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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE TWO TREATIES; OR, HOPE FOR JERUSALEM ***

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THE TWO TREATIES;

OR,
HOPE FOR JERUSALEM.

AN ADDRESS

BY THE
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Vicar of Trinity, Tunbridge Wells, and Hon. Canon of Canterbury.

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THE TWO TREATIES.

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WE meet to-day under a sense of profound thanksgiving. With the rest of the nation we have been praying for a righteous peace; and now we trust that through God's great, and abounding, mercy, such a peace has been secured. In all probability very few persons are altogether satisfied. There are very few who would not wish to have some of the conditions changed. But in the midst of so many conflicting interests it was not to be expected that any one nation should have its own way in every point; so that we have to be most heartily thankful to God that the Congress has dispersed without a conflict; that England is not involved in war; and that Europe is free to devote its energies to the extension of commerce, and the promotion of goodwill amongst mankind. May God bless the peace that has been established, and enable his people in a thankful spirit to avail themselves of it for the circulation of his Word, the spread of his Gospel, the promotion of his kingdom, and the glory of his name!

But thanksgiving is not the only duty of the day, for the two treaties now concluded involve consequences of such great importance that they ought to awaken in all our minds the deepest interest, and the most earnest expectation. To the student of the Prophetic Scriptures they

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assume an importance altogether unequalled by any event in modern history; I might almost say; by any event since the Siege of Jerusalem. We are taught in many places of Scripture that the people of God will not be taken by surprise by the great events of the latter days; but that there will be certain predicted signs which may be understood beforehand by those who study them. Thus in Matthew xxiv. our Lord teaches us that there will be such signs as will indicate the nearness of his return as distinctly as the budding of the fig tree assures us of the approach of summer. When we see the fig tree budding in spring we know that summer is at hand, and so when we see these predicted signs we are to conclude without a doubt that the great deliverance is near. Nor are we to wait until the signs are fully developed, or have passed into the region of history, but we are to look out for their beginnings, as our Lord said, "when these things begin to come to pass then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Now I cannot help believing that the conclusion of these two treaties is at all events amongst the beginnings. I believe that the fig tree is beginning to bud, and that, if it be, it is high time for us to be looking out for the summer. Let us endeavour then to consider, first, what we actually see; and secondly, what we may anticipate as the not improbable consequence of the great events that have taken place.

I. First then, WHAT DO WE SEE?

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Do we not see the complete, and, as far as man can judge, the final overthrow of the uncontrolled dominion of the Ottoman Empire? The result of the Berlin treaty is that, although the form is preserved, the dominant power of the Ottoman Empire is at an end.

Look first at Europe as re-arranged by the treaty of Berlin. If you compare the new map of Turkey in Europe with the map before the commencement of the war you will find that it is not one third of the size. Montenegro, Servia, and Roumania are no longer tributary States; Bulgaria north of the Balkans is independent of Turkey; Bosnia and Herzegovina are virtually transferred to Austria; and a considerable portion of Thessaly is handed over to Greece. Then again the position of the remnant that is left is entirely changed. The New Roumelia is to have an independent administration. The remainder of Thessaly, Thrace, Macedonia, and Crete, are all to be placed under constitutional government, to be arranged with the concurrence of the great powers of Europe. The power to oppress is therefore at an end, and as far as man can judge, for ever. The Ottoman was let loose from the Euphrates as a scourge on Apostate Christendom. He has done his work, though not for God's glory, and is now laid aside by the same hand that raised him up. He was appointed for a given time, and a given work, but now that time is expired, that work is done, and he is wasting under his predicted doom.

But how is it in Asia? Let the treaty between the Porte and England answer the question. In that treaty, and in the letter of the Secretary of State explaining its object, there is the clear recognition of the complete defencelessness of the Turkish Empire. The treaty was made because there was no power of self defence left in the Ottoman, or in other words, because the Euphratean flood was almost dry.

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The very existence of the treaty is therefore a proof that the power of self-support is gone. But that is not all, or nearly so. According to the treaty, England makes itself responsible for a complete reform in Turkish administration. Turkey in Asia is henceforth to be governed, if not as an English protectorate, at all events under English counsel. Is it possible to imagine a greater proof of Turkish decay? If there were any life left, would the haughty Turk submit to such conditions? If he did not know that he was helpless, would he ever have consented to such terms? The conditions of the treaty are a self-evident proof of his loss of power. But that is not all; for is it possible to suppose that England will be responsible for the continuation of Turkish misrule? Is it likely that England will hold those treaty powers, and not use them? Is it to be supposed for one moment that we have undertaken the responsibilities, and are now going to look on as passive spectators on all the corruptions of the past misgovernment? But if England secures a complete reform the days of the misrule of Turkish Pashas are numbered. The death warrant of the whole system is signed and sealed, and the fault will rest with England if Turkey in Asia is not in a very short time virtually free.

Now these are the indisputable facts of the case; the undoubted results of the two treaties; and the remarkable fact is that these results are exactly such as the students of prophecy have been predicting for many years. From one prophecy they have foretold for years that there must be a decay of the Ottoman Empire simultaneous with the loss of the temporal power of the Pope, ^[7a] and now we see their words come true. From another prophecy they have believed that the decay of the Ottoman power is represented in symbol by the drying up of the Euphratean flood, so that the Ottoman must recede from his conquests just as the waters of a flood recede from the land over which there has been an overflow, ^[7b] and this is the process which we are now witnessing. From Europe the waters are almost, if not entirely, gone, so that Europe is practically dry. And as for Asia, the waters there have become so shallow that the Englishman, we hope, will walk through them and scarcely wet his feet. I am well aware that some people have felt a difficulty in applying the symbol of the Euphratean overflow to the Ottoman invasion, and I am quite prepared to acknowledge that there is a great uncertainty about the interpretation of all symbolic prophecies; but one thing we must all admit, that if we are right in our

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interpretation of the symbol, we see in these two treaties the most remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy. We see the drying up going on in our own days and under our own eyes; so that we have this day a fresh evidence conspicuous before the world of the divine inspiration of God's holy word, of the truth of the prophetic scriptures, and of the sovereignty of God over the mightiest nations of the world. Sceptics may doubt, and infidels may scoff; but we see that God's word is from himself. What he has predicted, that is coming to pass, and, though the time appointed has been long, we see in the great facts of our own day that the word of God's prophecy is true.

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II. We may proceed then to consider WHAT WE MAY ANTICIPATE AS THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCE OF ALL THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE.

When our Lord spoke those words referred to in St. Matthew, he was clearly speaking of the second Advent; but the events which we are now witnessing are not the same as those described in that chapter, and therefore we cannot regard them as the predicted signs of that glorious appearing. But there is another great event foretold in prophecy, which many of us believe must take place before the Advent, and for that event I cannot but hope that these two treaties will rapidly prepare the way. I mean the return of the Jews and the ten tribes to Palestine.

If we turn to the prophecy respecting the drying up of the Euphrates in Rev. xvi. 12, we find that it will be dried up in order that "the way of the kings of the East may be prepared." That expression "the kings of the East" does not mean the kings now reigning in the East, but it does mean the kings who are to come up from the East. So that the full meaning of the text would be given if we were to render it "that the way of the kings might be prepared from the East!" The persons referred to are kings by birthright, though they are far away in the East instead of in their own home; but when the Euphrates is dried up a way will be made for their return. Who then are those kings? And what nation is it that God has chosen to royalty? Turn to Exod. xix. 6, and there you read of Israel, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests;" the meaning of which expression is explained by St. Peter's quotation of it, in which he substitutes the words "A royal priesthood." Surely then it is not altogether unreasonable to believe that the priests of that royal priesthood may be the kings referred to, and that a way will be prepared for their return by the drying up of the Euphrates, or the wasting of the Turkish power.

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The same conclusion may be drawn from the words of our blessed Saviour in Luke xxi. 24, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Those words most clearly teach us that Jerusalem is to be trodden down for a time, but they no less clearly imply that it will be for a time only, and that it will be restored when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. By whom then is Jerusalem now trodden down? Who is it that is at the present day treading down the captive city? There can be no doubt as to the answer. It is the Turk that is the treader down of Jerusalem. It is the Ottoman power that holds it under foot. It is the Euphratean flood that has overwhelmed it; and if so, is it not an obvious conclusion that the fall of Turkey is likely to be the rise of Jerusalem, and that Turkish decay is the harbinger of the Jew's prosperity? When therefore we see the waste of Turkey, and witness the receding of the waters, we see in that waste the budding of the fig tree; and, as believers in God's word, we are taught by the prophetic Scriptures to look out for the outburst of the summer in all its glory on Palestine.

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But now turn to the treaty with Turkey, and see how it bears on the prospects of Israel. Look at it well, and consider whether it may not be regarded as the budding of the Jewish fig tree.

According to that treaty Turkey in Asia is placed under what approaches to an English protectorate, and one of the principal covenants is that England shall in future have a voice in its government. Now think for a moment of the vast importance of that part of Turkey in Asia now called Syria, and consider whether there is any plot of land on the face of the globe that is of more importance to the commerce of the world. On the S.W. it reaches down to the isthmus of Suez, through which the traffic between the Eastern and Western hemispheres is now passing like the sand through the narrow neck of an hour glass. The result is that any powerful nation holding Syria would have the power of interrupting the greater part of the trade of the world. Then on the East and North East it is bounded by the valley of the Euphrates, which is almost certain before long to become the line of Railroad from Europe to India. That country therefore, though not much above 400 miles from North to South, commands the two great highways between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Any powerful nation holding Syria will command both those communications between Europe and the East. Can we then believe it possible that England, now having the right of interference, will leave that most important country to the miserable maladministration of six Turkish Pashas? Can we doubt for a moment that the first object of this Country will be to secure for Syria a Government so firm, so just, and so trustworthy, that it may give security to life and property? Is it not next to certain that those who have made this treaty will do their utmost to secure through its means an efficient administration for a district of such vast importance? But if they succeed, what will be the effect of such a government? Will it not immediately attract thither both capital and enterprise? As things are now, nothing can prosper, because there is no security. If people grow a crop they cannot be confident that they will ever enjoy the fruit. If it is not plundered by the Bedouin, it is too often

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seized by the Pasha. So that one of our Missionaries writes—"The inhabitants of Palestine are becoming poorer every year. This is especially the case with the cultivators of the soil, who mostly suffer the burden of a cruel and grasping system of taxation, now doubled on account of the Russian war." But if there were a good government all would be changed. Then he that planted the vineyard might eat the fruit thereof, and he that tilled the soil might calculate on the produce of his labour. And this is the change that we may expect to see very quickly brought about by England. This I trust before many months are passed will be the blessed result of our country's use of her new treaty rights.

But we have not yet done with Syria, for there is this peculiar interest attached to it, that it is the very country which God gave to Abraham. The boundaries are almost exactly the same. Take the map of Syria, and compare it with the promise originally given to Abraham. Look at Israel's title deeds as recorded in Gen. xv. 18.—"Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." And see how this title deed was afterwards ratified through Moses; (Deut. xi. 24.) the only difference being that he draws his line from East to West, instead of from North East to South West, and so speaks of the Mediterranean as the Western boundary. "Every place whereon the soles of your foot shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost Sea shall your coast be." That most important district is therefore the very district given by God to the seed of Abraham more than 3000 years ago. It belongs therefore to the house of Israel. It is their own, and why should they not return? People say they would not return if they could, and I have no doubt that of a great number that is perfectly true. I have no doubt that it would be with many Jews in respect of Palestine, just as it is with thousands of Gentiles in respect of eternal life. How many are there who have life and restoration offered them in Christ Jesus, but who are altogether indifferent to the offer? So doubtless it will be with multitudes of the house of Israel when the Jubilee trumpet is blown. The return may be proclaimed as that from Babylon was proclaimed in the edict of Cyrus, but none will respond but those whose spirit God will have raised. But how many are there in Russia, in Poland, in Hungary, in Roumania, in Arabia, and amongst God's hidden ones throughout the world, who look on Palestine as the long lost home of their fathers, and who are crying and sighing for the recovery of Jerusalem! And why should not they hasten there as soon as Palestine is safe? They have all that is required, the capital and the enterprise. They hold the title deeds of Palestine, and they are only strangers amongst the people where they are scattered. What then is there to delay their return as soon as a righteous government is established? It is of no use for them to go there now. If they were to take their silver and their gold with them now the probability is that they would soon lose it through either plunder or taxation. But let England put forth her power, and establish with a strong hand a Government that may be trusted, and before many months are passed we may see the fulfilment of the prophecy recorded in Isaiah lx. 8, 9.—"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee."

But if such should be the case, how wonderful are the times in which we live! It is 2600 years since that prophecy was given by God through Isaiah, but hitherto there has not been a sign of its fulfilment. How marvellous it would be if we, or even our children, should actually witness its accomplishment!

It is 2500 years since Israel was outcast, and 1800 years since Judah was dispersed. During those periods, the four great predicted empires have risen and fallen; but there has been no movement yet for the restoration of the Jews. On the day of the Ascension the Apostles asked when the kingdom should be restored to Israel, and the Lord Jesus answered that it was not for them to know the time. Ever since that day believers have been waiting for it, assured that it would be, but unable to calculate the date; but now, not only do we seem to be on the verge of the return, for it is perfectly clear that the way is likely to be opened for it as it has never been since the dispersion, but it seems not improbable that our own dear country may be God's chosen instrument in its accomplishment. It seems indeed not impossible that England, and England's Queen, may be the persons referred to in that other prophecy, Isaiah xlix. 22, "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their Queens thy nursing mothers."

But we must look farther still, and the eye must reach even beyond the return of Israel. There are many ready to say that they do not care much whether the Jews are restored or not, for it will make very little difference to them. But we must remember that the return of the Jews will be but the beginning of the end, for there are far greater blessings beyond. We must never forget the promise in Psalm cii. 16, "When the Lord shall build up Zion He shall appear in His glory." There cannot be a doubt that the return of the Jews and the coming of the Lord are most intimately connected in the Word of God. Every thing therefore that affects the Jews affects more or less our hope of seeing HIM. When we see them in Palestine we may begin to look out for his appearing. When they are in Zion we may hope that HE will soon come there to reign. Oh! what a summer will that be, "when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings," when "the sun shall be ashamed, and the moon confounded, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and before his ancients gloriously!" What a multitude of overpowering thoughts are presented to us if we trust we see in our own day even though it be nothing more than what we think may prove to be the first budding of the Jewish fig tree! It may be only the first budding, and there may still be a great deal to follow before we gather the fruit. ^[15] But if

there is a bud at all there is enough in it to fill our hearts with holy hope, and to remind us of the words of our Lord—"When these things begin to come to pass then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

HENRY S. COLBRAN, PRINTER, TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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FOOTNOTES.

[7a] See Faber on the Prophecies.

[7b] See Rome, Turkey, and Jerusalem.

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