THE PROSPECT.

"THE DAYS ARE AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION."—EZEKIEL xii. 23.

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SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STUDY OF PROPHECY.

THE great truths of our salvation were long veiled by the darkness of unbelief and superstition. Thanks to the courageous champions of the Reformation, and to their struggles too often sanguinary, justification by faith, redemption by the blood of Christ, are now, as it were, anew acquired for the Church of God.

The salvation which is in Jesus Christ is assuredly the precious foundation of peace, and that which each Christian must hold firmly, if he would be nourished and refreshed by the word of God.

The Holy Spirit, in the simple and inimitable language of Scripture, presents to our hearts the boundless love which God has testified to us, in giving us His beloved Son. All the pious efforts, all the meditations of Christians who have sought into this divine good will towards men, will never rise up so as to exhaust the treasures of grace, of which the angels themselves search in vain to discover the bottom.

But has the victory of the second Adam no other result than the ransom and deliverance of Christians? and does not the Spirit, animating the Church, urge it to search even the deep things of God? Ought we, dear brethren, to content ourselves with the precious milk of the Word, and to reject the food which it offers to those who seek to become full-grown men? Does the wisdom of God in mystery, which, hidden before the ages, was ordained beforehand unto our glory,—does it require of us to be confined to Christ crucified?

The death of the Saviour, as well as all the facts of His life, is opposed to human wisdom: such is to it the folly which is to be preached to the unconverted, philosophers or illiterate, to carnal men and to the little children in Christ. But the fruits of the incarnation of Jesus, the results of the obedience even unto death, the glories which were to follow it, are for those who seek the mind of Christ. Those precious fruits will be desired and gathered by all the faithful who wish to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and to increase in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory with every kind of patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father which hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and who hath delivered them from the power of darkness and hath translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love. (Col. i.)

It is those promises also which we present to you, beloved brethren, desiring, with the help of God, to draw your attention to the importance of the study of prophecy, which unrolls them to our view.

And first—we say so with a profound conviction—the life of Christ in us, His Holy Spirit in us, our conformity to His death and resurrection, all the blessings of which we are actually partakers by faith in the sacrifice of the Lamb, are yet imperfectly, feebly, insufficiently preached, ill understood, little appreciated by a large number of Christians.

Yes, it is with grief and humiliation we confess it: the Gospel of the cross is still obscured by the weakness of the Church, by its disunion, by the false humility, by the indolence of the majority of Christians. The birth, the life, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, the glorification, and session of Jesus at the right hand of the Father—*there* are so many positive facts, *there* is Christian history;—the office of Jesus as intercessor with God, *there* is the leaf we need to turn every day. Do we read it assiduously? Is it really our cordial and our refreshment? No, brethren; for this reading would infallibly conduct us to the study of unfulfilled prophecy, of which we are about to discourse some moments.

Prophecy is one in this sense, that it has Christ as its centre, its object, and its end.

But, because of the succession of times, we must divide it into prophecy fulfilled, and prophecy unfulfilled. Fulfilled prophecy presents us with the destinies of the human species until our days; the election of the Jewish people with a view to glorifying God on earth, and their obduracy; the advent of a Saviour, His life, His death, His glorification; the temporary rejection of the Jewish people, the introduction of the dispensation of grace and of the Church.

All the Old Testament announces these things: the New Testament bears testimony to their fulfilment.

Unfulfilled prophecy recounts the future consequences of the death of Jesus Christ; it refers to the world, to creation, to the Jews, and to the Church.

It presents us with the future destinies of the world; that is to say, a series of judgments, which will serve to purify the entire creation, to deliver it from the yoke of vanity and corruption, and to prepare it thus for the return and reign of Jesus, by whom and for whom all things were made.

These destinies consist then in the judgment of this world and of its children, always rebels and enemies against God, in order to bring about the reign of the King of kings, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the Jews, as God's people and in the measure of earthly promises, it announces a future portion of blessings temporal and spiritual. The Messiah will come, for the Eternal has promised it; and would to God that the Church which is to return with Him expected it as faithfully as do the Jews!

Relatively to the Church, the effects of the life of Jesus, of His obedience in humility, of His death, of His resurrection, are progressively developed.

Each of the redeemed has already received in himself on this earth the precious life of his Saviour.

The resurrection *from* the dead,* and the gathering of all the members of the body of Christ to their Head; the manifestation to the eyes of the world of the Church in the glory of its Bridegroom, and its return with Him, are no more than the threshold of the magnificent promises which are ensured to the saints.

Thence the history of Jesus becomes that of the Church: the glory of His reign, the complete victory of the King of kings over all His enemies, even over death—the fusion, definite and infinite, of Jesus with His Father, and our Father, and all the glories which are to follow from it; such is what we read in unfulfilled prophecy relatively to the future lot of the redeemed.

The Church is redeemed—is a fulfilled fact.

The Church is gathered—is a present fact.

But it will rise by the power of the life of Christ in order to be glorified, manifested with its Bridegroom; to judge, to reign, and to walk from glory to glory with Him.

Such is unfulfilled prophecy; such is the glorious hope of the promise which we ought to know and lay hold of by faith.

If we have succeeded in this very rapid outline, we shall have demonstrated: That unfulfilled prophecy reveals to us the future consequences of fulfilled prophecy: That these future consequences concern the world, the Jewish people, and the Church.

From that which goes before we draw the following conclusions:

The study of prophecy is *inevitable* for the Christian who reads the Bible in simplicity of heart.

This study is a *duty* to Christian men.

It is their *privilege;*

And a *source of blessing.*

The study of prophecy is *inevitable* for every Christian who reads the Bible.

If it is true that there are fulfilled prophecies, and that they are contained in the Bible, it is clearly impossible for him who reads it not to meet with and study them.

* Called also the resurrection of the just, of the saints, the first, *the better*, the resurrection of life, &c.

But if there is a portion of prophecy which is not fulfilled (which no Christian doubts—we hope so at least), and we suppose a believer whose intention would be to neglect this part of the Word, we say that he ought necessarily to be occupied with these subjects.

No one, surely, will deny that the prophetic books contain the prophecies in an especial way. Now these books form by themselves the greatest part in the Old Testament.

The Psalms are prophetic, and almost entirely prophetic: they show us Christ identified with the Jewish people in all the past and in all the future of this people.

Job itself contains prophetic passages.

Christ is in all the other books, either in types or in express prophecies.

The Old Testament introduces already Jesus in the third chapter of Genesis, and we find Jesus again in Malachi. Jesus is presented in Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, as about to come in humiliation, as well as a second time in glory, as King of the Jews, and King of the nations.

From the first page to the last, the New Testament shows us the accomplishment of the Messianic prophecies, and the future development of the counsel of God.

It is the business then for the Christian, who does not wish to occupy himself with unfulfilled prophecy, to pick and choose between the events which are and those which are not accomplished. Now we say that that very thing is to study prophecy, although involuntarily and in a bad spirit. Such a labour will sufficiently prove that it is impossible for the Christian to read either the Old or the New Testament, without being occupied with prophecy. If then this necessity is imposed even on the children of God whose heart is not suitably disposed, how much more pressing will it not be for believers whose heart is single and upright! Prophecy is everywhere to be found in the Bible. It is needful therefore to know how to distinguish that which is past from that which is future, unless we renounce this reading, or do it without understanding its real and profound sense.

The knowledge of revealed things will preserve us from many erroneous applications of passages which refer to future events; as, for example, from taking Sion and Jerusalem for the Church, Israel and Judah for Christians, from often looking at grace through Jewish ideas; from perhaps taking prayers wholly Jewish against the enemies of Israel, for Christian prayers, and from often finding ourselves by this very means in great perplexity.

The study of prophecy is thus *inevitable* for every Christian who desires to be taught of God, and to know the whole counsel of God. And how shall we suppose a single one who of deliberate purpose would not desire it?

We have said moreover that the study of prophecy was a *duty*.

Every disciple of the Lord knows that he ought to draw near His divine Word, only with the respectful love of a child adopted by grace; and certainly, if there were any part of the Scriptures which should be studied with more humility and respect than others, such dispositions should be surely applied to the revelation of future things.

But here, as in all things, our rule is general and invariable: to do all to the glory of God, for the love of His kingdom and of our brethren in Jesus. Such is the precept that we should always have before our eyes, if we would be faithful disciples; such is that which, by the grace of our Master, will keep us from every research of our own, and from all carnal and rash speculation.

Were it true, as we often hear affirmed, that knowledge *destroys*, that it disperses, that it divides, that, provided one is saved, it is all that is needful, that one should not dig into the Bible like a mine, that the study of revealed things is a secondary affair, of inferior importance, perhaps even hurtful and dangerous? These allegations cannot be better combatted and refuted than by the Word itself; but we have an explanation to give our brethren before we employ this powerful medium.

We avow that it is not granted to all and to each in the same measure to search and to study prophecy, and that the grace of our God has diversely distributed gifts and functions among the members of His Church. But we believe also that those to whom God has so given *ought* to pay attention to it, in order that they might thereby furnish their share to the edification and growth of the body of Christ; and that those to whom this nourishment is presented *ought* on their side to be profited by it, imitating the believers of Berea, who, more noble than those of Thessalonica, searched the Scriptures day and night whether those things were so.

They are bound so much the more, as the fundamental doctrines gain in power of sanctification, in clearness, in extent, in solidity, in depth, when they are studied in a complete manner and in the light of prophecy.

Humility consists in receiving all and in taking all from the hand of God, blessing Him; nay more, in asking Him, and in seeking day by day to obtain something more of His thoughts. It is pride and indolence to refuse a part of God's grace.

It is sin to turn aside and condemn other brethren who desire to know Jesus as the glorious Bridegroom of the Church, and the immortal destinies of this Church.

With people of the world, with nominal Christians, and perhaps, alas! with many Christians otherwise godly, this pretended humility proceeds, certainly in part, from the fear of being enlightened; for nothing is more calculated to sever us from the world than the perspective of the thick darkness and terrible judgments which are going to fall upon it, and which prophecy unrolls before our eyes, when, in its sublime scenes, it announces to us the day of the Lord.

Christians are responsible for the use they have made of this depository of God's oracles which have been entrusted to them. Nothing in the Word authorizes them in rejecting certain portions of the Bible, to study and receive those only of which they in their weakness perceive the immediate application.

A want of faith in the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in us can only keep us in this state of indifference; but the results of such a distrust in the goodness of God are necessarily fatal, for Scripture teaches us that meat is the nourishment which brings the babes in Christ to the stature of grown men. It is therefore by means of this solid nourishment, or of the knowledge of the admirable purposes of God, that we shall arrive at the position which is commended to us (1 Thess. i. 10), serving the living and true God, and waiting for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.

A host of arguments present themselves to us to prove that the study of prophecy is a duty. Simple good sense itself says to the least advanced children of God, that all which has been written has been so with a view to being read and meditated; that God says nothing but what ought to be precious to us—He who declares to men that they shall give account of every vain and idle word. Reason, logic would surely furnish us with some arms, but we prefer to cite a small number of passages, nevertheless apprising our readers beforehand that we have not selected perhaps the most powerful and the most conclusive, for the purpose of stirring up Christians to fulfil this duty.

Here is that which the Lord predicted to the Jews and that which will happen to those who, failing in love for the truth, shall take the Antichrist for the Messiah, before the second coming of the Lord: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John v. 39-43.)

Yes, it is assuredly in order that we should consult them that the oracles of God are become our inheritance after having been confided to the Jews; (1) we will not range ourselves among those who think that Scripture speaks in vain, (2) since we know that it is *all* wholly inspired of God, "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (3)

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (4)

Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesying, (5) for the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; appropriating spiritual things to spiritual men. (6)

Avoid, dear brethren, being placed in the number of the mockers *of the last days*, that say, Where is the promise of His coming? "Let us be mindful of the words which were spoken before by

(1) Rom. iii. 2. (2) James iv. 5. (3) 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. (4) James i. 5. (5) 1 Thess. v. 19, 20. (6) 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12, 13.

the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (1)

Let us give serious heed to the title of the last prophetic book, which has been left us by the express order of the Lord Jesus Himself to him who was His beloved disciple. This book is entitled *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which God has given him to show unto His servants the things which must *shortly* come to pass. (2) How many rebellious servants are there not, on this point at least, who will not *see*, will not even look at these things! how many wiles and cunning shifts do not our indolence, our pride and our want of faith, invent to escape from this light! And if it is true that this precious book is the most obscure, and the most difficult to understand, ought that to hinder the disciple of Jesus from studying a portion of the Scriptures wherein Himself is revealed? Is there not in us the Spirit who is the earnest of the promise to *teach us all things?* (3)

And this duty of studying prophecy is so much the more pressing for the children of God, as the end of the times, or of the indignation of God against His people Israel, approaches. Now, this end of the times will bring in the fulfilment of great things predicted in all Scripture. And if Daniel had to shut up the words and to seal the book *even to the time of the end*, the days are come when many shall traverse this book and their knowledge shall be increased. (4) But now are we nearer salvation than when we believed; much more are we nearer than the Jewish prophets were.

In the time of those latter, Isaiah could say (xxx. 11): "The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed." See moreover Isa. vi. 9.

For us it is the moment to seek into the ways of God, and not to act as the people who sat down to eat and drink and then rose up to play; for all these things happened unto them for types; and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are met. (5) And it is for us, brethren, that the Lord Jesus has said, Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. (6)

Eighteen hundred years are run out since the time when the faithful believed firmly that all things were about to be made new, (7) and since the New Testament was written. Is this a reason for us, who are arrived at the last times, to put aside this expectation, to neglect our duty, which is to be in a position to receive the Lord when He shall return? Ought we then to settle down upon the labours of our predecessors, to desire to know from the Bible only that which they could find there? Such is not our opinion, dear brethren. If, on one side, the children of God are called and authorized to search the Word with the Spirit of Jesus and with a respectful wisdom; on the other side, we know that the opening of this Word enlightens and gives understanding to the simple. (8)

If it is true that there is nothing new under the sun, it is equally true that the Bible is a sufficient treasure for all ages, even to the end of time. The Lord our God has enclosed in it all that is necessary for the growth of His people; and His Spirit, who is in the Church and in each of its members, distributes to the saints the nourishment suited to their need. In one sense then there is nothing new in the Bible; but, in another sense, every Christian, become a disciple for the kingdom of heaven, can draw out of this precious treasure things new and things old. (9) Let us not permit ourselves therefore to be arrested by the enemy, who tells us to search in the Bible for nothing but that which our predecessors discovered there; for all the teaching of the New and Old Testaments is a treasure given to the Church, to the end that it may draw from it, according to its exigencies, directions for knowing the counsel of God, and warnings salutary to its progress in holiness.

Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets! (10) for the Lord our God has put the Spirit of Jesus in us; but want of faith is one of the greatest obstacles to the action and effectual working of this precious Comforter.

May we receive instruction from the misfortunes which happened to the people chosen from the nations! may their example be a powerful warning that may serve to deliver us from all this false prudence, from the indolence, from the pride which hinder us from receiving and studying all the word! It is the sole means of not

(1) 2 Pet. iii. 2, 3. Jude 18. (2) Rev. i. 1. (3) John xiv. 26. (4) Dan. xii. 4 lit. (5) 1 Cor. x. 7. (6) Rev. xxii. 10. (7) 2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1-5; Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22. (8) Ps. cxix. 130. (9) Matt. xiii. 52. (10) Numb. xi. 29.

deserving the following words to be applied to us as a bloody reproach from the Lord: "Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken." "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." (1) "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (2)

The study of prophecy is more than a duty, in the absolute sense of this word; it is for us a precious *privilege*.

The Church, when gathered to Jesus, will receive all things which have been promised it; such is its *inheritance*, of which the Holy Spirit serves as the earnest. (Eph. i. 14.)

This inheritance, this possession, purchased for the Church joint-heir with Jesus Christ, is the world, which is still in the power of Satan. The coming of the King with His saints will deliver this purchase of Jesus for the praise of His glory. But the reign with Jesus over the regenerated world is only, as we have already seen, the introduction of *the glories* which are to follow that.

The grace and mercy of God are not confined to the redemption and salvation of our souls, however immense those blessings may be in our eyes. Prophecy is the inventory of the treasures of the grace of God by Jesus. Prophecy is the key which opens to us these treasures while we are waiting, that we may enter into the possession of these exceeding riches of our great God. This precious key has been for a long time rusty, but the Spirit urges the Church to withdraw it from oblivion, to restore it to a fit state for use, and this impulsion is of itself a prophetic sign of the nearness of the times.

Shall we neglect these gifts and warnings of God? Shall we, children of light, be less wise than are the children of the age for their own profit?

What man of the world, what one among us is there, who, receiving a magnificent palace as his inheritance, would not hasten to have its gates opened, and would neglect to visit even its littlest recesses? Shall it be otherwise, brethren, as regards our glorious hope? And if the voice of the Bridegroom invites His beloved to make use of the key of the Palace of the Marriage-supper, shall she refuse to obey this voice?

A vague foreboding takes possession even of the world. Prophecy is in the air which encircles us; but Satan knows how to turn aside the attention of his own from this voice which disturbs them. For us, this call of the Holy Spirit is perhaps the presage to us of new trials; but we see, even in these presages, a powerful reason to seek the counsels of God, such as He has revealed them to us. It is good and wholesome, now more than ever, that the sheep of the Lord should know from what quarter they are to draw. Abraham, who lived in faith and in hope, did not pass through the fire, but he abode under the immediate protection of the Lord. Lot had chosen Sodom, because he was not so intimately conversant with the thoughts of God. May this example teach us not to despise prophecy, and to enjoy the privileges of the Christian! the most precious of which privileges, during this life, certainly is to have the knowledge of the purposes of our Father.

But to enjoy them always more, let us keep, like Abraham, far off from the plain and the cities of the Canaanites. The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? (3) Thus, the more the Church resumes its position of stranger here below, and of a Nazarite to the Lord, the more it keeps itself separated from the world; the more also the Lord will reveal to it His purpose, the more prophecy will be cleared up to it.

All the holy men, who have lived by faith, keeping the promises choicely, have been preserved from evil and protected in the hour of trial; the Church ought then to imitate these models, in order to be also in a position to escape that which is about *to come upon all the habitable earth.*

Prophecy serves it as a guide to go toward the Lord, just as in times gone by Enoch, Elijah, Noah, Rahab, and all the saints, have done.

It is for that that Jesus does not call us servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but He has called us friends, because He has made known to us all things that He had heard of His Father. (4) He prayed for us, and not for the world, because God has given us to Him. (5) And He has sent us, and given the

(1) Jer. vi. 17; viii. 7. (2) Luke xxiv. 25. (3) Gen. xviii. 17. (4) John xv. 15. (5) John xvii. 9, 20.

Spirit of truth to guide us into all the truth . . . . and to shew us things to come. (1) And we have the prophetic word more steadfast, whereunto we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise; knowing this first in our hearts,* that no prophecy of Scripture is of private solution, (2) (d'une explication particulière), for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (3)

The revelation of future things presents us with the edifice of the grace of God in its totality; it displays to the eyes of the believer the crowning of this immortal monument, of which the cross of Jesus is the precious foundation. *There* are the things which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man; the things which God hath prepared for them who love Him, and which He hath revealed to us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (4) Secret things are for the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever. (5) And we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, (6) who has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure. (7) Our privilege is therefore evident, if we understand the position in which we are set by the oracles of God which have been entrusted to us. It is certainly this knowledge which makes us raise our heads on high, and look, not at the perishable things here below, but at the invisible things which are eternal. We live thus by the Spirit, and pursuant to the Spirit of Christ, seeking our citizenship which is in heaven; for all things which have been written aforetime were written for our instruction, that we, through patience and consolation of the Scriptures, might have hope. (8)

The hope, the consolation, the strengthening of the Ephesians, were the object of the solicitude of Paul, when he prays for them, That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, *that ye may know* what is *the hope* of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, &c. (9) It is to the elect Church that it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to him that hath will be given yet more; and happy are our eyes because they see, and our ears because they hear! (10)

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (11)

We repeat it still: he that studies the promises so extended and so varied, which are contained in the Bible for our consolation, studies the most important portion of unfulfilled prophecy relative to the Church; for we are become the heirs of the seed of Abraham by faith. (12) This study makes us walk with assurance and humility toward an end which the grace of God alone has proposed, and which it alone can make us attain. It is in prophecy that the child of God learns to know the difference which exists between his position, his calling, his walk here below, and those of the children of the world.

Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for our Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. (13)

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer; and, above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves. . . As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

It is thus that faith in Jesus Christ, and love to all the saints, are nourished and renewed by the contemplation of the common hope which is reserved for us in the future; and that, if we participate in the sufferings of Christ, we ought still *to rejoice*, that when His glory shall be revealed we may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1) (See Rom. viii. 15-18; Heb. x. 22-26, 37-39. See moreover, as to the future of the world and of its children, compared with that of the children of God, when the Lord shall come to take in hand His kingdom and His inheritance, 2 Peter iii. 3, 7, 11, 13, 14.)

It is not without doubt, in certain isolated passages only, relative to the knowledge of prophecy, that we find motives of sanctification, of separation from a corrupted world, judged and condemned, but it is in all the Scripture that the idea of 1 John ii. 17 is found developed, "the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever;" and this world is going soon, for it is the last hour, and woe to those who shall have walked according to the spirit of the world, and not according to the Spirit of Jesus! Sanctification, or the setting apart for God, spirituality, detachment from worldly lusts, joy, hope, consolation, establishment—these are the results of the privilege granted to Christians of searching the Word of God. It is there that the world *to come* (Heb. ii. 5) is presented to us as the sole world where Christ will reign, and where we will reign with Him.

His divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through *the knowledge* of Him that hath called us by His glory and virtue, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that *by these* ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, (2) giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. (3) Certainly there is, dear brethren, an apostle who does not accuse the knowledge of the promises of destroying and dispersing. Knowledge puffs up, it is true, when it walks without love, when it has not the glory of God and the love of the saints for end and object; it is then an idle or barren knowledge; nay, carnal and contrary to that of which it is here the question, and which we recommend to our brethren. But if the things of which we have just spoken are in us, we will not remain idle or barren in the knowledge of the Lord, that we may make our calling and election sure, and not fall; for so an entrance shall be richly ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now, this knowledge of Him who has called us not only by His grace, but by *His glory*, was of such price in the eyes of Peter that he neglected nothing to strengthen his brethren in it, *though they possessed it already*. And he has done it so, that after his departure we might remember his exhortations upon this subject. What, then, shall I separate from my brother, because he knows prophecy better than myself, or because he knows it less, or yet because he considers several points in a manner opposed to mine, or different from mine? Wherefore the Holy Ghost, wherefore serves the love of the truth, if we cannot employ them for the growth of each other in knowledge and in charity—if through fear of the abuses that man introduces everywhere, we can receive from the Scripture only what our predecessors could see, and believed they saw there? What the knowledge and confession of the truth can do, and what in effect they do, is to bring about an entire separation, according to the Word, between the children of God and the world, between the Church and nominal Christians.

For us, we think that the possible abuses of so precious a privilege ought not to hinder us from becoming acquainted with our treasure, from giving our heart to it, and from drawing from the prophetic word things new and old, according to the will of the Giver of every excellent grace and of every perfect gift.

The study of prophecy is not only inevitable, not only enjoined upon the believer; it is not only a privilege, but moreover *a source of blessing*.

It is very remarkable that the Revelation—this book, in general, so neglected by Christians—contains in it alone two very special blessings for those who read it and keep its sayings. One of these blessings is at the head of the book, Rev. i. 3: "*Blessed* is he that readeth, and they who hear the words of the prophecy, and who keep those things which are written therein; *for the time is at hand*." Then in chapter xxii. 7: "Behold, I *come quickly: blessed* is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book."

(1) John xvi. 13, 14. (2) Private to the prophet, and not to the reader. One should explain prophecy, not according to the personal sentiments of the prophet, but by the thought of God. (3) 2 Peter i. 19-21. (4) 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. (5) Deut. xxix. 29. (6) 2 Cor. iii. 18. (7) Ephes. i. 9, 10. (8) Rom. xv. 4. (9) Ephes. i. 17, 18. (10) Matt. xiii. 11, 16 (11) Heb. vi. 11, 12. (12) Compare 1 Pet. i. 10, Gal. iii. 29, with Heb. vi. 13, 20, Rom. iv. 13. (13) Phil. iii. 20, 21.

* [Though differing from the rendering of this clause, and believing that the ordinary versions in French and English are decidedly better, I let the author's words stand as they are, leaving brethren to judge for themselves.—Ed.]

(1) 1 Peter iv. 11, 13.
(2) The knowledge of the promises, which are Yea and Amen in our Lord Jesus Christ. (3) 2 Peter i.

Besides, the eighteenth verse of the last chapter announces terrible curses to him who will add to it or will take from it any thing.

Shall we then despise—we, God's children—things which the Lord Himself has surrounded with so much care and so many promises?

Hasten we rather to seek into them with prayer, with love, with respect; sustain ourselves mutually with charity and a fraternal co-operation in the search after the will of God. He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. The Lord, who has given prophecy, and who gives the Holy Ghost to His children, will bless those researches, to which He urges us Himself. And the Lord has already done so: many obscure points are now cleared up. Let us bless God for it.

For ourselves, brethren, we also fear abuses, carnal speculations; we believe that many rash calculations have discredited prophecy, or rather its study among Christians. We deplore these things, but we love to advance in the knowledge of the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. xix. 10.) We possess this testimony; the book *is not sealed;* He tells us Himself that it is the spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus.

We are very far from having quoted all the declarations of Scripture on the subject; but we are persuaded that for those who love the truth and who have not taken a side against this study, the foregoing is sufficient at least to make them reflect, and perhaps, by the grace of God, to convince them.

The question which we have just put before the conscience of our brethren would not even exist without the action of Satan among the believers. The prince of darkness profits by all our wicked inclinations, by all our infirmities, to hide the truth and the light from the children of God—to hinder them from giving themselves up to a study which must necessarily withdraw them from the world. On the other side, it is certain also that the appeals to an unconverted world must even be rendered clear by the powerful light of prophecy. The short sketch which we were bound to present upon the aim of these divine revelations will justify this opinion, which we have not the facility of developing here.

However, let us consider, on one side, the darkness, the despair, the great anguish of the nations at the return of the Lord, the total annihilation of all that which is dear to the heart of the natural man; but until that the dominion of the prince of darkness extending itself progressively over this world, which is already condemned and judged; then the complete slavery of that which will not have laid hold of Christ our hope, of all that which will have rejected His testimony; finally, the second and eternal death for the end of the life of the children of the age. Is there not in that a something to detach the soul from the world, far more and far otherwise than a preaching of the law unto which we are no more subjected?

And on the other side, our new life, hidden now with Christ in God, manifested in glory when Christ shall appear; our blessed resurrection; our manifestation and our eternal glory in peace and in light; the absence of all judgment, of all condemnation, and of all tribulation for eternity: are there not there promises calculated to arouse the soul and to attract it to Christ?

Notwithstanding, we do not at all pretend that the preaching of the Gospel, with a view to conversion, should be an exposition of prophetic truths. So far are we from it, that we think these truths should not, and cannot, even serve usefully in the discussion or the controversy of Christians on one side, and of the unconverted on the other. We think that it is true of all prophecy that it serves as a sign, not to unbelievers, but to believers. (2) But we believe that he who desires to preach all the grace, and to proclaim the whole counsel of God, and on the other hand to make known all the power and perversity of Satan, must know prophecy; and that without this light he may be blessed, it is true, because of the indulgence of God, but that nevertheless he takes away from the Gospel a very considerable portion of its strength and its clearness.

Finally, when God Himself is pleased to call and awaken a dead man, His Spirit knows how to act by means of prophecy; and we are going to cite an example of it which may be useful in disposing us to render glory to God, and to Him alone.

A child of the world, possessing all that the world can give of happiness, so much so that it would have been impossible for him to desire any thing without being unreasonable in his own eyes, was drawn by the mercy of God the Saviour and Almighty into a position which withdrew him from the din of the world, not in a manner painful for him, but according to his yet carnal tastes.

Living at an epoch when all the doctrines of social levelling might occasion him fear for his private circumstances, he was urged by this very fear to study prophecy.

The hostility of the natural heart soon engaged this poor blinded one to essay the proof to the world and to himself, that all that was nothing but pure inventions of men, nothing but so-called pious frauds.

The evidence of inspiration in fulfilled prophecy had the effect of annihilating those proud pretensions. The existence of the marvellous things which it proclaimed, and which continue to follow their course throughout ages, in the eyes of a blinded world, subdued his reason without as yet touching his heart.

Nevertheless, the grace of God acted. He was compelled to acknowledge that Jesus, the Christ, was come; that he was dead and risen; that he was the Saviour promised by the prophets; that the Jews, after having rejected him, continued dispersed among the nations, a living testimony to the divinity and the authenticity of the word of God.

At last the future glory of Jesus Christ appeared to him in the revelation which he studied still with a carnal heart. The poor unbeliever was enlightened by this glory; his eyes, like those of Saul, were opened to the light of grace.

Resembling the paralytic, this brother was placed by the Word in the centre of the grace and glory of Jesus. Looking then around him, he saw Jesus everywhere. Jesus says to him, Arise and walk; go, thy sins are forgiven thee; thou wert my enemy, but I loved thee.

This soul, thus conquered and convinced, wept and could love. It saw the end for which Jesus had laid hold of it and set it apart. Counting upon this powerful hand, it forgot the things which were behind it, in order to attain the end which is so clearly offered it in prophecy, namely, the better resurrection, the prize of its heavenly calling in Jesus Christ.

Christians! this ungodly one is now one of your brethren. He will bless, during the rest of his life, that One who has given him to love you in Christ. He weeps with you over the feebleness and the disunion of the sheep of Jesus.

Yes, the day will come when the prophecy will be realized with which the angels and the multitude of the heavenly host saluted the first advent of Christ; the day will come which the birth of a Saviour in humility proclaimed to us. Then the reign of Jesus over the earth, the reign of the Prince of peace, will be a verity.

Then, brethren, the world will rejoice in the realization of the prophetic songs: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace! among men good will!

Rejoice in the Lord always: I say again, Rejoice; for the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.

And the Bridegroom hath said, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!—*Le Témoignage.*

(1.) In attentively reading the original, one may see perhaps like us that it is thus this proposition is there set forth: "for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus;" which explains all the verse.

(2.) 1 Cor. xix. 22.

EVIDENCE OF THE LORD'S COMING TO THE CHURCH

BEING QUITE DISTINCT FROM HIS COMING TO THE WORLD.

In a former paper, headed "The Church hasting the Coming of the Lord," I spoke of the connection between His return and our communion and prayers. I thought it would be desirable further to set forth the scriptural evidence of the separateness of the Lord's coming for the *Church.* I would at once say therefore that the remaining of the Church *on earth*, until He *comes to the earth*, seems to be quite inconsistent with the revealed truths of God.

Let us look to the difference of dispensation between Israel and the Church, which has been to my own mind the great key about it. First then, I would say we find Israel again owned of God, and dealt with *nationally* before the Lord's return to the earth (more correctly perhaps, I should say, the remnant of Israel), and brought through the judgment into blessing *on the earth.* (Isa. lxv. 8, 9.) "I will bring forth a bud out of Jacob, and out of Judah

an inheritor of my *mountains;* and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a plain for herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me." So also Luke xiii. 9; compare Isa. vi. 13. Now I say that is quite inconsistent with the standing of the Church. "There is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ," but one body, is an *essential* truth of the Church. It is not *at all* national, but elective. When God therefore again takes up Israel, to know them *as Israel*, the Church no longer *exists* on earth. It is done with, and taken away. And remark, in the Old Testament prophets, which are full of this remnant, they plead with God, as Israel: "We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name." (Isa. lxiii. 19.) So also lxiv. 9, 10.

Secondly, they *walk*, as Israel does. In Malachi iv. 4 we find this. Speaking of that day and of Elias' coming, he says, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." It is not in the way of Christ's commandments, as John xv., but in the statutes of Moses they wait for him.

Again, we find the temple service restored, *and owned of God.* Look at Joel i. and ii., when the last hour of judgment and distress comes, who are called to stand in the breach; verse 13: "Gird yourselves, and lament, ye *priests;* howl, ye ministers of the *altar;* come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the *meat-offering* and the *drink-offering* are withholden from the *house* of your God." Again, ii. 16: "Gather the people, sanctify the *congregation*, assemble the elders, gather the children," &c. "Let the *priests*, the *ministers of the Lord*, weep between the *porch and the altar;* and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine *heritage* to reproach. *Then* will the Lord," &c.

We find then earthly *priests* and *sacrifices* owned of God. Surely this is diametrically opposed to the calling of the Church. We protest now that there is no *priest* on earth (save as all believers are *spiritual* priests, 1 Peter ii. 9); only One in heaven. (Heb. viii. 4; vii. 14.) And if we saw an altar on earth, should we not at once say, "That is not of God"? "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the first tabernacle." (Heb. xiii. 10.) Mark also the *porch*, and the altar, the temple again owned.

Now if we suppose the Church to be on earth, then you find two classes of persons holding testimonies diametrically different. The one affirms what the other *entirely* rejects. Certainly God cannot be the author of this. He can be but the author of one such testimony at one time. Imagine an enquirer desiring to follow the Lord. He says, To which shall I attach myself; you both say you are of God, and yet you entirely contradict one another: the one owns an *earthly altar*, &c.; the other entirely *rejects* it?

I would further remark, in passing, another instance of the remnants acting after the earthly calling. (Zech. xii. 6, 7.) So again Rev. xi. 5, 6 shows itself, to my mind, to be clearly an *earthly* testimony. Compare Luke ix. 54.*

And further, supposing the Church to be on earth, when the Lord comes to the earth, you have one of two things.

First, in the one case, we must suppose the Church taken up to him; the Israel remnant, not. In that case you have one party taken up at the same time to the *higher* resurrection glory with the rest of the Church; *Israel* left for the lower earthly blessing *in flesh.* What confusion!

Secondly, supposing you say the *Israel remnant* is taken up too in resurrection, you have the earth without a single soul in communion with Christ, who was to deliver it and Israel! (though I believe Zech. xiv. 14; xii. 8, openly contradicts this.) No heart on earth to welcome His triumph and His entry into Jerusalem, that has waited and suffered for Him in His rejection! To say (as Isa. xxv. 9) this is our God; we have *waited* for Him, and He will save us! And again Isa. lxv. 10.

And as to saying that the remnant of Israel hold a testimony for God, and yet are unconverted until Christ comes, it is in my mind contrary even to *fundamental* principles of truth. Surely how can any hold any testimony for God, except by communion, under the leading of the regenerating Spirit? (Or *supposing* the *Church* to be *on earth*, what neutral ground can be admitted according to that word, "He that hath the Son of God, hath life: he that hath not the Son, hath not life"?

* If any want instruction on the differences of our (Church) calling, and that of Israel, past and future, they will find it in a little halfpenny tract, called "The Christian's Heavenly Calling."

Now their communion is of a very high order. Next to John xvii. I do not know if Isa. xxvi., *their* language, does not stand.

In what I have spoken, I have spoken of what is realized, and clear to my own mind. I further suggest to help enquiry, when Satan is cast out *from heaven*, as in Rev. xii., how can the Church be any more on earth, when it has no longer an enemy *fit for it* to contend with? See Ephes. vi. 12; Satan in the *heavenlies* as they are. Chap. i. to ii. 6.

The upshot is to my mind this: when God acknowledges and deals with Israel as Israel, the Church is done with. The principle seems entirely clear. I add one word. We may not in one sense attempt to answer the question, "*When* will the Lord come for us?" In another sense it seems clear to my own mind (according to what was said in the former paper) there is this solution: "When the Church is READY;" or at least the remnant of the Church, for I by no means look for the whole Church to take up its proper position.* Most important truth! "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly!" G.

THE PRISONER OF HOPE.

Zech. ix. 12.

THERE are two leading principles in the soul of the Christian, which make God the special object. "These are "faith and hope." There is a marked distinction, and yet an intimate connection, between these two principles. Faith takes what God has given; hope expects what He has promised. Faith rests in holy tranquility, in God's statements about the *past;* hope goes forth in active longings after the *future.* Faith is a recipient; hope an expectant. Now it will be found that in proportion to the vigour of faith will be the vigour of hope. If we be not "fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is able also to perform," we shall know but little of the power or energy of hope. If faith be wavering, hope will be flickering. On the contrary, if faith be strong, hope will be strong also; for faith, while it nourishes and strengthens the persuasion, imparts strength and intensity to the expectation. Thus the soul, in the happy exercise of the above principles, is like a climbing plant which, striking its roots downwards into the soil, sends forth its tendrils along the nearest wall or tree. So the soul finds its root in the eternal record of God, while it sends forth the tendrils of an imperishable hope to grasp tenaciously the faithful promise of God; and we may say, the deeper the root, the stronger the tendril. The patriarch Abraham was a happy exemplification of all this; his "faith and hope" were truly "in God." Circumstances added nothing to him. He had been promised the whole land of Canaan, where he had not so much as to set his foot on; he had been promised a seed like the stars of heaven, or like the sand by the sea shore, when as yet he had no child. Thus, neither his faith nor his hope could have drawn any nutriment from circumstances, for every thing within the range of mortal vision argued against him. But the promise of "the Almighty God" was quite enough for the man of faith. With nought but that he started forth as a pilgrim and a stranger, having no foundation for his hopes that could at all be recognized by "flesh and blood." Abraham had heard a voice which the children of this world could not hear, even the voice of "the God of glory," calling him forth from the midst of his worldly circumstances to be "a prisoner of hope." The Lord had directed his thoughts upward; He had called him from earth to heaven—from the earthly Babel to the heavenly Jerusalem—from the baseless city of man to the well-founded city of God. Thus was it with all the patriarchs and witnesses whose honoured names the Spirit has recorded for our encouragement in Heb. xi. "They all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." They died as they had lived, "prisoners of hope." An unbelieving world might scoff and sneer at them, and wonder why they had given up the apparently substantial realities of earth to live and die without anything. But their "faith and hope" were in God, and not in circumstances. Faith enabled them to rest with tranquilized spirits upon the record of God, while hope carried them onward into the future, and converted it into the present.

But the verse which stands at the head of this paper presents the

* A little Scripture proof on this very important point would be acceptable to many readers.—ED.

believer in two most interesting aspects, viz. as the recipient of *grace*, and the expectant of *glory*—as one safely lodged in a "strong-hold," but yet as "a prisoner of hope"—as one in the enjoyment of perfect peace, and also living in the blessed hope of better things. These two points may afford matter for profitable reflection, through the Lord's mercy.

There is only one thing which can render the soul happy in looking forward into the future, and that is the knowledge of God's redeeming love in giving His Son to be a perfect sacrifice for sin. Until this is known, the mind will never reach beyond the question of mere individual salvation, which, after all, is but selfishness. The human heart is, in a measure, conscious that all is not right with it, and hence it is ill at ease at the thought of the future. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." Death and judgment form a gloomy prospect for man to comtemplate. Death draws aside the curtain and reveals the terrible future—it launches the poor soul forth into the boundless ocean of eternity, without anything to sustain or guide it. But "the one offering of Jesus Christ" brings the soul into new ground, alters its point of view, and removes the clouds from the prospect. "So," says the apostle, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 28.) The sinner must get at the other side of the cross ere he can happily or peacefully look forward. In other words, we can only study prophecy with a purged conscience. It is when we know, through the Spirit, the value of the sufferings of Christ, that we can joyfully contemplate the glory that is to follow. The unconverted, therefore, have nothing to do with prophecy. To them the throne from whence Jehovah reveals His deep counsels is surrounded with thick clouds and darkness, and sends forth nothing but thunderings and lightnings. The prophetic book is sealed with seven seals, and none but *the Lamb* can open it.

If, then, it be true that a purged conscience is needful ere prophecy can be rightly studied, we need not wonder that so little is known about it by those who consider it the highest point of Christian attainment to be able to feel that the conscience is cleansed from every stain. Until the grand doctrine of forgiveness—full, free, and eternal forgiveness—is known as the unquestionable portion of the soul through the finished work of the Lamb of God, no marvel that every other question, be it ever so important, should be held in abeyance. The value and efficacy of *grace* must be known ere *glory* is thought of. That grace which brings salvation must first be received before "the blessed hope" can be enjoyed. All this leads us to see the distinction between the work of the evangelist and that of the teacher. The evangelist should lead the sinner to see that the work on which his soul is to rest has been accomplished and that he cannot by any possibility add thereto. He has to convey a simple message concerning an accomplished work, which work must be the basis of the poor guilty sinner's peace. He does not assume any thing with respect to those to whom he speaks, but that they are dead in trespasses and sins—dead as Ezekiel's valley of dry bones, and as unable to live or move. The evangelist is privileged to stand in the midst of a ruined, self-destroyed, guilty world; and that to offer salvation, in the name of his Master, to all who will believe the word concerning the cross. It is of the utmost importance that all who occupy the position of evangelists should clearly understand the nature and limits of their work, and the terms of their commission. It too often happens that preachers of the gospel mar their work by intruding upon the province of the teacher. They think it incumbent on them to press upon the attention of people the fruits that result from the reception of the gospel lest they should be suspected of antinomianism. This is, properly speaking, the work of the teacher who has to do only with those who have passed under the hand of the evangelist. The teacher has no more to do with *sinners* than the evangelist has to do with *saints*.* Nor is the teacher to confine himself to the matter of pressing upon the conscience of the believer his responsibilities; he has also to instruct him in the nature of his hope, he has to expound to him the book of prophecy, according to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost. The evangelist has to speak of what God *has* done; the teacher of what he *will* do. The former calls for the action of faith; the latter, for the action of hope—the former points to the strong-hold; the latter speaks to the prisoner of hope. If these things be confounded the effect will be most pernicious. It is as wrong for the unbeliever to be addressed on the subject of the hopes of the Church, as it is for the believer to be confined to the question of the forgiveness of sins. The enemy of souls may often work much mischief by leading the unregenerate to exercise their intellects on the subject of prophecy. He is doing so at the present day, seeing he has not been able to prevent Christians from searching into their Father's testimonies concerning the future. The devil will endeavour either to suppress or corrupt the truth of God. For ages he succeeded in keeping the Church of Christ from the perception of the precious doctrine of the coming of the Lord; and now that attention has been awakened on the subject, he is maliciously seeking to nullify it by causing unhallowed lips to proclaim and teach it (or by causing Christians to differ about it). Now, the remedy for both these dangerous evils is the simple understanding of the Christian's place, as a prisoner of hope. It is not to amuse the intellect, nor to please the fancy, that the Spirit of God has spoken of the Church's destinies. No; it is for the purpose of comforting the prisoner, by giving him a well-grounded hope. Nor is it for any, save those who find themselves within the strong-hold of the blood-stricken door that the prospect of rest and glory has been painted in the distance. Looking at the believer in one aspect of his character, he is like the Israelite within the blessed circle of peace which redemption had described around him, feeding on the Lamb whose blood had secured his peace, with girded loins, waiting for the first beams of the morning, to leave the land of death and darkness to proceed on his way toward the land of Christ. So the believer, resting in the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ, is privileged to look forward to "the morning without clouds," not that he may then know, for the first time, that he is accepted in the Beloved, but that he may enter into all the rich and ineffable fruits of redeeming love. Thus, the believer is a prisoner of hope. His faith reposes on the cross—his hope feeds upon the rich pastures of God's prophetic record. His spirit travels over a course of which the cross is the starting-post, and glory the goal. He finds it.

> "Sweet to look back and see his name
> In life's fair book set down;
> Sweet to look forward and behold
> Eternal joys his own."

The two points are inseparable. It is only where we find it sweet to look back, that we also find it sweet to look forward. We must see our names in the fair book of life, written there in indelible characters, before we can understand our title to eternal joys. It is impossible that any one can rightly enter upon the investigation of the doctrine of the hopes of the Church, until his spirit has been perfectly tranquilized by the blood of atonement. To the unwashed soul the prospect is unspeakably dreadful. "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified." Prophecy conveys a two-fold message; it tells of unmitigated judgment to the man who is yet in his sins; and it tells of incorruptibility and eternal life to the man who has believed in the love of God, as displayed in the gift of His Son. Hence, to the former it must be a most unwelcome messenger; to the latter, the bearer of most gladsome tidings; to the former it speaks of the complete shipwreck, to the latter, the glorious consummation of all his hopes. The children of this world are not prisoners of hope, they are prisoners under condemnation; they wait, not to be emancipated, but to be executed; it is not endless rest, but endless torment, that lies before them. Miserable prospect! Oh, ye men of this world, what will it be when your cup of pleasure shall be dashed from your lips for ever! When the world—that idol for which you have lived and laboured, and at whose altar you have sacrificed everything, shall pass away into everlasting destruction! What would you not then give to find yourselves in a strong-hold—even in the strong-hold which faith finds in the sacrifice of Christ? It is nothing but the blindest infatuation to give up God's future for man's present—to sell the coming glory of Christ for the present glory of the world. Far better to endure the temporary privations of a prisoner's life here, than to suffer an eternal imprisonment with Satan and his angels. Poor sinner, the crucified Jesus calls upon you to "turn to the strong-hold;" to take refuge, by faith, beneath the shadow of the cross, and there to wait, as a prisoner of hope, for the glory which shall speedily be revealed from heaven. And you, Christian reader, who have, through grace, found rest for your wearied spirit, do

* Of course, we may often see the gift of an evangelist and a teacher developed in the same person. Where they are thus combined, great care is needed not to confound them in their exercise.

you seek to know more of what is involved in that title, "a prisoner of hope"? We can form some idea of the intensity of a prisoner's longing for the day of release; we may imagine how eagerly a prisoner of old would long to hear the soul-stirring note of the trumpet of jubilee, announcing his complete deliverance from captivity. We know full well that it is not with the gloomy and crumbling walls of his prison-house that the prisoner engages his attention; he seeks not to decorate or render them stable. No; he groans and sighs for deliverance. Just so should it ever be with us. We should unceasingly "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body!" "We," says the apostle, "that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." Here is the proper language of a prisoner of hope. It is not merely groaning to be set free from the cage in which we are pent up; but "to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven!" Doubtless, we feel the sorrow and trial of our present position; we are made to taste the irksomeness and roughness of the journey; we are called to enter into the painfulness of being imprisoned in a body of sin and death. In a word, "we groan, being burdened." Nevertheless, the putting off of the earthly tabernacle would not perfectly remedy the case. To be unclothed as to our spirits would not make us perfectly happy. Very many Christians err in their thoughts on this subject. They think that the moment the spirit escapes from its prison-house, it enters into perfect bliss. That such is not the case, the passage just quoted most fully proves. Nothing can fill up the measure of the believer's joy, but his being clothed upon, with his house which is from heaven; for, until then, whether he be imprisoned in the tomb, or in a body of sin and death, death and mortality bear sway, so far as the body is concerned; but, when he appears in his resurrection garments of glory and beauty, death shall have been swallowed up in victory, and mortality swallowed up of life. To speak of perfect bliss, while the spirit is unclothed and the body mingled with the dust, is a contradiction. There are, I believe, but four places in the New Testament where the state of the unclothed spirit is spoken of, and in none of those have we any thing approaching to a full description of that state. When, contrasting it with our present painful and trying condition, the apostle says, "*it is far better.*" Yes, truly, it is "far better" to be at rest from our labours than toiling here—far better to be away from a scene of strife and turmoil where everything tends to draw out the vileness of nature. But all this would not constitute the summit of blessedness. How very differently the Holy Ghost speaks of the resurrection state! It would be out of the question to think of citing, or even referring to, the various passages in which this glorious subject is treated of. The New Testament abounds with them. Nor is there any mystery or vagueness in the manner in which it is put before us. No; we are clearly, explicitly, and simply taught that the resurrection, and the glories connected with it, will constitute the very consummation of the believer's joy and blessedness; and moreover, that, until then, he is not a prisoner of hope. The patriarchs—the prophets—the apostles—the noble army of martyrs—all our beloved brethren who have gone before us—yea, and the Master Himself—all wait for the morning of resurrection. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they *without us* should not be made perfect." God must gather His family together—the grave must let go from its grasp every redeemed one—every scattered member of the flock of Christ must be gathered into the heavenly fold, ere the festivities of the kingdom can commence.

Thus we see the vast importance of being rightly instructed as to the nature of our hope. When we know what we are hoping for, we are able to give an answer; yea, our lives answer. *A man's life is always influenced by his genuine hopes.* If a man be an heir to an estate, his life is influenced by the hope of inheriting it; and if we knew more of the power of the Spirit as "the earnest of our inheritance," instead of disputing about the time or manner of our Master's arrival, we should, as "*prisoners of hope,*" be anxiously looking forth from our prison windows, and saying, "Why is His chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of His chariot?"

Oh that all who have found a strong-hold in the cross of Jesus may say more earnestly "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

C. H. M.

THE CYCLE OF SEVENTY WEEKS, BY SIR E. DENNY.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

HAVING read your remarks, in "The Prospect," on my Charts on the Seventy Weeks, I find that we disagree on the subject, especially with regard to what I have termed "*The Unnoticed Cancelled Week of Messiah's Rejection.*" This, I confess, disappoints me, because I value your judgment, and because I did hope, when you had read my "*Companion,*" that we should have been of one mind on the subject.

It has been my object to prove that the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks involves a deep moral principle, connected with the character and government of God. This fact, however, is not commonly recognized, and hence it is treated as little more than a mere chronological question. This, I believe, lies at the root of your objections to "The Cancelled Week." You object to it because of the want (to your mind) of Scripture proof on my part. Now I, for my part, do not hesitate to say, that the subject, when viewed, not in detached parts, but *as a whole* (the subject presented in *the two Charts together*, I mean), and judged of, moreover, by the spiritual mind in the light of the sanctuary, will be found to be a great moral chain, so consistent in every part, so aptly fitted together, that it is absolutely impossible that it can be a human invention, or anything less than the work of HIM who is the parent of all that is harmonious and beautiful. This is not *my* judgment alone, but that also of many deeply taught in the Word, to whom I have submitted my views of "The Cycles," together with those on "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel." Well, then, this week forms an integral part of this chain; take that away, and the chain falls asunder. You, however, set it aside; you say that it is an ingenious fabric on my part; showing that you are conscious of something consistent therein, but still you reject it—and why? because, in the *first* place, no actual notice is taken in Scripture of the length of John's ministry; and, *secondly*, because it conflicts with the views of certain chronologists as to the time of Christ's death. This is, surely, not a true principle; this is using human chronology as a test whereby to interpret the Word, instead of keeping human chronology in subservience to Scripture. Now, a true interpretation of Scripture, I believe to be the very thing to set chronologists right in many a question of this kind:

> "To correct, mistaken oft,
> The clock of history, and events
> Timing more punctual."

And what if it be so with regard to this prophecy? What, too, if the cancelled week be actually needed in order to fill out the purpose of God with regard to His ancient people, the Jews, to make them fully responsible for their rejection of Christ? And what, let me add, if the enemy, in order to hinder this week from being seen, thereby preventing this important portion of Scripture from being understood, has intentionally confused the minds of men with regard to chronology? This, of course, he could easily do with regard to so brief a period as a week, or seven years, so far back as nearly two thousand years. I, for my part, believe all this to be the case. Now, therefore, I ask you to reconsider this subject. With this object in view, I send you the following paper, wherein I have endeavoured to set the subject before you in somewhat a different light. May I hope you will carefully read it yourself, and also give it a place in "The Prospect"? By this means, those who have read your remarks, without having at the same time studied my Charts, will be the better able to judge of the question. Believe me, dear brother,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

EDWARD DENNY.

To the Editor of "The Prospect."

Those who are acquainted with the TWO CHARTS which I have published together, one of which treats of the SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL, the other of the CYCLE OF SEVENTY WEEKS, are aware of the order in which I have presented these subjects.—IN PLATE 1, I have confined myself to the ninth chapter of Daniel, and other portions of Scripture connected therewith; while in PLATE 2, I have endeavoured to show seventy weeks to be a great dispensational cycle with Israel, in the first place, and next with man universally. Now without attempting to add to what I have already brought out in the explanatory Key, or "COMPANION,"

without indeed wishing much to vary my mode of expression, or in some cases to do more than, verbatim, to repeat what I have written, I purpose to take up the subject in somewhat a different order; not to speak, as before, in the first place, of the ninth chapter of Daniel, but to commence with the cycles in connection with Israel; then, in passing along, to speak of the seventy weeks of Daniel especially; and lastly, to treat of the cycle in reference to the whole course of time, from the creation down to "the end." This mode of treating the subject, I have reason to know from experience, will greatly help to show that the interpretation which I have offered of the seventy weeks of Daniel is nothing overstrained or extraordinary, but, on the contrary, that it falls in, in a most simple, easy, and natural manner, with the views held by all Christians rightly instructed in prophecy, of God's dealings with Israel and with the world at large.

I now turn to consider the Jewish arrangement of time, as presented in Scripture, and on looking at Leviticus xxv., I find that in addition to the primeval order established by God when He created the heavens and the earth, that the law of Moses presents us with two great septenary divisions thereof; namely, *first*, seven years or a week, that is, six years of labour, followed by the seventh, or sabbatical year; *secondly*, seven times seven, or forty-nine years, between every jubilee. Thus the Jewish division of time was regulated according to the sabbatical or septenary principle; namely, weeks of years in the first place, and then weeks of weeks of years in the next. This statement prepares us for the discovery which the Lord, in His goodness, has allowed me to make with regard to the whole course of time in connection with Israel. It is this—that 490 years, or seventy of the Levitical weeks above named, which, observe, is the *decimal* of the 49, or seven times seven years between every jubilee, formed a great dispensational probationary cycle, as it were, with regard to the Jews, and, though we never read in the Word of any such period, saving in the ninth chapter of Daniel, that, reckoning from *Abraham* to *Christ*, no less than *four* of these septenary circles of time may be traced.

The whole Jewish nation lay hid in the loins of their forefather Abraham, so that his birth may be viewed as the birth of the nation. From this point, then, we start, and count our four cycles from thence; at the termination of each of which we come to a GREAT SABBATICAL CRISIS—a point when the hand of the Lord was outstretched in behalf of His people, when an offer of blessing was made on his part, only to be slighted and lost by the nation. These four offers occurred in the days of MOSES, of SOLOMON, of NEHEMIAH, and of CHRIST; and this, let me observe, is consistent with Christ's answer to Peter (Matt. xviii. 21, 22), showing the number in question, "*seventy times seven*," to be linked with the great principle of *grace* in the mind of the Lord. "How often," said the apostle, "shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" "I say not unto thee," said the Lord, "Until seven times: but, *Until seventy times seven*."

Now then, starting from ABRAHAM'S BIRTH, after the lapse of the *first* period of seventy weeks, we reach the point when his seed, conducted by Moses, were delivered from bondage; namely, from under the power of Pharaoh. Here then, at the time of the exodus, the first crisis occurs, the first offer of blessing is made. The question is now, Will the people be faithful? Will they trust in His love who had redeemed them from Egypt? No; their hearts were unchanged, and hence this could not be: the golden calf, set up at the foot of mount Horeb as an object of worship, was a sorrowful proof that they had sadly declined from the faith of their fathers. The goodness of God being, however, unwearied, another—a *second* cycle begins, continues, and closes with another—even a second such crisis as that above named in the history of Israel, even the dedication of the temple of God in Jerusalem. SOLOMON, the wisest of men, was at this time exalted by God to the throne which hereafter will be filled by the blessed Messiah. He was a type, it is true, of Messiah; but he soon showed that he was not the Messiah himself. The glory being too much for so weak a vessel to bear, he failed, as we read; he fell into the sin of idolatry; and hence the time of Israel's blessing is deferred; and after the same lapse of time as before, at the close of the *third* cycle of weeks (three decrees having been previously issued by the court of Persia with regard to the temple), NEHEMIAH receives from king Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, a commission to restore and to build the street and the wall of the city, then lying in ruins. Here then, for the third time, blessing is offered, but only to be slighted and lost as before. The sabbath in Israel, the great sign between God and His people, is despised; while at the same time the nobles are found allying themselves, like king Solomon before them, with the children of strangers. Thus then the Lord, in His wonderful goodness, has (seeing that He is still unweariedly bent upon blessing them) to give them a fourth and last trial, to prove them once more. Reckoning, therefore, from thence down to the close of a *fourth* septenary cycle, we reach the great moment when CHRIST, the true Deliverer of Israel, its King, its Restorer—greater by far than either Moses, Solomon, or Nehemiah—was offered to Israel. Now then "the Messiah, the Prince," first appears on the scene. By the mouth of John the Baptist, his messenger, and next in his own blessed person, the Lord is made known to His people—made known, however, only to be despised and rejected—to end that life, which he had spent in works of mercy and love, on the cross. In this way the fourth and last cycle closes with the cutting off of Messiah. And hence for a season the Jews are cast off, and a NEW WITNESS on earth, even the CHURCH OF GOD IN THIS AGE, fills up the wide space, the long and dreary blank occasioned by the rejection of Jesus, and of Israel in consequence, and their restoration hereafter to the favour of God.

And now, having come to this wonderful crisis, to the close of this cycle, the most important of all, I call my reader's attention to what I am now about to explain, showing how the prophetical period of Daniel, *the only cycle of seventy weeks actually named in the Word*, is linked with this fourth and last period, both of them starting from one and the same point of time, though not having, as we shall presently see, the same termination.

And now, with a view to make my explanation more clear, I must quote, in the first place, the whole prophecy divided, according to the arrangement given in PLATE 1, into *eight* distinct sections, under *four* leading heads.

FIRST HEAD. Introductory and general, presenting the WHOLE PERIOD at once, without noticing the THREEFOLD DIVISION thereof.

1.—SEVENTY WEEKS *are determined* (or divided) *upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish* (or restrain) *the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness* (or the righteousness of ages) *and to seal up the vision and prophecy* (or prophet—see margin), *and to anoint the most holy* (or holy of holies).

SECOND HEAD. From the opening of the seventy weeks, at the time of Nehemiah's return, to the rejection of Christ by His people, seven years or a week "AFTER" He was first presented to Israel by the mouth of John, his forerunner, at the end of the sixty-ninth week.

2.—*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be* SEVEN WEEKS AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS.

3.—*The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.* ("In strait of times"—see margin: or, as translated by Wintle and Purver, "in the narrow limit of the times;" meaning, according to them, the SEVEN WEEKS above named, as distinguished from the threescore and two weeks that follow.) *

4.—*And after* (the) *threescore and two weeks* (above named) *shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.* (The article "the" is here introduced, being found in the original, showing that this is the period named in the foregoing verse.)

THIRD HEAD. From the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, headed by Titus, the same people who hereafter will be subject to antichrist, "the prince that shall come," down to the end of the desolations thereof, at the second coming of Christ.

5.—*And the people of the prince that shall come* (*i.e.* the Romans in the reign of Vespasian) *shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood.* (This prince is neither Vespasian nor Titus, but the last head of this same people—the little horn or antichrist—the beast to whom the whole revived Roman empire will in the end become subject.—Rev. xvii. 12–17.)

6.—*And unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

"* This amended version, the justness of which I leave to more competent Hebraists to discuss, is so far important that, if true, it decides that the period of seven weeks is intentionally severed from the threescore and two weeks, as the time specified for the rebuilding of the street and the wall. After this period come the sixty-two weeks, and the cutting off of the Messiah. One week remains, as to which full particulars are given in verse 27. Observe, it is "*a*," and not "*the*" covenant. The covenant of Christ can in no sense be said to have been made "*for one week*;" that of the coming prince is made for such a period, and broken when half the week is expired.—ED."

FOURTH HEAD. The "ONE WEEK" of antichrist's power, the great crisis in Jewish history, ending at the second coming of Christ, with that foretold at the outset, viz. the acceptable year of the Lord, the time of Israel's blessing and glory.

7.—*And he* (the prince above named, *i.e.* the antichrist) *shall confirm the covenant with many for* ONE WEEK.
8.—*And in the midst of the week, he* (having broken his covenant) *shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate* (or upon the wing or pinnacle of abominations, *i.e.* idols, shall be a causer of desolation) *even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.* (Desolator—see margin.)

Thus, at the close of the Babylonish captivity, the angel Gabriel addresses the prophet. Daniel had confessed the sins of the nation; he had prayed for his city and people, and now the purpose of God is made known to His servant. Seventy weeks, he is told, is the time set apart in the counsels of God, which is to end with the forgiveness and blessing of Israel. Accordingly, reckoning from the days of Nehemiah, seventy-nine years after the Jews had returned from Babylon, when seventy weeks had nearly expired, that is, when the sixty-ninth week had ended and the seventieth week had begun, "*the fulness of the time*" being come. (Gal. iv. 4.) John the Baptist is heard, as the voice in the wilderness, proclaiming the approach of the coming Deliverer, of "the Messiah, the Prince." "*The time is fulfilled,*" said the prophet, meaning "the *set time*" (Ps. cii. 13), when Israel, through Daniel, had learned to look for redemption and blessing, and for *three years and a half* John proclaims Him as such; after which, for another *three years and a half*, down to the close of the *seventieth week*, we read in the gospels of the blessed Messiah Himself walking up and down through the land, from city to city, doing wonders of grace, revealing the name of the Father, till at last, having accomplished this part of His work at the close of the week, He is rejected; He ends His labours of love by laying down His life for His people, by shedding that blood which will hereafter avail for the redemption and blessing of Israel. And now, as to this week of the testimony of John and of Jesus, it will be asked whether this is the last, namely, the "ONE WEEK" of Daniel ix. 15. In answer to which I reply that *it surely is not*, inasmuch as the termination thereof will also be the close of the prophetical cycle revealed to the prophet, which is to end, not with the *rejection*, but, on the contrary, with the *restoration*, and the full and final forgiveness and glory of Israel. Israel, it is needless to say, having cut off their Messiah, is not yet redeemed; the Jewish people are scattered, their land is a wilderness, the holy city and temple are both defiled and trodden down, for the present, under the foot of the Gentiles. This being the case, it is quite a mistake to suppose that the seventy weeks of Daniel have ever yet been fulfilled. True it is, the period, *historically* and *chronologically* speaking, has reached its close, seeing that the week above named—the time of John and of Jesus being added on to the seven and threescore and two weeks—did actually perfect the cycle. This has led some, uninstructed as to the fact of the restoration of Israel, to imagine that it has been fulfilled in a *prophetical* sense. But this cannot be, for the reason aforesaid. And now the question is, in the next place, What becomes of this week, if it be not that referred to in Daniel? The answer is simple, involving a principle with which we all are familiar, connected with the past sin and the future forgiveness of Israel, namely, the TWOFOLD FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY—one fulfilment at the *first*, another at the *second*, advent of Christ. This principle, be it remembered, is true with regard to John the Baptist and the Elijah of Malachi iv. 5—the Elias who has come, and the Elias who hereafter is to come and restore all things, as predicted by Jesus Himself. (See Matt. xvii. 10, 11.) Had Israel received their Messiah, this week would have been that which it was ostensibly destined to be, "THE END OF THE AGE,"* the "*one week*" of our prophecy. But instead of receiving, they slew their Deliverer; and hence, the time being deferred, the *week of grace*, namely, of God's offer to Israel (followed, say, by two thousand years of dispersion and blindness) is *lost, blotted out* as it were by the hand of the Lord from amongst the times and the seasons which were anciently linked with the annals of Israel. The week did exist, I believe; but witnessing only the failure of Israel, it is not owned as such; not suffered to stand, as it otherwise ought to have done, as the last of the seventy. This accounts for no notice whatever being taken of this period. Full space is left, it is true, in the prophecy for the week to come in, as I shall presently show; but *the week itself is not named.* The Lord from the outset foresaw what He would be constrained, owing to the rejection of Jesus, to do, namely, to cancel this period; He leaves it therefore unnamed and unnoticed, passes it by altogether, and every thing connected therewith, saving the coming of "the Messiah, the Prince," at its close. There is wonderful skill displayed by the Lord with regard to this week. In order to see it, we must quote the two following parts of our prophecy, on which this reasoning is founded. In verse 25 it is written as follows: "*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem,* UNTO *the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven and threescore and two weeks;*" then in verse 26 we read: "*And* AFTER (*the*) *threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off.*" Observe here the distinction between the words "UNTO" and "AFTER." This is important, seeing that the question of the true interpretation rests upon this, as I have before said. I explain it as follows: CRITICALLY, AT THE CLOSE OF the seven and threescore and two weeks, Messiah was announced by John, His forerunner. Then, AFTER the same threescore and two weeks, He was slain. Observe the force of the word "UNTO;" definite in its meaning, it shows that as soon as the sixty-ninth week had ended, then the Messiah, the Prince, was announced. Then on the other hand observe the value of the word "AFTER," in the following verse. *Indefinite* in its character, it leaves the question undetermined as to *how soon after* this period Christ was cut off. A space is thus left in the prophecy for the week expressed in the Chart (see Plate 1), though unnoticed by Daniel; namely, the cancelled or lost time of Messiah's rejection, *which actually and historically, though not prophetically, was the seventieth week, reckoning from Nehemiah to the death of the Mediator.*

And now, as to the future week of our prophecy, for *future* it must be, seeing that the time of Israel's blessing, at the close of the seventy weeks of Daniel, is not yet arrived. The week of grace being thus lost, after a long interregnum (beginning to reckon from the close of the sixty-ninth week), formed both by the cancelled week and the present period of Israel's rejection from the land of their fathers, the week, as it were, *will revive;* its place, in a word, being supplied by a week of a very different character—a week, not of *grace* as before, but of *retributive judgment*, when no second offer will be made, but when the false Messiah, "the prince that shall come" (Dan. ix. 26), will be suffered to deceive his victims at first, and then, having broken his blasphemous covenant "in the midst of the week," to oppress them. For seven years they rejected their King; first, in the person of His messenger, John, and then in His own blessed person; and now, for the same space of time, they will have to rue their rejection of Him and His grace. This child of the devil, this "man of the earth," "*the* antichrist" (1 John ii. 18), as he is termed, in order to distinguish him, the chief and last of his kind, from all others bearing this title, will be used by the Lord as a scourge, as "the enemy and avenger" (Ps. viii. 2) on Israel, for the wrong done to "the Just One," the true but rejected Heir of the vineyard.

And now, as to the two weeks above mentioned, let me observe that there is a *resemblance*, a *correspondence*, and at the same time a marked *contrast* between them. In the one case we trace the actings of the true Messiah of Israel, the One whom His people have rejected and slain; in the other, those of the false Christ, who is yet to come in his own name, and will be owned and received as though he were the hope of the nation. Then again, they are divided exactly alike, namely, "in the *midst of the week.*" As to the past week, the first half thereof was marked by *deceit*, the other half by *violence* on the part of the Jews; deceit being shown in their false-hearted reception of John, who, at the very time that they were pressing in to his baptism, aware that this was merely hypocrisy, told them that they were, notwithstanding all their profession, "a generation of vipers;" while violence appears in their treatment of Jesus, whom from the outset they doomed to destruction, and whom in the end they put to death on the cross. Now mark the correspondence, and at the same time the contrast, between this past week and the last week of Daniel, with regard to the two characteristic sins of the nation.

* In pages 36-40 of the "Companion," it has been my object to show that "the end of the *age*" (αἰῶνος), wrongly translated world (see Matt. xxiv. 3), means, not the end of *this dispensation*, but the detached week of Daniel, the closing part of that age (interrupted at present) which is to end with the redemption of Israel.

Antichrist, we find, will come in with flatteries, will offer himself to the Jews; then, having established himself on the throne "*in the midst of the week*," he will break the covenant which he will make at the outset. At his bidding, the oblation and sacrifice cease, namely, the Jewish ordinances, which he himself will revive, will be all set aside, and his image, the abomination spoken of in Dan. ix. 27, xi. 31, and Matt. xxiv. 15, will become an object of worship, and all, including both Gentiles and Jews, will be called on to bow down to the idol, or perish. Thus, then, we see, as in the case of the cancelled week, deceit in the first place, and violence next, characterized the ways of this people; so delusion, at the outset, and then persecution, will mark the career of this mighty avenger. At the termination, however, of this time of retributive vengeance, in answer to the cry of his remnant, namely, an election out of the infidel nation, who will be led by the Spirit to look for their Lord, the Deliverer will come—the true Messiah Himself will appear to destroy their oppressor, and rescue His people, thereby fulfilling the promises made of old to their fathers, to Abraham at first, and now, in the next place, to Daniel the prophet.

Now then, leaving the consideration of the seventy weeks of Daniel, I turn again to the cycles. And here I must answer a question very frequently asked with regard to this subject; it is this, Whether the four periods between the birth of *Abraham*, the exodus of *Moses*, the dedication of the temple by *Solomon*, the return of *Nehemiah*, and the death of *Christ*, amounted each of them precisely to four hundred and ninety years. To this I reply, that I believe *they did not*, but, on the contrary, that they were each of them considerably longer than this. In admitting this fact, however, I am by no means retreating from what I have already advanced, but am thereby rather confirmed, than otherwise, in what I have said. To make myself clear, let me observe, that *time* in Scripture is viewed in two distinct aspects; that with God there is *natural*, and also *dispensational*, time. To find an example of this, we need go no further than the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel; there the period from Nehemiah to the second coming of Christ, *prophetically* speaking, is only four hundred and ninety years, whereas, if we reckon in the present period of Jewish dispersion, it is about two thousand years longer. On the very same principle it is, then, that while dispensationally viewed, four distinct cycles occurred between Abraham and Christ, actually and historically, each period was longer. And the reason is this, that during the course of each cycle (the first three at least) there were certain periods or intervals not counted in time, but treated by the Lord as *blanks*, not taken into account in His reckoning, put in the same way, as I have said, that *now* there is *a pause in time*, as it were, a parenthetical interval, during which Jewish time is suspended. The present blank interval, what does it mark? It assuredly shows that God is estranged from His people, that the Jews are rejected. And so it was ever of old. Whenever Abraham or his seed were disobedient, time, in a sense, was suspended. Now, then, let us look at the FIRST period. This was actually five hundred and five years, but, by deducting from thence the fifteen years between the birth of Ishmael and the weaning of Isaac—the time of the bondwoman and her son, the period of Abraham's failure—it was just seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years. As to the SECOND period, this was actually six hundred and twenty-one years; but the seven periods of servitude in the days of the Judges and Samuel, amounting to one hundred and thirty-one years, being deducted from thence, this, in like manner, is reduced to four hundred and ninety years. And this, let me observe, accounts for the difficulty which chronologists have long found with regard to the dates between Moses and Solomon. And now with regard to the THIRD cycle, this amounted to five hundred and sixty years; but the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity being deducted, this, as before, only amounts to the same number of years, namely, four hundred and ninety. Now, then, we reach the FOURTH cycle, and here we find something peculiar. No break, no interruption appears in this period. No; but the cancelled week, which we have considered already, comes in at the close—observe, I say, *at the close*, not during the course of the cycle, involving a wonderful principle, seeing that the Lord is thereby enabled, while He lets the week drop for a season, to resume it again, to bring in the last, the "one week," and so, after all, at the termination of seventy weeks, His own great dispensational period, to bestow on His people those blessings which they, when left to themselves, where wholly unable to accept or to value. And here I would first direct my reader's attention to the moral resemblance between these blank periods and the cancelled week aforesaid. If he admits the truth of the former, he will be the more free to receive the latter as true. Time, in both cases, because of Israel's failure, was expunged by the hand of the Lord; not but that, with regard to the week, there is something especial—something that, with far deeper emphasis than in the other case, marks the indignation and, at the same time, the loving-kindness of God.

And now, before leaving this part of the subject, let it be distinctly understood that here, inasmuch as my present object is not to enter into detail, but merely to exhibit these views *as a whole*, leaving them to be considered in the light of their moral consistency, I do not attempt, by any reference to Scripture chronology, to show that such cycles actually existed. This I have done in the "COMPANION" to my two Charts on the Seventy Weeks of Daniel and the Cycles, where I have endeavoured to *prove* what I have merely *stated* above.

Thus, having treated of the four Jewish Cycles, in the first place, then of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel especially, I now turn to glance at the whole course of time. And what do I find? To my surprise, I discover seventy weeks to be a cycle in connection, not with the seed of Abraham alone, but with all the children of Adam —with man universally; and that, in tracing the years from the creation down to the close of the millennial age, no less than *fourteen* of such cycles are found to exist. This, to my mind, appears a most interesting discovery, seeing that it links the mystical number of SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN—the number of *grace*, as we may term it (see *again* Matt. xviii. 21, 22)—with the whole human family. Then again it helps to throw considerable light on other parts of the Word, especially on the prophecy of Daniel—a prophecy which all who read it aright will agree is one of paramount moment, connected as it is with the hopes of the Jews, and also, though more indirectly, with those of the Church. Now, then, I turn to prove by *two methods* what I have just said of the universal character of the great cycle in question. *First*, the whole course of time, it will be allowed, is a grand septenary cycle, a great week of millenaires, as it were, from the creation down to the close of the millennial age of Messiah, the sabbatical thousand being the last of the seven, as foreshown by the Sabbath-day, the sabbatical year, and the jubilee. Now, if I can show that seventy weeks, in a sense, is equal to *five hundred years*, then I shall have succeeded in proving that this also is a universal cyclical period, as well as the millenary of which it forms the half. And here, as the proof of this question depends on the peculiar manner in which the YEAR OF JUBILEE, the great type, as we know, of the times of restitution of all things, was formed, and connected with the Mosaic order of time, let us turn to Lev. xxv. 8-10, where we find it spoken of in the following terms: "*And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of* THE SEVENTH MONTH (*of the* FORTY-NINTH YEAR, *observe*), *in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout the land, and ye shall hallow the* FIFTIETH YEAR, *and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof*," &c. &c. Thus we see that the year of jubilee was a year altogether peculiar; it was, as shown in Plate 2, figures 4 and 6, made up of the *last half one sacred year, and the first half of the following*—a species of *composite* year, as it were. It was, we may truly say, a year of its own kind, independent altogether of the Jewish order of time, which rolled in due course, as though such a year had no existence whatever. And now, in connection with this, let us turn to the period of seventy weeks, as illustrated in Plate 2, figure 5. Within the compass of this we find just *ten years of jubilee*, which, if time be regarded in the usual way, according to the Levitical reckoning, are made no account of, as forming an integral part of the four hundred and ninety years. But if, on the other hand, we view it in a mystical light, as I feel assured, in the present case, to be the mind of the Lord, taking these ten years into account, then what is ACTUALLY ONLY FOUR HUNDRED AND NINETY becomes MYSTICALLY FIVE HUNDRED YEARS. The jubilee, observe, is termed in Scripture "*the fiftieth* year," which to me seems a clear intimation that the Lord would have

us consider the whole cycle, of which the space between every jubilee is the tenth part, as *five hundred years*. And now, to return to the argument used at the outset, what is five hundred years? It is the half of a millenary. And again, into how many millenaries do we, by universal consent, allow the whole course of time to be divided? Into seven, all will allow, as foreshown by the week of creation, as also by the septenary divisions of time under the law, as expressed in these Charts. What then do we deduce from all this? Simply this, that when the Lord, at the outset, divided the whole course of time, He did so in two distinct ways; *first*, He divided it into SEVEN MILLENARIES, on the one hand; *secondly*, into double that number of the lesser cycles, namely, into FOURTEEN PERIODS OF SEVENTY WEEKS, on the other. All this is expressed in Plate 2, figure 7, where, on one side of the column, the *millennial*, and on the other the *septenary*, order of time is presented.

And now, *secondly*, as to the other mode of proving this fact, be it remembered that the past annals of Israel formed a part, the most important and prominent part, too, of this world's history, as given in Scripture. What were they, in fact, but the annals of God's elect nation, the only nation or earth that was ever called by His name? Now then, in connexion with this, let us remember what we already have seen—how the whole period from Abraham to Christ was broken into four distinct cycles, each marked at the close by an offer of blessing on the part of the Lord to His people. Next in connexion with this, let us consider the ages *before Moses*, as well as those *after Christ*, and does it not seem to be quite according to the usual way of the Lord, which ever exhibits the most beautiful order, the most perfect consistency, that the arrangement of time, both *previous* and *subsequent* to the existence of Israel as a people, must have been divided by Him, when in secret He ordered the ages, according to the very same principle? The four periods above named, what were they but *four links in the great chain of time?* and though only these four, as it were, meet our eye, may we not, from analogy, judge that the *rest of the chain*, though kept out of sight, is exactly the same as that part which is visible? True it is, before Moses, no law was enacted, such as we find in Leviticus XXV., as to the division of time; neither is there any such law in existence at present: still, for the simple reason here given, I, for my part, cannot escape the conclusion that seventy weeks must have been from the outset, and must still be (*in secret* of course, seeing that time *now* is not reckoned) as much a dispensational cycle with God in His dealings with the world at large, as it was during the days of Israel's history.

Such then are my views on this subject. Many a difficulty, I doubt not, will occur to my reader, which here I have neither touched on nor solved. I beg, therefore, to refer him to the "COMPANION" aforesaid, of which this paper is merely an abstract; there, it is probable, he may find what it is impossible to give in so brief a sketch as the present, and thankful, let me say, I shall be, if he has the patience to travel with me through the mazes of this interesting question, for which the foregoing pages are designed as a clue.

APPENDIX.

HAVING thus reached the close of my subject, I now, in the form of an appendix, desire to add a few words on one prominent point in the foregoing pages, namely, the question as to the precise time of the ministry of John and of Jesus. This, as I have said, was SEVEN YEARS, OR A WEEK—that is, one of the Jewish Levitical weeks, divided, as we have seen, into two equal parts.

But how, it may be asked, is this proved? What chronological data have we in Scripture, on which to ground this assertion? None, I unhesitatingly answer—none, at least, that I am aware of; nor do I believe it is to be settled in this way. Being, as I feel assured, rather a *moral*, than a *chronological* question, it does not depend for its proof on any knowledge of dates. Hence, I would ask my reader, should he be disposed to require a proof of this kind, to suspend his judgment awhile, and assuming the truth of this statement, to follow the argument contained in the foregoing pages, viewing the subject, *not in detached parts*, but as a whole. Having done this, he will be better prepared to come to a decision. And, supposing him to be generally acquainted with prophetical truth, and therefore competent to form a judgment upon it, I have no doubt whatever as to the result. Let him only trace the connexion between one part and another, the beautiful harmony, the wondrous consistency which runs through the whole, and he will, I believe, be unable to withstand the conviction that the period in question must have been just what I have stated—A WEEK. To give my reasons for this would be only to repeat what I have already advanced: to go through the whole subject again. Let me however remind my reader of three leading points.

FIRST, I have endeavoured to show that between the birth of Abraham and Christ there were *four dispensational cycles of seventy weeks*. Does this, let me ask, commend itself to my reader? If it does, and that he, at the same time, views the last week of Daniel as *future*, then let me remind him that the week in question is needed, in order to fill up the period—to complete *the last of the three cycles* between Moses and Christ.*

SECONDLY, when Christ offered Himself to the Jews as their king, is it to be supposed that He did so otherwise than just at the time *when they had been taught to look for the kingdom*—at the termination *of the seventy weeks?* Accordingly we read, "*When the fulness of the time was come*, God sent forth His Son;" and again, "*The time is fulfilled*," said His messenger John. This, of necessity, brings in A WEEK, which though unnamed and unmeasured, both in the four Gospels and Daniel, must, in order to perfect "*the time*," have existed, and so, uninterruptedly following the seven and threescore and two weeks of our prophecy, completed the period of seventy weeks between Nehemiah's return, and the cutting off of Messiah.

Then, THIRDLY, the *correspondence* and, at the same time, the *contrast*, between the two weeks, namely, the last week of grace, and the week of retributive judgment—both as to *the time—the twofold and equal division of each—the events*—and the *persons* connected therewith, is so evident, that it is wholly impossible that such an analogy can be fortuitous. At this I have, however, hinted before; I will therefore merely observe, that to me the future existence of one leads to the thought that the other must have also existed.

These, then, are the points to which I allude. And now let me ask, though no week can chronologically be traced in any one of the Gospels, whether there is not a moral necessity why such a period, and that, too, divided in the way I have shown, must have come in at this point?

It is a principle, allowed on all hands, that when, in reasoning, we admit certain facts to be true, we are bound to receive as truth any inference deducible from these acknowledged truths, unless it can be clearly or equally proved to the contrary. I, for my part, do not ask for further proof of the question. True, if there be indeed any chronological point in Scripture which would corroborate my statement, I shall be thankful to any one who will direct my attention thereto; but, in the meantime, I feel perfectly satisfied, believing that the more strictly the whole subject is canvassed by the intelligent reader, judging of things in the light of the Lord, the more fully persuaded he will be on the subject.

And here let me add, that whatever discoveries I may have made with regard to other matters discussed in the foregoing pages (*the cycles*, for instance, and so on) began with that which I made more than twelve years ago with regard to THIS VERY week:† the others originated with this. This may be compared to the first circle caused by a stone cast into water; the others were like circle after circle, succeeding the first. To use a different figure, this I may term the keystone on which the whole theory sets, so coherent in

* The same thing, observe, may be said with regard to the *fourteen cycles* through the whole course of time. These cycles cannot be made out without this week; it forms, as we have said, *a link in the chain*.

† The way in which I was first led to the theory of the cancelled week was as follows:—having recently learned that the last week of Daniel is *future* and not *past*, as I had been previously taught to believe, it occurred to me that I would look into SCOTT'S COMMENTARY (a very unlikely book to supply a discovery of the kind), hoping perhaps to obtain some light on the subject from thence, fully aware, at the same time, that his general views on the chapter were wrong. He, in common with Dr. Prideaux and others, I found, viewed the last week of Daniel as having already elapsed, regarding it as the time of the testimony of John the Baptist and Christ. This, as I have said, I had learned was erroneous; but, at the same time, on reading his observations upon it, I could not escape the conviction, that if this was a week, then a period actually of seventy weeks was completed at the cutting off of the Messiah. What then, I thought, becomes of this week, seeing it certainly is not the one spoken of by Daniel, which is to usher in the deliverance and blessing of Israel? Are we, I said, because of Israel's sin respecting their king, *to view it as cancelled, set it aside altogether, its place to be supplied in the prophecy?* This thought, which suddenly struck me, was considerably strengthened on my turning to the passage itself: "After (the) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." (Dan. ix. 26.) And discovering threin the force, the indefinite character of the word "AFTER," which, as I already have shown, *left an unnoticed space for the week*. At first I had some hesitation in giving way to this thought, lest it should prove, after all, to be mere speculation. The more however I considered the subject, and named it moreover to others, the more was I convinced that it was no speculation of mine, but simply the truth, quite in accordance with what we all are familiar with, being *as to time* an example of the double fulfilment of prophecy—that is, an *initial*, a *germinant fulfilment* at the *first*, and then a *perfect*, *matured fulfilment* at the *second* coming of Christ.

every respect as this theory is, so aptly fitted together, without effort on my part to work out a system. If this then once be removed as untrue, the whole fabric falls to the ground. Nothing else in these charts could stand for a moment, I believe, if this view of the cancelled week should be proved to be a fiction on my part. But it is not so, I feel fully persuaded. The Lord, in His goodness, has shown it to me; and through me, I humbly trust, he will show it to others, who, willing to judge of all things in the light of His presence, are dependent, not on their own understanding, but on the teaching of God's blessed Spirit. Such will see that these are not matters of curious inquiry, or chronological interest; not the imaginations of the natural mind, which, with regard to the things of God, is, at best, only a chaos of endless confusion: but, on the contrary, that they are the deep and wonderful secrets, the "witty inventions" of Him whose mind is the source of all that is beautiful. Happily for us, it is with Him that our souls have to do; and these things are treasured up in His word for our instruction, our comfort, and blessing; His object therein being nothing less than to display His infinite wisdom, His justice, His grace; and in this way to teach us how fully, on our way through this stormy and sorrowful world, we may rest in His love, what a rich and inexhaustible store of blessing and gladness He has in reserve for the heart that thus reposes in Him.

THOUGHTS ON UNITY.

The end which God has proposed to Himself from the beginning, is unity. At the close, there will be a perfect and immutable harmony in all His works. God has created all things with a view to Himself, and to those who shall be partakers of His happiness; and it is by the principle of unity with God that we participate in His happiness, according to the measure and the position that He will have made for each. Those of His creatures who shall have despised this participation in the happiness of God, shall be rejected for ever, outside the sphere where God inhabits, and with Him shall dwell all the intelligences who shall have their part in this unity of happiness, where God shall be all in all.

In this chain of unity, according to God and in God, the Church occupies the first rank of glory, being the body of Jesus Christ, head of all things, the tabernacle of God by the Spirit. She becomes the centre by means of which God has regulated His relations with all those who have part in this unity.

Jesus speaks of this unity of His own with Him and His Father (John xvii.), and of the present and future consequences of this unity, in the twenty-first verse, as being the most powerful way of calling the world to the faith of Jesus, the sent one from the Father; in verses 21, 23, as manifesting to the world that the Father loves the Church with the same love with which He loves His Son. The testimony, mighty for the world, of the unity of the Church in its actual position, had place but for a moment—the Church failed therein: such is the consequence of all that is placed in the hands of man under responsibility. Nevertheless, God abandons not His purposes. He accomplishes that which He proposed to Himself—He is the Almighty.

Meanwhile, God realizes His unity for His own, in taking out of the introduced evil; and the futher one is separated from all evil, the nearer one is brought to God; and the further also one escapes from the fatal effects of the corruption of what ought to have been his powerful blessing in this world, namely, Jesus reproduced in the world by the unity of His own, one with Him, as He is one with the Father. In a general point of view, by the fall of the Church, the corruption of this blessing becomes more and more the principle the most opposed to this unity, namely, Babylon, a unity according to men, which is but confusion in the judgment of God.

This unity has then failed respecting us as a Church here below, but it is accomplished as respects God and us in His Son; this is what shall be seen by the world to come, of which it is spoken, I think, in verse 23. Jesus had presented God to the world in perfectness in His own person; there was perfect unity between the Father and Jesus, but the world hated and rejected Him. If the Church had persevered in presenting the unity of the Father and of the Son, that would have been the most powerful means of call. Those also who would have formed parts of this union and communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit, having kept the commandments of God, would have remained in His love; as a body, they would not have lost the enjoyment of His love. The presence of God in every way would have been the blessing within its happy precincts. Such is, I believe, in this point of view, the thing that has failed. But what is said in verses 22, 23, will take place when the Church shall appear in the same glory as Jesus; the world shall then know (it is not *believe*, as in verse 21, but *know*), because it will see the counsel of God concerning the Church. It will be the unity of the Father and the Son manifested to the world by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the Church and by the Church, the body of Christ. Blessed they who shall have part in this height, depth, length, and breadth of His love; who will be the objects of it for all eternity, being *filled with all the fulness of God.*

When the things which are in heaven and which are on earth shall be gathered together in Christ, it will be the commencement of visible blessing by unity. From the heavenly places to mount Zion, there will be many links in this chain of the beloved of the Lord; and from the throne of Christ, according to David, at Jerusalem, to the most remote worshippers from this terrestrial centre, there are also diverse positions and capacities, but unity from one extremity to the other.—(*Translated from "Le Témoignage."*)

NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

OR,

FORESHADOWINGS OF A NEW AND HEAVENLY BODY, TRACED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF CHRIST AS THEIR KING.

It is necessary to apprize the reader of these Notes, &c., that they should be read in connexion with the text, and as it is not the intention to give a detailed explanation of every paragraph, the reader is requested to keep his eye on the text between each quotation which appears in inverted commas. It will be remarked that the NOTES are divided into chapters corresponding with the text, in order to facilitate this plan.

The reader should not expect to find in the opening of this book large notices of a mystery not yet made known and which was kept secret since the world began (Rom. xvi. 25); or diverted from pursuing the enquiry, because Jewish interests so largely engage the mind of the Spirit. We must ever remember that the Church arose consequent on the rejection of Israel; so that, if we would discover when the Church began, we must first ascertain when and how Israel placed itself beyond the pale of forgiveness, at least in this age. The object of the writer in submitting these Notes, &c., to his brethren is simply told. There has been great confusion and misconception in the mind of many saints as to what portion of the gospels applied to the Church, and what to Israel—some asserting that all applied to the Church, others to Israel. These conflicting statements led the writer to examine the subject for himself, and the result of that examination, irrespective of the peculiar notions of any, but looking to the Lord for help in His own truth, he now humbly lays before his brethren, and begs they will patiently peruse it, before they form any untoward conclusion on the subject.

Chapter I.

It is evident, from the dedication, that this gospel was not written to one ignorant of the glad tidings of great joy; and also that none of those already written by the many who took it in hand was suited for the purpose of the writer of this, namely, to certify to the most excellent Theophilus concerning things (λόγων) in which he *had been* instructed. Not the mere certainty of the subjects, I apprehend, but ἀσφάλειαν, the safety of them; it implies another idea besides truthfulness, and is only used in two other places in the New Testament, in Acts v. 23, and 1 Thess. v. 3. I think one might very justly expect, from this preface, that every allusion which fell from our Lord, referring however directly or indirectly to the abstruse things of which Paul was especially the minister, would be inserted here, inasmuch as Luke was a fellow-traveller with that apostle; and if even it were disputed that Luke wrote this gospel, it cannot be gainsayed that the writer of the Acts was a companion of the apostle, or that the writer of one was the writer of the other;

and therefore, I repeat, we are justified in expecting to find, in this gospel pre-eminently, many notices of the yet undisclosed mystery of the Church.

Man's forfeiture of blessing has been ever his own act; for God leaves him without excuse. Hence, if we are to look for the disclosure of another dispensation in this book, we should first be instructed as to the fulness of the offer of mercy to the one about to be superseded. Consequently, the subject begins by accurately recounting to us in this chapter all the circumstances of the birth of John the Baptist, who was to go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, and whom "the scribes said should come." We get in Zacharias Israel's condition before God in its best estate—orderly in ceremonials, but distrustful of God's promises without a sign. We get also in this chapter the birth and origin of the promised Saviour; all was purely to Israel. And yet more, there is no allusion to a Gentile, either by the angel to Zacharias or to Mary, nor in the prophetic utterances of Mary or of Zacharias. In their mind all the grace is confined to Israel: no other thought disturbs the full gladness of their soul. They witnessed the glorious favour to Israel, and they believed assuredly of their unhesitating reception of it. Surely, no son of Abraham could read this chapter and not feel that to him and his people did this salvation peculiarly come: if it turned aside from them, it must be from obstruction *after* its display, and not from a divergence in its issue. There could be no question but the first streak of light fell on Israel. "The day-spring from on high had visited us." If it diverged, it must be Israel's fault—and this we shall have to inquire into in the next chapter.

Chapter II.

This chapter opens the fact that Israel is in bondage to the Roman power, the fourth beast; and, in submitting to the decrees of that power, Jesus is born in Bethlehem, not amid the happy exultations of a thankful people, but unknown and unthought of, in a stable, in a manger, apart from even the haunts of men, because "there was no room for Him in the inn." It is a little, but very emphatic notice in the very dawn of the day, showing how Israel would receive Him. None of the shepherds of Israel were looking out for Him as the morning without clouds. Little they felt the grinding rule of Rome. Little did they feel the poverty and apostacy of the nation, when there was no straining of their necks in earnest, anxious expectation of a deliverer. None such as these in Israel. The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The shepherds of man's sheep put to shame the shepherds of Israel, and to them is revealed the glories of grace as symbols of the fit characters for such blessing. When Saul did not tend the sheep of God, David, who tended his own sheep well, was chosen to fill his place. Here again is another notice of the unreadiness of Israel to receive the Lord of glory. No scribe or lawyer to announce and proclaim abroad the wonderful manifestations of the mercy of God to Israel! The shepherds fill this place. The sanctioned functionaries are unfit for the task, and God chooses more suitable instruments; "who made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child," but to the Jew only. No intimation, as yet, that this new and heavenly light would radiate to any but Israel. Every thing is in Jewish order. On the "eighth day" Jesus is circumcised. "The days of purification according to the law of Moses being accomplished, he is brought to Jerusalem, to be presented to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord." All confined within Jewish limits—but now Jesus being born as a Jew, circumcised as one, presented to the Lord as one—there falls from the mouth of one who waited only to see the Consolation of Israel, that this light which was shed on Israel would traverse beyond the limits of Palestine, and beyond the connexion of any one people. Simeon, in the evidence of the Holy Ghost, could survey the wide unlimited range it was yet destined to occupy—"A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." This is the first notice that any but a Jew should participate in this great blessing. No honest Jew, on reading these chapters, could cavil on the plea that he was not sufficiently considered. No; the Lord again provides an instrument to speak of Jesus to all them who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, or Israel. All must justify God in turning to the Gentiles. Where are their shepherds? Where are those to comfort the mourners in Zion? Have not those who profess to fill these offices "fed themselves and fed not my flock"? The teachers of Israel were hid in a corner, yet God sought Him out shepherds who would tell abroad His grace, and now Anna, a prophetess, an aged widow, is the organ of comfort to all them "who looked for redemption in Israel." When the Lord saw there was no man, His own arm brought salvation. Anna, weighed down by years and sorrows, is charged with a message of the comfort to all the mourners wherewith she herself is comforted of God. Never was one so patient and long-suffering as God. If none of the recognised shepherds and elders of Israel can be used of God in the offices they had dishonoured and abused, yet He who declared the Father, and faithfully witnessed of His mercy, is found, as His earliest service, sitting in the midst of the doctors or teachers, hearing them, and asking them questions, if haply they might be reformed. "Let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it and dung it," was to the end the expression of Christ's service towards Israel.

Chapter III.

In the foregoing chapter we have seen the condition of Israel. Nationally subjects of the fourth beast, and so uncared for by them who assumed to be shepherds that they wandered on all mountains and upon every high hill; they were as sheep that had no shepherd. Here we have the ministry of John. The spirit and power of Elias leads him to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, if they would receive it. He took his place in the wilderness—the Jewish land was defiled. He came in the way of righteousness—and yet he cried, in the fulness of God's purposes, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." None can accept his mission but through baptism—old things, for they had corrupted themselves, must be abandoned. They who had a quick sense of sin in them yielded to this confession; but when it had a tendency to be formal, when multitudes came to him, he warned them that men descended from Abraham could not meet the righteousness of God, and that God was not confined to the present children of Abraham, but was able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham—to procure children of faith, when there existed neither ability nor pretension to such a rank. Israel is sought and Israel is warned—but if Elias is not received, the Lord must come and smite the earth with a curse. (Mal. iv. 6.) John is cast into prison because he rebuked the unrighteous king; the throne that ought to have been established in righteousness is the first to indicate the nation's apostacy from God. Yet, though John, in the spirit and power of Elias, is silenced, still Jesus declines not from the path of sorrowing service he came to take. As a descendant from God through a Jewish line, and of mature years, for Levite service, He enters upon it.

Chapter IV.

The Lord Jesus has entered on His course. In the desert, apart from the associations of men, and all the palliatives of human misery, in the fertile regions of the earth. The Son of God, born of a woman, born under the law, begins His course. In far different circumstances from the first Adam, He withstands the assult of Satan. In Eden every thing the eye rested on proclaimed the goodness and love of an Almighty hand. In the wilderness, where not a green thing assured the heart of the care of God for man—a vast dreary scene—type, morally, of all creation—aggravated to the utmost by the presence of Satan, the malignant author of its ruin, did He unhesitatingly maintain the goodness and worthiness of God. He is faithful to God, let circumstances wear what aspect they may; He could be stripped as Job, as a pelican in the wilderness, and yet His heart would not swerve from confidence in His Father, or His feet decline from the mission of His grace. He is not to be interrupted in His service. He comes forth in the majesty of a conqueror to fulfil His course, and in the power of the Spirit, and is "glorified of all." He delays not to announce at Nazareth, "where He had been brought up," the wonderful service on which He was then entering. He goes into the synagogue, and stands up to read. He reads the beautiful and comprehensive prophecy of the objects of His mission. "All (Israel) was amazed at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth," but all were incredulous, for truth was not to be valued for truth's sake, because it fell from the lips of one so humble as Joseph's son. Jesus is first rejected where He was brought up, where He ought to have been best accepted. When Cherith dried up—when the stream of Israel no longer flowed to cheer the prophet of God—is there no resource? Is there not a member of the human family to minister to the Lord of glory? Israel, where He was brought up, where the blessed features of His grace, from infancy to manhood,

were developed—where he was best known—has rejected Him. To whom will He turn? Is there a Gentile widow? Is there a Gentile leper? The Gentile widow of Sarepta is the ready hostess to Elias of that cheer which was denied to him in Israel; the desolate Gentile, with gladness, and glorifying the word of the Lord, received the rejected of Israel. The widowed heart and the leprous mighty man, aptly embodied the characteristics of the family into whose circle the blessed Lord would retire from Israel. Where He ought to have been best known, where He was brought up, He is rejected even to death. He is led to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

He passes away from them, but His hands are still stretched out, the star of mercy is still in the ascendant. He teaches on the Sabbath-days, in a city of Galilee, and here encounters the root and power of all man's enmity and opposition to God. The spirit of an unclean devil lurks in the bosom of man. Satan holds possession—man surrendered to him! Who will evict him? The evil spirit cowers in the presence of Jesus of Nazareth. A man has risen up who will give it no place, but who will destroy it, for He is the Holy One of God. A man now commands Satan to loose his grasp on his fellow-man, and he yields; he must yield, but not without a struggle. Too long he held his sway in the human heart to surrender without resistance. The unclean spirit "had thrown him in the midst and came out of him." One is brought low in the world by the ejection of Satan; but this is the utmost of his power, for it "hurts him not." In the beginning of this chapter we have seen our Lord's personal conflict and victory over Satan; here we see His power over him in man's heart, the throne of his empire. Like a mighty warrior, Jesus assaults every citadel; having first in single combat proved Himself, He now proceeds to every place of Satan's power, and every result of it, as one able to meet any and all. In keeping with this I believe is the perfect and immediate cure of Peter's wife's mother of a "great fever;" the power of evil is not only met personally in the wilderness, but as an unclean spirit in man, and still more in its results, as a "great fever" conveys. Henceforth the devils know what the world refuse to own, "that He was Christ." Yet Jesus continues His course to other cities also; His comfort amidst all rejection—"For therefore am I sent."

Chapter V.

This chapter opens with the fact that the people pressed on Him to hear the Word; so much so, that He entered into a ship which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land, and He sat down and taught the people. It could not be then from want of hearing that Israel refused the Son, the only Son. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the world, and their words unto the ends of the earth. "Now, when He left speaking," He gives another proof of His devoted service to Israel. If He is the messenger from God, He will increase the materials for service, by drawing to Himself, out of the mass, men whom He will endue with His own power, in order that they might labour with Him, and if by any means, save some. "How often would He have gathered them as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wing" is the assured conviction every one must rise up with, on reading this gracious history of His services towards Israel.

Simon Peter is now to be delivered and borne across the barrier that separated his people from the mercy so pressed on them. All the night he had toiled, and like his nation, had taken nothing; but at the word of the Lord, he was ready to let down the net. And now he is taught the vanity of earthly accumulations, for such a multitude of fishes does he enclose, that "the net brake;" and so little does the help of the partners avail, that when they came and filled the ships, "they began to sink." Dread eternity now opens before them. Of what value is this multitude of fishes? What gain to a man to secure the whole world, and lose his own soul? In this dismal hour he would look to Jesus; but sins which before could be borne with, now rise in awful contemplation before him, and he would escape the presence of Jesus, for the majesty of His holiness glared on his awakened conscience. For *such* Jesus came, so that all Peter's woe is met with "Fear not," and that from henceforth his occupation would be a higher one, even to catch men; to catch some of the wandering sheep of the house of Israel, and witness to them of the great Shepherd who, alone and unassisted, traversed this valley of Baca, to seek and to save that which was lost. The Jew cannot excuse himself that none received Christ; for Simon and his partners, James and John, "left all and followed Him;" on every side he must be left without excuse. We next see the Lord Jesus ready to identify Himself with Israel in its lowest physical condition: he touches the leper, and heals one whom all others would shrink from as loathsome and contaminating. And little therefore was the wonder that great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. But He cannot commit Himself unto them. He withdraws into the wilderness and prays.

The next scene discloses how little the doctors of the law, and the great professionists of religion, really understood the blessedness of His mission. When the palsied man, whose total inability pourtrayed the Jew in his real estate, heard from the lips of Jesus the first and fondest desire of God—"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee"—the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? In vain had they come from Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, if their eyes were so blind, and their ears so dull of hearing, that they so think and speak of the Lord of glory. But He who can dry up the springs of evil and weakness within, and then originate new life and power, can also invigorate the nerveless members of the body, and make it, instead of a burden, a burden-bearer; at this the lesser blessing, but suited to their carnal expectations, they were amazed, and glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things to-day." But they were in nowise convinced; for when, immediately afterwards, Jesus is found in the company of publicans and sinners, the scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat with publicans and sinners? How blind to their own condition! Jesus meekly and blessedly replies, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." They can neither understand His power to forgive sin, nor His grace to associate with sinners. The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, and hence the parable of putting a piece of a new garment on an old. It would be but labour in vain; the rent would be made worse, and no *unity*, for the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. New wine also must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. Deeply painful as it was to this gracious Missionary from God to discover how vain it was with the present materials to build again the tabernacle of David that was fallen down—nay, that the builders would refuse Him who ought to be the head of the corner—yet He can bear to see it, and, better still, though affected by it, to continue faithful to His mission, only letting drop now and again that He was prepared for rejection, and that His rejection might turn Him aside, yet it would never estrange His heart from the children of His people.

Chapter VI.

In this chapter we find the path of rejection no longer concealed. The second Sabbath is marked by the Lord's entrance into circumstances similar to those under which David suffered, in the first journey of his rejection, from the hand of Saul. The disciples, the Lord's companions in His rejection, being hungry, rubbed the ears of corn in their hands as they passed through the corn-fields on the Sabbath-day. He who entered the world with no better reception than a manger, found ere long no place in it to lay His head. The ruthless Saul of His day pressed the companions of the rejected Jesus to unusual expedients to relieve their utter need. The scribes and Pharisees would value the day of rest (when the Lord of it had none) more than the Lord Himself. They would rest in their wretchedness and infirmities; He would not "rest till He had finished the thing." (Ruth iii. 18.) He would remove the hindrances; He sought God's rest, not man's rest. He would not rest till He could cast His eye to the utmost limit, and reassure the heart of God again with, "Behold, all is very good." Thus He first rested; thus He will eternally rest. He is now working on to that wondrous point, and hence on the next Sabbath He heals a remarkable symbol of Israel's state of incapacity, "the withered right hand." "The arm clean dried up" (Zech. xi.) too plainly told the powerlessness of the nation. The scribes and Pharisees could keep a Sabbath in utter unconsciousness of their condition. The Healer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in, would lay the foundation for everlasting rest; and hence, on the man with the withered hand, He enacts the mercies He was ready to administer to the whole house of Israel. His word,

"stretch forth thy hand," to him their representative, was but indicative of His mind to the entire constituency, and by them ought to have been hailed as such; but instead of this, they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus. Thus they despised the first dawnings of the sabbath of God. Jesus retires above the world to the mountains, to seek abstraction with God. The more rejected and painful His path, the more did His soul seek, alone and apart from all here, solace with God.

Another day dawns, and the faithful servant enters on His duties again. He now associates with Himself a distinct and remarkable number of disciples, whom He calls messengers or apostles. The service must not fail from want of hands, or be denied from want of witnesses; and again He stands on "the plains" of this world to re-exhibit His graciousness and tender mercies; for to the great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, "there went virtue out of Him and healed them all;" "and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed." He then turns to His disciples, and enunciates the principles of His kingdom; not as to what grace effects for us, but what is required of us as heirs of this kingdom; they rather declare our responsibility than our capability—the law of the kingdom, not the grace of the kingdom—and opens it to *every one* worthy of it. The good tree and the good man are to be valued, irrespective of everything; the corrupt tree and the evil man are to be rejected, irrespective of any original claim; and this practically we learn in the opening of the seventh chapter.

Chapter VII.

A Roman centurion, a Gentile, seeks the Lord for blessing. He engages the elders of Israel, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants," &c. (Rom. ix. 4), to be the ministers of Christ to him; for in the full sense of it, as a branch of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, he had no right to be grafted into the root and fatness of the olive tree. He presumes not to seek blessing from Christ but through the Jew. And what does Jesus find here? "I have not found," saith the rejected of Israel, "so great faith; no, not in Israel;" and where did He find it? In a Gentile. Let not the Lord of glory despond, though His own will not receive Him; yet through His grace, the heart of many a stranger will bid Him a true and an eternal welcome.

Yet Israel must learn the fulness of His mercy, and therefore the next day He raises from the dead the last hope of the widowed heart. He comforts the widow and restores her last hope, though she had endured the withering pang that death had for ever extinguished it. Oh that the widow of Israel who desolate sits on the ground could but understand these things! At least the conviction steals over them, and they reiterate the words of the prophet, that God had visited His people; "and this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about. Surely they were left without excuse! Yet there was a veil on their hearts—the desperate reluctance that is in man to give credit to the unselfish love of Christ, and of this even John the Baptist seems to partake. He who had gone before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elias, now needs to be confirmed himself. The unsuccessfulness of his own testimony, the apparent unprofitableness of all his labours, no doubt did lead his soul to waver as to the Lord's identity. He himself in prison, so contrary to the expectations of one who came to fill the place of Elias, was doubtless assured that in a little time Jesus would so increase as to counteract all opposition. But now, disheartened, he sends two disciples to learn and gather fresh evidence, and confirm his heart touching the nature and object of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth. In reply to this enquiry, Jesus enumerates the nature and extent of His works, adding this warning: "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." Let none of your preconceived notions as to my service, and the effects of it, divert you from recognizing and acknowledging me; let not my rejection at the hands of Israel lead you to question my claims, or from the effects of it on my position, to be found assenting with them in their evil deeds. John was not to waver from his first happy thoughts, as the friend of the Bridegroom. True, true, men said "he hath a devil;" and of Jesus, "on whom he had seen the Holy Ghost descending and remaining on Him," they say, "Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." To the men of this generation every service proved ineffectual. Of them it could be said, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept." What then? "Wisdom is justified of all her children," and of one of them we have an example in the following scene:—The Pharisee here represents the better sort of *public* acceptance accorded to our Lord, acknowledging Him as a remarkable character; and though unconvinced of His pre-eminent station, yet not ready to appear hostile to Him, nor join in His rejection. As such, he receives Him as his guest, but so as to exhibit how little his heart honoured Him as a distinguished one; and though, perhaps at personal sacrifice, he is the host of the Son of God, yet he loses the blessing obtained by one of wisdom's children, because he "knew Him not." Israel's acceptance of Christ did not exceed the Pharisees. The woman that was a sinner represents the Church; she sought to Christ because of her sins, not because of other and temporal expectations. She served Him because she was forgiven, not that she might be honoured by Him: her love taught her a service which the learned self-righteous Jew either neglected or was ignorant of. In the house of the Jew, *at his very table*, the unwelcome sinner is saved, and bid "go in peace." The Church of God, despised and unwelcome, sprung into life and blessing in the very precincts of Jewish hospitalities, and I believe is here darkly shadowed. It is a scene which does not occur in the other gospel narratives.

Chapter VIII.

This chapter opens with the account of the still larger ministrations of this blessed servant throughout every city and village, preaching and evangelizing the kingdom of God, and in company with the twelve who were to be witnesses of these things, and of His manifold labours in service towards Israel. "Certain women," "a remnant according to the election of grace," followed Him, and ministered "of their substance" to the destitute heir of all Jewish inheritance. There, in the presence of many which "were come to Him out of every city," He utters the parable of the sower; and this kind of teaching at once discloses to us God's judgment of Israel nationally. They are now to be dealt with as "seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." If you hear without a heart to heed, your hearing will only harden you the more. So it was with Israel; but the Lord contents Himself that the seed will not fall always in unsuited and unproductive soil, but that honest and good hearts will be found which, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. The seed will not be confined to the barren unfruitful spot. "God is no respecter of persons." (Acts x. 34.) "But in every nation," wherever, in the largeness of the grace of the sower, the seed should be sown, and wherever it grew, it would be accepted of God. God "lighted a candle" on the earth, that all they which enter in may see the light; therefore take heed how you hear, for you are responsible, and will be called to an account for it. If you "have," you shall have more; you have something to build on; if you "have not," you shall even lose the semblance of it. In a word, the Lord now says, I shall no longer recognize family or class relationships. My own mother and brethren I recognize not as such from nature, but my mother and brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it. "From henceforth," said the faithful revealer of the thought here mysteriously announced, "know we no man after the flesh." Such was the peculiar self-denying path the Lord now opened to His disciples, which He more practically instructs them in by the vicissitudes they endure in passing over "the lake." He is asleep, as if personally unconnected with their circumstances. His disciples awoke Him by the agonizing cry, "We perish!" so little prepared were they for the path of "faith" over the sea of life; and *here* they first learned that Jesus commands the winds and water, and they obey Him. To remove the hindrances to the growth of this faith in the human heart is, I apprehend, the Spirit's object in placing before us the following acts of our Lord. We have here man as he is by nature; a legion of perverse, ungovernable, and senseless passions:* all educational restraints, "chains and fetters," no barrier to the spring tide of their desires: a fool, one that saith to every one, I am a fool. "He wore no clothes," and the haunts of the dead, "the tombs," were his abode. But the word of Jesus, the word that can control the winds and the waves, can emancipate

* [The writer would not, of course, weaken the fact that devils actually possessed the man.—Ed.]

poor man from this grievous thraldom; and many such are found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind. Yet how unpopular His gracious work to the covetous Gadarenes of this world! "They besought Him to depart from them!" Blessed gentle Jesus returned where the people received Him. He is a ready visitant to them waiting for Him. And there too He gives a fuller illustration of His grace to answer the faith of the most wretched. The ruler of the synagogue, a person of considerable note among the Jews, enlists the sympathies of Jesus for his only daughter, who "lay a dying," and beseeches of Him to come into "his house." Jesus accedes to the request of the supplicating Jew, who, in the spirit of his nation, seems to recognize no power in Christ but in person. Jesus is on His way to assuage the bitter cry the hand of death was wringing from His people; but as He went, as He journeys along to the great day of Israel's final, complete, and death-released deliverance, He is not unmindful or insensible to the touch of faith from the most despised and unheeded. A woman, who, whatever her condition had been, is now destitute and penniless, all her living having been spent in her search after health. Twelve long years of sickness and expenditure only found her, having spent all her living upon physicians, and neither could be healed of any. Job-like, wealth was gone, and health was unattainable; not a shred of earthly hope remained. Jesus, the fountain of grace and mercy, is on His journey; she, by the eye of faith, knows Him. Unseen, she touches Him, and immediately a stream of mercy imparts life and vigour to her. "She was healed." Another striking type of the Church, who, without hope or enjoyment on earth, by faith finds all her life and blessing in Jesus, not as appropriating Him exclusively to herself, for that is highmindedness, but, as He passes on to the ruler's house, through faith engaging His best services—yea, while the blessings of His grace and affiliation are ringing in her ears, the doubts of the extent of His power are uttered by the Jew in unhappy discordance around, while she, of no earthly hope, drinks largely, through faith, of the fountain of life. The Jew, in unbelief, cries out, "Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Master;" death has laid his rude hand on what was most dear to me, and, alas! there is none to help—"our hope is lost." (Ezek. xxxvii. 11.) But, behold! Jesus pursues His way, undiverted from His purpose, through storms of unbelief and scorn, till that wondrous hour when He shall take the virgin daughter of Israel (now sunk in the sleep of death) by the hand, and shall sound "Arise," and, before wondering multitudes, her spirit shall come again, and she shall arise straightway. But on this scene for the present the curtain falls, and the charge is, "that they should tell no man what was done."

Chapter IX.

We have seen in the last chapter that, though great was the manifestation of mercy to Israel, yet so unfit were they for the disclosure, so little ready to appreciate it, that the marvellous service of Jesus to Jairus' daughter (so typical of His heart's desire and purpose toward the whole house of Israel) is not to be made public. The charge is "that they should tell no man what was done;" and yet this chapter unfolds to us, not One declining any more to serve a people so unworthy of it, but, on the contrary, enduing His twelve disciples with power to counteract and remove their sorrows. Grace, like a flowing stream, only accumulates an expression of its power as every fresh barrier is raised against it. This was largely shown to the Jew. Twelve new currents of blessing must now permeate their land, carrying with them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases, to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And so great is the effect of this conbined movement that the tetrarch on his throne is "perplexed." He had beheaded John, once happy harbinger of all this mighty blessing. The tender budding of it as a bitter frost he had nipped. He who from his throne had all but crushed it in its infant state, now bears testimony to Christ's wondrous mission, and, conscience-smitten, desires to see Him. Can any Jewish caviller say: "Jesus gave not sufficient evidence of Himself to the house of Israel"? Their King who, without remorse, did imbrue his hands in the blood of Christ's herald, is now so convinced that he desires to see Him—Him the impersonification of all the power he had contumaciously rejected in the execution of John the Baptist! The virus of rejection originates with the throne. The tide of conviction now reaches the throne. The apostles having returned from their mission, and given in a detail of their task, Jesus leads them "aside privately into a desert place belonging to a city called Bethsaida." Whether "the house of provision" or not we shall shortly see, for thither Jesus is followed by the people when "they knew it," and He receives them in all the fulness of His grace, and, still unwearied in His service towards them, "spoke unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing;" but here He also teaches the emptiness of all earthly pretension. At Bethsaida, "the house of provision," there is no sustainment for the followers of Christ. As at Nain, "the beautiful place," the dark hand of death had changed the scene only to be repaired by Him who can make all things new. So here, He Himself is the fountain of supply. If earth and earthly things fail, Jesus can meet, and more than meet, the need of His people. Twelve baskets full of fragments attest the more manifold blessings which will flow from Him than from the most honoured place in Israel.

Now, the question must be propounded to His disciples—the future nucleus of blessing—"Whom say the people that I am?" This occurs when the Lord is "alone" from man, and abstracted unto God. The answer declares the effect of His services to Israel. He was said to be "John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the old prophets," but none but Peter knew Him. None but he said "the Christ of God;" but none yet must didactically remove the veil from the heart of Israel. The disciples are "commanded to tell no man that thing," but rather to learn for themselves the path of unearthly expectation which following Him would demand. And to sustain them in this path, not by what earth could provide, not from the supplies of the failing Bethsaida of this world, but from a heavenly sphere, does He reveal to them, "ere they should taste of death" (as unreached by that wide-spreading, unsparing scourge, as unconscious "whether in the body or out of the body," 2 Cor. xii. 3), the glory of God's kingdom.

On the mountain, in prayer with God—above the earth, and separated in spirit from it—does He reveal to Peter, John, and James, the power of glory. The fashion of His countenance is altered, and His raiment white glistering. Moses, for whose body the devil contended, and Elias, for whom fifty sons of the prophets three days did seek, are manifested in glory. In personal intimacy with Jesus, they talked with Him of the great results of His sorrowing service here—His ἔξοδον, which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. The disciples betray how little they are prepared for such a scene; they are either heavy with sleep, or they only awake to prove a wrong judgment. To assimilate this wondrous glory to something earthly, Peter places the Lord of glory on an equality with Moses and Elias, perhaps comparing the scene to a feast of tabernacles, the most celebrated of earthly festivals. But a cloud intercepts all earthly hopes and plans, and a voice out of the cloud proclaims that Jesus is chief.

"This is my beloved Son, hear Him." The right estimate of Jesus is learned in the glory; and Peter afterwards, speaking of this scene, describes it as "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ .... His majesty." (2 Peter i. 10.) The majesty of Jesus, learned in the glory by men as yet unreached by death, discloses to us, then, only that high place of attainment in which the apostle says, "Of such an one will I glory." (2 Cor. xii. 5.) No earthly connection, service, or gift, entitled him to glory; elevation into this scene alone entitled him; but then he was not only unearthly, but unconscious of a link with earth.

This revelation was necessary to sustain the disciples in the path of unearthly expectation which He had been unfolding to them; and hence, when they return again on that path, an incident occurs which exposes the nature and violence of the power arrayed against them. "When they came down from the hill," a man of the company beseeches Him for his only child—the earthly hope of the father centred in this child. But this condition is: "A spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him." There are two important features in this scene which does not present themselves in other cases of Satanic possession. The suppliant here is not the sufferer: the sufferer appears to have seasons of respite. This manifestation of suffering, and the inability of the disciples to remove it, call forth from the Lord a censure on this generation for faithlessness and perverseness, the two great causes of our difficulty in encountering the power against us on earth; and because of them, Satan affects us in the humiliating manner here described. On the way to Jesus, "yet a coming," he gains us no reprieve. It is no easy thing to be rid of Satan. We must not expect deliverance without being "thrown down and

torn." When Satan has done his worst, when you are humbled and torn before men, then you know the comfort and rest of the healing of Jesus. Jesus knew what His disciples would have to suffer if they would learn, from glory, to hear the beloved Son. This is here depicted for them, and then He tells them to let these sayings (λόγους) sink down into your ears, for I myself will have to pass through bruisings and tearings. "The Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." "But they understood not this saying," but only offer fresh evidence of how little led they are above earthly hope, for they reason among them "which of them should be greatest." Oh, how slowly we all learn our place and portion! How needful for the disciples, as for us, to receive a Spirit which would bring to remembrance the teachings of Christ!

A helpless babe is a disciple's proper earthly condition: assuming nothing, neither important enough to forbid any body, nor affecting power even in judgment on those who will not "receive" the Lord of glory. Our place is to follow Him, as the lowest and most unprovided for in creation. As to earth, "the foxes and the birds of the air" have the advantage. Neither respect for "the dead," nor affection for the living, "at home at my house," must divert the sincere follower of Christ from the plough of service he has put his hand to. Such ought to be the miserable expectancy of Christ's servant on earth. Alas! how few have learned it.

Chapter X.

As we might have been prepared for, this chapter declares the long and fullest sound of the trumpet ere judgment be pronounced—seventy additional instruments, answering to the number who shared with Moses the burden of the stiff-necked and rebellious Israel of his day. Their perverseness in that day made it necessary, and so now. The harvest must not lie ungathered for want of hands. "Into every city and place whither He Himself would come," there must be a twofold announcement of His mercy. They are warned of His approach. If they reject, they must do so deliberately. The Lord could already pass sentence on some cities where "mighty works had been done." The Chorazin, the Bethsaida, and the Capernaum of this world have already deserved condemnation. As the return of the twelve in the former chapter was an occasion for the Lord to explain to them a large page of their yet future history, so might we expect another of still greater interest and matter to be unfolded here. The seventy return with joy, gratified with the fact "that the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Little yet, doubtless, had they learned the extent of Satan's power; for the reply of Jesus is, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." We know what is the terrific effect of lightning on the inhabitants of earth. But yet, saith the Lord, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the powers of the enemy (heavenly or earthly), and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Though this assurance might appear the highest of all blessings, yet there was a higher. "In this rejoice not .... but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.) Your names inscribed in a region afar and above all here, is the real source of joy. And in the sense of this Jesus exults in the purposes of God being so accomplished, that "the babes," the powerless unintellectual class, have revealed unto them what the magnates of wisdom and prudence, the highly esteemed among men, knew nothing of; and therefore, "privately," the disciples are told by Him that "blessed are the eyes which see the things which they see, for that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them"—"the mystery which was kept secret since the foundation of the world," and of which they themselves as yet knew scarcely anything.

The stern demands of law are all answered by grace. The more it demanded from us, the more does Jesus, by substitution, for us. The greater the difficulty we had to encounter through it, the greater the service Jesus performed for us. The more my responsibility to my fellow man from the law, the more do I gain from Jesus, born of a woman, born under the law. Thus grace resolves all the difficult questions that the law can raise; and Jesus but describes Himself when He recounts the traits and acts of the good neighbour. Who but Jesus, as an unbidden friend, an unwelcome servitor, a Samaritan, would visit the Jerusalem wanderer, the self-immolated sufferer, the victim of human malice, without money or clothes, and almost lifeless—when neither priest nor Levite, the boasted appendages of the law, could aught avail—would come "where he was," be it into the darkness of death? "He had compassion on him, and went to him" (side by side with him on the cross of Calvary), and "bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine;" and on that living power which bore this gracious neighbour to the sufferer's side, was now the sufferer to be conducted and raised out of this scene of sorrow. He "set him on His own beast," and brought him to an inn—the abode of travellers and strangers—and then, having cared him to be trusted to no other hands *at first*, He on the morrow consigns him to "the host" (the proprietor of all needful supplies by the way), defraying the probable expense, but chargeable with all, cost what he will!—"And whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." If the host has great and arduous services in the absence of Jesus, His coming again will crown his labours with rich rewards. May the saints understand their service!—"If ye love me, feed my sheep."

From the next little scene we gather the nature of the best services we can render. Jesus is "received" into Martha's house. Who so great a stranger here? Who so way-worn and friendless? Surely, a most desolate One, yet, for love's sake, "received." Well, reception is one thing, right hospitality is another. Doing one thing well often leads us to do the next thing indifferently. Martha understands not the nature of the services this desolate servant of God would value most. Mary has learned this. "She sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word." The service most grateful to Jesus will be so, in like manner, to His Spirit in His people. And, doubtless, the patient lover and student of Christ's word will, towards the wearied traveller, exceed in hospitalities more than the more apparently laborious and external attentions of Martha.

Chapter XI.

We should ever remember, in tracing this interesting subject, that the great Teacher of the Church is very patient, minute, and comprehensive, in His mode of instruction; and I think the more we trace the slow trail of our progress in truth, the less will we wonder at the dulness of the disciples, or be surprised at the apparent repetition of principles already proved. The Holy Ghost is, in this book, meeting the entire question, and practically it will be found a much more difficult lesson than many apprehend to practically take a heavenly standing with a happy conscientious rejection of all the claims an earthly one may appear to have on us.

This chapter opens with a desire expressed by the disciples to be taught to pray as John taught his disciples. They were led to this, I suppose, both from realizing, in some measure, the barrenness of present things, and from seeing what a continual resource it was to their Lord and Master. Prayer always implies circumstances of need and privation. Praise is the language of enjoyment and satiety. The latter was ever the more ostensible with the Jew, because when righteous they were in scenes of abundant blessings. Prayer therefore implies a departure from these; and John, who was to take the kingdom by violence, making a last effort in the flesh, endeavouring to produce righteousness from it by the severity of bodily exercise, taught his disciples to pray, for the wilderness was his sphere while waiting for "Him who should come." The Lord yields to the desires of the disciples, and gives them a prayer suited to their then understandings. In fact this prayer lets us into the amount of light and knowledge possessed by them at this moment. It is evident they had not the Holy Ghost as an *abiding* unction of thought in their souls at this time, for "the Holy Ghost was not yet given" (John vii. 39); and they are here, in verse 13, told that if they pray for the Holy Spirit their heavenly Father will give it. Well, then, this prayer was suited to their present knowledge, or else it would have been an unintelligible prayer; and indeed the sentiments generally in the prayer establish this point. The forgiveness of sin is here only contingent on their extending the same toward those who may trespass against them: not the fullest idea of the largeness of God's forgiveness to us; though practically one may lose the sense of forgiveness when one departs from the principle of forgiveness, for (as with all God's blessings) it has a reciprocation. I do not think this prayer gives any leading to a heavenly hope. A faithful Jew, feeling the ruin about him, could unhesitatingly utter it, under the full conviction that when the kingdom would come, the will of God would be done on earth as now in heaven. But though the Lord gives them a prayer suited to their then

circumstances and knowledge, yet He would not have them to be contented with it; but He explains to them the nature of real prayer. If we know God as a friend, no circumstance or delay on His part to answer and relieve us should cause us to discontinue seeking blessing from Him. This was a great point for a Jew, nay, for any to learn, that one is never to judge of God by what one sees of His favours, but from what one knows of His power. It was so with the example here. The needy man sought from his friend, and persisted even when friendship seemed to have gone, because he knew he could be then supplied, and *his need knew no refusal.* Let the disciples be prepared for any and every adverse circumstance which may arise in this world. Let them maintain their judgment of the grace and power of God, in spite of all the contradiction appearances may raise against it. Let them but ask, and continue asking.

The next occurrence, I have no doubt, is intended by the Holy Ghost to teach us the real hindrance to our utterance before God. The devil has no interest in either speaking to God or of God. When his power is dominant we must be dumb; but Jesus casts out the unclean spirit, and the dumb spake: another subject of wonder to "the people," as all the effects of Christ's power on us ever are, as well as another ground for misconstruction and rejection of His grace. Some of them said, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." "And others" would not trust Him till they would prove Him—"tempting, sought a sign from heaven." Their opposition increases in proportion as His grace and power are manifested. The Lord meets their thoughts first by the unreasonableness of them. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." Secondly, that His work was not unusual in Israel; and whatever judgment they pass on Him, they must pass on their own children; and if they judge their act as of God, then let them recognize how near the kingdom of God had come unto them in the person of Jesus.

Jesus then declares that He will have no half measures; that as long as Satan, "the strong man armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in safety;" but of that there must be an end when a stronger than he comes upon him. He will overcome him, take from him all his armour wherein he trusteth, and divide the spoil. Satan has used *all natural* things, with which the Jew abundantly was blessed, as instrumental against God. "They waxed fat, and kicked." All these shall be now sunk in the cross. From the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop which grew on the wall, all nature must be merged in the blood of the sacrifice. And if you are not with Christ, you must be against Him; you must not be so listlessly; you must gather with Him, or you are scattering. The mere deliverance from an unclean spirit does not ensure complete surrender to God. Israel was now much reformed, yet its future history is shortly told. It was set in "dry places;" the greatness of Canaan had departed, and yet they were "seeking rest," and, finding none, they would return to their own home, and then and there associate with themselves a more malignant power of evil than ever, and so their last state would be worse than the first. Seeking rest in "dry places," whether by a Jew or a Gentile convert, is ever followed by the same results. The earth is the dry place; if you seek rest, you must seek it beyond earth. May the saints remember this, or surely they will yet have to learn it! As He spake these things, a woman of the company, in the spirit of popery, in veneration for the descent of Christ, blesses not Him, but the channel through which He came. This was too truly the spirit of many in Israel, highly venerating the earthly lineage of Christ, and in doing so, overlooking the aim and object of all His labour and mission, allowing His greatness only to shed a halo around His human origin. This thought is corrected by the Lord announcing that still more blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it. No natural blessing, however great, can transcend an humble following of the word of God. Jesus came through the Jew; they were thus highly distinguished among men, but they can be surpassed by a Gentile follower of the word of God.

To those who sought a sign the Lord gives a sign, first premising that it is an evil generation which seeks a sign, because they have no faith; that there shall no sign be given but the sign of Jonas, the prophet. Ere Jonas testified to the Ninevites, he sank in the waters of death; thus was the Son of man to be a sign to this generation; and subsequently a Gentile queen shall rise up in judgment against this generation and condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon—the wisdom of Christ in glory, as Solomon symbolizes—and yet this generation lightly esteems a greater than Solomon amongst them. In like manner, a Gentile people shall rise up in the judgment against this generation, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. Israel would be surpassed by a Gentile, is the great fact established here. Who is to blame for this? Surely not He who lighted the candle. God has lighted His candle for lightsake, and all who come in shall see the light. It will be publicly manifested, and for public benefit. It is not kept in a secret place or under a bushel; it is not to be confined to the narrow limits of Palestine. If you do not see it, your eye is not single; you are not fully set upon it; if you were, your whole body would be luminous with the purpose of your soul, with the deep engagement of your heart, and light will increase. Not only will your body be full of light, having no part dark, but it will emit vivid light *from it*, as a candle by its bright shining. Such would be the blessed effect of learning the grace of Christ, which I apprehend a Pharisee assumes as descriptive of his doctrine; for, as Jesus spake, "a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him." The Lord accepts the invitation, and then takes occasion to expose the inconsistent and delusive doctrine of the Pharisees. Their pretensions to light and power were hollow and limited. The Lord washed not before dinner. He regarded not one act here more clean or sacred than another; the meal needed as much to be sanctified as the person. All earth was corrupt before Him. Restriction implied that some things were better than others, but the doctrine of Christ is, "To the unbeliever is nothing pure." If you will have all things pure, give all *present* things (τὰ ἐνόντα) in alms. If you will place yourself on the ground of merit, then here is your responsibility, here is your requirement, giving all present things as alms to those from whom you can expect no return—expecting no gain from them in this present time. But on the course and practices of the Pharisees nothing but judgment awaits. Woe unto the Pharisees, unto them who assumed to give the best expression of righteousness among Israel! Woe unto the scribes, classed with the disciples they produced, and woe also to the lawyers! The nation and their guides must now hear their sentence. Mercy towards them is exhausted. From this generation must be required the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world. Are they smitten with remorse and penitence at these awful denunciations? No; they only seek to aggravate their destiny in their fruitless efforts against the Son of God; they exposed the terrible enmity of their hearts against Him, as well as the hollowness of their professions, in that they urge Him and provoke Him expressly for the purpose that He might commit Himself, and so give them ground for accusation against Him. Alas! such teachers of the people! Watching for evil, not for God!

Chapter XII.

"In the mean while," whilst the scribes and Pharisees were thus so unworthily employed, "an innumerable multitude of the people were gathered together," and the Lord uses the opportunity for impressing on His disciples to beware, in particular, or "first of all," "of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." The Pharisees, by their assumption of godliness, were deceivers of the people; they were greater enemies to the truth, by pretending to be what they were not, than if they had been openly vicious. No greater danger to true religion than the leaven of hypocrisy; malice is only masked. There is no power of it in the heart. It is merely adopted as a cloak for the evil within; and hence what the disciples are *first of all* warned against shall mark the full-blown apostacy of Christendom, "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." It is the design to make religion conspicuous and acknowledged, which never can be in a world which rejected Christ. But there will be a full disclosure of all motives. Mere privacy will not avail; yet on the other hand you are not, if "friends" of Christ, to fear to confess His name; you are not to assume a character without power, nor again shrink from a testimony which you can afford; you are not to seek the gaze of men for religiousness, nor shrink from confessing His Name through fear of men. If your body is full of light, it will not fear them who kill the body; *this* will be one bright ray from it. Covetousness will not be your snare, for you will have learned that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things

which he possesseth"—a Jewish idea, and one to which all nature is wedded—but ye will learn to "take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on." Abandon all natural calculations, such as all the nations of the earth seek after. Know it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The word "kingdom" did not sound strangely on Jewish ears; they all expected a kingdom; and truly what is here promised shall be realized, though I apprehend that in the next verse a new thought was introduced, and one which embodied the place and hope of the saints now. Here they are told to "sell" all their property on earth, and give it to those needing it, and lay up treasure in a region utterly unknown or unheard of to a Jew, save as the throne of God; and the value of this doctrine is enforced by the remarkable words, that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If Jesus be rejected to the heavens, and Jesus is your treasure, then your heart will be there; or in other words, you will be set down together with Christ in the heavenlies; and the natural consequence of having such a hope and interest beyond this scene will be that "your loins will be girt and your lights burning," marked by an alacrity in moving onwards, and your course luminous with the light of the body described in this chapter.

From verse 36 to 40 I am very much disposed to think the return to Israel is spoken of. The Lord's return here being placed subsequent to "the wedding," strongly disposes me to this thought, and in the perfect keeping with the fact that the Lord always only casually and subsidiarily referred to the Church, while the open and general narrative manifestly bears on Israel. This is still more confirmed by Peter's question, "Speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" To this I believe the Lord replies, giving strict reference to the Church as now. "A faithful and wise steward," *οἰκονόμος*, leads you at once to a house and its domestic economy. In the preceding parable we have servants and the master of the house, their service "watching," efficient if they are ready to answer to the knock of their returning Lord, in which the house-master, *οἰκοδεσπότης*, is especially interested. Here the service is not watching, but feeding and caring for the domestics in the absence of their Lord. Whoever observes this service is blessed when the Lord returns; his reward shall be great, though I think the word "enter" is not expressed in the original. The Church, as the habitation of God through the Spirit, should be known here as in domestic relationship; and then in proportion as one is faithful and wise will he care and nurture his fellows. The principle is only declared here, that is, service to one another in a domestic scene. If the Lord's return is appreciated, service to His people here will be proportionately observed; but if apostacy creep in, the judgments on Christendom will be very great. The word stripes, *πληγων*, is translated "plagues" in the Revelation. The thought of this judgment leads our Lord to disclose the issue of His mission *on earth*. "I am come," saith He, "to send fire on the earth." We read in another place, "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter iii. 10.) Premonitory notices of this terrible issue were already to commence. Natural domesticity would be outraged. The fairest scene on earth, the social hearth, would be marred by the malignancy of Satan, no longer to be restrained. The Lord having thus glanced at the earth's destiny and the progress to it, with His unwearied grace chides the people for not forming a more truthful judgment of the purposes of God. In natural things they were wise enough. Why then so dull as to matters so momentous? And He concludes by showing them the only mode for escape, and if that be neglected, incarceration till they have paid the last farthing must be their doom.

Chapter XIII.

The chapter division here is infelicitous; for "at that season," as He enunciated these predictions and warnings, there were present "some" who told Him of the terrible judgments on the Galileans by the hand of Pilate, their blood being "mingled with their sacrifices," or in other words, judgment and death in the hour and with the act from which they looked for blessing and acquittal. This, alas! but too aptly illustrates what the Jew in his self-will was hanging on to. "I tell you," said One who knew them, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Also in the fate of the eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, is foreshadowed to them their destiny, except they repent. When the greatest blessing is rejected, as it was assuredly at Siloam, then the direct judgments would be perpetrated. The parable that follows explains how fully the Jew deserved excision. The Lord can appeal, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done?" And there was no want of patience; year after year He looked for fruit and found none! But mercy is not yet exhausted; the Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, and knew and answered to His heart, did say, "Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it." This last trial should be made ere the natural branches be cut off; and we have an evidence of this, and the manner of it, in the next miracle. The Lord was teaching on the sabbath-day; they must not put the shadow for the reality. He would lay the foundation for the latter; consequently the infirmity of one who was "bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself," at once engages His sympathies and power. When He saw her, He called and said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." But how is this service, a sample of His purpose towards Israel, received by the nation? "The rulers of the synagogue," blind as to their real condition, and, as is ever the case, pertinaceously upholding a form when the power of it was gone, answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day. Miserable sabbath, when such infirmity was occurrent! How unlike the sabbath of God! Jesus was labouring to make all "straight," and introduce again on an eternal basis God's day of rest and complacency in unbroken bliss over the wide universe. But the Jew resisted, for he was too blind to see, and too fat of heart to feel his infirmity. Jesus convicts them of waiving obligations when their own selfish interests are concerned, which are denied to a daughter of Abraham. God's glory is concerned in the rescue of the one; our own in that of the other. We might seek our own rest, even religiously so, and overlook the characteristics of God's rest; but yet no real keeping of a sabbath until we enter into the rest of God. At this juncture the Lord discloses to us His judgment of the kingdom of God on earth. He put little confidence either in the confusion of His adversaries or in the rejoicing of the people, for the resemblance of their whole condition passes before Him. It was not possible to find a likeness to it in nature. It would not be confined within natural limits. I should think that the parables of "the mustard seed" and "leaven" here refer to the Jewish economy, though I believe they have a different signification in a different connection in other places in Scripture. The Lord sees and unfolds to us what Judaism had grown to, of unnatural size in both similitudes; in the one it became a covert for the fowls of the air, and in the other the increase was not solid or genuine. I cannot gainsay that Judaism or earthly religiousness in a former time or now will ever be sure to issue after a like manner and bear a similar representation. (Verse 22.) The Lord continues His progress through "cities and villages," still unwearied in His work, but at the same time "journeying toward Jerusalem." "Then said one unto Him," less patient than his Master—perhaps troubled at the little effects such blessed service was producing, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" In answering this, the Lord takes occasion first to confirm His disciples in a jealous watchfulness over themselves, and then pronounces in solemn sentences the sad consequences of rejecting Him, at the same time intimating that the kingdom of God shall comprise within it all Jewish greatness, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets," and that from the four corners of the earth should guests flow into it, to the eternal reproach of those who now were unbelieving, though amidst the very foundations of the kingdom, and in the presence of the great Architect of all. Though they could say, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presense, and thou hast taught in our street;" yet they would be last though they were the first offered blessing, and they who were the last would exceed the first. But while the Lord thus comforts Himself, and looks beyond all present failure with a heart prepared for it, He hears the "same day" from the lips of the Pharisees, the great religionists of the day, that the king, the false king of Israel, was ready to kill Him (the true and rightful King). The Pharisees only say, "Get thee hence, for Herod will kill thee." Under the shelter of this they seek to accomplish their own malevolent desires, even to get rid of Christ—too uncandid, like many a one, to say for themselves what they so readily say for Herod. But the Lord, in answering him, answers them. He first declares that

He will run His course until He is perfected, until the resurrection. He will cast out devils and do cures to the end, but His project must continue till the third day, because a prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem. He must fulfil His mission ere He reaches the metropolis of rejection. Most failure where was most blessing, like Gilgal and Bethel, so was Jerusalem; "better for them not to have known the way of righteousness" than, like the sow that was washed, to have wallowed in the mire. Yet, wonderful grace! the very lowness of their condition seems only to arouse afresh the sympathies of this blessed revealer of the Father's heart. He cries, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that stonest the prophets, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her chickens," and what then? hear it every Jew—"AND YE WOULD NOT!" Hear your judgment: "Your house is left desolate," but it shall be only *until* you learn to value ME, "*until* you shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."—(*To be continued, if the Lord will.*)

LETTER UPON THE QUESTION: WILL THE CHURCH BE CAUGHT UP BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE SIGNS ANNOUNCED BY THE LORD IN MATTHEW XXIV.?*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I KNOW very well that I am about to enter upon a subject as to which there is diversity of views among the Christians who, nevertheless, expect the coming of Jesus to seek His Church before the introduction of the millennium. However, my aim is not controversy, properly so called; for since my convictions were formed, I do not know that any thing has been published in our language [French] for or against an affirmative solution of the question placed at the head of this letter. What I have at heart, and that for our common edification, is to set forth without any reserve or condition the scriptural foundation of these convictions, without neglecting, however, to answer certain objections which have been made to me in private conversation, or which I have made to myself. If people will call that controversy, be it so; but I undertake it in love, and I hope that the brethren who cannot yet see as I do will kindly read, bear with me, and set me right if they find that I go astray.

I ought first of all to declare that, for my part, I cannot give the name of idle to the proposed question, for great is the difference of our position before God, according to the manner in which it is resolved. Could there be found identity in the spiritual affections of two brethren, of whom one sees the return of Christ only in the distance, through a crowd of previous and yet unfulfilled signs, and the other looks for Jesus every day, persuaded that it is the rapture of the Church to meet the Lord in the air which is to precede all these signs? I wish to judge no one; but the nature of things and my own experience do not permit me to allow this identity. However strong or enlightened the faith may be, it cannot put aside signs to which the Lord desires that attention should be paid; nor can it consequently, before they arrive, regard the deliverance as very close at hand. The virgins were aroused by the cry, *The Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.* It is said that the Lord can hasten the accomplishment of the signs, and that is true. But God cannot change His word, nor accomplish in one day that which He had declared will fill up a week or a half-week of years. And were we at the beginning of this half-week—did we see the abominations of the desolator placed in the sanctuary—we should still have forty-two months to wait for the coming of Jesus, and forty-two very long months, since it will be the time of the persecution of the saints of the Lord under antichrist. But I will not anticipate that which is to follow. I do not believe then that an expectation of the coming of Jesus after antecedent signs affects our hearts in the same way as an always present expectation; and it is this which shows me the importance of the subject which I am attempting to handle.

Without further preamble, I would tell you that for some years I am firmly convinced that the Church will be caught up before the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in Matt. xxiv., and that conscientiously I can only see in a contrary persuasion an error or a mistake more or less grave respecting the mind of God; let this be said without questioning the good faith and the sincerity of those who thus wander from the truth. And if for a sufficiently long period I have myself shared this error, a somewhat attentive examination of the Scriptures has soon recovered me from it.

That the proposed question presents difficulties, I do not deny. Such there are, not only in the study of prophecy in general, but moreover in that of the generality of doctrines. Doubtless several have been lightened, but others have not been, and never will be, removed out of the road; hence those divergences in the views of brethren equally upright, equally well disposed to divine truth. The word of God is not a treatise upon the exact sciences; but it is the expression of the mind of a Being, boundless, infinite and incomprehensible in His knowledge and wisdom, in comparison of whom all the inhabitants of the earth are weighed as nothing, who confounds the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the intelligent. Shall we find out the depth of God by searching it? Shall we know perfectly the Omnipotent? I doubt not, and there is my consolation, that, *as regards Him*, this Word is perfectly accordant with itself, and that all the things which it contains form but one divinely harmonious whole, which will be in heaven the joy and admiration of our souls. But here below we know only in part; and when, though enlightened by grace, our feeble intelligence seeks to penetrate into the divine revelation, we have very frequently much trouble, and often we cannot succeed, in making a crowd of details mutually co-ordinate, even while we have seized the large outlines which include them, and when the general mind of God is no longer a mystery to us. But are we less assured that we have laid hold of this mind? Undoubtedly not. They are *difficulties*, we say; and they do not arrest us in our path, although they may slacken our pace. *Here* is a fact clearly revealed, and *there* is another in the same case; but where is their connection? Supposing we do not discover it now, what are we to do? Nothing more simple: admit them both, waiting till our divine Teacher is pleased to show us how they agree together. Such is that which I call humility and wisdom; whilst one can only see pride and folly in altering (as is done, alas! by many theologians) the bearing of one fact or of one doctrine in order to put it in equilibrium with another. And I will add, that God ever blesses this walk herein; that it is seldom that he who on divine authority has admitted two things irreconcileable in appearance, has not later (if you will allow the expression to pass) the word of the enigma, and then a sort of shame at the previous stupidity of his mind in discovering the harmony of two revealed facts.

I have allowed myself this digression, because of the utility which it seems to me to have for the brethren who read prophecy, and because it is otherwise bound up with my subject. We find ourselves in presence of two revelations, the one given to the apostles in Matt. xxiv.; the other given by Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 1 and seq. In the first, Jesus declares that He will come in clouds with power and great glory, after several events destined to render the disciples attentive; and several have concluded from thence that the Church is to pass through those events, and to suffer the great distress or the tribulation of antichrist. In the second revelation Paul expresses himself, on the contrary, in such a manner as not to leave the Thessalonians the least room for expecting the signs or for fearing the tribulation; and the most ingenious spirit would search in vain to make this revelation accord with that of the Saviour to the disciples, at least at first sight. Well, I now bless God for it, I see those two prophecies perfectly in harmony, without being obliged to alter one jot or tittle of them, and without forcing the meaning of a single expression. It is as true for me that the Church will be caught up before the signs as it is that, after the signs, men will see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. I have no more trouble to reconcile those two facts than to distinguish between the titles of Son of God and Son of man, or between the destinies of the Jews and of the Church.

One must be singularly enslaved by the old theology, and I would even say led of one's own spirit in the study of the Bible, not to make those distinctions; and, God be thanked, we know that He who at the beginning created *the heavens* and *the earth*, chose to Himself two peoples, one heavenly and the other earthly, with whom His Christ sustains, or will sustain, different relationships. But what surprises me is, that, while knowing how to distinguish the relations of the Christ of God with the Church from those which He has with the people of Israel, people con-

* [This letter, which so strikingly resembles in many respects various trains and even expressions of thought in the "Remarks connected with the Study of the Revelation" (Prospect, vol. i., pp. 165-171), was not read by the writer of the latter till after his own paper was printed and published.—ED.]

found them, in point of fact, by identifying the coming of the *Son of man* with the rapture of the Church, and by regarding Matt. xxiv. as a warning given to this latter of its position *at the consummation of the age*, that is to say, at the epoch of the deliverance of Israel. That the will of God to have a people associated with the heavenly glory, actual and future, of His Beloved, and destined to display the immense riches of His grace, as well as His infinitely varied wisdom; that this will, I say, was a mystery hidden in all ages, revealed first by the mission of the Holy Spirit, afterward in a direct manner to Paul, who may be with a just title called the apostle of the mystery (Ephes. i.-iii.), is what is no more a thing doubtful for us; thanks for it be given to Him who, according to His good pleasure, has given us the knowledge of this adorable mystery. To refuse admitting this *foundation principle*, if thus I may name it, is to be condemned to a Christianity more or less carnal and Jewish. But then, is it in the gospels where Jesus speaks in some sort *from the earth* (Heb. xii. 25) and not *from the heavens*, that the Church should seek the direct revelation of the glory which concerns it? Certainly not. I hasten, nevertheless, to make a sort of exception in favour of the gospel of John, because Jesus speaks there as come down from heaven, and in the consciousness of being [determined] the Son of God by His future resurrection. But in this gospel itself, of which chapters xiii. to xvii. in particular are a treasure for the Church, we are conducted no farther, for that which concerns the future, than to the simple promise of the return of Jesus in order to take us to be with Himself. Jesus does not speak there of the rapture of the Church (although the promise supposes the thing), because He Himself was neither risen nor caught up. And it is a very remarkable thing that, in the same discourse in which He is so explicit upon the blessed operations of the Comforter, and upon the certainty of His return from heaven, He should say nothing of the blessed hope, or of the rapture of the Church.

And if in the gospel of John, a gospel destined to withdraw the disciples from Judaism and to free them from the yoke of the schoolmaster, the Saviour confines Himself to the promise of entering into the mansions of the Father (and that in opposition to the expectations of an earthly glory, the only ones which the apostle could have), what then will become of the prophecy in Matt. xxiv., where the prophet, like unto Moses, and near the end of His career, prophesies just as Moses had done, near to his own? Have people any plausible foundation for supposing that the intention of Jesus in this chapter is to instruct the disciples in the destinies of the heavenly people—a people of whom the disciples have as yet no idea—a people who were not to be manifested and gathered till after the rejection of Jesus by the earthly people? Can it be explained in a manner ever so little satisfactory why the disciples, inquiring of things which regard the future, of the temple and of the nation, Jesus responded to their questions by a detailed prophecy upon the destinies of the Church, a people very distinct from the Jews, and called to a quite different vocation, as well as to a quite different glory? To make such questions is to answer them in the negative. The least attention to the prophecy of Matt xxiv., and above all that which is written in the fifteenth verse, can leave us no doubt whatever as to the intention of the Lord. He converses with *the faithful remnant* of a nation which was soon going to crucify their King and their God; and to the question of these "poor of the flock" (Zech. xi.) He makes a suited answer, in which He groups facts already announced by the prophets, intermingling them with certain others which were not yet revealed, and which are only facts of detail. The abominations of the desolator, the flight of the disciples, the great tribulation, were not new events, as one may be assured by comparing Dan. ix. 27, xii. 1; Jer. xxx. 6, 7; Ezek. v. 9, vii. 16; and Zech. xiv. 5, with Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, 21. And as to the coming of the Son of man for the deliverance of the people, I will not cite, because there would be too much to cite. Thus the Lord in this prophecy does nothing but recall, collecting them together, and adding to them His own revelations—facts relative *to the Jewish nation, and to none other*. To apply them to the Church is to abuse the word of God, as men abuse it in applying to the Church the promises made to the Jews. For further details, I refer the reader to the eighth number of the *Témoignage*, in which a hand abler and better directed than mine has analysed the prophecy of which I have just been speaking. I have heard several brethren object that the Lord therein speaks of the elect; but the Old Testament gives the same title to the Jews in various passages. We may, for example, cite Isa. lxv. 8, 9, which is parallel with Matt. xxiv. 22. Thus, in this last chapter, it is not a question about the Church.

I have in myself a full persuasion that the rapture of the Church is one of these mysteries of which he is the steward whom the Holy Spirit now calls to the ministry of the Word. (1 Cor. iv. 1.)

Perhaps this was one of those visions and of those revelations with which Paul was honoured when he was himself caught up (whether in the body or in spirit, we know not—God knoweth) even to the third heaven (2 Cor. xii. 2, 3), or which he received in other circumstances. My persuasion rests upon the striking analogy which exists between two passages. The first is 1 Thess. iv. 13-17, where Paul, speaking to the brethren of the rapture of the Church, after having spoken to them of the resurrection, which was not a mystery, warns them that what he is going to tell them is a *word of the Lord*. What word? Is any portion of it written? Had Jesus pronounced it before? By no means. It is a revelation which Paul received, like many others, for the joy and consolation of the Church; a *new* revelation, shut up in the bosom of God and communicated by the Holy Spirit, or by a manifestation of Jesus, to the apostle of the mystery of God. Of it, then, it is not a question before this period; it is a secret discovered to Paul, and to none before him. Accordingly we should not search for it in the gospels. The second passage, which confirms that which I have just said, is this: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) The parallelism is too striking to be denied; and it must be concluded thence, that the rapture of the Church was a mystery until Paul.

These are only, I am aware, indirect proofs in favour of the principle which I defend, though they have a certain degree of force. But the two facts which appear to me to have been sufficiently proved, namely, that in Matt. xxiv. it is only a question of Jews, and that the rapture of the Church is a mystery revealed to Paul, have already an important bearing, and serve to open the road for solving definitely the question that engages us. I will add thereto, but without delaying too much, because it is pretty well known, the great principle laid down in John vii. 39, xvi. 12-15, 1 Cor. ii. 9-12, which, reduced to its simplest expression, amounts to this—that the glory of the Church could not be disclosed and published save by the Holy Ghost, sent by the second Adam, entered Himself into glory. Before this period God, it would seem, could not speak of introducing men into heaven, any more than cause the gospel to be preached to the nations before the resurrection of Christ. We may undoubtedly discover, whether in the law and the prophets, or in the gospels, types or indications of the glory of the Church and of its privileges; but nothing more, because the Holy Spirit was not come down from heaven in order to bear witness to the glory of Christ.

I come now to the direct proofs which the word of God furnishes us of the rapture of the Church before the fulfilment of *all* the prophecy of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. I say *all* designedly, because I do not think that God occupies Himself with the Jews, as a people, before the Church is withdrawn from the earth. Those proofs are not numerous, it is true, since they reduce themselves to two. But had I only one, it ought to suffice for him who sees in the Word a truth of God. They are contained, first, in the prophecy of Paul, in the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians; secondly, in that of John, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of the Revelation.

Let us begin with this latter, because that, of the two (I speak here with respect to the opinion of some brethren, and not to my own), it is that which at first sight presents the least clearness, because of the symbolical character of all the apocalyptic visions. It is not a new idea which I utter, in pointing out the beautiful parallelism which exists between the second, third, fourth, and fifth seals (Rev. vi.), and verses 6-14 of Matt. xxiv.; also I will confine myself merely and simply to recall it. Only I would remark, in passing, the analogy which there is between the cry of the souls under the altar and the prayers of the persecuted Jewish remnant, which one finds in the Psalms—prayers which, if they are according to the spirit of the earth and of a people of the earth who may call for *justice*, are not according to the Spirit of adoption, which is a Spirit of grace, praying for those who trample

upon us. John does not speak of false Christs nor of false prophets, because the opening of the seals presents the events as preparatory judgments, and not as signs of the appearing of the Son of man, though they do not cease to be signs also. The same parallelism will be found between Rev. vi. and Luke xxi., of which verses 10–19 correspond to Matt. xxiv. 6–14 and verses 25, 26, to the sixth seal. Now, since the apocalyptic vision of chapters iv. and v. is a preparation for the opening of the seals, it is very evident if John sees the Church play a part in this imposing scene which passes in heaven, where the apostle is presented as caught up, it must be rigorously concluded from it that the Church will be raptured before the fulfilment of the prophecy of the sixth chapter, which is in substance identical with that of Matt. xxiv. 4–16, and that it will be in the everlasting rest, when God will act to judge the earth. But does John see the Church around the throne? That is the question: and for myself I do not hesitate to resolve it in the affirmative, when I hear the song of the elders, and when I see them clothed as priests, offering prayers, sitting upon thrones, and wearing crowns of gold upon their heads. Who could there be in heaven, excepting the Church, to sing: "*Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . . . and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth*"?*

It will be said that it is a vision. Agreed: but a vision of very substantial facts and of personages who are not fictitious, although they may be presented in a symbolical form. The Lamb, the elders, the living creatures, and the angels, are not themselves symbols, though here they appear under features which are not theirs in reality, but which the vision gives them in order to put us poor creatures, partakers as yet of flesh and blood, in relation with invisible things, and to cause us from afar to be present at the grand scenes which shall usher in the redemption, or rather the deliverance, of the earth. God desires that His children on earth should know what is to happen after these things; as in the second and third chapters he had shown them the different phases presented by the Church, or by that which bears its name on earth, until it is spued out of the mouth of the Lord, and the faithful remnant goes to sup with Him. Then he to whom, as to a type of this remnant, Jesus showed the things which are, is taken up to heaven to behold the things to come. Such is the historic part of the vision. It is evident that the Church is no more on earth; I speak of the faithful. And in effect John finds them again in heaven, under the form of twenty-four elders (a number corresponding to the twenty-four classes of priests and singers established by David for the service of the temple, 1 Chron. xxiv. and xxv.); they have the costume and all the emblems of royalty and of priesthood, and they proclaim their redemption by the blood of the Lamb. *There* is then precisely the Church, the glorified Church, the entire Church, stationed round the throne, which the Holy Spirit presents to us in vision. Oh, if our heart could be absorbed in the contemplation of the marvellous glory which is reserved for us! Oh, if we could realize somewhat upon earth the worship which we here see paid to God and the Lamb, and anticipate the time when we shall be actors in the scene which we now contemplate only in vision and in symbol! What life in our thanksgivings and our praises! What joy in proclaiming the death of the Lord together! What a powerful confession of the rights of Christ to reign over the earth and to possess all things as Lord! For such is what the elders do. In the fourth chapter they cast their crowns at the foot of the throne (the symbol of the sovereign power of God), owning thereby that if they are kings, their authority is but derivative and a fruit of sovereign grace; and they sing the natural rights of Jesus, as Creator, to possess all things. Up to this, save their royal and priestly garments, nothing shows in the elders the character of the Church, properly so called. But in the fifth chapter we hear them sing a new song: "*Thou art worthy to take the book . . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*" Now in heaven there can be none but the Church in these circumstances.

And then remark on what occasion the elders sing this song. It is when it is a question of determining the rights of the Lamb that was slain; to take the book and to open the seals thereof. The book is a sealed roll, like the contract of sale between Jeremiah and Hanameel. (Jer. xxxii.) It is an act which gives to him who can open it the right of taking possession. That which Jesus has as Creator on the earth, He had remitted to man from the beginning, in creating him (Gen. i. 26); but Satan took it away from him, and became master of the earth and of man. By dying, Jesus has already rendered him powerless, and has robbed him of the children in order to bring them to glory. (Heb. ii. 10–15.) But the children once in glory, it is needful, with the view that order should be established, that man should be again put in possession of the earth; for the primitive purpose of God could not be frustrated. Now it is the fifth chapter of the Revelation which shows us the preparations for that work. Here the true Boaz, who is *affianced* to the Church (the marriage is only in chap. xix.), declares that the field, or the world, in which He has found His Betrothed, is going to be taken away from its actual possessor. Who will take it away? Who will be strong enough to drive Satan from here below, and to abolish his unrighteous power? None but He who purchased the Bride and the field, or the world. And it is this which the Church itself, the redeemed Church, proclaims with loud voice. It could not do so if God had not entirely redeemed it; that is to say, if the body were not entirely glorified in the resurrection, which is the day of adoption, namely, the redemption of the body. (Ephes. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 23.) And all this admirably coincides with what follows. Christ having finished with the Church, and having placed it in the mansions of the Father, is occupied with the judgments, which are to put successively all things under His feet. And the opening of the seals is the beginning of these judgments, which, as we have seen, correspond with Matt. xxiv. 4–14. Thus I think with justice that the Church will have been caught up, or perfected, before the fulfilment of this prophecy, so much the more as the rights of Christ to bind Satan can be owned and proclaimed only when this redemption shall be fully accomplished. And this is even more confirmed to my mind by the typical rapture of Enoch before the deluge, which is itself a type of the judgments of the Son of man upon the corrupted earth. But I would not delay upon this point any more than upon Revelation, chap. xii., which also might furnish me with another source of light; because that would draw me too far away, and these besides are not direct proofs of the principle which I am sustaining.

I was for a time stopped by the end of chap. vii. But in examining it a little closely, I could not see the Church in this innumerable multitude, composed of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongue; and here, in few words, are my reasons:—1. Because they are only *before*, or *in presence of*, the throne; while the elders are *around* and even *in* the throne, and nearer God than the angels themselves. (Chap. v. 11.) 2. Their song does not make mention of redemption.* 3. They were very distinct from the elders. 4. They have no mark of royalty or of priesthood. 5. They are simply arranged like the Jews of chap. vi. xi., in white robes. 6. They have branches in their hands, like the people who celebrate the feast of tabernacles. 7. They come out of the great tribulation, through which the Church has the promise not to pass. (Chap. iii. 10.) Briefly, I can see there but Gentiles escaped from the last judgments, and associated with the millennial glory of the Jews. This passage appears to me to be parallel with Isaiah ii. 2–4, and Zech. 13–16, to which may be added Isaiah lx. 5, 6, lxvi. 23, and many other passages in the Psalms. As the benevolence of God toward the Gentiles and His will to save them have been revealed by the death and resurrection of Jesus (Luke xxiv. 46, 47), as the glory of the Church was only manifested by the glorification of Jesus (John vii. 38, 39), so the rights of the Lamb to redeem the field of the Bride will not be really asserted

* [This argument of our brother loses a little of its strength, because it is evident that, in taking account of various readings, unquestionably well founded, here is the way we ought to read the end of this passage or song . . . . "and hast made THEM kings and priests, and THEY reign (or they shall reign) over the earth." Nevertheless, I judge also that it is the Church which sings, the Church which says, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," &c. Then it speaks of the saints on earth, whose prayers they, as a priesthood, presented in verse 8; so that the argument, though a little weakened, is not invalid for all that.—ED.]

* [Here the author might have expressed himself more guardedly. The multitude ascribe their salvation to God and to the Lamb. They are saved; but it is a position inferior to that of the crowned elders who, having the mind of Christ, can enter into all the counsels of God, and sing the special blessedness and title of Christ, as the multitude do not. This remark is made the rather because some have objected strongly to similar expressions in "The Prospect," vol. i., pp. 21-23. Now I take it on me to affirm that neither of these writers would for a moment question that these remnants of Jews or of Gentiles, alluded to in the gospels and in the Apocalypse, are saved on any other ground than that of grace by the blood of the Lamb, and this through faith; while they both hold that in the sovereignty of God there will be differences in the positions of the saved in glory, as there have been differences in His dealings with His saints here below. I trust that so unequivocal a disclaimer of the sentiments imputed repeatedly to one of these dear brethren may be satisfactory, as I think it ought to be, to every upright soul.—ED.]

and proved save when the latter is arrived in the heavenly glory. Then, Satan being driven from heaven, Jesus will begin to make good His rights of Lord of the creation. These are analogies sufficiently striking.

Here is my first source of conviction, as regards the certainty of the glorification or the resurrection of the Church before the signs of the advent promised in Matt. xxiv. I pass to the second, which I have said is to be found in the two epistles to the Thessalonians. These had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 9–10); and their faith, like that of the Romans, was spread abroad for the power which it had in them, a power which sounded out in Macedonia and Achaia. Thus the Thessalonians, as faithful believers, *waited for* the coming of Jesus; it is that which we also ought to do like them (Phil. iii. 20, 21; Rom. viii. 23), and I have no need to insist thereon. Moreover they expected to be delivered from *the wrath to come* by Jesus. Now the wrath to come is not that which is called the second death (Rev. xx. 12–14); but these words refer invariably to the judgments which await the world before the millennium. (See Rev. vi. 16, 17; xi. 18; xiv. 10; xvi. 19.) In Matt. iii. 7 and Luke iii. 7 this expression can only be applied to the temporal judgments upon the Jewish nation, judgments of which 1 Thess. ii. 16 speaks, and which will be literally accomplished in the future upon the nations and the unbelieving Jews. I do not at all deny that the wrath of God is manifested in the second death; but what I affirm is, that nowhere does the eternal judgment bear the name of *the wrath to come.* I read further (1 Thess. v. 9) that God has not appointed us *to wrath*, that is, to suffer the judgment which the *day of the Lord* (the arrival of which is here contemplated by the apostle) will bring upon the unbelieving and ungodly. Thus it is very evident that the faithful will be sheltered from those judgments, and in general from every manifestation, or from every consequence of the wrath of God. They will not participate in the future wrath of God upon the world and the Jews. (Luke xxi. 23.) Now how escape it entirely if they are still on earth? As regards myself, I could not answer any thing scriptural to this question, which moreover I do not propose as an argument. I would only keep to establishing the fact that no manifestation of the wrath of God can reach the children of light, and that, as the Thessalonians believed, they are delivered from it by Jesus. Further, the Thessalonians expected from heaven the Son of God (and not *the Son of man*, Matt. 24), the Son of Him in whom they were, namely, in *God the Father*. They viewed Jesus in their expectation as their Elder-Brother, and not as the Sovereign of the world or the King of Israel. They viewed Him in the promise of John xiv. 2, 3, and not in His character of Jewish Messiah. I believe this distinction important; but I do not insist upon it. In all circumstances they were to expect neither death nor signs, but Jesus. And if they did not hope to be caught up from one day to another, I know not, in truth, how one could call that a waiting for Christ; and above all, I cannot at all understand the language of Paul in chap. iv. 13–18 of this epistle; for it supposes necessarily that the brethren of Thessalonica did not expect to die, but to be taken by the Lord. If any one would but study this close of the chapter, he will be convinced of it. Verses 13, 14: There was sorrow at Thessalonica by reason of those among the brethren who were dead. Paul calms it by the hope that, when the Son will come, the power of God which was shown in the resurrection of Jesus will act for bringing with Christ all the brethren that sleep in Jesus. Verse 15: For by the revelation of the Lord, Paul could tell his brethren, yet living and left behind, that he and they (*we who survive*, literally; or better still, *who remain over*) will not be caught up before the others, or would not depart the first, according to what, as it has been observed, the apostle says also in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Verse 16: For Jesus will descend from heaven with a cry (without doubt the cry at midnight), with the archangel voice (compare John v. 28, 29), and with the trumpet of God (the trumpets served to assemble the people, Numbers x. 1–5); and the faithful who are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth. Verse 17: *Then we who are alive* will be caught up, gathered all together with the Lord. Verse 18: Lastly, Paul exhorts the brethren to draw from within their consolation, and we ought also to find ours there. The coming of Jesus was in the mind of God a distant event; perhaps it is so still. But the *will* of God was eighteen hundred years ago, as to-day, that the faithful should day by day expect it, and Paul does not reason on any other principle. He supposes that the living ones left on earth may not die before the Lord descends, and it is from that very thing he draws his comfort. The Thessalonians, persuaded that Jesus would not delay, were afflicted at seeing their brethren die, not at all knowing that the resurrection and the rapture of the Church were one and the same thing; and Paul consoles them by informing them of it. There was in that a great consolation, of which all those are destitute who believe that they are to die before Jesus comes to seek His disciples. I am convinced then that all this passage is unintelligible if one does not start from the principle that the Thessalonians awaited day by day from heaven Jesus the Son of God, in order to shelter them from the judgments which will fall upon the world because of its wickedness.

In chapter v. Paul speaks of these judgments, to which he will yet again recur in the first chapter of the second epistle. But he would not enter into many details upon this subject and at this time, because the faithful had nothing to fear from all that to themselves, being children of light and appointed not unto wrath, but to the possession of salvation. Some have been pleased to confound *the day of the Lord* with the coming of the Lord, resting upon 2 Peter iii. 1 and following verses; but we are going to see in a moment that the Holy Spirit employs the word *arrival* or *coming* in a general manner, and that this expression ought not to be limited to a single sense, or referred to only one event.

I pass to the second epistle. In the first chapter the apostle, knowing the Thessalonians to be persecuted, presents to them the arrival of Jesus revealed for the judgment of the world and the manifestation of the glory of the Church with Him; for there only will it be publicly seen what the children of God are, and the world will quake with terror at having hated and spurned them. I do not dwell on this, because in it the question is not of the rapture of the Church. The following chapter, on the contrary, is of great importance, and definitely solves the question which I am treating. The Thessalonians were or were not in danger of being "troubled and shaken in their mind," either by some *spirit* who had spoken, or by some other revelation or interpretation, or finally by some supposed letter of the apostle himself, announcing "*that the day of Christ was there.*" Without going further, it is evident, first, that Paul did not believe that the day of Christ was yet there or quite close; secondly, that no more had the Thessalonians so believed; and thirdly, that they were shaken in their mind and troubled by hearing announced the proximity of this day, which without contradiction is the same as that of the Lord. (1 Thess. v. 2.) To confound this last with the rapture of the Church then would be an error; for so far ought the views of this rapture be from troubling the brethren of Thessalonica, nothing on the contrary ought to be more proper to rejoice them, since it was precisely the object of their dearest hope. But it is very evident that, far from confounding those two events, Paul does exactly the opposite: "*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering unto Him, we beseech you, brethren, that ye be not soon shaken in mind.*" In what mind? In that of expecting from the heavens the Saviour, that we all, dead and living, caught up before Him, should be ever with Him. "*Nor be troubled,*" he adds. Troubled by what? By the idea of having to pass through judgments, the outpouring of wrath which is to precede the day of Christ, and of not being taken away from the earth before. For it is precisely this which they were seeking, or they had sought, to make them believe, in order to disturb their faith and turn aside their looks from on high. Now Paul beseeches them not to listen to these spirits or to these reports, and not to receive as coming from him a letter which announced that *the day of the Lord was actually come.** That, I think, is clear enough. The apostle would not that his brethren should be left troubled by the signs which are to prepare the day of the coming of Jesus, nor terrified by the idea of being earthly witnesses of the blows with which He will smite the earth before establishing His kingdom there. But Paul does more than that; he formally declares that the day of Christ is even yet distant, and that to announce any thing else is a *seduction;* because, as he had told while yet present with them, the day of Christ could not *be there* before the manifestation of the man of sin, who is *the*

* See page 166, vol. i.

mystery of iniquity,* in opposition to *the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in flesh*. But this manifestation of antichrist was stayed by an obstacle which the Thessalonians knew, and which would be taken out of the way. I decide nothing as to this obstacle to the grand project of Satan: I believe, or rather I strongly suspect, that it is the presence of the Church on earth, a presence which holds in check the prince of this world.

But however this may be, the day of Christ will not be there before antichrist is revealed; that is evident Now we see the revelation of this monster of ungodliness in Matt. xxiv. 15, where it is placed in the number of the signs which shall precede the advent of the Son of man, or that which Paul calls in this chapter "*the appearing of the coming of the Lord*," in order to distinguish it from *our gathering unto Him*, which is also called *the coming of our Lord*, in the first verse. Thus it results from this chapter that the Church ought not to expect signs of its rapture. If such is not the doctrine of Paul, I entirely give up understanding him. Nay, I do not fear saying that if the apostle had had the design of hindering the Thessalonians from expecting the Lord too soon, he is in contradiction with his first epistle, in which he draws from the proximity of this advent so much comfort for the living believers who mourn the death of their brethren.

These comforts were not given for the Thessalonians only; they regard us also. But in what will they avail us if, instead of seeing our dying brother near being brought back to us in a resurrection, which perhaps may follow his death only a few moments or days after, we are obliged to pass through a crowd of events before resting our mind upon the return of Christ and our gathering unto Him? Is this the intention of the apostle in that which he says upon this subject? I am fully convinced of the reverse, and it is one of the motives which have engaged me to communicate to the brethren that which God has taught me by His word on a subject of grave enough importance practically. I regret having done it in so dry a manner; the subject in itself did not demand it; but in an exposition of principles it is hardly possible to avoid it. I will not close without remarking that the intention of God, it seems to me, has been to show us the rapture of the Church, and to fix its place in the prophetic history at the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, which presents to us the body of Christ introduced into heaven, whence Satan is cast out and descends to the earth, in order to complete there the mystery of iniquity to which the Church, not yet glorified, was an hindrance, as we have seen.

To sum up: I distinguish between the coming or the descent of Christ for the Church, and His appearing in glory for the deliverance of Israel. In the first there is no manifestation of Christ to the world, and the meeting of the saints with Him has place in the air, and not on the earth.

I think that the Church is not at all called to consider the signs of the appearing of *the Son of man*, save so far as God has revealed them to it, and because of many practical principles which may be drawn from them.

I believe that the normal position of the Christian is to be waiting from day to day to be caught up, and to consider as a *seduction* every doctrine which would tend, in one manner or another, to make him set his death (although it is possible that he may die) or signs between the present moment and the arrival of his elder Brother.

Solemn position! May God give us all the joy of it, and make us feel its sanctifying power in detaching us from the world and visible things. Amen! I am, &c., L. B.

THOUGHTS.

Satan tempts the saints to imitate Lot when they ought to imitate Abraham—to have earthly affections in place of heavenly affections.

People say, What harm is there in the well-watered plains of Jordan? Are not they also a gift of providence? I answer, The devil planted Sodom in their midst.

What is done in the flesh is not to the glory of God; it may, thanks to His powerful intervention, turn in the end to His glory; but so far as concerns us it is worth absolutely nothing.

A Christian is a being purchased at a great price, and who has nothing else to do than to glorify God.

* [Does not the chapter intimate that the manifestation of the man of sin was a future enormity, and the mystery of iniquity an evil *already* working? though doubtless the ἄνομος is the zenith of the no longer hidden ἀνομία.—Ed.]

JACOB ALONE WITH GOD.

(Gen. xxxii. 24-32.)

In tracing the history of Jacob, and in contemplating his natural character, we are again and again reminded of the grace expressed in those words, "*Jacob have I loved.*" The question why God should love such a one, can only receive for an answer the boundless and sovereign grace of Him who sets His love upon objects possessing nothing within them; and "who calls things that be not, as though they were; that no flesh should glory in His presence." Jacob's natural character was most unamiable; his name indeed was at once the effusion of what he was, "*a supplanter.*" He commenced his course in the development of this, his disposition; and until thoroughly crushed, as in these verses, he pursued a course of the merest bargain-making. On leaving his father's house he makes a bargain with God "If God," says he, "will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, raiment to put on, so that I come again in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen. xxviii. 20-22.) Here we find him making a bargain with God Himself, the full evidence of what his real character was. Then again, mark him during the period of his sojourn with Laban; see there what plans, what deep-laid schemes to promote his own ends. How plainly it is seen that *self* was the grand object before his mind, in all that he put his hand to. So it is in the course of this thirty-second chapter. He is deeply engaged in plans to turn away the dreaded wrath of his more manly, though badly treated, brother Esau.

But there is one circumstance with regard to Jacob in this chapter which deserves attention. He is seen labouring under the painful effects of a bad conscience, with regard to his brother; he knew that he had acted towards him in a way calculated to call out his anger and revenge, and he is therefore ill at ease at the prospect of meeting him. But *God* had a controversy with Jacob. He had to lead him through a course of education that was to teach him that "all flesh is grass." Jacob thought only of appeasing Esau by a present. True, he turns aside in this chapter to offer up confession, and prays yet, notwithstanding it is manifest that his heart was engaged about his *own* arrangements for appeasing Esau, more than anything else. But God was looking at him in all this, and preparing a salutary course of discipline for him, in order to teach him what was in his heart. For this purpose was "Jacob *left alone*." All his company, arranged according to his own plan, had passed on, and he himself was awaiting this much-dreaded interview with no small degree of anxiety. There is peculiar force in the words, "*Jacob was left alone.*" Thus is it with all who have been trained in the school of God; they have been brought in the stillness and solitude of the divine presence, there to view themselves and their ways where alone they can be rightly viewed. Had Jacob continued amid the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen, he could not by any means have enjoyed the same calm and sober view of himself and his past course as he was led to in the secret of the presence of God. "*Jacob was left alone.*" Oh there is no part of a man's history so important as when he is thus led into the solitude of the divine presence! it is there he understands things which were before dark and inexplicable. There he can judge of men and things in their proper light; there too he can judge of self, and see its proper nothingness and vileness.

In Psalm lxxiii. we find a soul looking abroad upon the world and reasoning upon what he saw there—reasoning to such an extent that he was almost tempted to say it was vain to serve the Lord at all.

In Psalm lxxvii. we find a soul looking *inward*, and reasoning upon what he saw *within*—reasoning to such an extent as to question the continuance of God's grace. What was the remedy in both cases? "*The sanctuary.*" I went into the sanctuary of God; and then understood. So it was with Jacob; his "sanctuary" was the lonely spot where God wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. The careful reader will find that this passage, when taken as it stands, affords no foundation for the popular idea, namely, that it furnishes an instance of Jacob's power in prayer. That no such idea is set forth will at once appear from the expression, "*There wrestled a man with him;*" it is not said that *he* wrestled with the man, which would give an entirely different aspect

to the scene. I believe that, so far from its proving Jacob's power in prayer, it rather proves the tenacity with which he grasped the flesh and the things thereof. So firmly indeed did he hold fast his "confidence in the flesh," that all night long the struggle continued. "The supplanter" held out, nor did he yield until the very seat of his strength was touched, and he was made to feel indeed that "all flesh is grass." Such is the obvious teaching of this very important scripture. Instead of Jacob's patience and perseverance in prayer, we have God's patience in dealing with one who needed to have his "*old man*" crushed to the very dust ere God could make anything of him. This momentous scene gives us the grand turning-point in the life of this extraordinary man. We are here reminded of Saul's conversion: Jacob, with the hollow of his thigh, touched, like Saul, prostrate in the dust between Jerusalem and Damascus. We observe on the one hand the broken fragments of "a supplanter," and the elements of God's mighty "prince;" on the other hand the fragments of a persecutor and injurious one, and the elements of God's mighty apostle. And we may ask, What means the expression, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me"? What but the utterance of one that had made the wondrous discovery that he was "without strength"? Jacob was let into the secret of *human weakness*, and therefore felt that it must be a *divine struggle* or nothing. He thinks no more of his goodly plans and arrangements, his presents to appease my lord Esau. No; he stands withered and trembling before *the One* who had humbled him, and cries, "I will not let *thee* go except thou bless me." Surely this is the gate of heaven! Jacob had, as it were, arrived at the end of *flesh*; it is no longer "*me*," but "*thee*." He clings to Christ as the poor shipwrecked mariner clings to the rock. All self-confidence is gone, all expectations from self and the world blasted, every chain of self-devised security dissolved like a morning cloud before the beams of the sun. All his bargains availed him nothing at all. How miserable must every thing that even he did have seemed to him; yea, even his offer to give a tenth to God, when thus laid in the dust of self-abasement and conscious weakness! The mighty Wrestler says, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." What a striking expression, "Let me go." He was determined to make manifest the condition of Jacob's soul. If Jacob had without delay let go his grasp, he would have proved that his heart was still wrapped up in his worldly plans and schemes; but on the contrary, when he cries out, "I will not let thee go," he declares that God alone was the spring of all his soul's joy and strength; he in effect says, "Whom have I in heaven but *thee?* and there is none upon earth I desire beside *thee;*" or with the twelve in the sixth chapter of John, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Blessed experience! So is it with the poor convicted soul; he may have been trusting in his own righteousness, as Jacob was in his goodly, well-devised plans; he may have been building upon his moral life; but, oh! when once the arrow of conviction has pierced him, has laid open his very soul, and told him *all* that ever he did, he trusts in self *no longer*, but exclaims with Job, "Now mine eye hath seen *thee;* wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." "I will not let *thee* go except thou bless me." Such will ever be the happy effect of a thorough acquaintance with our own hearts. Jacob now gets his name changed; he must not be any longer known as "the supplanter," but as "*a prince*," having *power* with God through the very knowledge of his *weakness;* for "when I am *weak*, then am I *strong*." We are never so strong as when we feel ourselves weak, even as "water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again;" and, on the contrary, we are never so weak as when we fancy ourselves strong. Peter never displayed more lamentable weakness than when he fancied he had uncommon strength: had he felt somewhat of Jacob's happy condition when his sinew shrank, he would have thought, acted, and spoken differently. We should not turn from this passage without at least seeing distinctly what it was that gave Jacob "power with God and with man;" it was the full consciousness of his own nothingness. Who that hearkens for a moment to those precious words, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," and beholds the humbled patriarch clinging closely to the One who had broken him down, can fail to see that Jacob's "*power*" consisted in his "*weakness*"? There is nothing here of Jacob's power in prayer. No; all we see is, first, Jacob's strength in the flesh, and God weakening him; then, his weakness in the flesh, and God strengthening him. This is indeed the great moral of the scene. Jacob was satisfied to go "*halting*" on his journey, seeing he had learned the secret of *true* strength. He was able to move along, using the words afterwards uttered by St. Paul: "I will therefore gladly glory in my *infirmities*, that the *power of Christ* may rest upon me." Yes, "*my infirmities*" on the one hand, and "*the power of Christ*" on the other, will be found to constitute the sum total of the life of a Christian.

I would observe, that there seems to be a marked connection between the spirit of this instructive passage and that of Gal. vi. 16: "As many as walk according to *this rule*, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon *the Israel of God*." What rule? "The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is God's rule It is not "circumcision or uncircumcision, but a new creature." (καινὴ κτίσις.) This is the rule which distinguishes the Israel of God; this the grand distinction between "the supplanters" and "the princes;" the former trust in *the flesh*, the latter "*in the cross*." The Israel of God have ever been identified with weakness in themselves, like Jacob halting along, having the sentence of death written in their flesh. Thus the apostle goes on to say, "From henceforth let no one trouble me; for *I bear in my body* the marks of the Lord Jesus." (στίγματα τοῦ κυρίου.) So did Jacob bear in his "body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Nor was he at all ashamed of them; because, while they were at once the marks of *Jacob's weakness*, they were also the marks of *Israel's strength*. Blessed strength! May we know more and more of it daily! I would only observe in conclusion that Esau was not met by *Jacob*, but by *Israel*, and as a consequence all was peace and sunshine—the difficulty vanishes, the danger disappears. God, who had crushed Jacob's "*old man*," exercised an influence on Esau's mind, else the consequences might have been terrible. How happy it is for us when we can thus meet difficulties at the other side of the cross! Jacob had been *alone* with God, and could therefore be *alone* with Esau.

C. H. M.

STUDIES ON THE REVELATION, FOUNDED ON A LITERAL EXPLANATION OF THIS BOOK.

"Do not interpretations belong to God?"—Gen. xl. 8.

PREFACE.

Dear Readers,

The time is at hand. In proportion as it advances, the study of prophecy acquires a new importance, and believers give themselves up to it with more attention: a light always more living is shed by the Spirit upon the contents of the Revelation. Also, serious and faithful souls who fear the Lord, and who are attentive to His voice, ought to rejoice every time that a brother furnishes them in simplicity with the opportunity of searching again and more profoundly this book of the last days. This is the intention of him who places in your hands these feeble studies, dear brethren in Jesus. I am nothing; I arrogate to myself no authority; I submit simply the fruit of my long and, I dare to say, conscientious researches to the examination of holy brethren.

The route which I have followed in this labour is to me a guarantee that it should procure some gratification. It consists in general of explaining the Revelation only by the word of God, and thus of collecting upon each particular point the greatest number of parallel passages which have importance. I have not discovered this method, of which we have an example quoted with praise in Nehemiah viii. 8; other interpreters before us have sought to apply it to the Revelation. I think it is the only one that can lead to happy and blessed results, Scripture always being the best interpreter of Scripture. There are teachers given of Jesus to the Church (Ephes. iv. 11) who can speak with authority in the instructions which they are commissioned to make known, without having need of resting them continually upon citations of the Word. If I had received from on high so precious a ministry, my explanations would have been briefer and more concise. But, feeble as I am, I have had constantly to take at once for stakes and supports in my route the passages of the Scriptures which the Lord has made me find on my road, without fearing excursions to right and left, or digressions, provided they were more or less directly bound up with my subject.

There has quite naturally flowed from this route the necessity of often making numerous quotations of passages; those of our readers who find them fatiguing, because they painfully interrupt a continuous reading, will please to reflect that in our plan they were indispensable. To cut them off would be to weaken the only

value of those studies—their conformity to Scripture. At least we hope so. Now it is fit that this supreme authority should be verified every moment; but there are few readers able themselves, and without indications, to make researches into scriptural texts; others would not give themselves the trouble or lose the time; while some, designated by the Holy Spirit "more noble" (Acts xvii. 11), loving to search the Scriptures to see whether those things were so, will be happy to see their labour facilitated by finding endorsed here the passages upon which the author rests. Finally, it has been sought to reconcile utility for the readers who seriously study prophecy, with agreeableness for those who read in a manner more rapid or more superficial, referring to the bottom of the pages the greatest number of the citations.*

Lastly, if I put my name to these studies, it is not only to assume to myself all the responsibility of their contents, but still more in the hope that the brethren who may bestow attention to them will make me acquainted with the result of their examination of this work, and the different objections which such a subject cannot fail to create.

That the Lord has been with me in this work, often begun and cast anew, I have no doubt, for it is but from Him alone that blessing comes. May He be also with you, dear reader, who hold in your hands these leaves, to the end that there may be also blessing for you in this reading!

May peace and grace be multiplied to you in awaiting the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE REVELATION.

The most indispensable notions to read this book appears to me to be these:

The first Adam was king and heir of creation. His fall, fruit of the spirit of independence, made him lose both the kingdom and the inheritance, which fell for a time into the hands of the adversary.

The second Adam, by His obedience, vanquished the usurper, and conquered back the kingdom and the inheritance. God gives Him a Spouse who is His co-heir, and will put Him soon in possession of the inheritance.

The Lord Jesus has received an order and a promise: "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (1) The time draws near when this promise shall be executed in a single day; then shall take place the return of the Son of man.

The formation on the earth of the Church, the fulness of Christ, constitutes an intermediate dispensation, during which is exercised the endurance and long-suffering of God towards the world. But this formation may be terminated from one moment to another; and the first chapters of the Revelation speak of it as of a thing which closes, and which, without interrupting earthly events, perhaps slackens their course.

The great object of the Revelation is to describe the progress of the apostacy in the world—its maturity, which will put an end to the long-suffering of God—and the different judgments of God which are to precede the return of Christ as Son of David and seed of Abraham, to restore the kingdom to Israel. (Acts i. 6.)

The Revelation reveals "the mystery of God" to His servants and to the churches; it speaks of the end of the dominion and times of the Gentiles, of the reign of antichrist, and of the introduction of Christ into the habitable earth.

CERTAIN DATA AS TO NUMBERS, CONSIDERED IN THEIR SYMBOLIC MEANING.

ONE is the sign of divinity, so far as God is one. (Rom. iii. 29; Gal. iii. 20; Ephes. iv. 3-8; Heb. ii. 11.)

Two is, according to some, the natural sign of opposition and combat. "Consider the works of the Most High. Two, two. One against one. All things are by couples, one against one." (Ecclesiasticus xxxiii. 16; xlii. 25.) In magic,‡ the number *two* was that of the beings fallen from unity—of the rash and of the wicked. But in Scripture it is not so. Marriage is a true fellowship and a perfect reunion, which completes each of the wedded ones by the other. Jesus sent the twelve two and two. If two of you agree on earth. Two tables of the law. Two witnesses. Two prophets. Two olive trees. Two candlesticks. Two wings. Two hours. "Two are better than one." (Eccles. iv. 9-12.)

THREE is the true number of diversity. The number of union wrought between unity and diversity. (Rev. i. 4; iii. 1; iv. 5; v. 6. Compare Eccles. iv. 12.)

FOUR is the number of the entire world, as created. It is more particularly a number of the things which concern the earth; but, above all, that of humanity reconciled on earth. Four monarchies. Four winds of the earth. Four corners of the earth. Four angels. (Zech. i. vi.; Dan. vii. viii.; Rev. vii.)

This number and the number three offer two divisions of the number seven, ordinarily distinct enough in the Revelation.

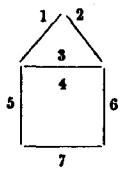
FIVE is a number relatively small (Lev. xxvi. 8. Compare Josh. xxiii. 10; Isa. xxx. 17); as, following the number four and preceding the number six, it tends to an accomplishment.

SIX is a number which in two remarkable cases completes the exterior and interior evil before the purification takes place. (Lev. xii. 5; Rev. xiii. 18.) This number is, as it were, a signal which announces what follows definitely.

SEVEN refers in the Old Testament to moral relations—sanctification, salvation, peace, joy. The seventh month had three feasts. The sabbath was the seventh day. The seventh year was the year of release. The jubilee returned at the end of seven times seven years. The sprinklings were seven times. This number is composed of three and four by addition, by superposition, and forms thus an indivisible whole, composed of the two figures of which one is that of divinity, the other that of creation. The expression of God's alliance with His people. The number of perfection, of interior fulness. God and humanity met in one.

There is a great difference between seven and twelve. Seven is composed of three *plus* four; it is an addition, an intimate fusion. Twelve is composed of four multiplied by three. It is a multiplication—a blessing of the inferior by the superior.

If we examine the number seven, traced by lines which form a triangle laid down upon a square, it will be seen that the whole forms only six lines, describing a solid edifice, in which the numbers three and four are confounded.



Seven indicates in the New Testament fulness, perfection, harmony.

There are in the Revelation seven epistles to seven churches, seven candlesticks, seven stars, seven angels, seven spirits, seven eyes, seven horns, seven lamps, seven years, seven attributes in praise, seven thunders, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials.

Every number seven, when broken in pieces, is divided into three and four, or into four and three; the point of division being always indicated in one manner or another, without altering the whole.

Every number seven of the seals and trumpets offers this remarkable circumstance, that it contains in itself a new development of seven other things. And it is by the seven vials that the wrath of God is fulfilled. That gives twenty-one species of judgments, or seven multiplied by three. It is blessing, the result of the intervention of God.

Satan employs this number in his counterfeits. (xii. 3.)

EIGHT is four *plus* four. The reunion of the exterior and interior world, of the intellectual and corporeal world; but in action and reaction. Circumcision took place on the eighth day. (Luke ii. 21.) The prolonged feasts were generally of eight days. The eighth day, the next day after the sabbath, is always that of resurrection. The leper was reinstated the eighth day. (Lev. xiv. 23.) It is the first day of the new week, the *millennium*.

NINE is a number which never appears to be employed symbolically. Being a multiple of three, it would signify divinity blessed by itself, or by something superior, which is impossible. (The ninth hour was that of prayer. Acts iii. 1; x. 30.)

* [Here follows a portion referring to a literal translation of the book, which, with the translation itself, is omitted here, as recently a similar version was printed in *The Prospect*.—ED.]

(1) That is, until the moment when I shall make. (Ps. cx. 1; Acts ii. 35, 36; Heb. ii. 8; x. 12, 13.)

‡ [I regret these allusions to the Apocrypha and magic, which, besides, are hardly in accordance with the preface.—ED.]

TEN is the number of fulness manifested in the exterior world, just as seven is the number of interior fulness. (1 Chron. xxviii. 15; 2 Chron. iv. 7, 20, 21; 1 Kings vii. 49; compare 43.) The number of exterior universal fellowship. Inasmuch as it is the number of exterior fulfilment, Satan employs it also in his counterfeits. (Rev. xii. 3; xiii. 1; compare ii. 10.)

ELEVEN has no employment in prophecy. As formed of seven and four, this last figure, added to that of perfection, gives an incomplete result, for it is not the blessing of the number twelve, nor the exterior fulness of the number ten. In the moral point of view, Matt. xx. 6 gives a precise and very solemn meaning to this number, which was that of the apostles after the end of Judas. (Acts i. 26.)

TWELVE is four multiplied by three. The number announcing earthly fulness. The blessing of humanity and the material world There are twelve hours in the day (John xi. 9), twelve tribes, twelve apostles. Multiplication is a blessing of the superior on the inferior, which lets these differences subsist, but which presents not the intimate fusion of addition which I have remarked in number seven. The numbers four, twelve, and its multiples twenty-four, and an hundred and forty-four thousand, express, for the things grouped under these figures, a character of blessing in connection with the redemption of the world.

DIVISION OF THE BOOK.

This division is given by the Lord Himself, in verse 19 of the first chapter.

PART I.

"The things which thou hast seen." (i. 1-18.) Introduction—preface—praise—*mise en scène*—Jesus, the God-man, the Mediator.

PART II.

"The things which are." (i. 20 to iii. 22.) The seven churches—Jesus, Sovereign, Judge and Prophet, in their midst.

PART III.

"And the things which must happen after these." (iv. 1 to xxii. 6.)

The third part is subdivided into four circles of visions.

A.

Chapters iv. v. vi—Chapters iv. and v. make but one. They show us the heavenly temple, and things which will transpire in heaven from the moment when prophecy will commence to run its course of fulfilment. Songs sung by different choirs precede the seven seals.

Chapter vi. is a heavenly mirror. The six first seals broken bring us to the dawn of the great day of the wrath of the Lamb.

B.

Chapters vii. and viii.—Introduction to the seventh seal. Chapter vii. describes a halt, which introduces this second subdivision. The seventh seal will only be opened after the finishing of the providential preparatives which are going to take place. There are Jewish and earthly first-fruits which must be set apart for the return and reign of Christ. (1-8.) The remainder (9-17) is an anticipative vision of the sufferers of the great tribulation, which were foreseen at the opening of the sixth seal. Heavenly scene in the halt.

Chapter viii. is the halt *in heaven:* silence like that which precedes the storm. The six preceding seals have shown the final consequences of the oblivion in which man has put his dependence on God. Satan has triumphed because of this oblivion. God having caused to be proclaimed intelligibly His desire to resume His rights as Creator and Sovereign, will no more abandon men to the course of their own thoughts.

The four monarchies are smitten with warning judgments, more direct than the general calamities of the six preceding seals. (6-13.)

Announcement of the three last woes, or three last trumpets. The wrath of the Lamb, foreseen under the sixth seal, is about to intervene. (13.)

C.

Chapters ix. x. xi.—End of the history of the purification of the kingdom. The end of this purification is only predicted.

First woe. (ix. 1-11.) Second woe. (ix. 12-21.)

Scene in Judea. (x. 1; xi. 14.)

The Revelation always supposes the mass of Israel unconverted until the return of Christ. There will be a sort of resurrection of the nations that issued out of the confusion of Babel, and a gathering of these nations round Jerusalem, at the end of the age. (x. 11; xi. 21; xix. 19.)

The last prophetic appeal. Joy and preparations after the investiture of the Son in heaven. (xi. 15-18) This is linked with the nineteenth chapter, where, all being ready, the train is put in march for victory and the resumption of the kingdom.

D.

Chapters xi. 19-xxi.—Chapter xi. 19 announces the *manifested* renewing of the eternal covenant. Chapter xii is the heavenly centre of the third part, or prophetic part, properly so called. Chapter xiii. is its diabolic centre. Chapters xvii. xviii. are details and commentaries on this mystery of iniquity, and these last chapters interrupt the general narration to come back again on a certain point of view of the whole.

Chapters xii. xiii. xvii. xviii. may be read by themselves.*

Chapter xiv. 1-5, the Jewish earthly election, kept to itself.

Verses 6-13, the last warning. Verses 14-20, the heavenly prologue.

Chapter xv., the title is very clear. The seventh trumpet has sounded in vain. The outpouring of the seven bowls is *going to take place.*

Chapter xvi., God is alone against all. End of the wrath of God and the Lamb.

Chapters xvii. xviii., the mystery of iniquity.

Chapters xix. xx., the end of this age. The entrance of the world to come, or palingenesis, of which the millennium is only the first day.

Chapter xix. describes the combat of the great God Almighty, which is, as it were, the end of the day of His wrath. Chapter xx. speaks of the first resurrection, the reign of a thousand years and eternal judgment, and the final submission of all things to the Christ of God.

E.

Chapters xxi.-xxii. 6 is the world to come reconciled. The consummation.

Chapters xxii. 6 to the end is the conclusion of the book. Those who read should profit by it.

DWELLERS ON EARTH.

IT is both a happy and a safe place to be an inquirer. Happy, because it keeps the soul in direct intercourse with the Lord, for we must inquire in His temple; safe, because His word will be regarded as that which is to search and guide us, rather than as a subject for the speculation of our minds. But we are naturally prone to be impatient of the place of inquirers, and readily fall in with a theory which, though it may embody great features of truth, hinders the direct application of the truth to our consciences and affections.

Whilst we are thus impatient of inquiring in the temple in the attitude of worshippers, we are no less impatient of inquiring among ourselves. Self-confidence will lead a few to dogmatize; while, to save the trouble of thinking and judging for themselves, the many will follow on in the wake of dogmatic teaching. The result is opposing theories, and then all the help which one might afford another is lost. When Christians, with the single desire of ascertaining the mind of God, have inquired one of another, as in His presence, concerning the meaning of Scripture, how many a crude thought has been shaped, how many a precious thought has been disentangled, while some imaginative mind has perhaps been checked in carrying out a particular truth beyond its limit; and

* I would not say that it is useful to do so, but I would only give an analytical notion of the book.

thus have "hearts been knit together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding;" all have been edified, all have been comforted. And can we only say that such things were? May the Lord, in His abounding grace over all our sin, grant to us in His own time such profit and refreshment again!

I would now desire briefly to inquire as to the expressi n, "they that dwell on the earth," which so frequently occurs in the Revelation. Is it to be understood as applied universally, or within certain geographical limits, or as expressing the moral condition of a class?

The following are the passages in the Revelation in which the expression occurs:

1. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them *that dwell upon the earth.*" (iii. 10.)

2. "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them *that dwell on the earth?*" (vi. 10.)

3. "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, *to the inhabiters of the earth* by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (viii. 13.)

4. "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that *dwell upon the earth* shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them *that dwelt on the earth.*" (xi. 9, 10)

5. "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and *ye that dwell in them.* Woe *to the inhabiters of the earth* and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." (xii. 12.)

6. "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, *and them that dwell in heaven.* And it was given him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And *all that dwell upon the earth* shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (xii. 6-8.)

7. "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth *the earth and them which dwell therein* to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them *that dwell on the earth* by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying *to them that dwell on the earth*, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." (xiii. 12-14.)

8. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that *dwell on the earth*, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (xiv. 6, 7.)

9. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, *and the inhabitants of the earth* have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (xvii. 1, 2.)

10. "And they *that dwell on the earth* shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." (xvii. 8.)

In reading these passages, there is a great deal to intimate that they do express the moral condition of a class. In the original, the participle is invariably used, whether our translators have rendered it "them that dwell on," or "inhabiters of, the earth." This of itself is presumptive evidence that the expression has reference to quality; *i.e.* that there is a certain class of persons largely introduced into the scene of the Revelation characterized as "dwellers on the earth." This presumption is greatly strengthened by the dwellers on earth being found in contrast with another class also mentioned in the Revelation, "dwellers in heaven" (or literally, "tabernaclers in heaven"). "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and *them that dwell in heaven*"—literally, "tabernacle in heaven" (Rev. xiii. 6); and then follow in verse 8, "And *all that dwell upon the earth* shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." We have indeed in this passage heaven and earth *locally* contrasted; but is there not a moral contrast between the two classes also—heaven giving its impress to those who tabernacle there, and earth its impress to the dwellers thereon?

But this is not a point to be settled philologically, which is rarely satisfactory to the spiritual mind. It will often be found at fault; when dependence on the Holy Ghost, as a present guide into all truth, will furnish the internal evidence for a solid and sound interpretation.

The expression "inhabiters of the earth" cannot well be regarded as *universal*, because we find the expression, "people, kindreds, tongues, and nations," and in close connection, yet not synonymous with it. "*And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations* shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And *they that dwell upon the earth* shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because those two prophets tormented them *that dwelt on the earth.*" (See also xiii. 6-8; xiv. 6, 7.)

Is the expression to be strictly limited geographically? for that there is a special local sphere, in which the closing scene of the Revelation is laid, is apparent to many. Moreover, that by "the earth," in Revelation, is meant what we regard as the civilized world—that special geographical sphere into which the light has come, and at least externally *remained*, however it really may have become darkness—is readily conceded. But in allowing all this, the several passages in the Revelation where the expression "them that dwell on the earth" occurs will be found easily to bear a moral meaning, viz., a class who, with all the outward profession of the light, acknowledging even the truth of the testimony in the word of God, both to the present grace of the gospel and to the coming judgment on the world, nevertheless *have their interests exclusively on the earth.* There may be an actual crisis, as undoubtedly there will be, when this will be clearly manifested; yet, as a principle, it is one of the deepest practical importance to recognize the light in which "dwellers on the earth" are regarded by God.

The two great subjects of the testimony of the Holy Ghost are the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. When these two connected truths are received into the soul by the teaching of the Spirit, they necessarily sever it from the absorbing power of earthly interests. Take the cross, for example. "They are enemies to the cross of Christ who *mind* earthly things." On the other hand, take the resurrection. "If ye then be risen with Christ . . . *set your affections* (the same as *mind* in the former quotation) on things above, not on things on the earth." (Col. iii.)

The great *morale* of the gospel, if I may so speak, is heaven as a present enjoyable reality, as the home of our affections, the centre of our interests. This is indeed a wondrous truth; but how little do we know the power of it in our souls! The characteristic of our present calling is, that it is "heavenly." We are addressed as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Our true tabernacle is in heaven; our only Priest is in heaven. The epistle to the Hebrews sets forth the heavenly worship, which faith alone can recognize in direct contrast with earthly worship, which the senses could recognize. The priest of the Jews was a visible person, the sacrifices tangible objects, the temple a material structure: all beautiful and orderly, and suitable to the system with which God Himself had connected them; but to faith they are mere shadows of glorious and abiding realities. The heart of man naturally lingers about the shadows; and the full-blown evil of the Judaizing tendency, with which the apostle dealt so sternly, is now become habitual to the thoughts of Christians, and has helped to form the characteristic of "dwellers on the earth." Judaism has been taken as the pattern of what men call Christianity; and thus Christianity itself is regarded as a mere improvement or refinement of Judaism, instead of being regarded as the apostle regards it, as its direct contrast. "The new piece has been added to the old garment, and the rent is become worse." "The new wine has been put into old bottles," and all its raciness is gone.

But to turn again to our calling. We are exhorted to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called. (Eph. iv. 1.) This implies the knowledge of our "calling." It is a "high calling." The word rendered *high* is the same as that rendered *above* in Col. iii.: "Set your affections on things *above*, not on things on the earth." This explains its meaning; we are called of God from beneath to above, from earth to heaven. We are locally and bodily on this earth and in this world, yet we belong not to either; even as the Lord Himself said of us when here: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Hence also the pilgrim and stranger character of the saint; heaven is his home, though actually he is away from it; and, oh, that we as ardently desired to be with Christ where He is, as He desires to have us with Him! So entirely is heaven regarded as our home, that the apostle, in speaking of those whom God by His grace had quickened, affirms them to be "raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ." God *has* done this for us, however feeble our apprehension may be of its blessedness. The only place, as it were, in which we can now sit down and take a calm survey of all around us, is *heaven*. "Our conversation," rather our citizenship, "is in heaven;" and this is stated in a passage in contrast with "minding earthly things." (Phil. iii.) It is from heaven too that we "look for *the Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." "Dwellers upon the earth" can only regard Christ as coming in the character of a *Judge*. It must necessarily be so, because the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth is invariably represented in Scripture as coming in judgment, in order to introduce righteousness and blessing into the earth. The popular thought of Christ's coming is in judgment. This indeed is a truth, and a most important one; but it quite overlooks, and, as it were, overleaps the great truth of Christ's coming with respect to His elect Church, which will not be in judgment, but in deliverance. He comes not to the earth, but He meets the Church in the air. He comes to receive the Church unto Himself, that where He is His elect Church may be also. We then, as "heavenly," wait for the Saviour (not the Judge) from heaven. We then "wait for the Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." If by faith we take our place as tabernacling in heaven, such a distinctive hope appears to us as suitable as it is blessed. But if, declining from our high calling, we settle on the earth, then Christ's coming can only be the expectation of dreaded judgment; for the great event of Christ's coming must necessarily take its character from the point from which we look at it, from heaven or from earth. The day of the Lord, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, is invariably connected with the thought of judgment on the earth.

The consideration of the peculiarity of our calling and the distinctiveness of our hope will very naturally lead us to consider the expression, "those that dwell on the earth," as characteristic. Moralists, philanthropists, and politicians, all recognize something valuable in Christianity, and use it as helpful to their own ends; and thus has Christianity been dragged down from its lofty eminence, till almost all that is distinctive is lost amidst so many elements which are foreign. The long-continued attempt to apply Christianity to the world merely as an aid to its civilization has led to the loss of even the theory of the Church. And if things progress in this line, I can readily believe that nothing will be so offensive to "the dwellers on the earth" as the assertion of the peculiar privileges and special hope of the Church.

PRESBUTES.

THE FOUR-AND-TWENTY ELDERS AND THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES.

[A brother writes begging the insertion of the following remarks as helpful, in his judgment, to show, first, that the Church is in heaven, from Rev. iv; and secondly, that the living creatures are "seraphim.'—ED.]

LET us compare the description given of these "living creatures" in Rev. iv. 7, 8 with that which is given in Ezek. i. 5–10, and in Ezek. x, where they are several times called "*cherubim*." Also with Isa. vi. 2, 3, where they are called "*seraphim*."

And it is a question which we shall now inquire into, whether "cherubim" and "seraphim" are not *two* distinct orders of angelic beings.

I desire very briefly to notice one or two points of similarity and dissimilarity.

In Rev. iv. it would seem that each "living creature" had but *one* face; "the first like a lion, the second like a calf," &c. But in Ezek. i. it says distinctly, "every one had *four* faces."

Again, in Rev. iv. it is said, "each had *six* wings." But in Ezek. i. it says, "every one had *four* wings."

Now, in Isa. vi., of the "*seraphim*" it is said, "each one had *six* wings," corresponding with the description in Rev. iv.

And again, in Rev. iv. it is said, "they rest not day and night, saying, *Holy, holy, holy*, Lord God Almighty;" and in Isa. vi. the "seraphim" cry, "*Holy, holy, holy*, is the Lord of hosts," marking another correspondency between them and the "living creatures" of Rev. iv.

Thus then it stands: the angelic beings of Rev. iv. are called "four living creatures," and the "*cherubim*" of Ezek. i. and x. are also called "four living creatures." But there is not, as we have seen, an *exact* correspondency in the further description given of them.

In Isa. vi. the "*seraphim*" are not minutely described, but what *is* said of them corresponds exactly with what we find in Rev. iv.; each having "*six* wings," and their cry in each place being, "*Holy, holy, holy*."

Hence I conclude that "the four living creatures" of Rev. iv. are "*seraphim*," an order of angelic beings somewhat similar to "*cherubim*."

"The difference marked in Scripture, as far as I can yet see, between the "*cherubim*" and the "*seraphim*" (*i.e.* cherubs and seraphs) is this: the "cherubim" are spoken of as acting for God on earth, *providentially* as we may say. They are first spoken of in Gen. iii. as guarding the way to the tree of life, after man's sin; then, when the tabernacle in the wilderness was built, figures of them are formed of *gold* (observe, *according to God's command*, otherwise it would have been idolatry—see Exod. xx. 4), and their wings covered the mercy-seat. In the Psalms it is said of Jehovah, evidently alluding to the mercy-seat, He sitteth "*between the cherubim*" (Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1); and in Ps. xviii. 10, "He rode upon a *cherub*;" denoting, as I conceive, a manifestation in providential deliverance (see verse 17), in which deliverances angelic beings have much more to do than many of us imagine. (See Heb. i. 14, which may be applied to *any order* of angelic beings, except the fallen ones.* And in Ezek. i. x. the "*cherubim*," as I judge, are spoken of in connection with God's providential dealings with Israel.

The "*seraphim*," from what we find recorded in Isa. vi. concerning them, seem to be more engaged in *adoration* than active service on earth. Their *continual* cry is, "*Holy, holy, holy*."

I think that this will be satisfactory proof to most minds that the "four living creatures" of Rev. iv. do not represent "*the Church*." But that the "four-and-twenty elders" do, I feel fully persuaded. Their *clothing* ("white raiment"), their *title* ("kings and priests"), their *song* (redemption by *blood*), and their *number* ("twenty-four"), as we shall see, all prove it.

The Church's song on earth, in Rev. i. 5, 6, harmonizes exactly with the elders' song in heaven. (Rev. v. 9, 10.) This of itself is sufficient to establish their identity. But there are one or two more considerations which I think are weighty.

The first is this: it cannot mean that exactly *twenty-four* redeemed ones are to be in glory; for they say in their song, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood *out* of *every* kindred, tongue, people, and nation." Now this corresponds precisely with the *elect* character of "*the Church*," as gathered *out* of *all* nations, &c. It is therefore a symbolical number, and represents the *whole* Church.

And this is further corroborated by the fact that this number, "twenty-four," is composed of *two twelves*. Now we are all aware

* It will not be uninteresting to students of the word of God, to remark that there is much in Ezek. xviii. which would lead us to conclude that Satan was one of the "cherubim" before he fell.

See verses 14, 15, 17: "Thou art the anointed *cherub* that covereth. . . . . Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . . Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness," &c.

By carefully reading the whole passage, it will be clearly seen that it has primarily direct reference to the king of Tyre, who had lived apparently in all eastern magnificence; but I think that there is also direct reference to the fall of Satan, as a fall without temptation, corrupted by his own beauty and brightness.

And this is by no means an uncommon method of speaking in the Scriptures; as for instance, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" refers primarily in the prophecy of Hosea to *Israel*, but in the gospel by Matthew we find it applied to *Christ*.

So Ezek. xxviii. refers, I judge, primarily to the king of Tyre, but is in its chief points applicable to Satan.

that in Scripture language *twelve* is a perfect or complete number. The symbol then is easy: *a perfect number* from among the *Jews*, and *a perfect number* from among the *Gentiles* (*two twelves*), form the *one* Church. And thus we have it represented in the "four-and-twenty elders."

And this interpretation is, I think, strengthened by Rev. xxi. 12, 14, where the *twelve* gates of the "New Jerusalem" are spoken of as having on them the names of the *twelve* tribes of *Israel*, and the *twelve* foundations as having in them the names of the *twelve* apostles of the *Lamb*.

SANCTIFICATION, WITHOUT WHICH THERE IS NO CHRISTIANITY.

(1 Peter i.)

There is something very sweet in the certainty with which the apostle Peter presents to us the truths contained in this epistle. There is neither hesitation nor uncertainty. The word speaks of things received, of a certainty for those to whom it is addressed. Their faith was tried, but the thing was certain. The apostle speaks here of an inexhaustible fund of truths which belonged to him; and it is not as one groping in the dark that he speaks of it. These things are too important to be left in doubt; they deserve all our attention; our hearts need it. It is not the unregenerate heart that loves the Lord Jesus; one may be brave and all that, and think that if one's conduct is good, the result in heaven will be accordingly, but therein is no love for the Lord Jesus. And that is the badge of the *Christian*.

The apostle says, in the eighth verse: "Whom (Christ) not having seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now, there is no such thing as that without regeneration, which is a new life, which has an object which pre-occupies it. It is an entirely new life, which has interests, affections—quite a new world, and without that there is no *Christian*, because there is not Christ.

We will now see the two principles laid down in this chapter, and in the work here attributed to the Holy Spirit.

God finds the soul in a certain position, in certain relations, and removes it to place it in quite a new state; and this separation is according to the power of the resurrection of Christ.

The apostle speaks to the Jews of the dispersion (that is, to those of whom it is spoken in John vii. 35, those dispersed among the Greeks) in these words: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," &c. He addressed himself to the dispersed, to the Jews converted to Christianity, to those who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace and peace, &c. He says this because he is speaking of another election than that of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation was elected after another manner. Here he writes, as we said, to Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus; so that sanctification in them was not sanctification of a nation by outward means, but by the Holy Spirit, who separated the souls from among the Jews, to belong to God, and to form a part of the present dispensation of grace. It was not with them as with the ancient Jews, who were separated from the Egyptians by the Red Sea: they were separated by the sanctification effected by the Holy Spirit. Observe particularly this word *sanctification*: the first idea is separation for God, not only from evil, but a setting apart for God, who sanctifies.

This is what God does in those whom He calls. God finds souls lying in evil. John, on this subject, says in his first epistle, chap. v. verse 19: "We are *of God*, but the whole world lieth in wickedness;" and it is very precious to have things clearly stated. "We are of God;" it is not merely that we should conduct ourselves aright; doubtless, that is well, but the great difference is, that we are of God, and that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Does that mean that we are always as we should be? No; but we are of God. One is not all one would desire to be; that will come to pass only in heaven; for it is only there that God will make us conformed to the image of His beloved Son.

But this is what God has done: He has separated us to Himself, as a man who hews stones out of a quarry. The stone is hewn out of the quarry and set apart, destined to be cut and fashioned, in order to be placed in the appointed building. And God detaches a soul from the quarry of this world, to separate it for Himself. I say not but that there is much to do, for a rough stone cut out of the quarry requires often considerable labour before it is placed in the building for which it is destined. Even so God separates, prepares, and fashions this soul, to introduce it into His spiritual building. There are many useless matters to take off, but God acts every day in His grace; howsoever, this soul is sanctified, set apart for God, from the moment it is taken out of the quarry of this world.

The apostle speaks here of sanctification before he mentions obedience and the blood of Jesus Christ. We are sanctified for these two things. (Verse 2.) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. He takes us out of the quarry of this world to place us under the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The stone is entirely His, and adapted to His purpose. Although He has yet to work upon it, the question is not of what He does each day, but generally of the appropriation to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who acts in the soul, and appropriates it to Himself. It may previously have been very honourable or very wicked in its conduct, that is all the same; only it will be more grateful, if it feels itself more evil; but as to its former condition that matters little, it belongs now to God.

To what does God destine this soul? To obedience. Up to this period it has done little but its own will; it has followed its own way, no matter what appearances may have been, more or less good, more or less bad; it is all one. The character may have been weak, or more or less fiery, until, as with Paul, the Lord arrested him on his road: now behold this soul, hitherto filled with its own will, set apart for obedience.

Paul had been very learned in what concerned the religion of his fathers; he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He honestly believed that he had done the will of God, but there was nothing of the kind; he followed his own will, according to the direction impressed by the tradition of his fathers. Never, till the moment that Jesus stopped him on the way to Damascus, had he said, "Lord, what *will thou* have me to do?"

Thus, whatever may have been the conduct of a soul before this setting apart, nothing of all that has made it do the will of God. But the aim of the life of a soul sanctified, set apart, is to do the will of God. It may fail, but that is its aim. Jesus said: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He had no need of sanctification, in one sense, because He was holy; but the aim of His whole life was obedience. Here I am to do thy will, O God. He took the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He existed only for God; the principle of His life was obedience. He was come to do nothing but His Father's will.

As soon as a soul is sanctified, it is sanctified unto obedience, and that is manifested by the spirit of dependence which has done with its own will. It says: "What must I do?" It may fail, through weakness, in many respects, but that is its aim.

As to the second thing, we are sanctified to enjoy the sprinkling of blood; first, to obedience, then to enjoy the sprinkling of blood. The soul, thus placed under the influence of the blood of Christ, is thereby completely cleansed. The blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; it is by the efficacy of His blood that we are separated from this world.

The question here is not of the blood of bulls and goats, which could not sanctify the conscience of him who did the service, but it is the blood of Christ, who, by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. It is this blood which purifies the conscience.

The Jews, under the law, said indeed, trusting to their own strength, We will do all that thou hast spoken. They undertook to do every thing when it was prescribed to them as a condition. But here it is much more; it is the Spirit that makes them say: "What *wilt thou* have me to do?" It is submission, it is the principle of obedience, really produced in the heart: "I know not what thou wilt, but here am I to do thy will." It is obedience without reserve. There is no question here of rules that man cannot accomplish, but of the whole will changed, no more to do one's own will, but to do God's will.

The book of the law was sprinkled, as well as the people; but that gave its efficacy to the requisitions of the law, while the

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus gives to the changed heart the purification and the peace which belong to those who are placed under the efficacy of His blood. We are placed there as the Jews were under the blood of the goat of atonement, not however for a year only, but for ever.

As to a soul, then, that the Holy Spirit has hewn out of the quarry of this world, being honest, amiable, kept by the good providence of God, but withal doing its own will—well, God has found it there in the world and of the world, notwithstanding all its good qualities, and He has to put His love in its heart, in order that it may, without hesitation, only care about the will of God to do it. But, thus separated, it is under the blood of sprinkling, it is cleansed from all its sin.

That is the first principle; the separation wrought by God Himself, who places us outside of this world, or rather of the things of this world, and makes us Christians; without this there is no Christianity.

God acts effectually; He does nothing by halves, and that is all His work. God does not deceive Himself. He must have realities. He does not deceive Himself as we deceive ourselves, and as we try to deceive others, although we deceive others less than we deceive ourselves.

I would point out to you the meaning of the word sanctification; it is rarely used in the Scriptures, in the sense in which we generally use it, that is to say, in the progressive sense. It is only three times spoken of in this sense. It is said: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness (*sanctification*), without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.) "The very God of peace *sanctify* you wholly." (1 Thess. v. 23.) I quote these two passages to show that I do not set aside this sense of the word; but it more particularly designates an act of separation, a setting apart for God. If we have not laid hold of this meaning, there will be an entire mistake as to what sanctification is. In the two above quoted passages, the word has an every-day application. In the sense in which it is used by the apostle, in the beginning of this epistle, it is perfectly in the sense of taking a stone out of the quarry of this world to fashion it for God. Sanctification is attributed to the Father in more than one place in the Bible. (See Heb. x. 10.) Now, it is by this will that we are sanctified; by the offering made once of the body of Jesus Christ. It is by this will of God that we are sanctified.

1. There is the first thought, the will of God, which is, to set us apart (to sanctify us).

2. And the means,—It is the offering of Christ.

And it is always, with scarcely more than one exception, which we have already quoted, in this manner that it is spoken of in the Hebrews. Sanctification is attributed to God the Father in another passage also, Jude 1.

The Father having willed to have children for Himself, the blood of Jesus does the work, and the Holy Spirit comes to accomplish the counsels of the Father, and to give them efficacy by producing the practical effect in the heart. The soul separated from the world is sanctified by that very fact. There is the old trunk which pushes forth its shoots, but God acts in pruning; and His acting, which takes place by the Holy Spirit, works the daily practical sanctification. The heart is each day more and more set apart. It is not like a vase, because in man it is the heart which is set apart. Thus, when life is communicated, and thereby the man is sanctified, there is a daily work of sanctification which applies to the affections, to the habits, to the walk, &c.

Let us see how God does this. (Verse 3.)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Such is the way He does it. God sets us apart for Himself. It is not by modifying what was bad in us, but by creating us anew; by making afresh a new creature, for the old man cannot be made subject to the law. He gives a new life.

If one be not thus (born anew), one belongs yet to the world, which is under condemnation; but when God acts, it is altogether another thing. Being born in Adam, we have need to be born by Christ. When the heart is visited by the Holy Spirit, it is regenerated by a life which is not of this world, which urges it to another end—Christ. It is not by precepts addressed to the old man; it is by another life. The precepts follow afterwards; that is to say, that this life of which we speak, which is regeneration, belongs not to this world, neither in its source, nor in its aim; it cannot have one single thing in common with the old life. This life is found here below in the body; we eat, work, &c., as before; but that is not what Christ came for. Christ came to make us comprehend quite another thing from the life here below, into which He entered. And that is the rule of the Christian's conduct. He has for object, for aim, and for joy, what Christ has for object, aim, and joy; his affections are heavenly, as those of Christ.

If the life of Christ is in me, the life and the Spirit of Christ in me cannot find joy in that wherein Christ finds not His joy.

The Spirit of Christ in me cannot be a different spirit than it was in Him; and it is evident that he who is separated from this world, *for God*, cannot find pleasure in the life of sin of this world, and prefer it to that of heaven.

We know well that the Christian often fails in this rule, but that hinders not that there is nothing in common between the life of heaven and that of the world. It is not a question of prohibitions as to using this or that, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, and joys; and it is, on that account, people imagine that Christians are sad, as if they were absorbed by only one thought. It is that our joys are altogether different from those of the world; the world knows not our joys.

No unregenerate person can comprehend what renders the Christian happy, that is to say, that his tastes are not for the things of this world. His thoughts rise higher. This is the joy of the Christian, that Christ is entered into heaven, and has Himself destroyed all that could have hindered us from entering there.

Death, Satan, and the wicked spirits, have been conquered by Christ, and the resurrection has annihilated all that was between Him and the glory. Christ placed Himself in our position. He underwent the consequences of it. He has conquered the world and Satan. It is written, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you:" if he is already conquered, we have not to conquer him, but to resist him. When we resist him, he knows he has met Christ, his conqueror. The flesh does not resist him. Jesus gives us a lively hope by His resurrection from the dead; in this way, and being in Him, we are on a foundation which cannot fail.

Christ has already shown that He has won the victory; and what grace is here presented to us! even that of obtaining "the inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God through faith," &c.

This treasure is in heaven. I have nothing to fear, it is in perfect safety. But this is what I fear as to myself, temptations, all sorts of difficulties, for I am not in heaven. That is true, but what gives every security, is not that we are not tried or tempted, but that we are kept in the trial here below, as the inheritance is kept in heaven for us.

Here is the position of the Christian, set apart by the resurrection of Christ, and regenerated. It is that, in waiting for the glory, we are kept by the power of God, through faith, separated from the world by the power and communication of the life of Him who has won the victory over all that could have hindered us from having a part in it. And why are these trials sent to us? It is God who works the soil, in order that all the affections of the heart, thus sifted, may be purified and exercised, and perfectly in harmony with the glory of heaven, and with the objects which are set before us.

Is it for naught that gold is put in the furnace, or because it is not gold? No; it is to purify it. God, by trials, takes out of our hearts that which is impure, in order that when the glory arrives we may enjoy it.

Let us see a little what the apostle says on this subject. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Whereabout are we, then, when the process of sanctification is carried on? It is that although we have not seen Jesus, we love Him; and although now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

It is there the heart finds itself; and whatever be the circumstances of the present life, Christ is present in the midst of our temptations, and the heart always finds itself close to Jesus, the source of its happiness; and while saying that his love is bound-

loss, passes all knowledge, we can say also that we have the intelligence of it.

The magnet always turns towards the pole; the needle always trembles a little when the storm and tempest roar, but its direction changes not; the needle of the Christian heart points always towards Christ. A heart which understands, which loves Jesus, which knows where Jesus has passed before it, looks at Him to sustain it through its difficulties; and however rugged and difficult the way, it is precious to us, because we find there the trace of the steps of Jesus (He has passed there), and specially because this road conducts us, through difficulties, to the glory in which He is. Seeing, says the apostle, that it need be, in order "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

It is not only that we have been regenerated, but that we should receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. The end of my faith is to see Christ, and the glory that He has gained for me. He says here, the salvation of the soul, because the question is not of a temporal deliverance, as in the case of the ancient Jews. I see now this glory through a veil, but I long to see myself there. And being now in the trial, I look to Him who is in the glory, and who secures it to me. The gold will be completely purified; but the gold is there; as to me, as to my eternal life, it is the same thing as if I was in the glory. Salvation and glory are not the less certain, though I am in the trial, than if I were already in the rest. And that is practical sanctification; habits, affections, and a walk formed after the life and calling one has received from God.

If I engage a servant I require him to be clean, if I am so myself. God says: "Be ye holy; for I am holy." And as it is with the servant I desire to introduce into my house, so is it with us. God requires that we should be suited to the state of His house; He will have a practical sanctification in His servants. Moreover, the aim of the apostle is, that our faith be firm and constant; He gives us, in the twenty-first verse, full security, in saying to us: "that your faith and hope may be in God," not merely in that which justifies us before a just judging God. It is a God who is for us, who willed to help us, and who introduced us into His family, setting us apart for obedience, and to share in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. He has loved us with an eternal love. He has accomplished all that concerns us. He keeps us by His power through faith, in order to introduce us into glory.

He places us in trial; He makes us pass through the furnace, because He will wholly purify us. It is Himself who has justified us; who shall condemn us? It is Christ who is dead, or rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and who also maketh intercession for us; who shall separate us from His love? (Rom. viii. 33.) Our faith and our love being in God, what have we to fear? We have, in Zechariah, a very encouraging example. (Zech. iii.) The Lord caused Zechariah to see Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said to Satan: The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! the Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this the brand that I have plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (the sin, the corruption of man), and he stood before the angel. And the angel said: Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said to him: Behold, I have made thine iniquity to pass from thee, and have clothed thee with new garments (the righteousness of God applied). Satan accuses the children of God; but when God justifies, who can condemn? Would you then that God were not content with His work, which He hath wrought for Himself? And it is in order that we be holy and unblameable in love before Him.

Can you say, "He has sanctified me," in the sense that He has given you Jesus for the object of your faith? If it be thus, He has placed you under the sprinkling of His precious blood, in order that you may be a Christian, and happy in obedience. You may say now, He is the object of my desires, of my hope. You may not yet have understood all that Christ is for you, and you may have much to do in practice; but the important thing is to understand that it is God who has done all, and has placed you under the efficacy of that resurrection life, in order that you may be happy and joyful in His love.

It is remarkable to what a point God makes all things new in us; it is because He must destroy our thoughts, in order that we may have peace.

There is nothing morally common between the first and the second Adam; the first sinned and drew the whole human race in his fall; the second Adam is the source of life and power. That applies to every truth of Christianity, and to all that is in this world. There are but these two men. Nicodemus is struck with the wisdom of Jesus, and with the power manifested in His miracles; but the Lord stops him, and cuts the matter short with him, by saying: "Ye must be born again." He was not in a condition to be instructed. He did not understand the things of God; for to do so a man must be born again; in short, he had not life. I do not say that he could not arrive at it; because, further on, we see him paying honour to Jesus, in bringing the necessary spices to embalm Him. I have been led to this thought, because the end of this chapter recalled to me the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. I do not speak of the accomplishment of the prophecy which will take place at a later day for the Jews, but of a grand principle. This chapter begins by these words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Before God begins, He must cause it to be understood that all flesh is as grass, &c.

If God will comfort His people, what saith the Lord? "All flesh is grass," &c. It must begin there. "The grass is withered, because the spirit of the Lord hath blown upon it. But the word of God endureth," &c. Therein was the foundation of hope; had it been possible for any one to have obtained anything, it would have been the Jews, who had all; but they were nothing more than the grass of the fields, than the grass that withereth. When God will comfort man who has failed, in the responsibility which attaches to him, it is thus He begins. "All flesh is grass," &c.; and it is for this reason that there is such a confusion in the heart of the newly-converted man, and even of the Christian, if he does not pay attention to it, namely, that the Word comes to tell him: "The grass is withered, the flesh is incapable of producing any good," and that he does not yet rest on this, that the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and that the blessing consequently cannot fail to His own. Till we cease in our efforts to get good from the flesh, and till we are assured that the word of the Lord endureth for ever, we shall be always troubled and weak before the assaults of the enemy.

The people had trampled on the ordinances, broken the law, crucified the Messiah, done all possible evil. Has the word of God changed? In no wise. God alters nothing in His election, nor in His promises. Paul asks, Has God rejected His people? God forbid. Peter addresses himself to the people; there is no more of them apparently; the grass is withered, but there is the word of God, and He can say to them, You are now a people; you have obtained mercy. Now, we are going to see that this word becomes the instrument of blessing and of practical sanctification. God never sanctifies what withers like grass. He introduces, on the contrary, what is most enduring and most excellent of man into heaven.

The Word withers man, the breath of the Lord has passed over; introduce man's glory into heaven, it is dreadful! This work is painful, because of the often prolonged wrestlings of the pride and the self-will of the flesh; and God does not begin His work by modifying what already exists. Neither can He, because He will destroy it. He can neither require nor produce fruits before the tree be planted. But He begins by communicating a new life, and detaches the creature from the things to which its flesh is attached; and the Holy Spirit communicates to it the things of the world to come, and the instrument He employs is the Word, that Word

whereof it is said, "It abideth for ever." The Word, which was of promise for the nation, becomes an instrument of life for our souls. We are begotten by the Word of truth, which judges also as a two-edged sword all that is not of this new life. Let us examine the difference between our justification and our sanctification. Justification is something, not in ourselves, but a position in which God has placed us before Himself; and those who possess this righteousness, those to whom it is applied by God, being the children of the second Adam, possess all that He has and all that He loves. He who has this righteousness of God is born of God, and possesses all that belongs to His Father, who assimilates the rights of His children to those of His Son, who is heir of all things. So soon as I am a child of the second Adam, I am in the blessing and righteousness in which Christ Himself is found; and just as I have inherited from the first Adam all the consequences and results of his fall, even so, being born of the second Adam, I inherit all that He has acquired, just as I had inherited from the former.

If it be thus, it is evident that I have part in the glory of Christ; and if life be not there, it is nought. God presents His love to us. He reveals it to us, and His word abides eternally. And here is the way God begins with the soul. He presents this truth to us, ever fresh before Himself; it is not a result produced in us that He makes us see; on the contrary, it is that man, such as he is, has no part in this righteousness, because the flesh, which is as grass, cannot be in relation with God. He reveals and imparts to us a justification He has accomplished.

God cannot give precepts of sanctification to such as have no justification. The effects of the life of Christ are to convince of sin, and also to cause fruit-bearing. When the gospel was presented at the beginning, it was the Gentiles who, till then, had had no part in the promises of God. There was no need to speak to them of sanctification. But now that all the world calls itself Christian, I must see whether I be *really* a Christian; but this idea is not found at all in the Bible. The state of sin was spoken of, and the gospel declared; now, men say, "Am I really a Christian?" which thing was not so then. A man takes his practical life to see whereabouts he is, believing that the question is of sanctification, when it is only of justification. This question was not necessary at the commencement; now, people look at the fruits to see if they have life, and confound with sanctification that which is only a conviction of sin previous to justification by faith and peace with God. Until a soul has consented to say: "Jesus is all, and I have nothing"—till then, I say, there is nothing in this soul which relates to Christian sanctification. These things must be set right before the soul can have peace.

At the preaching of Peter, three thousand persons were made happy; they were not in doubt; from the moment a man embraced the gospel, he was a Christian, he was saved.

The progress of practical sanctification must not be confounded with justification, because practical sanctification is wrought in a saved soul that has eternal life. It is an entirely new thing, of which there is no trace before I have found Christ. If we comprehend this passage, "Without holiness" (*sanctification*) "no man shall see the Lord" (there is nothing troubles a soul as that often does), it is clear that if I do not possess Christ, I cannot see the Lord: that is very simple. If I have not in myself the life of the second Adam, as I had before the life of the first, never shall I see His face. The tastes natural to the one will develop themselves therein, as they developed themselves in the other. The first inquiry to be made in such a case is: "Have you peace with God, the pardon of your sins?" If not, the question is of the justification of a sinner. Having then your soul purified in obeying *the truth* by the Holy Spirit, that is the power "by the Spirit." The essential thing is the obedience to the truth; people seek purification, and desire to bear fruit. But this is not what God first asks of us; it is obedience, and obedience to the truth. Whereof does the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, speak? He has much to say to us; but first of all: "All flesh is as grass." He says that no good thing exists in man; the Spirit convinces the world of sin. The whole world lies in wickedness; that world would none of Christ, and the Holy Spirit cannot present Himself without saying: "You have rejected the Christ." The Holy Spirit comes into this world, and proves to it its pride and its rebellion. Behold, the Son is no longer there, and *why?* The world has rejected Him. The Spirit comes to say: "The grass is withered," &c.; then, when that is acknowledged, He communicates the peace that He has preached. He says truly, "You are sinners;" but He does not speak to sinners of sanctification; He will produce it by the truth, and He tells them the truth. Can man produce it? Nay. It is Christ, He who is the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit speaks to the sinner of the grace, of the righteousness of God—of peace, not to make, but *made;* that is the truth. He convinces the world of what it is, and He speaks to it of that will of God by which the believer is sanctified, that thus we may be obedient to the truth, in submitting to the love of God; and when the soul is subject to this truth, life is there.

He communicates life, "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The Word abides eternally. It is thus that God first produces the principle of sanctification, which is the life of Christ in us; if the practical means be inquired, it is the word of truth.

Does the Holy Spirit tell pagans to make progress in sanctification? Does He say this to men unconverted? No. When a sinner has understood the truth, such as God presents it, then the Holy Spirit puts him in relation with God the Father, and this sinner rejoices in all that which Christ has acquired for him. Thus, having purified your souls in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit, &c., ye have been born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Dear friends, you will find that it is ever thus.

In 2 Thess. ii. 10, it is written, as to the unbelieving, contrasted with the Christians, that they have not received (or rather accepted) the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Therefore, God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who have not believed the truth, &c. But, my brethren, beloved of the Lord, we are bound to give thanks to God for you, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

It is then the belief of the truth; it is not the belief of the fruits. The Holy Spirit cannot present to me the works He has produced in me, as the object of my faith. He speaks to me of my faults, of my shortcomings, but never of the good works that are in me. He produces them in me, but He hides them from me; for if we think of it, it is but a more subtle self-righteousness. It is like the manna which, being kept, produced worms. All is spoilt—it is no more faith in action; the Holy Spirit must always present to me Christ, that I may have peace.

The same principle is in John xvii. 16: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth." The world was not Christ's aim.

During His whole life, though He was not gone out of the world, He was no more of the world than if He had been in heaven. When *practice* is in question, He says: "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by thy truth." Truth is not of this world; this world is a vast lie, which is demonstrated in the history we possess in the Bible. There we find the manifestation of sin in the natural man, and the manifestation of the life of God in the regenerate man, by His word. "Sanctify them by thy truth." For their sakes I sanctify myself." What does the Lord Jesus here for us? He sets Himself apart. He sanctifies Himself; it is not that He may be more holy, but He makes Himself the model-man. It is not a law requirement; but it is Christ Himself who is life and power, whereof He presents the perfect result. It is Christ who presents the fulfilment and the perfection; He is the vital spring of all; and in considering these things, the reflection of them is in me by faith, which reproduces them in the inner man and in the life.

We find something interesting on this subject in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the life, and the life was the light." The law was not this. It was not a light that condemned; but the life was this light, and we have seen it full of grace and truth—not of truth only, but of grace; and of His fulness have all we received grace for grace. When we have received Christ, there is not a single grace which is not for me, and in me. There is no Christian who has not every grace that is in Jesus; suppose even a state of failure, it is the strongest case, but this hinders not that we possess all in Him. Failure is a sad thing, but that changes not the position; for the Christian has not received a part only of Christ, but the whole of Christ.

On the one hand, it is encouragement, when I say to myself,

"I must seek after such a grace;" the answer is, "Thou possessest it;" and, on the other hand, "it humbles me;" for if I possess it, why is it not manifested? This always supposes that we have received the truth that God has made peace. We must always return to this: "Sanctify them through thy Word; thy Word is truth." Is it by looking into myself that I shall find this sanctification? No; but in looking to Jesus, in whom it is, Christ having been made unto us of God "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." I see this humility in Christ, and take pleasure in it; when I look to Him, by faith, my soul is in peace; His Spirit is always in me, and I am sanctified by faith in Him, according to that grace which makes me one with Him. Christ gives me all that, and this truth reveals to me that the redemption is made, and I enjoy it, having obeyed the truth. If any one seeks after sanctification without being assured of his justification, and is troubled about it, doubting whether he be a Christian, then I ask him: "What have you to do with sanctification?" You have not to think about that for the present. Assure yourself, first of all, that you are saved; pagans, unbelievers do not sanctify themselves. If you have faith, you are saved; sanctify yourself in peace. The only question is to consider your sinful state. First, have you obeyed the truth? have you submitted to it? What does God speak to you about? He speaks of peace made. He says to you, that He has given His Son; He says to you, that He has so loved the world, that He has given His Son to the world, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the truth to which you have to submit, and to receive above all, specially before you busy yourself about sanctification, which depends on Him who has given you eternal life. Begin, then, by obeying the truth; this truth tells you of the righteousness of God, which is satisfied in Jesus, and which is yours; or rather that you are in Jesus; then you will enjoy peace, and you will be sanctified in practice; this practical sanctification flows from the contemplation of Jesus. Here is what the apostle Paul says to us on this subject, in 2 Cor. iii. 18: "*We all*, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

You see that it is in beholding Jesus that we are transformed from glory to glory. Life, the principle of life, is there, and not in your anxieties; the development of this life of Jesus is progressively realized by looking to Him. It is faith which sanctifies, as also it justifies: it looks unto Jesus.

When Moses came down from the mountain, from before God, he did not know that he also shone with glory, but those who saw him knew it. Moses had looked towards God; others saw the effect. Blessed be God that it is thus in a practical sense! As to practice, then, the question is the sanctification of Christians, because they are saved, because they are sanctified to God, as respects their persons (not those who are not yet so). It is not to exact (on God's part), but to communicate life. Now, this communication proceeds from Jesus, who is its source. He communicates life, which is holiness. Oh that God might always show us the grace to make us always more and more feel that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever! "And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you:" it is of this incorruptible seed we are born. What ought not our confidence to be in this Word!—(*From the French of J. N. D.*)

NOTHING BUT CHRIST.

The epistle to the Hebrews calls us to leave all for Christ. Whatever be the objects in which we have been able thus far to glory in, it is necessary to abandon them now, and to receive in their stead Jesus, the Christ of God. Angels give place to the Son; Moses, the servant of the house, gives place to Christ, who is the Builder of it; Joshua, the ancient captain, who led Israel into Canaan, gives place to Christ, the Captain of salvation, who now conducts the children to glory; Aaron, the carnal and dying priest, gives place to the true Melchizedek, who lives and serves in the heavenly temple for ever; the old covenant gives place to the new, which Jesus administers, and at the same time the old ceremonial or earthly ordinances give place to the spiritual and efficacious ministrations of the heavenly Priest; finally, the blood of the victims gives place to the blood of Christ, offered by the eternal Spirit.

Such is one of the principal characteristics of this divine and glorious epistle, which thus annihilates all that in which man puts his confidence, in order to establish the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and the Christ of God, as the object of glory and only refuge of poor souls.

But that was a doctrine hard to hear, particularly for a people such as the Jews, who had in so many ways put their confidence in the law and legal righteousness. Amongst us also at the present day, when, amid so many religious forms, men propose with authority other foundations of confidence than Jesus, which other men blindly receive, we have to consider carefully what are the bases of this doctrine. In these days, when all creation groans, the soul thirsts after this simple gospel, which preaches to us the perfect satisfaction of Jesus; and it is the design of the Holy Spirit, in the epistle to the Hebrews, to unfold to the eager soul the reasons for which it can thus embrace Jesus as all that which forms the subject of its confidence and glory. This epistle declares what authorizes it to appreciate Jesus thus—to estimate Him as having no equal—to judge Him, in a word, as the sole and only stay of the poor sinner.

But how does the Holy Ghost assure us of this truth by this epistle? How does He show us that it is our salvation to leave there every other prop, in order to have none but Christ alone for our stay? He shows it to us in the only way in which it could be done, namely, in presenting to our soul *the appreciation which God makes of Christ.*

That which warrants the value I attach to Christ is, that God has already, previously, made known to me the worth which He possesses. If my soul confides exclusively in Him, I cannot be grounded in so doing but by seeing the foundation of Israel's confidence at the time of the sprinkling of the blood in Egypt. God had prescribed this blood; such is my divine and sure warrant, and this epistle to the Hebrews assures it to me. It speaks to me of the high value God sees in Christ; it tells me how clearly, simply, and exclusively He has put upon Christ all that can bring relief to the soul. That is the reason why this admirable epistle lingers with so much complacency upon Christ in all His different relations with us, in all the ministrations He accomplishes for us. There is what explains the numerous quotations (chapter i.), which establish Jesus far above angels; there is what explains the glorious commentary which chapter ii. gives upon the dignity of the Son of man; the declaration of His great superiority over Moses (chapter iii.); the abundant and varied testimonies (chapter iv.) borne to His priesthood, surpassing in quite another way that wherewith Aaron had been honoured, or that which the law ever conferred. There is the reason why He is represented as anointed and consecrated by an oath, and seated in the heavens in the midst of the sanctuary, as well as at the right hand of Majesty.

In all this we have the hand of God Himself, exalting the merit of Jesus, weighing Him in His dignities known in heaven and on earth. The soul is invited in the most pressing manner to come and be present at this grand work, at this divine proof of the merit of Jesus, just as the congregation of Israel was commanded to wait at the door of the tabernacle, in order that each for himself should contemplate and know how God was pleased with the priest, so that each, however large the congregation was, should have *personally, individually*, all liberty to resign themselves to the care and intercession of Aaron. (Lev. viii. ix.) It was a matter which concerned each, individually, and the same liberty should also appertain to every one of us, individually.

Our soul is a thing which concerns ourselves; for it is written that "none can by any means redeem his brother;" and it is *ourselves* who should know the divine remedy, ourselves who should possess it. It is not a faithful brother who can hear and believe for us; it is not a church which can represent us; we must be at the door of the tabernacle ourselves; we have ourselves to know the worth of Jesus in the eyes of God, and the epistle to the Hebrews is commissioned to reveal this secret of the holy of holies. It is addressed, not to a certain order of privileged persons, but to *us all*, in order that there we may each contemplate Jesus, such as He is there weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and that we may gather the blessed fruits of this ensured supply which has been stored in Him. It is not the question in this epistle of a particular church, nor of a class of privileged persons, as is very often thought and said; but it is the voice of the Spirit addressing itself directly to the soul, in order that it may learn to know for itself

Him in whom God has placed the help which is necessary to it. In this epistle our soul breathes, in some sort, the perfume of the plain which the Lord has blessed, and faith breathes the perfume of Christ; it enjoys Christ, as God Himself enjoys Him, and we have the divine light in our heart, we are converted from darkness to the light of God. In a word, God becomes our own.

There is yet another thing in this epistle: it makes us also understand in what characters God has set this exclusive value on Christ, and these characters are such as fully answer to our necessities. The victory, or the sacrifice, ix. 14; the priest, vii.; the prophet, or teacher, ii. 1-4; the captain, who brings His own to glory, ii. 10; and in all these qualities, as in each of them separately, we see Him estimated in the most exact manner by the hand of God, and we find Him perfectly what it is needful He should be, for persons so wretched as we are. According to God, Jesus is a victim perfectly suited to purify, a priest perfectly suited to intercede, a prophet perfectly suited to instruct, and a guide perfectly suited to transport us safe and sound into glory. There is that precisely which we need. This epistle traces our book of travels, in leaving our place of exile as sinners, up to our dwelling in glory, where we shall be in the companionship of Jesus. Yes, we clearly read there our rights, and we rest on Jesus as our Victim, our Priest, our Prophet, and our Guide, because God has given Him all that is possible of worth in these qualities with which He is endowed for us; and God has appreciated Him because of His work, because of His person, because of His obedience, because He has shed His blood and fully accomplished the will of God for us. There, in this epistle, the soul may read its titles, not according to the estimate which itself makes of them, but according to that which God makes of Christ.

REMARKS ON DR. WARDLAW'S SERMON ON THE MILLENNIUM.

In considering this discourse, which is as candid and as able as can be found on that side of the question, the reader will do well to bear in mind the apology which the author has made for himself. (*Sermons*, p. 492) He acknowledges certain defects, of which we may frequently see clear evidences. No one, therefore, will charge me, I trust, with presumption, any more than with a hypercritical spirit, if it be needful to point out errors which a more patient discriminating search of the prophetic word must have corrected. The author here fully allows that he is far from being familiar with the subject, however unconscious he is of the mistakes into which he has fallen.

But let it be premised, wherein one can agree with him. Contrary to the interpretation of many popular millenarians, I believe that the privileges and glory of the Church are characteristically heavenly. This, and no other, is our calling. The hope is laid up for us, not here, but *in heaven*. (Col. i. 5.) It is in the heavenly places we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. (Ephes. i. 3.) Our head is, not a living Messiah sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but a risen, glorified Christ at the right hand of God above, and we are by God's grace seated in Him *there*. (Ephes. i. 20; ii. 6.) And if we look at Christ in Spirit here, it is Christ in or among us the hope of glory (Col. i. 27); not a Messiah reigning—a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, which was the constant expectation of the believing Jews, from the time of Abraham downwards—not such a Messiah merely, accomplishing all the old familiar prophecies and ruling *over* the Gentiles, but a Christ *in* them now, and that as the *hope* of a glory yet unfulfilled, entirely hidden during all the ages and generations of the Old Testament, but now made manifest to the saints of God. This glory will soon be accomplished in heaven; meanwhile, Christ in us, the hope of it, is a secret no longer hidden, but plainly revealed and enjoyed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Hence, while on earth, which is not our element, the Church is really and distinctively a heavenly body—not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. Hence, it is not merely to make all men see what is the fellowship (or the dispensation) of the mystery hid in God previously; but to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. (Ephes. iii.) The Jews had been, and will be, the earthly people and witness of God. And so, finally, we wrestle, not as Israel did, against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places. (Ephes. vi.) Blessings, standing, testimony, conflict—all are essentially heavenly; the contrast of Jewish place and privilege, which were of earth. Thus, *to Israel* the promise was of earthly exaltation, the mountain of the Lord's house being established on the top of the mountains and people flowing to it, and many nations, or Gentiles, *as such* (and not an election out of them), coming, and saying: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for *out of Zion* shall go forth *the law*, and the word of the Lord from *Jerusalem*. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." *To the Church*, it was no more the honoured mountain, nor yet the city of solemnities, where was the place which *Jehovah* chose to himself for an house of sacrifice, but an hour when the *true* worshippers worship *the Father* in spirit and in truth. No earthly temple need they who, having Jesus Christ Himself as the chief corner stone, are growing unto an holy temple in the Lord, themselves in Him builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. The glory of a particular earthly people or place had no glory now, by reason of the glory which excelleth, the glory of the Lord above, which we all, the Church on earth, behold even now. Again, far from earthly peace and triumph, to us it was in this world tribulation, not merely as the needed path, but positive privilege; "for unto you," said the apostle Paul, "it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake," and if we suffer we shall also reign with Him: a thing never promised to the Jew. Christ will reign *over* them: we shall reign *with* Him, joint heirs with Him.* Thus it is not to us, as to Israel, every man dwelling under his vine, and under his fig-tree, no one making them afraid; but many mansions in the Father's house, and Christ gone to prepare a place for us, and coming again to receive us unto Himself, that where He is we may be also. Doubtless, the Father will take care that the world may know that He has loved us as He loved Christ; the glory by and by will manifest and demonstrate this beyond all question. Still, to us, the blessed thing is to be with Christ, where He is. Briefly, Israel is the grand national witness of God's justice on earth; the Church is the body of an exalted Christ, the blessed vessel of God's grace for heaven. *They* had carnal ordinances, visible sacrifices, a human priesthood and a worldly sanctuary; *to us* of the heavenly calling, Christ is our one Priest, Ordinance, and Sacrifice, and that in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. Their weapons and enemies, blessings and hopes, were as plainly of earth and the flesh as ours are spiritual and heavenly. At the outset I would state the unspeakable privileges of the Church, even more fully than is done in the sermon.

And now to notice briefly the observations *seriatim*.

The *first* is already anticipated. I admit, not only that heaven is *the locality where Jesus is*, but that there depart the spirits of the saints who have fallen asleep in Christ, to be present with the Lord. (Phil. i. 21-23; 2 Cor. v. 6-8.) But the latter of these passages explicitly shows us a blessedness beyond that of the separated spirit with the Lord. Paul was willing (verse 8) rather to be absent from the body (*i.e.* the present body of sin and death), and to be present with the Lord; but *it was not the thing which he earnestly desired*. This was quite another thing—"to be clothed upon with our house which is FROM *heaven*;" which is especially contrasted with death and the separate state, and *as decidedly preferred*. "Not for that we would be unclothed (*i.e.* of the body), but *clothed upon*, that mortality might be swallowed up *of life*;" *i.e.* the transformation or change, which is the exact opposite of, and triumph over, death. As to the passage in Philippians, although no one doubts that, personally, it is far better to depart and be with Christ, than to abide in the flesh, let any

* Supposing the Church to be meant by Rev. v. 10, the verse does not state that the Church shall be upon the earth, but that these saints *shall reign over it*. Ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς after a verb of reigning, governing, &c., means not the locality where the ruler resides, but the sphere of government. The authorised version conveys a wrong idea, which to this day misleads many students of prophecy.

unbiassed Christian read chap. iii. 10, 11, and say whether it does not manifest that the apostle never for a moment puts the separate state into comparison with the resurrection. *That*, and not the separate state, however preferable to present conflict and temptation in the flesh, was the result and complement of Christ's resurrection. Hence, as in the close of the same chapter, is clear, it is not death that we expect: "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Is it IN heaven? *That* is the author's view; but the Holy Spirit teaches us that it is FROM heaven. Our citizenship, our only true and worthy citizenship, is there, even at present—it is *in heaven—from which* also we look for the Saviour. Thus, the very scriptures here cited, if impartially examined, prove that the apostle did not stop short at the mere blessedness of the spirit with Christ. He waited and longed for the resurrection of the body in the image of Christ, for we are predestined to be conformed to His image that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Indeed, the very creation earnestly awaits the manifestation of the sons of God, which is consequent upon our resurrection.

Next, the objection of improbability does not seem to be of much force, because these matters are not in any way questions of *à priori* likelihood, but of revelation. And here I take my stand that even the author himself, I suppose, admits the fact, that Christ will *at some time* come from heaven. That is, *the principle is confessed*, against which he is here contending. The object of Christ's leaving heaven, as well as the period involved in that action, may be questioned; but *the fact itself*, be it recollected, all admit, and that fact embodies the principle I contend for here.*

2.—If many millenarians have lost sight of the general analogy of the book of Revelation, Dr. W. appears to have hardly a ray of light upon it at all. Prophetical books are not necessarily literal, nor figurative, nor symbolic. In Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Jeremiah, we find all three styles occurring in each. For example, in Ezekiel xxxvii. we have the valley of dry bones, confessedly a symbolic vision, and later the symbol of the two sticks: but substantial *facts* were conveyed by both. Again, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost. . . . I will open your graves," are clearly figurative expressions; but they do not the less indicate positive facts. Lastly, we have a number of plain literal expressions in verses 21–28 of the same chapter, some of which are the explanation of the foregoing symbols and figures. Prophecy *is* future history: and God may, and does, communicate it, in the forms which seem good to Him. Is 2 Samuel to be rejected as real history, because the Holy Ghost has begun it with a dirge (chapter i.) and closed it with a song (chapter xxii.) alike full of the boldest and most beautiful, but true figures?

It is granted that the vision which precedes the one in question is symbolic. But, mark, if we have the symbol, the dragon, we have the explanation immediately after, "which is the devil and Satan;" if the prophet saw in the vision the key, chain, prison, and seal, connected with that old serpent, surely it does not take much spirituality to discern that, by all this, was meant, not the final crushing under the woman's seed, but a previous intervention of God by an angel, to confine the tempter and destroyer during a certain defined period; that is to say, as in Ezekiel, so in Revelation, we have a symbolic vision with its meaning literally annexed, so far at least as God judged needful to guard against mistake. Now, it is upon exactly the same principle that I understand the next vision. As the key and seal are symbolical of a confinement and security thereupon, the thrones which John saw convey the idea of the kingly dominion which will succeed the binding of Satan. Neither the key nor the thrones were other than prophetic symbols; but they *were* equally symbols—one of what God would do to His enemy, the other of what He would do for His friends during the period of the thousand years.

3.—Even if it be agreed that "*the souls of them* that were beheaded" is not parallel to "the souls (*i.e. persons*) that were beheaded," and that such texts as Acts ii. 41; iii. 23; vii. 14; xxvii. 37, are not quite in point; still, what are we taught? As John (chap. vi. 9–11) saw in vision "the souls of them that were slain" not yet re-united to their bodies, but crying: "How long, O Lord?" proving evidently that they were in a condition short of what they longed for, but knew would soon be theirs; so here, after the expiration of the little season, when their fellow-servants and brethren were now killed, as they had been before, we have the description of all these souls joined to their bodies. (Chapter xx. 4.) "*They lived*," &c.* implies this.

But when Dr. W. asks, "What was the meaning of the symbol?" and answers, "a glorious revival and extensive prevalence of the spirit and character of those who had laid down their lives for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus," it astonishes one that he should have been so pre-occupied with the notions certain interpreters as to overlook the fact that He who revealed the symbol has adjoined His own explanation—"*This is the first resurrection.*" Just as, lower down, in the same chapter, having spoken of the lake of fire, the Spirit of God adds, "*This is the second death;*" the terrible explanation of that terrible symbol.

4.—We have to notice the confusion in the first words, "the *figure* of a *resurrection*," as applied to Rev. xx. It is the exact opposite; it is the interpretation, not the thing to be interpreted. Nothing of the sort occurs therefore in this passage. Let us compare it with those here alleged.

Now, first, in Ezekiel xxxvii. be it noted, that the dead state and then the revival of dry bones, is the symbol, and this is interpreted to mean the whole house of Israel brought out of their low estate (or the grave, figuratively), and God's Spirit put upon them, and they thus living, and placed in their own land. Here, on the contrary, visions pass before the prophet's eye; and in the one instance, the explanation given is, "this is the second death;" in the other, "this is the first resurrection." In other words, while the resurrection of the bones *is explained to be* a symbolic pledge of Israel's revival in Ezekiel, John's vision *is as positively explained to be* a resurrection—the first resurrection seen symbolically, of course. Secondly, Dr. W. weakens and departs from the plain scope of the explanation given by the Spirit of the early part of Ezekiel xxxvii.; for, while nothing is said about the deceased children of Abraham, either in the vision or in the interpretation of it, the latter does decidedly and literally predict the resuscitation and establishment of the same house of Israel, which was then scattered among the heathen. If a literal Israel was scattered, a literaral Israel was to be brought back.

As to the other texts cited, it is admitted that resurrections may be spoken of in another sense, by a kind of accommodation; but this does not nullify the two facts, that there is such a thing as a real resurrection of the body; and that the Spirit of God *explains* this vision to set forth such a resurrection.

5.—Evidently, Dr. W. is little acquainted with millenarian writers, or he would not charge them with this supposed inconsistency. There are notorious millenarians (Mr. Burgh, for example) who apply Rev. xx. 4–6 *to the martyrs* exclusively. But I have no hesitation in saying that both these writers are wrong in excluding the rest of the saints. It is not true that martyrs alone are mentioned. There are three classes of persons viewed as having part in the first resurrection. "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: *and* (I saw) the souls of those that were beheaded because of the witness of Jesus, and because of the word of God; *and* such as had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received," &c. First, the previous saints, embracing both the Church and the spirits of just men made perfect; secondly, those who identify themselves with the class John had seen in chapter vi. 9–11; and, thirdly, the sufferers under the bloody apostacy of the beast (chap. xv. 2), the two last being especially what we may term the Apocalyptic saints, *i.e.* those of whom the Revelation treats, and whose comfort, guidance, and sustainment under their tribulation we may suppose to have been one main object of the book, by the gracious provision of our God.

6.—A great part of the reasoning here falls, the moment it is seen that "the first resurrection" embraces not these martyrs only, but the saints before them also. "*The rest of the dead*" is then perfectly simple: it means the wicked, who had no part (blessed and holy is he that hath part) in the first resurrection.

* In page 497, the author misquotes Scripture. He refers, I suppose, to Matthew xxv. He speaks of "the heaven of heavens; the place prepared for His people from before the foundation of the world." Matthew speaks not of heaven, but "the kingdom," and that prepared, not "before," but "*from* the foundation," which entirely subverts the author's inference. John xiv. again, which speaks of the Father's house, not of the kingdom, says: "I go *to prepare a place* for you;" which differs widely from being prepared before the foundation of the world.

* Nor can this expression be applied to "the souls," but to "the beheaded;" unless the soul dies, which Dr. W. does not hold. A resurrection of spirits is nonsense. But that those who had fallen asleep—whose souls were seen in their separate state—should live again, is good sense, and the simple meaning of the passage.

But one word as to Dr. W.'s explanation. He says "the remnant" and "the rest" is the very same Greek word. And what of that? It is the same word in Rev. xi. 13 and in xii. 17. So it is, no doubt, in Rev. xix. 21 and in xx. 5; but as there is not the smallest analogy in the former case, so neither is there in the latter. In chapter xix., it is the remnant of the beast's armies, after he himself and the false prophet were cast alive into the lake of fire—a *living* remnant, which is thereon slain. But in chapter xx. it is a remnant left by the resurrection of the saints who have their part in the first resurrection—a *dead* remnant, embracing all who do not rise to reign with Christ.

7.—These consequences pressed upon us do not follow.

1. So far from limiting judgment to the wicked, I believe, on the contrary, that 2 Cor. v. 10 and Rom. xiv. refer *exclusively* to Christ's dealing with the works of *His own*. There the question is not about our *persons;* we are *not* put upon our trial whether or not we shall be saved. For 2 Cor. v. is Christ's appraisal of the conduct of those who are already justified; He reviews the works, good or bad, of those who are cleansed by His blood, but He could not condemn *themselves* without condemning His own cross. The believer *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into *condemnation*. (John v. 24.) Nay, the Word of God is even stronger; the believer shall not come into *judgment*, *εἰς κρίσιν*. There is absolutely no judgment of the *person*, no solemn assize as to his guilt, no *κρίσις* for him: in such a judgment the Psalmist (cxliii.) assures us no man living shall be justified in God's sight. But God has already justified the believer; Christ is dead, is risen, is at the right hand, and is interceding for him. On the other hand, it is the judgment, the *κρίσις*, which is the settled portion of poor man, as we are told in Heb. ix. 27, and it is the details of this last, I believe, which Rev. xx. 11 presents us with. Again, it is clear that Matthew xxv. 31–46 does not refer to the dead at all, and even among the living leaves out the Jews entirely. It is the Son of man's judgment of *all the Gentiles* (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*), and hence the ground and nature of the investigation is quite different from that stated in Rom. ii., which really does state the character of that solemn and final scrutiny. And it certainly appears highly *inconsistent* (I do not say incorrect) to press the force of the last part of Rev. xx. in a plain and literal manner (however there may be figures interspersed), in the very same discourse which seeks to evade the force of the portion almost immediately going before. It is not that I doubt the application of the white-throne scene to the last closing session of judgment; on the contrary, I agree with the author in what he says, save in his assumption that the righteous are included in it. No proof is offered. There certainly ought to be; for, to a simple mind, the bare reading of the early part of the chapter conveys the idea that all judgment of the righteous must have been over for one thousand years (literal or symbolic), for they have been reigning with Christ during that period, and then the rest of the dead are raised, not to a resurrection of life, but to one of judgment and the second death.

But, plainly, Rev. xx. records two resurrections; one in verses 4–6 which is called the *first* resurrection, and evidently distinguished from the other resurrection in verses 12–15 of those whose portion is the *second* death. It is inconsistent to interpret the former figuratively, and the latter literally, as was long since urged by Bishop Newton.

3. The judgment of the works of the saints before the tribunal of Christ is not represented as being during the thousand years, much less during the scene which follows it (*i.e.* the great white-throne judgment of the rest of the dead). I believe that it must precede the actual reigning; because the divers places and rewards in the kingdom hinge on, and presuppose, to my mind, a foregone examination of the things done in the body, according to which each is to receive. The five cities and the two, in the language of the parable, depend on the use of the talents, and can hardly be awarded, much less enjoyed, till the Lord has examined the conduct of His servants.

The judgment of *the quick* goes on during the millennium, as in Matt. xxv.

The judgment of *the dead* (*i.e.* of such as had not part in the first resurrection) succeeds, as we have seen in Rev. xx. 11.

Now, what is the difficulty to the receiving the plain revelation, that about the close of the reign with Christ, but previous to the white-throne judgment, Satan is allowed to go out and deceive *the Gentiles*, or nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and gather them to battle against the beloved city? I see none. So that the next head,

3, is not only needless, but contrary to any supposition ever heard of among sober-minded millenarians. This last rebellion is before the wicked dead are raised. Nor does "the camp of the saints" and "the beloved city" mean the glorified saints, in my opinion, but the city where God, the Jehovah, has set His name, when His people (the Jews) are all righteous. Nothing can be more simple, as it appears to me. The only difficulty is to conceive how so sensible a person could have so strangely bewildered himself.

8.—According to Dr. W., "the resurrection of *all the dead*" is stated or implied to be for the purpose of their being tried before the great white throne. But I answer, that even this necessarily excludes those who are and have been reigning *in life* by one, and with one, even Christ Jesus. It is admitted that the expression, "*the dead*," embraces all those who died but had not part in the first resurrection; but this is absolutely all which can be proved, by fair reasoning, from the context.

As to John v. 28, 29, observe, that while the *day* of the Lord in 2 Peter iii. evidently embraces events separated by one thousand years—the morning and evening of that great day—and cannot be reduced to a twenty-four hours' day; so here, somewhat similarly, "hour" cannot be restricted to a period of sixty minutes. Nay, in verse 25 of the same context, "hour" embraces a lapse of more than eighteen hundred years. Why may it not be extended similarly to one thousand years, three verses lower down? As all Christians believe that this hour of quickening *does* run on from Christ's time till the present, surely it is perfectly in keeping to hold that the hour of judging *may* occupy the millennium. And other Scriptures show that it does so precisely.

Again, 2 Thess. i. 7–10 states no more than all instructed Christians, who look for Christ's premillennial advent, rejoice in. From 2 Peter iii. 10, we simply gather, that *in* the day of the Lord (without revealing whether at the end or at the beginning of it) "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," &c. But 2 Thess. i. and Rev. xx. give us this further light, that, while flaming fire will accompany the Lord's revelation from heaven, taking vengeance when He comes to be glorified in His saints, yet will this be but the precursor and monitor of the conflagration at the close of the reign on the earth. Dr. W. is, therefore, mistaken in imagining that we separate the vengeance and the glory by a thousand years; but we do affirm, that while all these Scriptures are true, they do not furnish the same, but different, aspects of the truth, and we simply seek to discern things that differ. This, in my humble judgment, the author has failed to do.

1 Thess. iv. 15–17 refers exclusively to the resurrection of the righteous. There is not a word about a general resurrection. It is the same thing with 1 Cor. xv. But I should have thought this at least confirmative of a first resurrection, in which the wicked have no part.

I cannot allow the justice of what is said of Acts iii. 19–21. The obviously correct rendering of the passage is: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, unto the blotting out of your sins, that * times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send *τὸν προκεκηρυγμένον* (or with Griesbach, Scholz, &c. *προκεχειρισμένον*) *ὑμῖν* 'I.X. whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of *restitution* of all things," &c. Now, the very formation and nature of the word *ἀποκατάστασις* proves that it cannot have here, or anywhere else, "the same effect with *fulfilment*." Supposing even that the verb *ἀποκάθιστημι* meant to fulfil, still it will hardly admit of question, that the amendment here proposed is wrong; for *words so formed*, as a class, refer not to an act past and completed, but to the doing of the act implied in the verb. In other words, it would mean the *fulfilling* or fulfilment, but not an action already finished; and, therefore, this verse would teach the retention of Christ in heaven, not till

* Compare Matt. vi. 5, *προσεύχεσθαι, ὅπως ἂν φανῶσι κ. τ. λ.* the *ἂν* in both being required, because of the dependence on an infinitive, and not on the principal verb. The authorised version and the Vulgate are both wrong in their translation of this clause.

the prophecies *have* received their accomplishment, but *till the times of the fulfilling itself; i.e.* the reverse of what the sermon would aver. But the truth is, that in the eight passages where that verb occurs in the New Testament, there is not one passage where it can be shown to mean "fulfil;" there is not one where it may not be safely rendered "restore." "Reconstitute" in some cases gives the force well. Using this then, the meaning of the verse in question would be, "until the times of reconstituting, or restoring;" *i.e.* not in any sense till the act was done, but *being done, or doing.* So far from subverting, this text falls in with and supposes the coming of Christ from heaven, for the purpose, or at least at the time, of God's effectuating in the earth the latter-day glory, Jewish glory, as predicted by the prophets. The Church, as we have seen, is blessed in another and higher sphere.

Death is *not* the last enemy "to each individual soldier of Christ;" for it is positively revealed that "*we* shall not *all* sleep, though we shall all be changed," and this too in the very same chapter from which Dr. W. quotes. But, viewed, as it was meant to be, as the last enemy *dispensationally*, let the reader compare these three Scriptures, 2 Tim. i. 10, 1 Cor. xv. 54 (cf. verses 23, 24), and Rev. xx. 13, and then answer if it be not plain that there are here three stages; first, the conquest over death at Christ's resurrection, and life and incorruptibility brought to light through the Gospel; secondly, the conquest over death at the resurrection of Christ's people at His coming before the reign; and, thirdly, the annihilation of death at the end of that reign, when He shall have put all enemies under His feet—Gog and Magog, and if there be any other—the last of which is death.

Luke xx. 34-36 is misapplied. Studied with a simple mind, it is highly corroborative of a special resurrection, a resurrection of the just quite distinct from that of the unjust. "They that shall be accounted *worthy* to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead" is any thing but a general rise of dead persons. It is clearly eclectic. It belongs to *the worthy*. It is, in short, the first resurrection. Besides the saints of *the heavenlies*, there will be a converted, spared remnant of Israel, God's holy seed *on earth*. These are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them; they marry and are given in marriage. They are men in unchanged bodies, and of them especially the sweet promises in the prophets speak. But they are clearly not the children of the resurrection, for they are not risen.

Is the next statement, in page 516, true? All agree that "the earth *shall be* full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" but instead of reading in the context (Isa. xi.) that the Gospel works its way to universal extension, we find that the rod out of the stem of Jesse must *smite the earth* with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips *slay the wicked.* (Compare verses 4 and 9.) 2 Thess. ii. 8, instead of teaching that this was done at the death of Christ, or was to be done by the progress of the Church, reveals, alas! a dismal progress of iniquity; shows that not peace and happiness, but the falling away, must come first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; declares that even then this evil was working as a *mystery*, or hidden form of lawlessness; but, upon the removal of a hindrance, the Lawless One would be revealed, whom THE LORD would consume (not by the gradual influence of the Gospel, but) by the Spirit or breath of His mouth,* and would (not save by the preached grace of God, but) destroy with the brightness or epiphany of His presence.

Matt. xiii. 31, 32 and 33, conveys the idea of *progress, gradual progress.* But of what? of a good thing or of a bad? Is a great spreading tree, where the birds of the air (compare verses 4 and 10 of the same chapter) come and lodge, is the nest of the wicked one according to Christ? It may bear His name, but is it the mind which was in Christ Jesus? Lofty, ambitious, soaring—may aptly describe Christendom; but is it Christianity? I trow not. (Compare also Dan. iv.)

The parable of the leaven is still plainer. It marks diffusion over a certain defined quantity, three measures. But it is the spread of *leaven;* and the instructed scribe knows that leaven is everywhere the symbol of that which is corrupt. Let the reader compare 1 Cor. v. 6-13 with Exod. xii. 15, 17, 18, 19, 20. Lev. ii. 4, 5, 11; vi. 17. Also Matt. xvi. 12. Gal. v. 9. Again we find where the mingled state was to be described, the presence of evil was marked by that of leaven. (Lev. xxiii. 17.) This parable, then, proves the exact contrary of that which is here drawn from it. It is the progress of corrupt, not of sound, doctrine, if we are to read the parable with a spiritual eye.

2 Thess. ii. 1, 2, in no degree sets aside the possible immediateness of the coming of Christ; but, on the contrary, exhorts the saints by the coming of Christ, and their gathering unto Him, not to be troubled, as though *the day of the Lord were then present.* It would seem that false teachers were troubling the Thessalonians with the thought that the day of the Lord was *actually come*, and *they* in the midst of tribulation, instead of being caught up to meet Jesus in the air. "Now," says the apostle, "I beseech you *by His coming, and by our gathering unto Him*, that ye be not troubled." You have no reason; you will be with Him; you will come along with Him. The day of the Lord (compare 1 Thess. v. 1) is *that part* of the coming of the Lord which looks with judgment towards the world. It is associated with vengeance. The presence of the Lord embraces it, it is true, but embraces much more, especially that sweet thought of the Lord's calling the Church to meet Him. *This latter* is never called the day of the Lord. In this very chapter it is the comfort to the saints against the terrors of that day. And that day shall not come except there come the apostacy first, &c.; that is, certain terrible events were to happen before that day; but not necessarily, so far as revelation informs us, before the Lord's coming or presence. These events might or might not be before the Church was taken away, for the Father kept the times and seasons in His own power or authority; but *they must be* before the day of the Lord.

Moreover, I must utterly reject the notion that death and the coming of the Lord are "in effect and decisiveness the same thing." It does seem wonderful that such a remark should have been written, when the passages under consideration (1 Thess. iv. v., 2 Thess. ii.) confute it. Instead of the apostle there teaching what Dr. W. says, he uses the coming of the Lord as the blessed consolation against death. He does not say, "we must all die, and therefore ought to bear the stroke patiently;" nor does he teach them that they should rejoice because the separated spirits of their deceased brethren were gone to glory. He, on the contrary, brings the hope of *the Lord's coming*, as a present thing, as the most influential of comforts, as, in short, the divine remedy for sorrowing saints in such circumstances. That is, instead of identifying as in the sermon, he positively contrasts the Lord's coming with death. And surely there cannot be a greater contrast than there is between death and the victory over death, viz. the resurrection of the saints at the last trump. Compare 1 Cor. xv., especially verses 54, 55. It seems as if the Spirit wrote the passage to neutralize such an error—"*When* this corruptible *shall have put on incorruption*, and this mortal *shall have put on immortality*, THEN (and not before) shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up *in victory.*" Death, in Scripture, is the thing vanquished; not the victory. Nor does the apostle here detain himself for a moment with the incomplete state of the separate spirit. It is *the resurrection* which is the victory—the resurrection of them that are Christ's in His presence. It is the resurrection which vindicates Christ's claim to these vile bodies of ours. When they lie crumbling or crumbled into dust, what so unlike and so unworthy of the Firstborn in glory? But *He will come* and change our vile *body*, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Far from being death, the enemy, the destroyer, His coming is that of *the Saviour* who swallows up death in victory. And it is *His* power, *His* victory. May we never be satisfied short of it!

This same chapter (like 1 Thess. iv.) suggests another and most convincing proof of the fallacy of this popular notion. It is agreed that the Lord's coming is a motive pressed upon all the Church: none can doubt it. But in 1 Cor. xv. 51, it is clearly revealed that "WE *shall not all sleep*," or die. Death, and the Lord's coming, are in no sense the same thing; the latter affects us all without exception, the former does not. Death affects us as individuals, and our happiness, in departing to be with Christ, goes not beyond ourselves. But the coming of the Lord at once acts upon the *whole* Church; and what will be the joy of *all* the members when *we all* throng to meet Him in the air? Is this the same as death? So in Heb. ix. 27, 28, it is laid down that, while "it is appointed *unto men* once to die, and after that the judgment," the portion

* Compare with Isa. xi. 4 and 2 Thess. ii. 9, Isa. xxx. 33: "The breath of the Lord, *like a stream of brimstone*, doth kindle it." Surely, this is not the Gospel, but the judgment; not grace, but destruction.

of *the saints* is contrasted in the very next verse: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," and instead of death (or judgment either, in the sense here spoken of) being set forth as the lot of the believer, it is written, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." No; I look not for death, but for Christ; and Christ is not death, but life—our life. Can contrast be more definite?

To say, then, Ought not the remembrance—that death is, in effect, to every one of us, the same as the coming of the Lord to judgment—to bring home to us, with quite sufficiently persuasive power, the admonition of the Lord, "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come"? to say thus, is to be wise above and against what is written. For the remembrance is not true; and it is the truth only which sanctifies. But we have just seen that it is untrue to affirm that death and the Lord's coming are in effect the same thing to *any one*, for in themselves they are different, and in Scripture they are ever contrasted. The addition of "*to every one of us*" makes it as singular a contradiction as can be well conceived to the apostolic words—"we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord." That is, some believers will meet the Lord when He comes, without passing through death at all. May it be ourselves, beloved! And one may go further, and affirm, that to say, the remembrance of death ought to bring home to us, with quite sufficiently persuasive power, the admonitions of our Lord, "Watch therefore," &c. is not to be the disciple, but the teacher of Christ. Now, I believe that *what He said*, and that only, is the right weapon to faith. The sheep hear *His voice*, and He said, "Watch therefore," not for ye know not what hour ye shall die, but "what hour *your Lord doth come;*" and so uniformly—*never once* on the ground of death. It is for the coming of the Master we are set to watch, with lamps burning and loins girded. But death is in no way the *Master*, any more than the Bridegroom; far from it, death (however humiliating in itself, inasmuch as it is the last effect of Satan's power touching us) is now one of our *servants* through the grace of our Lord Jesus. Cast into the waters, He has made them sweet for us; and, life or death, all are ours!—Ed.

GENESIS XXII.

Worship always supposes the will broken.

In the preceding chapters, we have seen Abraham in Egypt, and we have remarked, that so long as he was there he built no altar; but he came out of it, and then, *having abandoned Egypt*, he could build an altar to the Lord. David sees the child sick who is dear to him; then he fasts and prays, but he wrestles with God; his will was not submissive. When the child was dead, David changed his apparel, ate, drank, and *could come to worship before the Lord*, because *the struggle* that existed in his heart *had ceased, and his will was broken.* Job, after those heavy afflictions, which are set before us in the first chapter, the loss of his substance and of his family, rends his mantle, it is true (i. 20); he did not sin in that, the Word tells us—his grief was lawful—he was permitted to grieve for the loss of his children; but he arises and worships before God; he can worship Him, because his will is broken, and he can say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

But in the chapter we have just read, we find something far above what we have in Job and David. They acquiesced in God's will, but their submission was passive; it required of them no act. Not so in Gen. xxii. Not only must Abraham accept God's will, but, moreover, he must act against himself; he must, so to speak, sacrifice himself, for the sacrifice of his son was nothing short of that. God says to him, Offer up to me *thy son*, thine only son. The name of an individual contains in it for us all that concerns him and all our relations with him. "*Thy son;*" this word kindled in Abraham the tenderest of feelings, and he had to sacrifice that son! Nay, more; this name recalled to him the promises of God, and it was in this son they were to be fulfilled, for God had positively told him: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." But he whose will is subjected to God, is satisfied of those two things. God will provide for it, and, I am with God. Every look to the flesh in the way of expectation, for the fulfilment of the promises, must be turned away, and God alone remain as the source of the life, the blessings, and the promise; as the One who never comes to the end of His resources, even in the very failure of all the means He Himself might have pointed out for the accomplishment of His promises.

God thus proves the heart, that all confidence in the flesh may be destroyed; but, at the same time, knowing that the heart needs to be sustained under the trial, He sustains it by a new revelation, which enables it to triumph. Thus we see, in Heb. xi. 19, that Abraham, on the occasion of the sacrifice required of him, had a revelation concerning the resurrection, then so unknown. It is thus that God, in His infinite mercy, causes us to gain in Himself what we lose in the flesh.

Far from those who accompanied him, that is, alone with Isaac and with God, Abraham received this revelation, and could offer the ram on the altar in the stead of his son, according as he had said, *God will provide Himself a burnt-offering.* It is thus that, in the secret of communion with God, we learn much of Him.

In Jesus, the true worshipper of the Father, the will was always broken. The cup was full of bitterness, as we know; but, in His desire to fulfil the will of God, He forgets, so to speak, this bitterness, and cries out: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

JOSHUA V.

I find a sufficiently palpable difference between the effect of the salvation that Christ has accomplished for us, and that which fits us for the enjoyment of things which are found in the heavenly country. The redemption of Israel was complete as to Pharaoh; it was finished for ever. Israel is introduced into the wilderness perfectly redeemed. It is the same with respect to us. In traversing the desert, Christ is given to us, as cloud, manna, water from the rock, all that is necessary for us. That comes from the pure grace of God. There is no question of conflict in all that; God gives the needful: cloud, manna, and water are always there. Christ is given to meet our every want, and to give us strength to journey through the desert.

If we look to ourselves, we shall find ourselves incapable of enjoying the things which belong to us. Now, it is no longer the question of entering into the wilderness, but of entering Canaan. The Jordan must be passed. Each fault we commit is committed in the presence of the enemy of our souls; it weakens us, and mars our enjoyment. The Christian, inasmuch as he is acting in the heavenly places, is in the enemy's presence; and if he is not faithful, he is incapable of enjoying the promises.

We must cross what stops the way, Jordan, death. It is true that we find there all the power of grace, the ark in the midst of Jordan. Christ has made of death a passage, a way. Death is ours. (1 Cor. iii. 22.) We can only enjoy the promises of God, so far as we are dead to all here below. Man is accounted dead. Manna continues until Jordan. Christ is there to give us the strength to go onward. But there is something else, even the enjoyment of the treasures which belong to us in heaven, and to that end we must be dead to all here below. If to-day I do not realize this death, I do not enjoy heavenly things. It is one thing not to find in ourselves the activity of the flesh, and as being in heaven to eat of the growth of the land; it is another thing to traverse the wilderness with Christ for all we need. We are called to the enjoyment of the heavenly places, and to do that we must have crossed the Jordan. It is there we eat of the fruit of the land of promise.

The first thing that Joshua does before he enters on the career of battles is to circumcise Israel, which signifies the putting off the sins of the flesh; that is, the reproach of Egypt. Before our conversion, we were only carnal; it is the reproach of Egypt, the only fruit of that land. The Israelites are circumcised at Gilgal, which is the practical destruction of all that remained of Egypt up to that time. We must always return to Gilgal, always have the camp there; the evil must there be cut off. Afterwards they celebrated the passover, of which no trace is found in the history of the wilderness, where they were uncircumcised. There is real communion with what Christ has been, which can only take place when a man is circumcised, when the evil is taken away, and we judge ourselves. Here, in order to eat the passover, this must be done at Gilgal. Holiness, without this circumcision, is a terrible thing; with it, I enjoy the holiness of God in Christ. The roasted grains of corn represent Christ risen, without having seen corrup-

tion. We enjoy it. It is a thing wherewith we are nourished, and not only what is necessary to us while we are in the wilderness.

Both for spiritual warfare and in spiritual enjoyment, we must be dead to this world and to sin; practically, there must be a stripping off of the flesh. We must return to Gilgal, to the judgment of the flesh. These things precede the manifestation of the Captain of the Lord's host presenting himself for battle. When there has been circumcision, passover, we feed on things which, without that, would have been our death and condemnation. (Gen. xvii. 14; Exodus xii. 48.) Christ presents Himself to lead us to battle. Inasmuch as He is the Captain of the host, He presents Himself in the same holiness as when He said to Moses: "I am that I am." When He leads His people on to battle and triumph, He is equally the God of holiness as when He accomplished our redemption. This holiness is equally manifested in the conduct of His people. Because of the sin of Achan, He no longer goes up with His people. No difficulties can stand when God is there, and the people cannot stand before their enemies when He is not there.

For the enjoyment of heavenly things, there must be Jordan and Gilgal—death and the putting off of the flesh. There we eat of the fruit of God's land. It is gain and a precious thing to realize our privilege in having done with sin.

These two things are true of the Christian life: the wilderness and conflict in Canaan. To be strong, we must be dead to the things of the flesh. Then all is ours. Christ is ours, with His holiness and His resurrection. We have the Lord Himself leading us from triumph to triumph, and saying to us: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet."

God grant us grace to profit by the death of Christ, to enjoy the fruit of the land, all we have in Jesus. For this end, we must be dead, have the circumcised heart, and return to Gilgal, in order that we may possess in our camp the Captain of the Lord's host. We are weak. What do I say, weak? Since Christ is our strength. May we enjoy what is given to us in our heavenly Canaan!

PSALM LXXXIV.

The essential thought of this Psalm is, *the tabernacles of the* Lord. We see that, at all times, the intention and the desire of God were to have a tabernacle: wherefore, God shows to Moses on the mountain a pattern of the tabernacle.

In his song respecting the deliverance of Israel and the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, Moses says: "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation, and I will prepare Him a habitation," a tabernacle. (Exodus xv. 2.) But God says, I will prepare myself a tabernacle; and at the end of the times, after the millennium, this desire of God shall be accomplished, according as it is spoken in Rev. xxi. 3: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them."

The word *tabernacle* has always the sense of a habitation of God with men. Thus David, after having said, "How amiable are thy tabernacles," adds, "My heart and my flesh cry out *for the living God.*"

"Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." It was thither that the soul of David looked; it was to that providence of God which has prepared a place of rest for every creature, and by faith he says: "Well, then, since thou hast prepared a nest even for the swallow and the sparrow, thou hast also prepared one for me;" and he adds: "Thine altars, O Lord of hosts!" There is the nest or place of rest that he sought. "Thine altars, O Lord of hosts!" And, *in fact, worship is the rest of the soul.*

There is but one man, dear friends, who never had a place of rest. Even as Jesus says: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." And if we now have a nest, a place of rest in God, it is because for our sakes Jesus was without rest on earth.

Verse 4. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee." Blessed are they, not who visit, or pass through; but, blessed are they who dwell in thy house. And impossible it is to dwell there without praising Him continually.

But, in another sense, we are not always in the house; we go out for service, as the swallow for food for its young; but (verse 5) there are ways which lead to the house, that is to say, divers ways of God with regard to us, which end at the house. These ways, dear friends, are sometimes stony, thorny, and murderous for the flesh; but they are the ways, and he whose heart is in the house will prefer the rugged way which leads to it, to the easy way that leads away from it. For example, for the first disciples the ways were hunger (verse 6), perils, persecution, death, or the *valley of Baca*, that is to say, all that is most sorrowful; but they "made it a well." It is thus, dear friends, that all difficulties are changed for those who are on the way; they are made into wells, that is, into sources of joy, blessing, and glory. "The rain also filleth the pools." Not only the ordinary modes of assistance come to the help of him who is in the way, but even rain, or direct help from God, comes unexpectedly in the midst of the desert.

Verse 7. "They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." There are, as it were, halting-places on the Christian's road, trials whence fountains spring up, which make him go from strength to strength.

Verse 9. "Behold .... and look on the face of thine Anointed." We can always present with confidence to God His Anointed, or Christ, and thus comfort ourselves concerning what we ourselves are.

Verse 10. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Many of God's children are satisfied with being at the door, and there are even some who keep themselves outside, while we ought to enter in and dwell in the house. Yet, if our unbelief, or the lusts of our heart, which desires other objects than God, hinder us from advancing, we have at least "the door," for Christ is "the door;" and "the door," though it be the door only, is worth more than all that is in the world.

A SOLEMN COINCIDENCE.

There is a striking, and to my own soul a solemn, coincidence between the close of the three several periods terminating in the call of Abraham, the rejection of Christ by Israel, and the judgments which will attend the speedy return of our blessed Lord. And seeing how near this last named event must be (without at all pretending to fix dates or to know the day and the hour), it becomes an exceedingly solemn subject of consideration for all who have ears to hear. Let us turn to the instruction of God's Word respecting it.

We are not simply Gentiles. We are Gentiles, of course, as distinguished from the Jews; but there are responsibilities flowing from the testimony of God to us and among us which distinguish us from the nations which have scarcely, or not at all, heard the Gospel; and those responsibilities must never be lost sight of in contemplating the righteous dealings of God in judgment on the nations.

Every serious reader of Scripture must have noticed the care of God to have, in every age, a testimony to Himself; and while the reception of that testimony has been life and salvation to any whose hearts have been opened to receive it in truth, the rejection or the abuse of it has been the ground of condemnation to all the rest. Thus did God deal with the whole race of mankind, from Noah to the call of Abraham; with Israel, from the beginning of their history to the rejection of Christ, and the judgments which fell upon them in consequence; and now with Christendom, by which is meant the sphere within which the gospel is preached and Christianity nominally recognized.

In the first case, we have the judgment which came upon the nations and the grounds of it in the first chapter of Romans. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. *Wherefore God also gave them up* to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. *For this cause God gave them up to vile affections.....* And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which

are not convenient." Thus we see it was not simply ignorance of God which characterized the persons here spoken of. "That which may be known of God was manifest to them (*see margin*); for God had shewed it to them." It could not be said that the sons of Noah, and their immediate offspring, were ignorant of God in the sense in which heathen nations are now ignorant of Him. No; they had the display of Him in creation, the proofs there of "His eternal power and Godhead," just as all have now. But besides that, they had the knowledge of *who it is* whose eternal power and Godhead are thus displayed. "They knew God." It is not, of course, that they knew Him savingly, any more than the thousands of Sunday-school children in this land know Christ savingly now. But just as these know all the external facts of Christianity from their teachers and parents, so those knew God through the instructions and traditions of their forefathers. *But they did not like what they knew.* It was a restraint upon their lusts and a check to their proud imaginings, and they desired to be without it. "They did not like to *retain* God in their knowledge." "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God." Instead of falling in worship and adoration before Him, they sought to subject Him to the reasonings of their own minds; and the result was, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." "They changed the truth of God into a lie." They did not deny that there was a God; they were not atheists; but their vain speculations and imaginings about God issued in changing the truth of God into a lie, and rendering to the creature the homage which was alone the Creator's due. The root of the evil was in their hearts. The light shone round about them, but they preferred darkness. They inherited the truth from those with whom it had been deposited, but they rested not till they had taken off all its edge, and turned it into a lie. They knew God, but they did not like to retain Him in their knowledge; and so God gave them up to fulfil their own heart's lusts, and all the thick darkness and horrible enormities of Paganism were what ensued.

It is familiar to most how the same thing occurred in Israel. One crisis after another in their history demonstrates this; but it was in the last great crisis that it was most of all apparent. It was not at all that they were without the truth, that they were destitute of the light. They had Moses and the prophets, and Moses and the prophets were read in the synagogues every sabbath day. There was the form of godliness to an unusual extent, and a high reputation for sanctity was the passport to universal commendation and esteem. And yet every thing was perverted. The law, which had been given on purpose to convince of sin, they used to justify themselves. The ordinances, which had been given as intimations of grace, shadows of good things to come, they made use of to eke out a righteousness of their own. "We be Moses' disciples," was their boast; and yet they made Moses their pretence for rejecting Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. What a serious word that is in Acts xiii.: "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they had fulfilled them in condemning Him." And they were given up to blindness. It is most evident that it was not the *absence* of the truth which had been deposited with the nation, nor was it the *formal denial* of it which brought on this judicial blindness. No; it was the perversion of it, the changing it into a lie, the abusing God's truth to sanction their rejection of God's Christ; this was what brought on the judgment. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts xxviii. 25–28.)

It was this transfer of the testimony to the Gentiles (the Jews being left to the blindness they had chosen) that was referred to at the beginning of this paper, as having imposed responsibilities on Christendom which distinguish it from mere pagan tribes. God is not now winking at the times of ignorance, but commanding all men everywhere to repent. God is not now dealing with one favoured nation, while the rest are left to their own ways (though even when He did this He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good and sent them rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness). His voice now speaks to men from heaven, proclaiming pardon and peace through the blood of Jesus, who was crucified on earth, but is exalted now to the highest place in heaven! while it surely testifies that "Him hath God appointed to be the Judge of quick and dead." Life, salvation, sonship, heavenly glory in union with Jesus, it publishes as the certain portion of any who, through grace, believe in Him; judgment, condemnation, *already resting on a guilty world*, and shortly to be executed on all who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;—this is the testimony which, for eighteen hundred years, has been sent to the Gentiles, and which has been in Christendom nominally recognized. And what do we find foretold as to Christendom at the close? Why, just that as the nations, when they knew God, did not like to retain Him in their knowledge, but made gods according to their hearts' lusts, and were given up to the darkness which they had chosen; that as the Jews, when they had the testimony of Moses and the prophets to the Messiah which they expected, made the word of God of none effect by their traditions, and chose a Messiah according to their own thoughts and wishes, and rejected the Christ of God, God then in righteous anger choosing their delusions; so Christendom, favoured with immeasurably greater light than either, will in the end follow the same course, and be like both the others, given up to strong delusion. We read of one "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; *because they received not the love of the truth*, that they might be saved." (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.) It is not because they are destitute of the truth, or because they have not nominally received it; but because they received not *the love of the truth*. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, *but had pleasure in unrighteousness*." (Verses 11 and 12.) This is the fearful secret in every case: a heart that has pleasure in unrighteousness, and loves to practice it under shelter of religious forms and pretensions, and so perverts the truth of God to this end. As the nations would have a *god* (or gods) according to their hearts, and the Jews a *Messiah*, so now and hereafter men will have a *Christianity* according to their own thoughts, and the desires of their proud, and deceitful, and wicked hearts, and *God will let it be so*. He will send delusion to those who love to be deluded! The Lord give us in holy self-distrust to tremble at His word.

One thing very important flows from all this, viz. that in a day like the present, it is no test of whether a man has true and living faith to inquire whether he holds the general truths of Christianity. It would have been no test of a godly true-hearted Israelite in our Lord's days to ask Him whether He was a disciple of Moses. *All were that nominally*. The difference was, that those who were *only in name* the disciples of Moses, used his name and his authority to sanction their rejection of Christ; while those who had *really heard God speak by Moses and the prophets*, discerned in Christ the One to whom they testified. There are two passages deeply significant as to this point; the one is Rom. ii. 17–20, and is addressed to the Jew in the apostle's day; the other is 2 Tim. iii. 1–5, and is a prediction of the last days of the present dispensation. "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God; and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness: an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes: *which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law*," &c. We have the fair exterior and high profession of those who in the apostle's days were under sentence of judgment, and ripe for its execution. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, *having a form of godliness*, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." The word translated *form* (μόρφωσιν) is the same in both passages: *and these are the only passages in which this word occurs*. Surely, we may learn from this that what occurred at the close of the last dispensation,

the perfect form of a Jew outwardly, being found in those who were not Jews inwardly, and who were given up to blindness and to judgment, will occur again at the close of the present dispensation. *The perfect form of Christianity*, separated from its power, and used like Judaism in the other case, as a cloak for all that is most repugnant to the Spirit of Christ and hateful in God's eyes.

How precious in such a day to have this word: "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His!" May true saints bear this in mind for their comfort; and may we all remember for our warning and admonition the accompanying word: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity!"

A SOLEMN ASSEMBLY.

It probably happens that an English reader of the Bible is sometimes perplexed by finding the words "solemn assembly" in the text, and "day of restraint" in the margin. (See Lev. xxiii. 36; Deut. xvi. 8; 2 Chron. vii. 9; Neh. viii. 18.) If acquainted with Greek and not with Hebrew, he would wonder still more to find the word ἐξόδιον occasionally used as a rendering of the Hebrew word; but, in reality, there is a connection between the ideas suggested by each of the three terms employed. Let it be first remarked, that the word "holy days" in the margin (Amos v. 21) might have been better than those inserted either in the text or in the margin elsewhere, as the rendering of the Hebrew word עצרה. Then let the following supposed case be employed as an illustration of the meaning of the three words or phrases:

Hebrew.	*Greek.*	*English.*
עצרה	ἐξόδιον	holiday.
restraint.	exit, departure, q.d. leave of absence.	(holy day) or solemn assembly.

A stranger arrives in London from the country, and is disappointed at finding it is a *holiday* at the Bank. He would probably meet with the following explanation: Do you not see the people are all going to *Church?* (ἐκκλησία, solemn assembly.) Business is *restrained* (עצרה), and the clerks at the Bank, &c., have *leave to go out.* (ἐξόδιον.)

N.B. It should be remarked, however, that it is *possible* the Greek word may refer to the celebration of the Exodus, but this does not seem very probable. Also, Amos, in the passage referred to, uses another word. SAMECH.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST AS TO PROPHECY.

I.—THE ANTICHRIST PROPERLY SO CALLED.

I AM still inquiring as to Antichrist, but I had not overlooked the difficulties. It has been taken for granted among those who expect a personal Antichrist, that he is the civil head of the Roman empire. This I question. Without doubting in the least that there will be such a blasphemous Gentile power, it seems to me that *the Antichrist* is another power, of which the Scriptures are even more full; the vessel of evil, religious energy, rather than that of evil public government. At least, two such manifestations of power we find in Rev. xiii., for the second is a beast, as well as the first; that is, there is a second temporal power co-existent with the public imperial power, which has the throne of Satan. The first beast had risen, like previous beasts, out of *the sea*, *i.e.* out of the tumultuous floating mass of population—the Gentile world. But the second beast came out of *the earth*, *i.e.* out of the formed arrangement of God's moral providence—the sphere where the dragon and the beast were worshipped, and all heavenly association was blasphemed. In form of power, this second beast was like the Lamb; but his speech was like the dragon, or great hostile power of Satan: a religious, though blasphemous, character of evil at work within the sphere where Satan rules. Such a relationship will be found to be Jewish. It is the religion of the earth, not of the dwellers in heaven, and is Jewish in character—a power in the earth ostensibly connected with divine things, falsely, and verified in the sight of men by the exhibition of judicial power as of God. Rev. xix. speaks of the second beast, as the false prophet.

The Antichrist is not spoken of by name, save in the epistles of John, where his character is religious, not secular—apostate and heretical activity against the person and glory of Christ and the essential doctrines of Christianity. He denies the Father and the Son. He does not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh. He denies that Jesus is the Christ, which seems rather Jewish in its connection and evil, rather than the denial of the revelation which constitutes Christianity. Antichrist, in a word, is characterized by religious energies of evil in connection with Christianity and Judaism.

In 2 Thess. ii. it is a wicked religious, and not a mere secular power which is spoken of—its impious, then its seductive, character. Verse 4 is moral opposition and insult to God, rather than the object of deference, who was publicly on Satan's throne. It is the active personage, with Judas' title, who opposes all divine authority—the *man* of sin showing himself as though he were *God:* the contrast of Christ, who was God, and yet was the man of obedience. His presence, too, is according to the energy of Satan; and as Christ, in truth of righteousness to such as should be saved; so he, in deceit of unrighteousness to such as should be lost.

In Dan. xi. 36, &c., is the king, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, &c.; that is, we have the same qualities and acts, and yet he honours the God of forces, and honours and increases with glory a strange god. So that it would seem that the haughty rejection of the true God and self-exaltation is not inconsistent with being servant of a false one, really slave to the enemy—an old lesson learnt all through human nature, and never learnt. Self-exaltation is not supremacy. I apprehend, or am inclined to think, that this self-exaltation will be, specially in result, in Judea against God; but my difficulty just lies there, because in Dan. vii. the little horn seeks to change times and laws (*i.e.* I apprehend the Jewish order), and this looks like the power of the Antichrist, while the little horn there is uncommonly like the first beast (*i.e.* its last head). The difficulty is in apportioning the parts where both work together. The process seems natural, painful to say. The apostacy denying the Father and the Son, and that Jesus is the Christ. This throws them on Judaism (which was always the mystery of iniquity in principle), and thus on Antichrist, who at last throws off all in self-exaltation, and makes them, during the last half-week, worship a strange God, and the tribulation takes place. It seems to me that the deepest troubles in the Psalms (I do not speak of the cross) come from what has a Jewish character, not an open enemy, but a companion or familiar friend, ungodliness and strife in the city. The self-exaltation is moral character, not public power, unless in his own sphere. This self-exaltation would be his own apostate setting up in Judea; but finding it convenient for himself, and it being the work of Satan, he forces all to recognize the Roman emperor, which for Jews is apostacy. It would be the old Josephus question, save that saints who flee or bow take the place of sicarii. It is a kind of *suzeraineté*. This false Christ in the east making head in the interest of the western emperor against all, and deceiving the Jews by Satanic power in the east, he wields all the power of the empire; he joins the recognition of the western emperor to the Satanic deception of the Jews, his own people probably. The little horn of Dan. vii. certainly seems the more general power, which, while local (like Bonaparte, a France), governs the whole beast.

II.—THE FORCE OF "THE LAST DAY" IN JOHN VI.

As regards John vi., the Lord is, to me, evidently substituting a blessing in resurrection to any royal Jewish blessing. Owned the prophet, and refusing to be king carnally, He goes up alone on high, and the disciples are sent away alone, toiling on the sea (a Jewish remnant strictly), and arrive as soon as He rejoins them; but He is fed upon in humiliation and death, in the interval, and hence to such the blessing comes in resurrection: he (*i.e.* the believer) will be raised up in the last day. Jesus will not bless him as come down here before giving him his portion where He is gone up in the power of everlasting life. The last day is in contrast with their present blessing as king. The last day is never the day of the Lord, save in the vague sense that it embraces all the closing period, which is its true force. He does not come and set up the Jews, but the Father draws, and a man comes to Him, and the way He blesses him is in the power of eternal life, raising him up when the close of all this busy and rebellious scene arrives; *that* shall be his portion in that day—not Messianic security now.

III.—THE ALLUSION IN "THE LAST TRUMP."—1 Cor. xv. 52.

After all the grave and wise speculations on the last trump, I strongly suspect it is merely an allusion to military matters. Somewhere in Josephus' war, and perhaps in other books, we have the order of the breaking up of the Roman camp, and at the last trump they all break up and march forward. Now, I acknowledge that Scripture interpretation is not to be borrowed from without; but I have seen only tortured linkings with other passages within. I am content to take the general idea of the last public call of God relating to the Church, and leave it there; but what suggested the image, I suspect, was what I say: just as κέλευσμα, in 1 Thess. iv., beyond controversy, is a similar military term used to a similar purpose. Matt. xxiv. 31 ("And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet"), I have not the smallest shadow of a doubt, applies to the assembling of the Jews (elect, as Isa. lxv.) after Christ is come.

IV.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

For myself, I have learnt much in searching the Word, with regard to the kingdom of heaven. . . . . I find that the true idea presented by this expression is the reign of the heavens in the person of the Son of man. John Baptist proposes it in testimony, as drawing nigh; the Lord does the same; but still as a prophet. All this being rejected, the violent alone took it by force, so that it was not established, and the Lord could say while yet there: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." Consequent upon the manifestation of this rejection, and of the judgment pronounced by the Lord on Israel at the end of the twelfth chapter of Matthew, this kingdom is preached as a mystery.* Then it is established in mystery, but administered by Peter, who had the keys of it, when the King ascended to heaven; and, finally, it will be accomplished according to the power of the King, when Satan is cast out of heaven, and Christ receives the kingdom, and establishes blessing on earth by this means.

Such is that which I present to my brethren as the *résumé* of that which I have found, evidently without any view to controversy. The Church, such as it is presented by Paul, does not at all enter here into account; it is viewed in his writings as the body, as the bride, of Christ, identified with Him in His life such as He is in heaven, in its nature, its position, and its glory. It is a quite different thought from the administration of the kingdom. He may speak of the gathering of the saints here below as a body, as a bride, &c., because such was the extent of their privilege: we will say a word about it elsewhere; but the thought which he links with the Church is its identification with Christ. At the death of Stephen, the administration, by the Holy Spirit, of this kingdom of which Peter had the keys, was rejected at Jerusalem, as the announcement of this kingdom had been already rejected in the testimony of John Baptist, and in that of the Son of man. From that time He ceased to be presented to the Jews as a people. Up to that time, the Holy Spirit acted upon the intercession of Jesus on the cross in their favour (compare Luke xxiii. 34, and Acts iii. 17), and as if the ten thousand talents due by the death of Jesus had been remitted. The love of God still delayed in withdrawing, and it is only in Acts xxviii. that He renounces His efforts toward this people, over the least remnant of which He ceased not to bend down. Nevertheless, always opposing the truth preached by Paul, and forbidding to preach to the Gentiles, according to the grace of God, the Jews filled up their sins, and the wrath is come upon them to the end; they have been sold, with all that they had, until the payment be made. From thence history regards the Gentiles. The Gentiles figure on the stage, either as rejecting, from love to their idols, or as receiving the testimony of grace which was proposed to them. Jerusalem, trampled under their feet, disappears entirely from the scene, and the iniquity and the conduct of the Gentiles, whatever they may be, become the object of the judgment and ways of God, the Jews being as it were buried (see Isa. xxvi. and Ezek. xxxvi.), though guarded, as the Gentiles before had been, so to speak, non-existent. It is evident that the Gentiles, professing Christians, and the Gentiles of the four monarchies subject to the beast, are the special objects of the ways of God in His government (not, however, the only ones); but it is at the time of the destruction and judgment of those in particular, that the Son of man will establish His kingdom in power, although He may subject and judge all the others afterwards. It is this of which the prophecies of the Old and the New Testament speak to us clearly.

* Here also, by consequence, the Lord sows; He does not seek fruit in the vineyard; all was to begin.

V.—THE CHURCH.

The question of the Church is bound up with these two truths: the return of Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. For the Holy Spirit is come down here below, and it is that which gives to the Church its unity and its bond as a whole on earth. With the Church it is as with the body of a man, of which, it is said, all the elements are entirely renewed in a very short time; but it is always the same man: the spirit of a man which is in him is vitally linked together, and appropriates to itself new heterogeneous elements, and unity and person do not change.

There are three great truths which are linked with Christ, the centre of all truth, or three different positions, if you please, in which He is seen: dead and risen; then in heaven (to which corresponds, as proof, the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth, John xvi.); and, lastly, returning here below. Dead and risen, there is the Church, His body, justified and risen with Him; this is the doctrine of justification, and though evidently true for all the Church, viewed as a body, it is in its employment, for each day and for each conscience, an individual affair. The Holy Spirit, seal of this doctrine, dwells in the body of the individual as in a temple. Afterwards in heaven, Jesus is hidden in God, but crowned with glory and honour; the doctrine, which flows from it, is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church on earth, in His body; of the Holy Spirit, who gives to this body its unity, and which renders applicable the terms: body of Christ, bride of Christ, Church of Christ,—to those who, on earth, are united to Him who is in heaven, and thus form an unity on earth; the dead in Christ being for the moment out of sight. If this is understood (for one may be converted without understanding it), we desire, as the bride of Christ, the return of the Bridegroom. Justification is tied to His death and resurrection: for we know that His death has been accepted on high. The unity of the Church, and its waiting for Christ as becomes a faithful spouse, are what is bound up with the glory of Christ on high and the presence of the Holy Ghost here below. These are the two great truths which have been specially put forward, which God Himself, I believe, has put forward in these times, and which have produced so much uneasiness in those who desire to abide outside their force. . . . . That people may not know these things, is intelligible; that others may oppose them, is very sad; but to say that they are secondary truths, is to be seriously deceived. To make little account of the glory of Christ manifested in the unity of the Church here below, is a proof, in effect, that the glory and love of Christ for His Church are not near the heart, and therefore there is hardly the occasion of speaking to conscience. If after having insisted before a son upon what he ought to be toward an affectionate and tender father, and having shown him what a filial spirit is, he demands that one should track out his duty with exactness, one may abstain from it: he wants the spirit to understand his position; it would be the spirit of a servant, of a hireling. The feeling must be awakened for conscience to act; but woe, woe to him in whom it is wanting! It is just so with the responsibility of the Church; the grace of the relationship must be recognized, and it is the heart taught of the Holy Spirit which will understand it. I doubt not that there is enough to condemn, by conscience itself, him who wants it; but such is neither my task nor my desire. If the heart can be awakened so as to feel the force of this relationship, of this obligation, this will be the most precious prize of the battle one has to join. Israel might have been condemned by the law, but is not the call of God far stronger, and Israel more hardened not to respond to it, when it was said, and in vain: "Go yét, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel"? For us the first principle is love. If that is wanting, all is wanting.

I admit, and have admitted, that one can understand the love which saves without knowing that the Church is bride of Christ; but, in present circumstances, this is what the Holy Spirit recalls particularly: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." Such is the normal position, the first testimony, which the Church bears. After that, it can turn to others and say: "Let him that is athirst come," for the living waters already flow there, and "whosoever will," &c.; but for

Christians, there is what the Spirit has bequeathed to the Church, as its true position. Its feelings are founded upon its relationships with Christ, and the Spirit demands that those who hear join this desire of His heart. Is it ill done to enlist those who have heard the voice of the good Shepherd, to take the position of the bride and join this cry, Come?

But the doctrine of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church here below, and of Christ's return, are identified with its unity on earth, with its position of bride (or rather of betrothed here below, in order to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ), and with this desire of His coming which detaches us from all that is not of Him, and attaches us entirely, exclusively to Him.

VI.—LUKE XXI. COMPARED WITH MATTHEW XXIV.

As to Luke xxi. it is much more historical, because it opens out, as revealing the Son of man, the period in which Israel is set aside and not counted in its history, or what concerns the Gentiles. Hence the Spirit records no enquiry of "the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age," but the general history in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus, from verse 9 to verse 19 inclusive, we have the state of things from after the Lord's death until the encircling of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, and no mention made of the abomination of desolation, and the twentieth verse gives the reply to the question of verse 7, founded on verse 6. The statement accordingly says nothing of the tribulation such as never was; but that vengeance then comes on the people and city, that all may be accomplished. This still continues, and will continue, Jerusalem being trodden down, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, in the close of the Gentile dominion begun in Nebuchadnezzar. Then the fact is revealed of the state of things at the close of the dominion of Gentile power—signs in sun, moon, and stars; on earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring (the last expression showing, I think, that the words are employed figuratively, though there may be possibly portents also); men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven (the sources of the earthly state of things) shall be shaken. And then shall they (not "ye," but they, these proud, rebellious Gentiles*) see the Son of man coming in a cloud.

Such is the prophetical revelation, which presents, it seems to me, little difficulty. The exhortation which follows may suggest more; at the same time, it offers some remarkable helps as to the use of expressions. For example, "this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled" (verse 32), proves necessarily, either that "generation" must be taken in an extended sense, as in Deut. xxxii. 5, 20, and as in other passages, or, that "all" could only apply to the establishment of the state of things at the setting aside judicially of the Jewish people, because we have the treading down of Jerusalem for a long continuous period revealed. Hence we have to seek the guidance of the Spirit for the application of the passage, there being an incipient accomplishment at the destruction or treading down of Jerusalem, its desolation, vengeance, &c., which subsists still, and a far fuller one at the close preceding the coming of the Son of man. Hence the Holy Ghost records here an expression which may apply to both: "Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." I do not doubt that this had a certain accomplishment in the absolute suppression of the Jewish order, but no fulfilment; and that the kingdom of God will be established by the coming of the Son of man after the signs of verses 25, 26. Note also that this passage precludes the possibility of the application of "the coming of the Son of man" to the destruction of Jerusalem, because we have already had the long treading down consequent on the encompassing with armies. The full natural application of verses 28–31, then, is to the close when, these signs having taken place, the full deliverance of the Jewish faithful will take place. So verse 35 has a limited application to Judea or Palestine; but it is evident to me that there is the larger application of the coming of the day of the Lord on the whole earth. It is the day that is spoken of. Verse 36 seems to me also to refer absolutely to the character of a Jewish remnant (though in a still better sense, it will be true of the Church); but in its proper application it is the escape of judgments then, and standing before the Son of man when He takes the kingdom.

In Matt. xxiv. the Lord passes over all the times of the Gentiles unnoticed, and speaks only of Jerusalem, as though under judgment recognised of God, so far as to be the object of His thoughts and dealings. Verse 14 only takes the broad fact that the Gospel of the kingdom should be preached to all nations (a thing not yet accomplished to the letter), and then the end should come. I judge, then, that while the whole reply will have an accomplishment at the close, there was sufficient in the early part to guide the saints between the Lord's ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem; but that its fulfilment will yet take place, to the end of verse 14 being general, and from verse 15 being absolutely and exclusively the last half-week of Jewish tribulation. There is a point which I think has not been duly borne in mind; it is that the unfaithful servant will, for the judgment, pass over into the time of the Son of man's judgment, so that what is called the Church may go on, in whatever apostacy of condition, into the state of things which takes place when the Church of the faithful is gone. Laodicea is threatened with being vomited out of the Lord's mouth, but when it is vomited, is not said, if it be taken for literal judgment. I am disposed to think Judaism will play an active part in connection with the apostate Church, and that there will be an astonishing amalgam; though, besides that, the Church form may continue until destroyed by the horns and the beast.—(*Extracts from letters, &c., of a brother labouring in France.*)

* In Matthew is given the full development of Jewish dispensation, and this so much so that I could not apply any of the statements in Matt. xxiv. or the like to Gentile circumstances; whereas, Luke explicitly opens the door, and brings them into the scene, as may be seen in the close of chapter xxi. Whence also, I believe, He introduces "*all the trees*," the fig tree being the specific emblem of the Jewish corporate nationality.

REVIEWS.

ENOCH. "BY FAITH ENOCH WAS TRANSLATED." &c.—Heb. xi. 5.
London: J. B. Bateman, &c.

THE best notice of this little work, so much is there precious in it, would be to transcribe it from beginning to end. As this may not be done, the following extracts from its close will suffice, doubtless, to induce many of our readers to procure the book for themselves:—

"We have, however, still to look at the *destiny* and *endowment* of these saints, as we have already looked at their *faith*, their *virtues*, and their *religion*.

"The translation of Enoch was the first formal testimony of the great divine secret, that *man was to have a place and inheritance in the heavens*. By creation he was formed for the earth. The garden was his habitation, Eden his demesne, and all the earth his estate. But now is brought forth the deeper purpose, that God has an election from among men destined, in the everlasting counsels of abounding grace, for heaven.

"In the course of ages and dispensations after this, this high purpose of God was only dimly and occasionally, slowly and gradually, manifested. But in the person of Enoch it is made to shine out at once. The heavenly calling, at this early moment, and in the bosom of this elect and favoured household, declares itself in its full lustre. This great fact among the antediluvian patriarchs anticipated, in spirit, the hour of mount Tabor, the vision of the martyred Stephen, and the taking up of the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Such was the high destiny of this elect people.

"The prophecies of Enoch and of Lamech are samples of their endowments. And rich indeed, worthy of their dignity, these endowments were. For those prophecies, under the Holy Ghost, tell us, that glorious secrets had been entrusted to them. They were treated as in the place of friends. 'Shall I hide from them,' the Lord was saying to them, as afterwards to Abraham, 'that thing which I do'? For such privileges belong only to dignity. (See Gen. xviii. 18.) And if Abraham knew the doom of Sodom beforehand, Enoch, in a deeper, larger secret, knew the doom of Sodom beforehand. And his prophecy lets out a mystery of solemn and wondrous glory—that the heavenly saints are to accompany the Lord in the day of His power and judgment. And, as of a character equal with this, Lamech's which comes after, in its turn, with happier anticipations, sketches the scene that lies beyond the judgment, days of millennial blessedness, 'the days of heaven upon the earth.' The Lord has not given up the earth for ever. And these saints before the flood can speak of the great mystery, even before the bow in the cloud becomes the token of it. But they know that the judgment of it must come first; and they can speak of that mystery also before the fountains of the great deep were broken up. . . . . *

* [Would it not be going beyond what is written to predicate even of these precious saints of God, that they were stewards of the mysteries of God? that they had the same intelligent communion with God's deep things as those who, since Pentecost, have the Spirit in a way in which He was not and could not be given till Jesus was glorified.' Incidents in their lives are used of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament as types or illustrations of what personally they may have known little or nothing about. What is termed "the mystery," was certainly hidden from all till the personal descent of the Spirit. Is it giving the blessed apostle his due place, in naming him with the Elders, to

"Such was the heavenly calling—its virtues, its dignity, and its endowments—of this antediluvian family of God. The end of their path was heavenly also, as heavenly as any feature of it. I speak not of the *fact* of its ending in heaven, but of the very *style* in which it so ended. No sign among the nations gave notice of it. No times or seasons had to mark or measure it. No stated age or numbered years had to spend themselves. No voice of prophecy had so much as hinted the blessed rapturous moment. 'Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.' Nothing peculiar ushered forth that glorious hour. No big expectations or strange events gave token of its coming. It was the natural heavenly close of an undeviating heavenly journey.

"It was otherwise with Noah afterwards. Great preparation was made for his deliverance. Years also spent themselves—appointed years. But not so our heavenly patriarch. Noah was carried through the judgment; but Enoch, before it came, was borne to the place out of which it came. *

"And if the days and years did not measure it, nor signs announce it; did the world, I ask, witness it? Or was it, though so glorious and great, silent and secret?

"The language of the apostle seems to give me my answer, and so does all the analogy of Scripture. 'He was not *found*, because God had translated him.' This sounds as though man had been a stranger to that glorious hour. The world seems to have inquired and searched after him, like the sons of the prophets after Elijah; but in vain. (2 Kings ii. 17; Heb. xi. 5.) And this tells us, that the translation had been a secret to man, for they would not have searched, had they seen it.

"All scriptural or divine analogy answers me in like manner. Glory, in none of its forms or actions, is for the eye or ear of mere man.

"Horses and chariots filled the mountains; but the prophet's servant had to get his eye opened, ere he could see them. Daniel saw a glorious stranger, and heard his voice as the voice of a multitude; but the men who stood with him saw nothing, only a terror fell on them. The glory on 'the holy hill' shone only in the sight of Peter, James, and John, though the brightness there at that moment (night as it was) might have lighted up all the land; for the divine face 'did shine as the sun.' Many bodies of saints arose, attendants on the Lord's rising, but it was only to some in the holy city they showed themselves. The heaven was opened over the head of the martyr of Jesus, in the very midst of a multitude; but the glory was seen only by him. Paul went to paradise, and Philip to Azotus; but no eye of man tracked either the flight or the journey. And beyond all, when Jesus rose, and that too from a tomb of hewn stone, and from amid a guard of wakeful soldiers, no ear or eye was in the secret. It was a lie, that the keepers of the stone slept; but it is a truth, that they saw no more of the resurrection than if they had done so. Silence and secrecy thus mark all the glorious transactions. Visions, audiences, resurrections, flights, ascensions, the glory down here, and the heaven opened up there, all these go on, and yet mere man is a stranger to all. And the translation of Enoch takes company with all these. I assuredly judge; and so, I further judge, will another glorious hour, soon to come, in which 'they that are Christ's' are *all* to be interested.

"I have now reached and closed the fifth chapter. The first part of the book of Genesis will be found to end here. For these chapters (i.-iv.) constitute a little volume.

"I. This chapter opens the volume with the work of creation.

"II. Creation being complete, the Lord, the Creator, takes His delight in it; and, in the midst of it, and over it, places the man whom He had formed in His own image, with all endowments and possessions to make His condition perfect.

"III. Man, thus made perfect, being tried and overcome, we see the *ruin* which he wrought, and the *redemption* which God provided.

"IV. V. These chapters then show us one branch of this ruined, redeemed family, choosing the ruins, and another branch of it delighting in the redemption.

"This is simple and yet perfect. The tale is told—a tale of other days; but in the results and sympathies of which we live at this hour.

"It is the sight of the elect, believing, heavenly household, which we get in this little volume, which has, at this time, principally drawn my thoughts to it. They walked on the earth as we should walk; but they were, by their faith, hope, and destiny, all the while, very near heaven, as we are.

"Are we touching the skirts of such glory with unaffected hearts, beloved? Does anything more humble you in His presence, I ask you (for my own soul has already given its answer), than the conviction we have of the little estimation in which the heart holds His promised glory? It is a terrible discovery to make of oneself. That we have but small delight in the provisions of His goodness, is more terrible than that we have no answer to the demands of His righteousness. And yet both stand in proof against us. After Israel had left Egypt, they were tested by the voice of the law; but the golden calf tells that they had no answer for it. In the progress of their journey they are tested by the first-fruits of Canaan; but the desired captain tells that they had no relish for the feast. And what is the heart of man still? What was it in Christ's day? The parable of the marriage of the king's son, like the captain of the wilderness, tells us that there is no relish there for the table which God spreads. What are singing men and singing women to a heavy ear? The pleasant land is despised still, Canaan is not worth the scaling of a single wall or encounter with one Amalekite. The farm, the merchandise, and the wife, are made the captain to take us back, in spite of the invitations of love and the treasures of glory.

"Terrible discovery! And yet it is not hard to make it. The proof of it clings pretty close to us. We know how quickly present interests move us; how loss depresses and profit elates us; and then again we know, how dull the glory glitters, if but a difficulty or a hazard lie this side of it.

"Are we sorry because of this, beloved? Does it ever break the heart into sighs and groans before our God? Sad and solemn, if we feel it not thus—and terrible, when we deliberately talk to ourselves of making a captain again. And this we do when the pastime and the pleasures of the sons of men again give animation to our hearts; or when their honours or their pursuits become again our objects. Lot's wife, beloved, had got beyond Sodom: and that, too, in company with the elect, when it was found that she was still there, in such a sense as to perish with the city. Israel was as far as the wilderness of Paran; and that, too, in company with the ark of God, when it was proved that they were still amid the flesh-pots of Egypt. Serious remembrances for us all! holy warnings, that we wanton not with those lusts and enjoyments, which once we watched and mortified.

"'Of that day and hour knoweth no man'—are the solemn words by which the Lord refuses to pledge the moment of His return to His Jewish remnant. (Matt. xxiv. 36.) That moment is to be to them as the thief of the night, or as the hour of a woman in travail. So as to death. If it come on any of us without a moment's warning, the Lord has not been untrue to any pledge He has given. And so as to the rapture. In no case is the day or the hour pledged or made known. All is included in *one* word of deep and holy import—'Watch'—and that one word is addressed to all: 'What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.'

"Whether the close to us be by death or rapture—whether it be to Israel by being taken or left—the day and the hour remain alike untold; no pledge of it is promised at all. Each and all are set on the watch-tower. *We* wait for 'the Son from heaven;' *they* will have to wait for 'the day of the Son of man;' but neither of us know the hour that closes the waiting.

"This is common to them and to us. We stand in equal condition with them as to this. But together with this, there is a difference.

"The Jewish remnant are given *signs*. That is, they are told of certain things which *must* precede 'the day of the Son of man,' though they are left ignorant of the day or the hour of that appearing. (See Matthew xxiv. 32-35.) The saints now gathering to the hope of 'the Son from heaven,' are, on the contrary, given no such signs, or told of any necessary precursory events.

"The Lord communicated His *purpose* of judgment to Noah; but said nothing to him of the *time* of it. But Noah knew that it could not be till his ark was built. He knew not the time when the waters were to rise; but he knew they could not rise, till he and his were lodged in safety. This was a sign, or an event necessarily forerunning the close of his history. And so with the earthly Israel. Circumstances must take place, though the day or the hour of it be not known, ere the Son of man can be here on earth again. But not so with Enoch. No circumstance necessarily delayed his translation. His walk with God was not a circumstance. And that was all that led the way to his ascension. And so with the Church now gathering. She waits for no circumstance—no years measure her sojourn here; no events prepare her heavenward way. She is not put, like the Jewish election, under the restraint of any signs or preceding circumstances.

"The Lord treats it as *deceit* to say, 'the time draweth nigh;' while the apostle *expressly puts us under those words*. (Luke xxi. 8; James v. 8. Gr.) *After certain signs or events*, the Lord tells the remnant that their expectation is near; the apostle tells us that ours is *always* so. (Matt. xxiv. 33; Phil. iv. 5. Gr.) The Lord exhorts the remnant to watch, because the day may otherwise overtake them; the apostle exhorts us to watch, because we are already of the day, and it is fit that we should act as day-men. (Matt. xxiv. 43; 1 Thess. v. 5, 6.)

"Here lies a difference. But still, all are equally commanded to watch—we in this our day, as ever knowing that 'the end of all things is at hand,' and the remnant, in their coming day, even though they know that some event must go before.

"And beautiful and just this is. For if the things threatened be profoundly solemn, as they are, and the things promised be unspeakably glorious, as they are, it is but little to require of us *to treat them as supreme*—and that, in other words, is *watching*.

"And the sense of the nearness of the glory should be cherished by us. I mean its nearness in *place* as well as time. And we need be at no effort to persuade ourselves of it. It is taught us very

speak of him merely as one entrusted with the circumstances of the heavenly calling? Is not such a statement liable to be misunderstood, as implying—what the beloved author would repudiate—a denial that God has provided *some better thing* FOR US?—ED.]

* "I am not careful to apply all this, as I believe it may be applied. I rather leave it in the way of a suggestion. But it does seem to me, that the Lord, *speaking of the Jewish election*, takes Noah for His text or type; (Matt. xxiv.) while the apostle, *addressing the Church*, takes his language the rather from the translation of Enoch. (1 Thess. iv. 17; 2 Thess. ii. 1.)

"For the Jewish remnant, like Noah, will be carried through the judgment—the saints now gathering will be in the sphere out of which the judgment is to be poured. For we are taught again and again, as I have noticed above, that exercise of power in that day, in company with the Lord, is part of the glory of the saints. (See Col. iii. 4; Rev. ii. 26; xvii. 14; xix. 14.)

clearly and surely. The congregation of Israel were set at the door of the tabernacle, and as soon as the appointed moment comes, the glory is before them. (See Lev. viii. ix.) So at the erection of the tabernacle, and so at the introduction of the ark into the temple. (Ex. xl.; 2 Chron. v.) So when it had business to do (though of different characters) with the company on mount Tabor, with the dying Stephen, or with Saul on the road to Damascus—wherever it may have to act, and whatever it may be called to do, to convict, to cheer, or to transfigure; to smite to the earth the persecutor, to give triumph to the martyr, or to conform an elect vessel to itself, it can be present in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. It is but a thin veil that either hides it or distances it. The path is short and the journey rapidly accomplished. We should cherish the thought of this, beloved. It has its power as well as its consolation. And so, ere long, when the time of 1 Cor. xv. arrives, that moment of the general transfiguration, as soon as the voice of the archangel summons it, the glory will be here again, as in the twinkling of an eye, to do its business with us, and in the image of the heavenly, to bear us up, like Enoch, to the heavenly country.

"Then shall the Lord be glorified in His saints—not as now, in their obedience and service, their holiness and fruitfulness, but in their *personal* beauty. Arrayed in white, and shining in our glories, we shall be the wondrous witness of what He has done for the sinner that trusted in Him. And, as one, much loved and honoured in the Lord, has just written to me, so I write to you, beloved. 'No lark ever sprang up on a dewy morning, to sing its sweet song, with such alacrity as you and I shall spring up to meet our Lord in the air.' And his exhortation to me, I would make mine to you (though feebly echoed from my heart), 'Oh, my brother, set it before your mind's eye as a living reality, and then let hope patiently wait for the fulfilment. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'"

Lectures on the Apocalypse; Critical, Expository, and Practical. Delivered before the University of Cambridge; being the Hulsean Lectures for the year 1848. By Chr. Wordsworth, D.D.

The present volume consists of fourteen lectures, of which the heads are as follows: I. On the doctrine of a millennium.—II. On the same.—III. On the genuineness and inspiration of the Apocalypse.—IV. On the relation of the Apocalypse to the canon of Scripture.—V. The coming of Christ.—VI. Exposition of the Apocalypse: plan of the Apocalypse: the seven epistles and the seven seals.—VII. The seven trumpets.—VIII. History of Holy Scripture.—IX. History of the Church.—X. Introduction to the prophecies concerning Babylon, in the Apocalypse.—XI. Whether Babylon, in the Apocalypse, is the city of Rome.—XII. Whether Babylon, in the Apocalypse, is the Church of Rome.—XIII. The seven vials.—XIV. Concluding discourse.

One of the few things in which we can concur with Dr. W. is in the following strong opinion of the authorized version as regards the Revelation: "Here I would earnestly exhort you, my younger hearers, not to content yourselves with the English version of the Apocalypse, but to have constantly before your eyes the original *Greek* in some good critical edition, where the various readings are carefully noted—as, for instance, in that of Griesbach, or of Scholz. It would be insidious to specify the numerous errors which have been committed by modern expositors, through neglect of this necessary precaution. Any one who undertakes to expound the Apocalypse from our English version alone, will deceive himself and mislead others.

"It is no disparagement to our authorized version of the Apocalypse to say that it admits of considerable improvement. This may be easily accounted for from the nature of the case. The Apocalypse, from its peculiar character, is more difficult to render accurately than any other book of the New Testament." &c.—(Pages 162, 163.)

Dr. Wordsworth's continual thesis is the entire denial of the millennial reign of Christ, *in any sense*, as a thing to be looked for. He is opposed to the idea of a *figurative* reign of the Spirit *before* Christ's coming, no less than to the truth of a *literal*, personal reign of Christ *after* His coming. Thus, in arguing against the former notion in pages 35, 36, he says very justly: "What was the language of the apostles? When the Thessalonians were expecting the immediate reappearance of Jesus Christ, what did Paul say? Did he tell them a millennium would first ensue? No! he that letteth," &c. So, in the preceding page, he had said: "It is clear from Scripture that the present *mixed* state of things will *continue*, as it now is, to the day of judgm nt, and will be *immediately* succeeded by *that day*." That is, his reasoning upon such passages is the same as we should adopt in combating the fond fancy of a triumph for the Church by human instrumentality on earth, or what is called a spiritual millennium here below, before the return of the Lord in person.

If the author sweeps away the figurative glory of the Spirit, no less than the personal coming and reign of Christ, what does he substitute in their stead? and how does he interpret Isa. xi. xxxv. lxv. lxvi., and a host of other Scriptures which are supposed to furnish one or other of these hopes.

Lecture I. is his attempt to prove that the millennial reign is a mere Jewish dream, and a mistaken oral tradition—the literal interpretation of what was meant figuratively in the prophets being the source of the error. He even supposes Rev. xx., rightly understood, to be "a correction of these earthly notions concerning (Christ) Himself and His kingdom." (Page 8.) He appeals, in the latter part of the discourse, to many Scriptures as disproving the very thing which they in fact confirm and demonstrate (such as Acts i. 11, iii. 21, &c.), but we have no room for discussing their bearing just now. Other texts again, such as John xiv. 2, 1 Thess. iv. &c., are quite irrelevant, that is, the fact that *we* are to have heavenly mansions in the Father's house, in no way conflicts with the additional fact that we are to reign with Christ over the earth, and that for a thousand years.

But the second Lecture is of a more positive character than the first. We have the author's view of the first resurrection described in Rev. xx. He considers that the angel is the Lord Jesus, that Christ began the conquest of Satan when He came from heaven and gave the chain to others, His disciples and apostles, to carry out the work; that, in short, Christ *did* bind Satan and fulfil this chapter; and that if Satan still has power in the world, this is due to man and not to God. (Pages 46-49.) Isa. xlvi. is supposed to be accomplished in the present silence of the oracles, and in the conversion of pagan temples into Christian churches. Accordingly "our first or spiritual resurrection is 'our death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness;'" (pages 54, 55;) so called "because it *precedes* the revelation of the body, and because it is the opposite of the second death." (Page 56.) The *erroneous* application of the passage to a mere bodily resurrection (!) he ascribes "to low and inadequate notions of our baptismal privileges and obligations, and of the sacred duties and inestimable blessings of Church-membership and Church-unity; and wherever unworthy notions are entertained on these momentous points, there the doctrine of a millennium may be expected to prevail." (Page 57.) No wonder we read in page 60: "Now, even now, the saints of Christ judge the world." (!)

I feel that simply to state the outline of such views (and the most monstrous assertions are not culled here) is to a spiritual person their immediate and decided confutation. The theory is as old as Hymenaeus and Philetus, "who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already." Along with this goes the scheme that the Church is reigning now. Both these things are affirmed by Dr. Wordsworth, and are the basis of the present volume. Happily the influence of such a theory will be infinitesimally small, else it might demand a sterner warning.

Considerations on the Character of the Religious Movement of the Day, and on the Truths by which the Holy Ghost acts for the Good of the Church. Translat[illegible] from the French, as published by W. H. B. Price 6d.

The Christian who desires to have a large view of that which the Spirit of God is doing at home and abroad, will do well to procure, and ponder over, this very important and wise pamphlet. The actings of God's providence, and the influence of outward political circumstances, are admirably distinguished from the work of the Spirit upon the conscience. The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, Christianity, the Reformation, are successively examined, and then more particularly the religious movement of our own day. In pages 39-52 will be found a beautiful statement of the place, relatively to other fundamental truths which the doctrine of the Lord's return holds, and again of the manner in which that hope connects itself with the entire Christian walk in every respect, and consequently of its eminently practical power. Let the reader judge for himself.

The Royal George.—A Parable.

The author, in the above tract, ingeniously applies to the illustration of Gospel truths this well-known story, and the means used some time ago to raise and dislodge the wreck. It will prove interesting, and profitable, I trust, to many readers.

Practical Reflections on the Life and times of Elijah the Tishbite.

The Lord our Shepherd. Substance of a Lecture on Luke xv. 1-7.

The latter of these works is a Gospel tract of that class which is very suitable, not so much to the unawakened, as to those who, although believing, do not enjoy peace, from the lack of knowing adequately the grace of the Lord, or the perfectness of His work.

The former is by far the larger and more important work, to which attention is called. There are weighty principles insisted on throughout, and pleasingly interwoven into the tale, of the raptured prophet; all is applied in a plain, wholesome, and earnest way. The closing observations, as to the special commission and apostolate of Paul, in illustration of the grand truth of the Church so fully revealed in his epistles, are striking, and many of them valuable, so far as could be judged from a hasty glance at the manuscript kindly sent by the author and the printer. Want of space forbids us a longer notice, at least for the present; but the Christian will find the book itself worthy of attentive perusal.

Moses on Pisgah. (Deut. xxxiv.)

The beautiful scene of Moses on Pisgah is made use of to illustrate the truths; first, that a penalty once incurred by our failure is not revoked; secondly, that the grace of the Lord brings in something in its stead far better than what was lost:—

"Moses makes the ascent from the plains of Moab up to the highest eminency of which the Lord had spoken to him. But now a good and a glorious thing appears, of which there had been no notice whatever in the Lord's previous words to him. The Lord Himself, and no less, not even Gabriel, the messenger on so many happy occasions, comes to bear him company, and to be his guide through the mystic scene which now lies beneath him. It is an hour of more than human delight. It is divine joy which Moses now tastes, joy in which the Lord Himself shares. With His own finger, as it were, the Lord points out to His servant all the promised land on either side of the river. He traces it from eastern Gilead across the Jordan to Dan, and from Naphtali in the north, through Ephraim and Manasseh, down to Judah—then westward to the furthest sea, and to the south from Judah to Zoar. And his guide is his interpreter. The Lord tells him the divine history of the land, that it is the land of covenant and of promise, the land of the chosen of God. This was exceeding the promise. The half of this had not been told him, for he not only sees the land, *but has it all shown to him and described to him by the Lord Himself.* It became "a holy hill" to him, a mount of transfiguration. Nay, Pisgah was more to Moses than Tabor was to Peter, James, and John. They, on Tabor, were below the Lord's place, surveying, as above them, those upper regions of glory into which He entered—he, on Pisgah, was on an equal elevation with the Lord, surveying, as beneath Him, those lower regions of blessing, at which, *with equal eye, he and his companion-Lord were gazing.*

"All this was a good and a glorious thing beyond what had been promised. But was it also beyond what had been lost and forfeited? Yes, far indeed beyond it. The land which he had lost, through his own pride and naughtiness of heart, was now found to be his footstool, while he himself was in company with Him who is to sit on the throne of it for ever."

The First Resurrection, and Rapture of the Saints.

"The First Resurrection," Preparatory to the Personal Reign of Christ; being Notes upon "The First Resurrection," preceded by General Remarks on the Book of Revelation. By E. B.

The former is the better written, the latter is the more truthful, of these two little works. The very title of the first, in the sense in which the writer uses it, is an obvious mistake. "The first resurrection" is the term used by the Holy Ghost to denote the condition of all the saints who live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. It is the contrast to the state of the wicked, who at the close stand and are judged before the great white throne. It is *not* the same thing as the "dead in Christ" who "rise *first*" in 1 Thess. iv. who are evidently distinguished from the living Christians—"*then* we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them." But the term "first resurrection" in Rev. xx. is applied equally to two classes of believing sufferers, who are witnesses for God on earth, subsequent to the removal of the Church (properly so called), as described in 1 Thess. iv. and 1 Cor. xv. 31. This plainly flows from the book of Revelation itself, as may be seen in various papers of the present publication. The mistake affects many statements throughout.

Another serious defect is, that the writer, not seeing the calling of the Church, continually applies to us passages in the Old and New Testament, which speak really about the faithful Jews. Hence, the Psalms, Daniel, and the other prophets, are habitually misconstrued. Nevertheless it may be added that the answers to common errors and objections are, in general, excellent, so far as they go.

The second work, as to these points, is subject to Scripture. Without vouching for all its statements (for instance, as to the *innumerable multitude*, Babylon, the structure of the Apocalypse, and other matters), it may be recommended as helpful to those who seek a plain sketch of the book, and a just view of the first resurrection.

Grace and Peace: a Brief and Practical Summary of the Fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel.

Without entering into any minute explanation of this work, much of which we agree with, and a good deal we differ from, I would just observe, that the author throughout takes too much for granted the ability of man, *as such*, to enter into the truths of God. Hence the book, though small and unpretending, savours of an elementary treatise upon any given science. The sweet fruits of God's grace lose their freshness when thus humanly handled. The author's intentions are doubtless good and sincere.

POETRY.

And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.—Luke xix. 41, 42.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!—Matthew xxiii. 37.

'Tis evening—over Salem's towers a golden lustre gleams,
And lovingly and lingeringly the sun prolongs his beams;
He looks, as on some work undone, for which the time has past,
So tender is his glance and mild, it seems to be his last.
But a brighter sun is looking on, more earnest is *His* eye,
For thunder-clouds will veil Him soon, and darken all the sky:
O'er Zion still He bends, as loath His presence to remove,
And on her walls there lingers yet the sunshine of His love.

'Tis *Jesus*—with an anguished heart, a parting glance He throws,
For mercy's day she has sinned away for a night of dreadful woes;
"Would that thou hadst known," He said, while down rolled many a tear,
"My words of peace in this thy day, but now thine end is near;
Alas! for thee, Jerusalem, how cold thy heart to me,
How often in these arms of love, would I have gathered thee!
My sheltering wing had been your shield, my love your happy lot;
I would it had been thus with thee,—*I* would, but *ye* would not."

He wept alone, and men passed on, the men whose sins He bore,
They saw the man of sorrows weep, they had seen Him weep before;
They asked not whom those tears were for, they asked not whence they flowed;
Those tears were for rebellious man,—their source, the heart of God:
They fell upon this desert earth, like drops from heaven on high,
Struck from an ocean tide of love that fills eternity;
With love and tenderness divine those crystal cells o'erflow,
'Tis *God* that weeps, through human eyes, for human guilt and woe.

That hour has fled, those tears are told, the agony is past,
The Lord has wept, the Lord has bled, but He has not *loved* His last;
His eye is downward bent, still ranging to and fro,
Where'er in this wide wilderness there roams the child of woe.
Nor *His* alone, the Three in One, who looked through Jesus' eye,
Could still the harps of angel bands, to hear the suppliant sigh;
And when the rebel *chooses* wrath, God mourns his hapless lot,
Deep breathing from His heart of love,—*I* would, but *ye* would not.

J. K.

CUMBERLAND.—DECEMBER.

These wintry mountains with their heads of snow,
Whence, like the locks of age, long wreaths descend,
White-streaming from each stern majestic brow,
Through heath and fern, where hues of autumn blend;
All day the torpid trance of cold they show,
But sunset gleams—they wake—a glorious end,
Crowning long hours of gloom: in ruddy glow
When dazzling streaks of sunlight storm-clouds rend;
They wake—they live—they struggle for the ray
That gilds their purple depths, their ridges white;
Even so, when evening comes on life's short day,
The sleeping soul may wake to vision bright;
After long years in mental darkness past,
Christ gives him light, and he believes at last. (Ephes. v. 14.)

K.

ERRATA IN THE LAST HALF-YEARLY PART. (Nos. 13-24.)

Page 113, column 2. *For* stare, *read* stone.
" 133, " 2. *For* almost more, *read* hardly any more.
" 143, " 2. *For* true friends, *read* three friends.
" 155, " 1. *For* I counsel of thee, *read* I counsel thee.
" 166, " 1. *For* second perf. *read simply* perfect.
" 171, " 2. *For* Noah indeed, *read* Enoch, &c.
" 172, " 2. *Insert the clause* "these two facts— his people *in parenthesis.*
" 173, " 1. *For* which have formed, *read* which never, &c.
" 179, " 1. *For* approve them, *read* approach them.
" 191, " 2. *For* author of (in some of the copies), *read* author or.

THE PROSPECT.

"THE DAYS ARE AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION."—EZEKIEL, XII. 23.

Vol. II.] GUERNSEY, JANUARY TO MARCH, 1850. [Part II.

ESSAY ON THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST.

"The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the body."—Ephes. v. 23.

THE excellence of Christ's priesthood is a constant subject of refreshing to the redeemed; it is only in contemplating this dear Saviour that we can abide in His love. It is not then without a spirit of prayer and reflection that we direct our looks to Him who came to give us the words of the Father, that the joy He takes in us may abide. May this precious Saviour be pleased to keep us from all evil, while we meditate among brethren His holy Word, in order that our joy also may be full, knowing, before all things, that without Him we can do nothing!

The work of redemption being finished, the Lord rejoices in the communion which He has established between His redeemed and the Father, by means of His perpetual priesthood; but, on the other hand, the sanctification of the redeemed requires a constant activity of the Lord's love until the last of the elect is perfected.

We are thus carried on to contemplate Jesus, not only as the perfect Saviour of the Church, which is His body, but as the Head, the Bridegroom of the Church, during the formation and bringing forth of this last. We purpose here to meditate on this subject. Our individual feebleness does not hinder us from undertaking this essay and offering it to our dear brethren in Jesus; we hope that even its imperfections will be a motive, for others more able, to search into and set forth these truths in a manner more complete. [1]

That which our brethren already possess is much greater than all we can offer them; for they possess Jesus, in whom are contained all the riches of the Father's love; but this consideration ought not to arrest us in the constant study of the Word; no more can it hinder us from discoursing with brethren upon all that is contained there. Wherefore, we trust in the grace of the Lord, that He will be pleased, by means of this essay, to strengthen the brethren in conflict, to encourage them in holiness, to increase among them longsuffering, love, compassion, and sympathy.

May He be pleased to give us a clear view, an eye single and watchful to contemplate Himself in His quality of Head of the body of which He is the Saviour; and more particularly, as sympathizing in the sufferings and infirmities of all the members together, and of each in particular!

But, before considering the compassion of Christ for His redeemed ones, we must clearly lay down the basis on which we are all founded, namely, that Jesus has fully and perfectly finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, [2] that is to say, to glorify God upon the earth.

Moreover, the office of Jesus, as Saviour of the body, is sufficient, perfect, and finished, [3] for by His death He has taken upon Him and carried from over us sin, condemnation, and death; then, by His resurrection, we have justification and life, and this resurrection is itself a proof of the sufficiency of His death. [4]

The sacrifice of Christ has been offered *once*. Jesus, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. [5]

(1) The printing of this article has been delayed for more than three months; partly because of the plan of the *Témoignage*, which only appears when it pleases the Lord, and partly because of the gravity of the subject which we have desired to examine maturely and with prayer.

The *Semeur* has just accomplished, before hand, the wish that we here uttered; an able and delicate pen, a talent universally admired, has put itself in the Lord's service to treat the same subject.

We do not believe that we ought to change anything in our essay, and we deliver it to the readers of the *Témoignage*, blessing God that we have found ourselves in unison in this little labour with the author of the article of the *Semeur*, at least on important points.—[I leave this as it stands in the original, unchanged, as being unable to speak from a knowledge of the article referred to. But I should regret that any of our readers should consider the above opinion as a sanction of the corrupt religio-philosophic tone which pervades the *Semeur* of late, so far as I have seen its pages, and especially when it ventures into the discussion of Scriptural topics.—ED.]

(2) John xvii. 4. (3) Rom. viii. 2. (4) John xi. 25. 1 Peter i. 3. Rom. iv. 25; v. 18; vi. 5. (5) Heb. x. 10, 12, 14, 18, 26.

The work of the Rock is perfect. [1]

Jesus *glorified* is sat down in His quality of priest and victim, that takes away sins for ever, and He is thus expecting till His enemies are made His footstool. [2]

Having suffered once for sins, He, the just for the unjust, (3) was crucified through weakness [4] * to bring us to God.

The sufferings of Jesus, in humiliation and under the curse due to our sins, have completely paid our ransom; the justice of God has been entirely satisfied; as Saviour of the Church, Jesus then has fully and perfectly accomplished our salvation and justification by His death and by His resurrection. In this precious point of view, the heart of Jesus is filled with joy when He considers the Church.

The saints of the present dispensation contemplate the fact upon which rests their salvation as an act past and accomplished, whilst the just men of the old covenant had seen *beforehand*, by faith, and welcomed the day of Christ. But for those as for these, everlasting life and justification, by free grace, were richly purchased for them in the death of Christ and for eternity.

We have, then, established that Jesus, as the Saviour of the body, has accomplished what it was meet for Him to do, and that, as the Captain of our salvation, He must be perfected by suffering once, always, and for evermore. [5] †

But we would now examine how, before His redeemed are brought to glory, they must needs suffer *in their turn* during the formation of the body, which will contribute to make us understand and seize, for our joy, the sympathy and incessant compassion of Him who is the Head of the Church, as well as its beloved Saviour. [6]

All that Scripture tells us of the sufferings of the body of Christ is, in a sense, applicable to Christ as Head of this body; and if the fellowship of the Lord, and the search after His thoughts, were the habitual state of Christians, the sufferings of Him who is their Head would be a motive to grief and prayer; but, above all, to

(1) Deut. xxxii. 4. (2) Heb. x. 12; i. 13. (3) 1 Peter iii. 18. (4) 2 Cor. xiii. 4.

* This passage, 2 Cor. xiii. 4, has for parallels Rom. i. 3, 4; ix. 5. "For if He were crucified through weakness, (or because of the weakness of the flesh,) He liveth by the power of God." It is the opposition between the seed of David and the Son of God; between the Son of man in humiliation and the Son of man glorified. Relatively to the word weakness, or infirmity, Gal. iv. 13; Heb. iv. 15; v. 2; vii. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 9, prove to us that the power of God is glorified in the *weakness of the flesh*, whether pre-eminently by the resurrection of the Son of man, of Christ our Head, or by continuing the same operation, by the same power, in us who are His members.

Thus Christ had to be in weakness, first as the servant, to make Himself of no reputation; He was made for a little while lower than the angels, but, by the power of God which was in Him, (John x. 18,) He took His life again to be thus the first-born among many brethren.

Sometimes with the Ionians ἐκ replaces ὑπὸ, "by," after a passive verb. This preposition after a passive verb often means "*in consequence of.*"

(5) Heb. ii. 10.

† John xix. 30. While Jesus our Saviour yet lived, He said: "It is finished." Seeing that all things were accomplished, He had asked to drink, that Scripture *might be fulfilled*. As long as the Saviour had not quitted His life, *all* was not yet completed as to *our salvation*. After His death, even, He must rise again; without that our faith would be vain, and we should be yet in our sins. Jesus had yet, at the time when He pronounced these words, first to die, then to be glorified, caught up to heaven; afterwards He had to send the Paraclete, the Comforter, to His disciples.

And even at present the things promised are not accomplished, since it is only in hope that we are saved, (Rom. viii. 24,) till this salvation is manifested in the last times, by our return with Christ after the first resurrection. The Lord then did not say, "*all* is finished," but "it is finished." What Scripture predicted of the Messiah in humiliation was fulfilled.

In effect, when all things shall have been subjected to the Lamb who waits upon the throne, (Heb. ii. 9. Rev. v. 6-12,) and the last enemy, death, shall have been cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, then old things shall have passed, and all things become new. Then Christ, the Alpha, will be revealed as the Omega. He who is our head, and pre-eminent in all things, will be also the last; He will contain all things in Himself. These remarks lead us to think that the translation of Lausanne, 1839, has well rendered John xix. 30 by "it is finished;" then further, Rev. xxi. 6, by "it is done." For in Rev. xxi. 6 it is treated of a new order of things which is going to be introduced: "old things are passed away," and we think even that the word γίνομαι meaning also "to be born, become, be done," (compare Matt. v. 18,) the force of the word γέγονε would be more completely given by "it is become," "it is begun." We conclude from this little digression, that Jesus had not completed *all* upon the cross, and that brethren who would confine His service to that moment, deprive themselves of much light and blessing, in refusing to follow Christ in His different offices since His death, and to seek communion with Him, either in the sanctuary, where He prays and intercedes; or in the relation of glorified man and Head of the body, with which He suffers by sympathy; or in the waiting for His return and the marriage supper of the Lamb, who was dead but is alive again for ever and ever. Amen.

(6) John xvi. 33. Acts xiv. 32.

watchfulness and humiliation, for those who are the object of these sufferings of the heart of Jesus.

When we say that the sufferings of the body are *in a sense* those of the Head, it is that we have always in view in that which follows the participation of Christ in our evils and in our griefs, in the sense of sympathy, of compassion; and that we employ these words, just as Scripture does, as synonymous with *suffering with, or sharing in, one's sufferings.*

The hour of grief arrived for the Church after that Jesus returned to Him who had sent Him; it is through the sorrows of bringing forth that the Church walks to its perfection in Christ,[1] and this state of suffering will last till we all meet together in the measure of the full stature of Christ, till by our passage through the trial of this life we have all been individually and successively perfected in Him who is the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

The edification of the body of Christ is then a time of sorrow, during which the Head shares in the numerous and varied sufferings which the members are to undergo, whether in the conflict of the Spirit against sin for their sanctification, or because of the enmity of a world from which God's grace has made them go out.

The position of the Church of the redeemed, considered in its acting portion, during its formation through the ages, must necessarily draw upon it persecutions if it is faithful, or a false peace and a dangerous calm when it is faithless or enfeebled.

In the eyes of God, the Church is the continuation of Jesus on earth; it is to represent Him in face of the world, so as to glorify the Father. The mission of the Church is to perpetuate the remembrance of Jesus until He come, to follow His steps by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and to convince the world, which has crucified Him, of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.[2]

Jesus, above all, did two things on earth: He obeyed, He suffered.

The Church ought to follow this model; it will obey, therefore, the powers of the world in all that which is in their province; but it obeys God in separating from all that which is already judged. Thus it is that it bears witness in favour of the rights of Jesus and against the usurpation of His kingdom by the enemy. Now, it is precisely in following His model that the Church is sure of suffering also, as Jesus suffered. Its only consolation and its only joy here below are in communion with its Head and in the glorious hope which it enjoys, by a full certainty of faith in future and invisible things. During His path on earth, Jesus, as man in weakness, was a man of sorrows, because possessing the thought of divine purity, He was, in His form of servant, without sin, surrounded by sin and rejected by this world, which He was come to seek in order to save and bring it to the Father.

Jesus had been sanctified, that is, set apart by the Father; He had sanctified Himself in his quality of Sent One,[3] and it was for His own that He had done that, that they also might be sanctified by the truth. The object of this setting apart from the world was, above all, to glorify the grace of the Father by means of this peculiar people consecrated unto His name.[4]

Jesus had not shared in any of the joys of the world, otherwise than to manifest there *His* glory,[5] which was the glory of the Father. Whoever would follow Him must hate, in himself and in others, all that which is of the world; he is to bear his cross, and walk through the desert, like a pilgrim who seeks a better country.

But here, too, the heart of Christ will be the source whence we are to draw meekness, patience, longsuffering, towards the individuals of the world. Christ has always blessed, borne with, called with love all the souls which presented themselves on His road. Imitate, then, Him who came not to judge but to save—Him who hated sin, but who loved poor sinners—this Jesus, who was *meek and lowly of heart.*

The means of realizing in our life, humility, love, and detachment from the joys and the good things of the world, is, instead of trusting to these good things, to consider seriously the Lord in His life and His death, always bearing about in our body the dying and the marks of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.[6]

Whatever be, at any given moment, the degree of toleration of the Church by the world, it is not less a world, hostile to God, which crucified Jesus, and is governed by Satan, its actual prince. There will always be enmity on the part of the world toward the children of God when they are faithful in glorifying their Father. When no opposition comes from the world to bear witness to the fidelity of Christians, there is room to attentively examine the state of the Church; for if the world loves us, it is a proof that we are like worldly people; whilst, if we follow the steps of Jesus, the world in that case will hate us, for the world loves its own.[1]

If the Church looked for nothing of the world—if it accepted nothing of it—if, in place of sleeping in a false peace with the enemy and making an alliance with him, it lived separate—if it profited by this beautiful position outside of all to act in the world and on it in the power of grace—if the Church bore witness to the speedy return of the true King in His great power—then each of its members would see that there is nothing but *trial* to expect, and that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God.[2]

Are we really here below as in a journey across the desert? Is the testimony of the members of the body of Jesus unanimous, or at least powerful enough to affright and irritate the enemy? Are we not in a world made Christian and a Christianity made worldly, and do we groan because of this confusion? Do not the greater part of brethren accept from the hand of this same world what it offers them in the place of gifts and ministries really evangelical?

Doctrine, sacraments, evangelising, worship, ministry, are they not, to a very great extent, dependant on the will and authorization of the world, and is not this evil the work of the adversary and the token of a great confusion?

Jesus, our head, is necessarily sensible of all those infirmities of each member individually and of all together, during the successive formation of His body; and if our testimony is also miserable, is there not in that, for us, an always renewed subject of humiliation and prayer?

Prayer and communion with the Lord are the only enjoyments which are the portion of the faithful in this world; they are inward and spiritual blessings, which they can find only in withdrawing near the Lord, far from the sin which so easily besets.

Communion with the Lord procures us, among other blessings, communion with brethren and intelligence of the wants and sufferings of all the body of Christ. The nearer, then, we may be to the Lord, the more we understand that we have to bear here below, *in our turn*, our portion in the sufferings which the body of Christ has yet to endure during its formation.[3]

It is possible, it seems to us even probable, according to what the Lord has often manifested of His ways toward the Church, that the Spirit who is at present urging many brethren to the contemplation of Jesus acting in His love, and who renders the bride attentive to all the power and wiliness of the enemy, desires thus to prepare for some great event.

The grace of God always strengthens His children when there is need of it; and if evil times draw near us, what mightier buckler can we find in trials than fellowship with our Head, than brotherly love, than the energy produced in each member by the feeling of its responsibility to, and its being bound up with, the whole body?

(1) John xvi. 6-11. 1 Tim. ii. 15. Rev. xii. 4-7. (2) John xvi. 8-11. Acts xvii. 31. (3) John x. 36; xvii. 18. (4) Acts xv. 14. Titus ii. 14. (5) John ii. 11. (6) Mark x. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 10. Gal. vi. 17.

(1) John xv. 18, 19. John xvii. 14, 16. (2) John xvi. 33. Acts xiv. 32.

(3) Col. i. 24. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and accomplish in my turn (fill up on my part) that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the Church."

This translation is literal without transposition of words, and this passage thus rendered contains the following chain of ideas:

What does Paul? He fills up in his turn. What? That which is wanting of the afflictions of Christ.

What are the afflictions of Christ to which something is wanting?

They are the afflictions of the body of Christ, or of the Church during its formation; and the sum of the afflictions of the body is composed of the portion of each of its members.

Is it Paul only who has part to fill up in this sum of afflictions imposed on the Church during its formation?

What Paul did, we have to do, each in our turn, *for the portion which is assigned us.*

Those tribulations of which Paul in his turn endured his part, were they wanting to the sufferings of Christ, or to Paul's part during his life (or in his flesh)?

Those afflictions were wanting in the flesh of Paul; and it was in his flesh, that is, during his life, that he filled up this part assigned to him.

Whence we see clearly that Paul accomplished a task which was imposed on him during the days of his flesh, (1 Peter iv. 16,) and that the Head first, having suffered its part in quality of first-fruits, suffers no more, save as sympathizing with that which remains.

Finally, those afflictions were endured in the first place by the Head, next by turns by each member of the common body, and this successive filling up takes place in favour of the whole body, or, as another passage reads it, "for the body."

The Greek word [ἀνταναπληρῶ] "I fill up in my turn," or "I accomplish on my side," is found no where else in the New Testament.

The word "that which is wanting," or "that which remains behind," [τὰ ὑστερήματα,] is found in 1 Cor. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14; ix. 12; xi. 9. Phil. ii. 30. 1 Thess. iii. 10. Luke xxi. 4.

No consideration appears to us more calculated than the sympathy and compassion of Christ to destroy and repulse the selfishness and indolence, the cowardly sloth even, which hinder brethren from uniting in the communion of the Lord and in prayer, from humbling themselves for the evil which divides the Church, and even from owning it. There is nothing better than Christ's participation in all these miseries for engaging us to undertake one another's burdens.

The true means of not slumbering in a vain profession of Christianity, of not being dead while we have a name that we live, is in exhorting to the contemplation of the Lord Jesus in the activity of His love for us.

It was needful, because of our infirmity, that Jesus should be revealed to our faith in different distinct aspects; that He should be made known to us in His different characters and in His different offices, explaining them to us each separately, whilst revealing to us His unity with the Father and with the Holy Ghost.

We know that Jesus in the manger is the same as Jesus on the cross, that the Son of God in abasement is the same as the Son of God in power: we all believe that Jesus is God blessed for ever, but we have particularly need at this moment to contemplate Jesus in *His glorified humanity*. The humanity of the Lord Jesus is our humanity; it is thus that He is Son of man; it is in our humanity that He satisfied the justice of God, and established us in communion with God. It is our humanity which is glorified in Jesus; and just as the life of Christ is in us, even now upon earth, likewise also, by Christ, our humanity is even now glorified in heaven.

In order well to understand the compassion, the sympathy of Christ, His participation in the state of the Church, we should contemplate Him not only as Saviour in glory, but moreover as Head of the Church in His glorified humanity. It is thus that He is the head of the body He has saved; it is in this point of view, precious to our souls, that He is the first-born among many brethren, the head of the Church; it is thus He is active and in living and efficacious relations with His Church.

Perhaps this aspect of Christ has been a little lost sight of by brethren; it is necessary to recur to it, since the resurrection and the glorification of Jesus are the earnest of our own resurrection in glory and the pledges of His activity, of His sympathy, and of His intercession for His brethren, for his Church before the Father's throne of grace.

Paul had been converted by the sight of Jesus glorified; he had viewed Him in His union with the Bride. This Saul, who before wasted the Church, who persecuted the body of Christ,[1] understood this mystery, when from the height of glory Jesus said to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME? I am JESUS WHOM thou persecutest."

Was it not the Head of the Church who complained of the evil, in causing His first members to suffer on earth? And is not the body still on earth? is it not there it exists, there it is formed, and there it suffers?

Saul became himself a member of this body; he was united to it from this moment, and the sufferings he endured from that time were not a special and distinctive part of his ministry; but Paul had the mind of Christ; Paul suffered, nay, he died every day, *for the sufferings of Christ* abounded in him;[2] and that which distinguishes Paul from all his brethren is not suffering for the whole body, but is perhaps the abundance of his tribulations.

If it is true that we also have the Spirit and the mind of Christ,[3] we ought, during our trial here below, carefully to search out what are the sufferings and the griefs of the members of His body, that we may bear our part in those afflictions, and realize in this way our death to the world with Christ, and our life with Christ in God. Then should we cry, Who is weak, and we are not so likewise? Who is fallen, and we burn not? We will even take pleasure in infirmities, in sufferings, in distresses, for Christ's sake.[4]

Let but one of the members of the body be in a state of fall, of feebleness, of worldliness, under a trial or a judgment, then all the members suffer, if at least the body is in a normal state, and the Head is not isolated nor insensible to these disorders. For we are the body of Christ, and members in particular; and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; for the body is not one member, but many members,[5] and Christ is the Head of every man; so that Jesus takes part not only in the sufferings of all the members, considered as gathered collectively, but He sympathizes in the afflictions of each of us in particular. Scripture also shews us our inevitable sufferings and our unceasing conflict as the afflictions of Christ Himself, of this Lord who is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

(1) Gal. i. 13. (2) 2 Cor. i. 5. (3) 1 Cor. ii. 16. (4) 2 Cor. xi. 29; xii. 10. (5) 1 Cor. xii. 14, 26, 27.

Now, that which is said of each fall of one of our brethren, we ought to apply to our own falls, in order that, considering the painful impression they make on our Head and all the body, we may walk in holiness, seeking to glorify God in all things.

Christ who is faithful over all His house, He who washes us from our defilements of every day, and who as High Priest has compassion on our infirmities, has charged Himself moreover with the actual judgment and with the discipline of the members of His body; so that if we do not discern ourselves in order to present our infirmities to God, we are judged here below after the manner of men, in the flesh, that we may not be condemned with the world.[1]

This office of Christ over His house is moreover a ministry of love toward His Church; but how much is not His heart afflicted in a thousand ways while He fulfils it? Our duty is then to take all these things to heart, as being also our own affairs, to consider before God and in His love our state of wretchedness, that of our brethren in the faith, and the state of disunion and feebleness in which all the body is found; then, if the love of Christ constrains us, we shall also, as it were, travail in birth again until Christ be formed in the elect who are held in the miserable elements of the world, or who have returned to them.[2]

Whatever be the sort of sufferings of our brethren, we ought to share them as the Hebrews sympathized in the bonds of Paul and the misfortunes of their brethren,[3] for we see that the apostle puts this compassion on the same level (as regards the recompense it is to obtain) as the sufferings themselves, and the positive afflictions endured by the Hebrews. It was, moreover, brotherly love, which displayed by the Corinthians great patience in enduring *the same sufferings* as Paul.[4] The latter praises them because of this sympathy, so that the affliction of Paul brings to the Corinthians salvation and consolation, because, having partaken in the sufferings, they should partake in the salvation and consolation. In this last passage, we find again as ever the principal idea which is so sweet to our hearts, namely, that if *the sufferings of Christ* abound in us, so *our consolation* also aboundeth by Christ.

We shall suffer thus with Christ every time that we take part with Him in the troubles which are manifested in His Church, during its conflict with the universal rulers of the darkness of this world and with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places;[5] but we have besides to suffer yet *for* Christ, and we certainly meet with this last sort of sufferings in faithfulness to the Gospel. If we would bear a powerful and sincere witness to the glory of Christ who has redeemed us, we shall also have sufferings to endure as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,[6] and here, as elsewhere, we shall be sustained by the mighty power and the good hand of our Head.

The despite of a world which calls itself Christian, the accusations of so many brethren who know not even the motives which separate us from every institution coming from the world, are very certainly sufficient to engage us to bear our own cross, and to consider ourselves as taking part in the sufferings of the body of Christ.

If, then, the times of open persecution are not actually our lot, yet are we still happy if we are in any manner reproached for the name of Christ, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us. Be then steadfast in faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in our brethren that are in the world. And if we do well and suffer for it, it is a grace of God; for it is thereunto we are called, because Christ, the Just One, has suffered for the unjust, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.[7]

Christ rejoices, then, in His perfect work as Saviour of the body;[8] but Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church and the Head of the body, actively shares in the afflictions of this body during its formation, as well as in the troubles and infirmities of each of its members.

If we have understood this so encouraging truth, we shall be eager to search both the terms of this state of things, and the

(1) 1 Cor. iv. 4. James v. 9. 1 Peter iv. 1, 6. 1 Cor. xi. 32. (2) Gal. iv. 19. (3) Heb. x. 32, 37. (4) 2 Cor. i. 3-8. (5) Ephes. vi. 12. (6) 2 Tim. ii. 3. (7) 1 Peter iv. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Acts vii. 54, 56. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Peter iii. 18; iv. 1, 2, 6. (8) Ephes. v. 23.

reward which is promised to those who may have taken part in all this labour and in all these fatigues.

The term is presented to us in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. The moment of joy will come when the Bridegroom arrives in the clouds to gather all His own into the air, by the glorious resurrection of the saints. Then each will receive his recompense; then the Bride will be revealed to the eyes of the entire creation, clothed with the glory and the power of the Son of God.

Let us bear then, in our turn, in our flesh, our part of the sufferings of Christ, and let us realize thus our death to the world with Christ and our life in God by Christ; but hasten we, with our requests and our prayers, the blessed moment of the presence of the Lord, of Him who ought ever to be the nearest to our hearts by faith.

It is not only the whole creation and the inanimate things which groan, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we groan, being burdened, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of the body.[1]

Shall we be less intelligent than all the creation which groans, being in travail of birth *until now* after so many ages, and awaiting the time of the return of Christ with his saints to be delivered from the bondage of vanity and corruption? Shall we not also, elect members of Christ's body, groan during our journey through the evil produced by the sin of Adam? For we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if at least *we suffer with* HIM,[2] with Christ who suffers because of His love to us, and because of His intimate union with us.

It is not a question for us to think of suffering with Christ in His past sufferings, either in the flesh or on the cross. These sufferings of the Saviour have always been for Him alone, for He alone was capable of enduring them, and we can share in them in no other way save in giving thanks, honour and praise, to Him who has accomplished them. But if we suffer with patience, we shall also reign with Him, and we have need of patience in tribulations, that, having *done the will of God*, we may obtain the promise.[3]

Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy, for the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.[4]

One of the most precious fruits of our communion with the Lord Jesus, in His thoughts and sufferings, full of love, is certainly the better resurrection;[5] for Paul cried out, That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship* of *His sufferings*, being made conformable unto His death, if, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection *from* the dead.[6]

John, in the year of our Lord 96 or 100, presenting himself to the seven churches under the most commendable titles, says, I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience† of Jesus Christ.[7] Here the kingdom only is a future thing, which is obtained by participation, during the life of the beloved disciple, in the actual tribulation and patience of Jesus Christ. This tribulation, such as we have developed it up to this point, is that of the Lord, because of His union with the Church and His compassionate mercy toward His redeemed ones. Now, the tribulation, as well as the patience of Christ, were also the part of faithful members of His Church; *there* were their most precious titles.

Many Christians admit the consequences of this doctrine; they are willing to accept the common bond which links together all the members of the body of Jesus, and the responsibility of each for the evil which is in all and in the midst of all; they suffer the persecutions which the Church endures in various places on earth; they groan because of the evil which rends it more and more; they deplore in their hearts the falls, the faithless ways and the miseries of each brother, but they do not receive the doctrine which makes us *a duty* out of this sympathy, because it shews us Christ as Head, as the centre and reservoir of all sufferings, general and individual. Those dear brethren, accordingly, follow the impulse of a good natural heart, but they accept not the sole principle which can sanctify those sympathies, that is to say, fellowship with Christ as the source and spring of these Christian affections.

Others, only laying hold of the glorious and ineffable privileges of our union already consummated with the Head of the body, appear too often to boast only in their hope, forgetting, on the other side, to boast in humiliation and to identify themselves with the persecuted Christ, with the suffering Head of their own body.

It is true that the doctrine of the actual sufferings of Christ may have been neglected among Christians, because of the abuse which others have made of it. For ourselves, who desire to contemplate the Lord under all His aspects, we are assured that the doctrine of Christ's sympathy for the Church, during its formation, cannot damage the doctrine of the complete satisfaction of God in the death of Jesus.

After having contemplated the love of the Father and that of the Son in giving His life for His enemies, we find nothing more touching than these compassions of the Lord Jesus, who desires to share in all our griefs, who loves us with an eternal and uninterrupted love, who suffers in seeing us still burdened with our cross—He who has borne all the sins of his redeemed, and undergone condemnation and death for them and in their stead.

What love is that of Christ! Does it not pass all understanding? Is it not by the ever-acting power of His love that in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us, and who besides even now intercedes for us?[1]

And yet the building up of that which remains of Christ's body to put together becomes always more laborious and difficult; for the lack of love, the indolence, the selfishness in each one of us, the want of affection and of fellowship among brethren, but, above all, our reluctance to suffer, even with Christ, considerably augment the difficulties of the last times, at which we are now arrived.

Charity, love of the Lord and of brethren, are the last remedy which remains to us; but how are we to employ it? If we continually contemplated Jesus, if we assiduously searched into the Word through the Spirit, we might realize, in some measure, His love and divine compassions. It is thus, and not by considering the charity which is in us or in some other man, that we shall keep ourselves in the love even of the Father, and in the light of the knowledge of His glory, in the face of Jesus Christ.[2]

Love is found only in Christ; it is impossible for us to realize it otherwise than in communion with Him, by means of the Spirit, who takes of what belongs to Jesus to give it unto us. If we drink at the source, the rivers of living waters shall flow out of us. If we are nourished on Christ, then shall we understand all that is lacking to us and all that is lacking in the Church. May the Lord Himself break down the hardness of our hearts and overcome our culpable selfishness, in order that we also, in our turn, may share in His thoughts and in the sufferings of our beloved brethren over all the earth, and walk toward the mark with confidence, knowing that our Jesus, the Son of God, is our great High Priest, who, having been tempted in all points like as we are, without sin, can sympathize with our infirmities!

Disposed thus and with these affections from on high, shall we joyously direct our steps toward our heavenly country, always expecting on the road the rest and deliverance, continually going to meet the Lord in the living hope of His coming.

Then, brethren, we shall be united in true love without alloy, when Christ shall be manifested, Christ who is our life. Then shall we truly rejoice in the Lord and no longer merely in hope. Meanwhile, let us seek the things above, where our life is hid with Him in God. For, yet a little, a very little while, and HE THAT SHALL COME will come, and will not tarry.—(*Translated from Le Témoignage.*)

(1) Rom. viii. 19 and seq. (2) Rom. viii. 17.
(3) 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Heb. x. 36. (4) 1 Peter iv. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 8.
(5) Heb. xi. 35.
* Κοινωνία is better rendered by "communion," while communication answers, I think, to κοινώνησις.
(6) Phil. iii. 10.
† Rev. xiii. 10; xiv. 12. James v. 11. Luke xxi. 19. Heb. x. 36. Ὑπομονή, patience, the act of enduring and bearing a shock.
(7) Rev. i. 9.

THE LOVE OF JESUS.

IN looking at Rev. i. 5, 6, we can trace the following actings of love: first, love *thinks* of its objects. This marks the motive in operation to be unaffectedly pure, for when the heart regulates itself by meditating on its object, it seeks not to be noticed, to be praised or exalted for thinking of its object; its reward is found

(1) Rom. viii. 26, 33, 38. (2) 2 Cor. iv. 6.

in the very thought itself—a reward, a pleasure with which nothing can compare. Secondly, love *visits* its object. It could not be content with merely thinking: the same principle that leads love to *think* with pleasure, induces it to *visit* its object; and, moreover, we can trace the same purity, elevation and disinterestedness, in the visit as in *the thought*. It does not *think* upon its object in order to please or attract the attention of any one, neither does it *visit* in order to effect such ends; it has *its own real substantial* enjoyment, both in thinking of and visiting *its object*. Thirdly, love *suffers* for its object. It rests not satisfied with merely *thinking* of or *visiting* its object—it *must suffer*. In order to exhibit itself in all its reality and intensity, love must put itself to cost for its object; it must spend and be spent, not because it expects a return, but simply because *it will* express itself in a way not to be mistaken. Love never thinks of what it may reap for itself in thus suffering. No: it simply contemplates *its object*, in thinking of, visiting, and suffering for it. Fourthly, love *exalts* its object. This is the highest point. In the exaltation of its object, love sees the point of previous thought, visitation and suffering. Hence, love feels exquisite happiness in exalting its object, for in so doing it reaps the wished-for harvest. Let us now apply the above blessed characteristics of love to the Lord Jesus, and see how His love exhibited all of them. Did not He ponder in His own eternal mind His much-loved Church before the foundation of the world? Yes, truly; "His gracious eye surveyed us ere stars were seen above." Did He rest satisfied with merely thinking about us? No: He laid aside all His glory; He came down into this cold, heartless world, as into a vast quarry, from whence He hoped to hew out stones for the temple. He made His way down into this "*rough valley*" of ours, which had "neither been cared nor sown." "The day spring from *on high* hath *visited* us;" but He did not rest satisfied with coming down to look at us in our misery and degradation; He determined to *suffer* for us, to groan, to bleed, to die for us; He hath washed us in "*His own blood*," which marks the intensity of His suffering for us. What, then, was all this for? Why those ineffable sufferings of Jesus? Why the groans and bloody sweat in the garden? Why the mysterious hours of profound darkness, together with the cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Simply that the love of Jesus might *exalt* its object. And He has exalted His object, yea, to the highest point of elevation: "He hath made us kings and priests unto God." Thus we have seen how the love of Jesus has *thought* of, *visited*, *suffered* for, and *exalted* its object: this is for our comfort. But then we should remember that if we love Jesus, *we too* will often like to *think* of Him, to contemplate His grace, ponder over His perfections; moreover, we will pay frequent *visits* to the secret of His sanctuary, not to gain a name as persons of much prayer, but simply to indulge the desires of our hearts after Him "who is the fairest amongst ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Again, we shall be ready to *suffer* for Him, not in order to commend ourselves to our brethren as persons of great energy and zeal, but to express the high estimation in which we hold His blessed person. Finally, it will be our constant effort to *exalt* Him in every place; our constant cry will be: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Let us earnestly pray for such a deep tide of divine love in our poor cold, narrow, selfish hearts, as will make our service not the mere spirit of imperfect zeal, kindled by the unhallowed spark of human opinion, but the calm, steady, constant flow of unalterable affection for Jesus—that affection which has its primary joy in *pondering* over its object, ere it comes forth as an *actor* or a *sufferer* in *His cause*.

"Come, saints, praise the Lamb, His mercies proclaim,
And lift up your heads and sing of His name;
His love to the Church, which He purchased with blood,
To make her His bride and the temple of God."

C. H. M.

LAW AND REDEMPTION.

MAN was not treated as a sinful people when put to the test of the law, but a being under trial; and redemption is here wholly and absolutely out of place. The question was, Could righteousness be by law as a means of title to life? It was shewn it could not. God does not put man on his *trial* by redemption, but saves him because he has failed in it, which is just the opposite of law.

MATTHEW XXIV. XXV.

OUR Lord had withdrawn from Jerusalem, and is followed to the Mount of Olives by His disciples, where this discourse takes place. They began the conversation by asking Him certain questions, which admitted the truth of a sentence He had just pronounced on the stones of the temple, though they themselves the moment before had been vainly admiring those stones.

It is interesting to see this. They looked on the temple now as a *doomed* and not a *dedicated* spot, and they desire to know when this doom should be accomplished, and what should signify to them the end of the world, and His return.

There was, therefore, in their minds a very simple faith. They admitted His truth, and their inquiries arose from thence. An *end* and a *change* were now looked for, because He had pronounced judgment on the *present* existing things of Israel. Still, however, there was a vast distance between the state of His mind at this moment and theirs. His was full of divine truth. He knew all the results of this needed end and change, and of Israel's present judgment. But we are to be calm, and stay our minds on this: How far had the time come for unfolding to them *all* these results, in the full knowledge of which He was?

Now, we, too, are in the knowledge of these results in our way and measure; for the Spirit of truth has been given, and we know the things of the Father and of Christ, and heavenly mysteries consequent on Israel's rejection, as Jesus then did. But we are to remember that the Lord was in converse then with those unto whom He says, on another (and I believe a *deeper*) occasion than the present: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

I must hold myself, therefore, in the remembrance that the parties in this discourse were thus widely different as to their then attainments, and in remembrance also of what their subject was.

I judge, then, that xxiv. 4-14 forms one part of this discourse. I am sure that the Lord looked on His disciples as Christians, or believers in Him. And I am free to admit that these verses may be read as a general account of things in Christendom, as we speak, or of things that were to be known and experienced in that portion of the world that was thereafter to adopt the name of Christian, and that, therefore, we have in them the general external history of our dispensation. But I believe, in a special sense, these verses will find their accomplishment when Israel becomes again the scene of divine notice, or in that part of the reserved week of Daniel which is to precede the abominable desolator in the holy place, which is the action of Anti-Christ in Jerusalem by and bye.*

Then verses 15-28 give us another period, a period following the exaltation of the great apostate in Jerusalem, and preceding the appearing of the Son of man. But here the disciples are addressed as being only in that devoted land and city, and they are commanded to leave them for the mountains, and not be seduced therefrom by any promises that Christ and deliverance had come either in the open desert or in the secret chamber.

Verses 29-31 constitute another portion, giving us the appearing of Christ with its precursors and results.

Then verses 32-35 impress on the souls of the disciples the duty of watching the things or signs now given, assuring them that none can possibly fail.

Verses 36-44 tell them the moral state of things immediately on the appearing of the Son of man, and of the discerning or separating power of that day, and enforces watchfulness upon them.

I pause here for the present. For the remainder may, without injury to what we have now gone through, be postponed.

I ask, then, how far does the Lord in this great discourse contemplate the heavenly destiny of the saints, and the fact and the time of their rapture?

It is judged that He gives two distinct notices of this mystery of the rapture of the saints into the air, in verse 31 and in verse 40. I desire grace to consider these verses, therefore, and to love the truth of God, or the mind of Christ, above all my own thoughts.

In the first place, then, let us consider verse 31.

In verse 22, I find "the elect" spoken of, and spoken of as part

* I see those signs, as I judge, in the first five seals in Rev. vi., and I suppose they will there be understood as belonging to actions in days not yet come.

of "all flesh," and of the divine purpose of saving them as flesh, or in the flesh.

Now, I confess this is the strongest intimation to me, that the Lord was not contemplating his heavenly, but his earthly people. When by his Spirit, in the apostles afterwards, he comes to speak of his heavenly ones, he distinctly tells us that the saving of their flesh was, and could be, of no account; for that flesh and blood could never inherit the heavens. Saved flesh must be for the inheritance of the earth. The elect of this verse are, I surely conclude, the Lord's *earthly* remnant.

The elect are again spoken of in verse 24. And there they are presented as being preserved from the deceits of false Christs. I do not say that such words respecting them would *necessarily* determine them to be an *earthly* people. No. I believe, from Rev. xiii., there will be many heavenly men exposed to deceits in that day, and in like manner preserved from being deceived. But having already established "the elect" of this chapter to be earthly, it is natural to continue in the one thought about them. And beside, the character of deceit here, signs and wonders connected with the assertion of *Christ being in the desert and in the chambers*, seems to address itself more plausibly, if not exclusively, to a remnant preparing for the earthly places.

Well then, "the elect" are again found in verse 31. They are spoken *of*, and not *to*, in the three places, and precisely under the same words, τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς. Is there, then, any reason to see *another* people here? My clear present assurance is, that there is none.

I believe the blessed Lord is here graciously closing the history of those whom He had before been looking at. He looked at them, in verse 22, as the dear objects of His care, when perhaps they knew Him not, as in the counsels of His electing love; in verse 24, He looked at them as preserved by His truth and Spirit in the midst of deceit and corruption; in verse 31, He takes a last look at them, gathered into the kingdom, or to their loved Zion, from all places of their dispersion.

There is a natural unforced character in this interpretation of "the elect" of this chapter, which, I feel, commends it. But it has more to rest on than that.

In verses 29, 30, the Lord had passed rapidly through the scene of judgments or the return of the Son of man. Its precursors—the darkening, and falling, and shaking of the powers and ordinances of heaven, and the mourning of the tribes of the earth. Its execution—the well-known figure of "coming in the clouds." (Chap. xxvi. 64. Rev. i. 7.) And now its results—the gathering of the elect, His mind stretching out to that feature of these results, for the comfort of those whom, in their trials and in other parts of their history, as we saw, He had been previously looking at.

But beside, a "great trumpet" had been foretold by the prophet, as the instrument of gathering the scattered election home to the land, (Is. xxvii. 12, 13, Sept.) and, to a great extent, the very language of the Lord here seems taken from that of the prophet Zechariah. (See Zech. ii. 6. Sept.) And as Moses and the prophets had spoken of the *dispersion* of Israel for their sins in all parts of the earth, or to the four winds, it is natural that Jesus should speak of their *restoration* in the same or commensurate terms. (Deut. xxviii. 64. Is. xi. 12. Ezek. xvii. 21.) And further, the Lord had often desired their gathering, as He tells us, (see chap. xxiii. 37,) and now He anticipates that gathering with assurance.

Besides, there is not a thought of *resurrection* here; and we know that those that are alive of the heavenly family shall not come without those that sleep. And their coming will not be the fruit of any "mission," ("he shall *send* his angels,") but in a moment, being changed or raised, they ascend on the Lord reaching the air from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. And I do not believe the mention of "angels" interferes with this, because of the extended use, not only of those creatures or servants themselves in the accomplishing of divine purposes, but in the extended use of the term in a figurative or secondary sense. And *angels* (Is. xviii. 2) are expressly used in relation to the gathering of Israel.

Well, then, I surely believe that it is far more easy and natural, and according to all scriptural analogy, to interpret this verse of the *same elect* ones as had been spoken of in verse 22. I do not force this conclusion on another. No. In this department of truth there are many things hard to be understood, and we should have at this day among us, I am thoroughly assured, the materials and the spirit of purer and more heavenly communion, had we been more modest and less urgent on those "doubtful disputations." I can quite believe that the perfect wisdom of the Spirit has judged it well to leave a certain indistinctness upon those distant details, valuing, as He surely and blessedly does, something far more than our mere agreement in opinion upon them. O that the Lord may shed among us the spirit of a more intimate and personal communion with Himself and each other! But in its place and measure, I am ready to welcome knowledge of these things and inquiry into them, and, therefore, go on to look at verse 40.

The *taking* and the *leaving*, whatever precise or prophetic sense may belong to these words or acts, morally convey the great and serious truth, that this day, the day of the Son of man, will be a *discerning* day, a day of separation between the righteous and the evil. And the chief value, the great moral power, of the teaching lies in that, and in that we are, of course, agreed.

But I do further believe, that supposing the "taking" refer to the righteous, it is the righteous ones who, like Noah and Lot, are secured only for the *earthly* places. Noah entered the ark, and Lot was borne away from Sodom, I grant, ere the judgments came. They were taken and the rest left for destruction. But they were *earthly* ones. I think, however, beyond this, that the passage affords evidence that the "taking" intimates *judgment* and not *security*, and the "leaving" intimates *outliving* and not *destruction*. Luke has the word "escape" and "stand," (xxi. 36,) and that simply and naturally conveys to me that those who are *left* are a people that have escaped the operation of this terrible day, and still stand as in their place, unmoved before the Son of man. And the figures employed intimate strongly that the *taking* is a *judicial* or *hostile act*. The figure of an eagle coming upon a carcase—the figure of a thief coming into a house—the figure of a snare catching a man—the type of the flood coming to bear away the old world: all these intimate to me strongly that our blessed Master had *judgment* rather than *security* in His mind when He spoke of "taking."

One objection is made to this, which appears strong, that the verb is changed; that in verse 38 it is αἴρω, and in verse 40 παραλαμβάνω. But I find the very same thing in John xix. 15, 16. There the Jews call on Pilate to take away Jesus—αἴρω—but the moment he allows them to do their pleasure, and act towards Him just as they wished, they παρέλαβον Jesus. This is surely at the very least enough to check confidence on this point.

My own conviction is this, though I am no critical scholar at all, that the quality of the *act*, signified by the verb παραλαμβάνω, is to be determined simply by the quality of the *agent*. It means (does it not?) assuming or taking to one's self. When the Lord Jesus descends to receive His saints to Himself, (παραλαμβάνω, John xiv. 3,) that taking or receiving is surely unto joy and glory; but when the *judicial* Son of man comes to take, it is, I believe, to carry off in vengeance.

These are my thoughts on the force of this verse. I am ready to say, as I did upon verse 31, I press nothing. I admit that some indistinctness may advisedly be left on this subject, for it is morally healthful for our souls, both to be in daily desire and expectation of Jesus, and yet armed with the daily mind of those who are ready to suffer death at the hand of any enemy of His name. My grief is, that saints are sedulously schooled or tortured into conclusions, that necessity is laid on them to *make up their minds* on these things, and that that zeal which works division is put forth in the service of peculiar opinions. "In many things we offend all."

I paused at verse 44, for I judge that from verse 45 to xxv. 30 we have only beautiful and striking illustrations of the great moral principles which had been previously enforced, such as watching, because ignorant of the time.

In verses 31-46, however, the Lord appears to me to resume the scene. In xxiv. 31, He had spoken of a "gathering," having brought down His teaching to the gathering or assembling of the scattered Israel. Now He resumes the scene, and exhibits the gathering of the Gentiles, or settling the nations in the kingdom. I believe there is no resurrection here, as there had been none in xxiv. 31. I believe it is impossible to say that the goats or the reprobate will rise into the air to meet the descending Lord, and there be judged. I believe it is impossible to say that the throne

of the King, before which a mixed multitude are to be brought at one and the same time, can be till the Lord have actually returned and been seated on the earth again. The judgment between "cattle and cattle" is on earth. (Ezek. xxxiv.) There was much in this to sustain the disciples, His believing people, to whom the Lord was speaking. There was sure promise of His return with His *rewards* as the Master, and with *Himself* as the Bridegroom. But I do not find, in the whole of this discourse, that which necessarily instructed them in *heavenly* glories, or necessarily intimated their rapture into the heavens. In John, as they are retiring from the supper, He speaks still more fully, and plainly tells them of mansions in heavenly places. But there *He* originated the discourse, and in spirit was in *heaven*; here *they* originate the discourse, and in spirit, in thought, in intelligence and associations, were on *earth*.

If the mind hold these or any other thoughts of God and His counsels before it, may the spirit within ponder them, and turn them to godly exercise of heart and conscience! May they not float before the mind's eye, beloved, as ideas or images, but dwell within the seeing and hearing of the soul with power! Amen.

J. G. B.

BRIEF THOUGHTS ON THE SEPARATION OF THE NAZARITE.

(Numbers vi.)

We have here, in type, the separation of Christ, and of those that are in Him, from the world unto God. That we might thus be set apart by His separation, He commenced it afresh in resurrection through His offering for sin.

The sanctification of the Nazarite did not go beyond the purifying of the flesh. It was in this, like the other shadows of the law, ceremonial, and not that which purgeth the conscience. But as the sanctuary made with hands was the pattern of heaven itself, so did the carnal Nazarite set forth Him who was always, thoroughly, intrinsically separate from sinners, and holy unto the Lord. From His mother's womb, Christ was really that which the Nazarite outwardly prefigured—"that holy thing." (Luke i. 35.) As a child, He was the same. The grace of God was upon Him. (Luke ii.) Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? He alone could say in its full force: "*My flesh* longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." (Ps. lxiii.) Again, as in Ps. lxxxiv.: "*My heart and my flesh* crieth out for the living God." Beside other and higher glory of His person, Christ was the blessed man who never walked in the counsel of the ungodly nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. Other blessed men there are whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. (Ps. xxxii.) But Christ was the one blessed man who, regarded as made of a woman, made under the law, had no transgressions to be forgiven, neither sins to be covered, but His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did He meditate day and night. In this, then, He stood alone, truly and totally separated unto the Lord, wholly apart from the world for God. Here below, in the flesh, He was the pure and holy Nazarite, blessed in Himself. All others were sinners. If these were blessed, they were blessed exclusively through Him: and this was by death and resurrection.

But if, in the flesh, He stood thus alone, in resurrection Christ is the first-born among many brethren. This is another condition in which we may view His Nazariteship, and a condition most precious it is to us.

Now, let us consider in what the separation consisted.

First, "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink; neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk." (Verses 3, 4.)

Wine maketh merry; it maketh glad the heart of man. But Christ had not one feeling in common with a world estranged from God. He could love and pity, but kept aloof from all earthly joy and gladness. To Him, in whom God was well pleased, nothing here below yielded enjoyment. He needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man. (John iii.) If men would come and take Him by force to make Him a King, He departs into a mountain Himself alone. (John vi.) If His unbelieving brethren would have Him to shew Himself to the world, He says, My time is not yet come. (John vii.) This blessed Nazarite walked as God's heavenly stranger through the world; and the more He knew the fulness of joy in Jehovah's presence, the more He detected and stood aloof from the spurious pleasures of men, and the more He felt the wretchedness, and sin, and sorrow, of all around Him. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge; but man had no ears, no voice for God. Could this gladden the heart of the Nazarite? Looking up to heaven, He sighed. (Mark vii. 34.)

Secondly, "All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord; he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow." (Verse 5.)

The head and beard are referred to in Scripture as the seat of glory and strength. Thus, in Ps. cxxxiii., "it is like the precious ointment upon *the head*, that ran down upon *the beard*, even Aaron's beard;" and, therefore, it was that the priests, in the case of the death even of near kindred, were forbidden to make baldness upon their head, or to shave off the corner of their beard. (Lev. xxi.) These tokens of humiliation did not become those who enjoyed special access to God. On the other hand, he who typifies the defiled and defiling outcast from God and His people, the leper, even in the days of his cleansing, had to "shave off all his hair off his head, and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off." (Lev. xiv.) Sin has utterly tainted that which otherwise would be comely. But the Nazarite is typical of Christ in His separation as a man unto God, and He was without blemish and without spot, and all that sprang up in that Holy One was lovely and acceptable to God. Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. (Luke iii.) His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. (John iv.) Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, He could say throughout; even as at the termination of His earthly career, He told the Father, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. To have cut off the beauteous locks of the untainted Nazarite, would have been to have cut off the feelings, interests, thoughts, affections, purposes and acts of Christ, which were all fragrant and precious in the sight of God.

Thirdly, "All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord." (Verses 6-8.)

Christ is life and the prince of life, as Satan is he who hath the power of death. And when one, bidden to follow Him, said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father, Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. (Luke ix.) This world will care for its own things, but Christ and His people are for the living and true God—for Him only. So truly was this verified in Christ, that even death itself He accepts as having to do with God and God with him. It is not Judas, nor the Jews, nor the Romans, nor Satan, that His eye is upon; but "the cup which *my Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John xviii.)

No type ever reaches up to, much less can it exhaust, the glory of the Lord. Hence we constantly find a point where Christ personally is rather the contrast than the object pictured. Aaron was the high priest taken from among *men*, but Jesus was the Son *of God*. The one with the blood of bulls and goats offered once every year for himself and for the errors of the people; "but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. ix. 11, 12.) So Christ, as we know, was incapable of defilement: the death of man or of Israel in the scene which surrounded Him, did not and could not affect Him, who, if he were the Nazarite, was infinitely more. None could take His life from Him. If He laid it down, it was purely and entirely the spontaneous act of His grace, though even

then He will not swerve from the will of the Father. "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Blessed be His name! He *did* lay down His life for the sheep. For it was the will of God that we should be separated by that true Nazarite unto God Himself, and Christ came to effect His will of sanctifying us, and this could only be by the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. For as Jesus had said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And Christ would not abide alone as God's Nazarite, but, having died, and thus removed our defilement and death by His own death for us, He is beyond the region of the dead; and there too are we brought, as risen with Him. The dead corn of wheat has produced much fruit. Risen with Him, great is the company of the Nazarites now.

It is wondrous, yet most certain, that He who knew no sin was made sin for us. Never was Christ's consecration of Himself more holy than when the spotless Victim was wreathed and filleted with our sins, which He verily owned, and bore, and suffered for, according to the judgment and wrath of God. Perfectly without sin, He alone could be a sacrifice for us; perfectly made sin for us, He alone could blot out our sins by the sacrifice of Himself. But now the work is finished, and He has taken His seat on God's right hand, "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Do we think of our need of a sin-offering? The answer is, Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. v.) Do we think, further, of the need of a burnt-offering? The answer is again, Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. (Ephes. v. 2.)

Accordingly, all our Nazariteship flows from, and is in unison with, this original source. Whatever professes to be holiness, whatever is accredited as holiness, that is not based upon the death of the flesh and is not carried on in resurrection-life, is not true Christian holiness. It may be indeed a fair shew in the flesh, but it is virtually a denial of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Once, beyond doubt, when God owned a worldly sanctuary, He owned a fleshly holiness, which rose no higher than mere outward restrictions. For the world and the flesh, however clearly known to Him, had not yet *proved* themselves to be irremediably evil. But now He owns neither the one nor the other. The cross of Christ was the end of both to those who see as God sees; and Christ is risen and seated at His right hand in the heavenly places, and His power to usward who believe is according to the working of that mighty power which wrought in thus exalting Christ. A man, as such, may be wise, mighty or noble; (1 Cor. i.) he may be possessed of a thousand natural advantages; he may be even religious in the flesh to a high degree. (Gal. iv.-vi.) Earthly things are these, though they may be called earthly blessings; and the Holy Ghost designates those who mind them as enemies, not exactly of Christ, but of THE CROSS *of Christ*. (Phil. iii.) *Men* may court such earthly things, they may boast of them, and lean upon them; but shall *we*, shall *Christians?* Shall we not rather, as true Nazarites, count those things which were gain, loss for Christ? Shall we not seek yet more to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead? It is as dead and risen with Christ that we are Nazarites, and not by subjection to ordinances, such as Touch not, taste not, handle not. Whatever is unworthy of such dead and risen men is not meet for us. Therefore, brethren, beloved of God, let us set our mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Even while we are here below, we are one with Him above: our life is hid with Him in God. And so really and inseparably are we identified, that when He shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Meanwhile, therefore, let us mortify our members which are upon the earth.

Thus, then, sin and death having entered, the death of Christ could alone meet our defilement; and hence He resumes His Nazariteship in resurrection. And it is in resurrection that He associates believers with Himself, as His brethren in the truest sense. "Touch me not," said Jesus to Mary Magdalene, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to *my brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Such is the gracious provision hinted at in the type: "And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled." (Verses 9-12.)

"The eighth day" (verse 10) is the introduction, the first day of a new week; and so we find the Nazarite commencing, as it were, his separation over again. If sinners are to be separated to God, it can only be by death—the death of Christ. By His resurrection, He began in power the new creation. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Cor. v. 17.) The total accomplishment may not be until the new heavens and new earth; (Rev. xxi. 5;) but faith looks at Christ, and can speak this language even now. Our separation is maintained in His separation, as to our life. And separation in our *walk* must be from walking according to the *life* we have in Him. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." To walk as men—not merely as bad men, but as men, after a human way—is beneath those who are Christ's. (1 Cor. iii.) Wherefore, says the apostle elsewhere, (Col. ii.) if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, *as though living in the world*, &c. In truth, they were *dead*, and they were *risen* too, risen with Christ, and therefore are called to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

Separation unto the Lord is now connected with separation from the vine of earthly stimulants and joys, and it will continue until Jesus exercises his rights directly as the Lord of all here below. For "this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt-offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin-offering, and one ram without blemish for peace-offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin-offering, and his burnt-offering: and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat-offering, and his drink-offering. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace-offerings. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven: and the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord: this is holy for the priest, with the wave-breast and heave-shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine." (Verses 13-20.) The Lord will no longer refuse to be a King, and retire alone on high to intercede as Priest; but, actually invested with dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him, He will come again, and He will bring to reign with Him those whom He now separates from the world, as cleansed through His blood and risen with Him. The days of separation are fulfilled .... and *after that the Nazarite may drink wine.* Then will be the fulfilment of the millennial psalms in all their meaning: "the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." In that day, truth is no longer fallen in the streets, for it shall spring out of the earth, and the Father's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Until then the blessing is deliverance, not only from sin but from this present evil world. If I have learned the cross, I have learned that thereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. (Gal. i.-vi.) Now, that which stamps the world, as the world, is *ignorance of the Father.* "O righteous Father," says the Lord, "the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee."

He and the world had no fellowship; neither have His disciples, for, just before, He had thus spoken of them to His Father: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." It is not they ought not to be, but they *are not*. Men may reason plausibly; but to hear any excuses for, or exhortations to union with the world, is to listen not to the good Shepherd's voice, but to the deceits of the enemy. And is it not enough that Satan should accuse the brethren, and deceive the whole world? Ought *brethren* also to be deceived by that old serpent?

Our place for the present, our only true place, is separation from the world in every shape. "For their sakes," said our Master in His ever-memorable prayer for us, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth;" for our separation is through the knowledge of Christ in His separation. As He is, so are we in this world. We know Him where He is, that we may know ourselves as there in Him also. This is sanctification through the truth, resulting from Christ's sanctification of Himself.

By and bye the saints shall judge the world. (1 Cor. vi. 2.) Meanwhile, an apostle says: "What have I to do to judge them also that are *without?*" (The powers that be should do that.) "Do not ye judge them that are *within?*" (1 Cor. v.) Such is the province of the Church, now at least. And preaching the Gospel to the world, far from being fellowship with it, is rather to gather people out of it. These can then say: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." They are separated unto God, and should preserve their Nazariteship intact until the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, when the world shall know that the Father sent the Son, and loved us as the Son was loved.—(*Founded on Notes from Demerara.*)

STUDIES ON THE REVELATION.

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER I.

I WILL not stop to prove the authenticity of the book. Others have done so. Besides, I write for Christians, who have no need of such proofs. The authority of Jesus is felt in it. The very style of the book proves the intimate connection of the things which it unveils with those announced by the prophets of the old covenant. It is the same Spirit speaking of the same things and in the same way, although the nearness of the fulfilment stamps upon its language here something more actual and positive.

Its title, "Apocalypse," is found in Greek from the first word, and signifies "revelation, unveiling."

By bringing historical traditions to verse 9, we can fix with sufficient certainty the date of this Revelation at the year 96 or 97,[1] that is, about twenty-five after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Revelation is, above all, in my eyes, the book of the closing testimony, of which Jesus is the Head. It speaks, among other things, of the witnesses who are to receive the Spirit of prophecy, and who are to be "the understanding ones of the end."[2] Jesus bears witness there to the things He has received since His glorification; He confirms and thus closes all the prophecy conformably to that which was said to Daniel by the man clothed in linen; for yet the vision is for many days."[3]

The Revelation is not the present Gospel of grace preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven;[4] nor the ministry, properly so called, of the Church. (Col. i. 24, 25.) But its plan, its general bearing, and the developments which the old prophecies here receive, make of it at once an original prophecy and the abridged repetition of all the old unaccomplished prophecies.

The object of the Revelation is, as it were, indicated in 1 Cor. xv. 23-28. It concerns the reign of God and the authority of his Christ. And Matthew xxviii. 18-20 contains the principles of the whole action of our book, which unfolds the ways of God until their accomplishment in the new creation, of which Jesus is our Germ.

Jesus actually living and acting in heaven, next Jesus returning; such is the fundamental subject of the Revelation. The light of this revelation was indispensable to clear up the prophecy of Matthew xxiv. and xxv., and the promise of the return of the Son of man. (Acts i. 11.) It was meet that the disciples should understand, on the one hand, that the return of the Son of man was not bound up with the fall of Jerusalem under Titus; and, on the other hand, that the persecutions which followed its fall were not the last, but that all was advancing, on the contrary, to the great tribulation, outside the hour of which the Church, the body of Christ, is to be kept.

The first chapter presents, I believe, four principal divisions: a title and an inscription; (verses 1-3;) a salutation and an answer; (verses 4-6;) the indication of the principal subject of the book; (verses 7, 8;) the writer. Vision of the Lord, and his instructions to the writer. (Verses 9-20.)

EXPLANATION OF CHAPTER I.

(Verses 1, 2.)

The expression, "Revelation of Jesus Christ," is only found here in the Apocalypse.[1] The following words, "which God gave unto him," shew that the question is of a revelation given by God the Father to Jesus glorified. (Compare John xii. 49, 50.)

Some interpreters explain these words, the prophecy of the unveiling or manifestation of the person of Jesus, until then hidden in heaven. It is true that this idea is justified by the contents of verses 10-17 and by the promise of the return of Jesus, so often repeated in the book; it is true, moreover, that the word Apocalypse signifies "unveiling." But one cannot, and ought not, to lose sight of the literal and complete sense of the phrase as a whole, nor separate the words "revelation of Jesus Christ" from those which follow, "which God gave unto him."

The literal sense of the passage is, that God the Father gave a revelation to Jesus Christ, who signified by sending it to John by his angel.[2] God is the dispenser; He gives. Jesus is pre-eminently the Witness; he dictates; (verse 19,) he communicates what he has received. John is the servant and witness of his Master: he writes to transmit and attest what he has seen and heard. The second verse presents to us anew the Word of God, the expression of His counsel: the testimony of Jesus, or the counsel of God communicated either by visions or by dictations; things which John saw, heard, wrote, and attested.[3]

The Revelation is given in favour of the servants of God, or of those who serve Him on earth, and in the number of whom Jesus ranges Himself.

The character of servant is indispensable for reading, understanding, and enjoying the book; if it is shut up to the world and to the friends of the world, it is not so to those who, living in the hope of the things promised, ave the ear open and the heart disposed to keep and observe the things which John has written for their instruction. The service of all the free-men consists not in offering their members as instruments to iniquity, but in presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God. Detachment from perishable things, self-renunciation, separation from the world as regards the things of God, dependance upon God, application to seek His will in order to do it, love, constitute the character of servant. One is a friend of Jesus in the proportion that one is the servant of God,[4] for the servant is to be as his Master, who, though a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and who is thus become Captain and Completer of the faith. Although we be sons, kings and priests, and even because we are so, we must, before judging and reigning with Christ, serve Him as witnesses, walking in His steps until He come. It is in the measure that we are clothed with the character of faithful servants that we advance in the understanding of prophecy in general, and of this book in particular. It is one of the most important keys to the treasure of our God; all the knowledge possible will never supply obedience to comprehend the counsels of the Lord. Noah was a just man and sincere in his time, walking with God; also he had been a hundred and twenty years before divinely warned of things not seen as yet. The Lord could not leave Abraham in ignorance of the judgment which He was about to

(1) Irenaeus, the disciple of Papias and Polycarp the contemporaries of John, fixes the date of this revelation to the 18th September, A.D. 96, the day of the assassination of the emperor Domitian by his wife.

(2) Compare Dan. xii. 3, 10; xi. 33, 35. Jer. xxiii. 20. Rev. i. 2, 5, 9; iii. 14; vi. 9; xi. 3; xii. 17; xvii. 6; xxi. 4; xxii. 9.

(3) Dan. x. 14; xii. 4, 9. (4) 1 Peter i. 12.

(1) See 1 Cor. i. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 1. Gal. i. 12. 2 Thess. i. 7. 1 Peter i. 7, 13.

(2) I think, though the thing be disputable, that this angel is that of Jesus, and not that of God. In chap. xxii. 6, (compare 9,) we find again the same idea: "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants," and at verse 16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel." At any rate, I believe that here, as in other passages where it is a question of angels, there is, up to a certain point, an identification between Jesus and his angel.

(3) Chap. i. 1, 2; xxii. 16, 20. (4) Compare John xi. 14, 15.

inflict upon the guilty cities of the plain, because Abraham is His friend, [1] keeping apart from the evil, and thus shewing himself the obedient servant of his God. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? No! God cannot do so, for it is and always will be true, that the secret of the Lord is with the righteous and with them that fear Him; and the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets. [2]

John was, without doubt, the servant of Jesus Christ, like Paul, James, Peter, and all the other apostles; but I believe that he is presented here as the prophet of the kingdom of the Son of man, as the brother of the Jews, joint-witness and joint-servant of the Jewish prophets; [3] for it must not be lost sight of that the Revelation is a *résumé* and a sequel of the prophecies of the Old Testament. John receives a prophetic and apocalyptic ministry outside his calling as an apostle, a member of the Church; and he does not appear here as minister of the Gospel of grace, knowing all things by the unction of the Holy One. He even addresses the Church according to this character in the two first verses. I believe that, if we except one only, (chap. ii. 20,) the different passages which might be cited on the condition of servant in the Revelation, present all the idea of a service of testimony in relation to the things wherewith the book is occupied. We find a service of testimony filled by angels, and which, like the preceding, bears above all upon the Jewish people, the world and the end of the present age.

Jesus himself, when He speaks in this book, is Prophet and Witness above every thing else; He takes angels, John and the prophets, to serve Him as fellow-servants in the prophetic testimony, to proclaim "the things which must shortly come to pass" in the world. When Jesus was on earth as man in the intimacy of the Father, He immediately communicated to the disciples the thoughts of the Father in respect of them, and then from servants they became His friends. Jesus having gone back to heaven, the Holy Ghost revealed to the Church, for its exigencies, all the thoughts of God by means of the apostles, and Himself explains, and even renders those revelations living to those who received the unction of the Holy One. As regards the Apocalypse, Jesus in heaven has received of the Father, and directly reveals to John, for all the servants of God, the things which we are going to read. John, the servant of Jesus Christ, as well as all those who are in the same position, keep the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, or the words of this book, or the testimony which they had. [4] John, the beloved disciple of the Lord, is named four times clearly as the writer of the book. [5] The end of the second verse, "all things that John saw," is altogether in unison with the habits of the writer. [6]

(Verse 3.)

The special blessings attached to the reading, the study, and the exposition of the Revelation, are found repeated at the end of the book. This particular agency sufficiently refutes the cloudy prejudice which leads many of the redeemed to neglect, and even to despise, under a vain pretext of humility, the intimate thoughts of God respecting the present world and the world to come. True respect does not consist in turning our back upon the burning bush, but just the reverse, in approaching it with unsandalled feet, in listening to the voice of Jesus, in considering the vision, and keeping the Word of God, in a walk holy and worthy of our calling.

Jeremiah, addressing those who, among God's people, received not the witness of the prophets, said to them: "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it."

Now, those who fear to be conformed to the present age, and who desire to walk not according to the world but according to God, will ever find here the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ to be a lamp to their feet and a light to their path.

(1) James ii. 23.

(2) Gen. vi. 13; xviii. 17-19. Ps. xxv. 14. Prov. iii. 32. Amos iii. 7.

(3) The angel of the Lord is invested with all these characters, save that of brother of the Jews. (xxii. 9.)

(4) Chap. vi. 9, 11; x. 7; xi. 18; xv. 3; xix. 2, compare 10; xxii. 3, 6, compare 9.

(5) Chap. i. 1, 4, 9; xxii. 8.

(6) Chap. xxii. 8. John i. 14; xix. 35; xxi. 24. 1 John i. 1, 2.

But it is not enough to hear the Word of prophecy; it must be *kept*, in order to draw from it the promised blessings. These do not concern the disciples who desire to remain attached to the present age, but those with whom knowledge is transformed into life and practice, in consequence of the obedience which hears and keeps the word of this book.

I think that "he that readeth" means the person who has studied and who expounds the contents of the book to others, who have either its reading or its exposition. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 13-16.)

"He that readeth and they that hear" form a whole, to whom the blessings are promised on condition of observing the things read. [1] I am well persuaded, nevertheless, that the simple private reading of the book procures great blessings to every attentive reader, and we have more than one example of conversions begun in this way. [2]

Almost all the things contained in the Epistles of the New Testament, concern the Church, and are addressed to it directly; there was no need there to say: "Blessed is he that readeth." If, then, the Lord found it good to open and terminate the Revelation by such an exhortation, is it not a proof that all its contents are not absolutely and directly applicable to the Church, like the contents of the Epistles? It seems to me that the exhortation not to despise prophecies may give the understanding of the worth of the exhortation which occupies us. [3]

It is evident that the blessing of the third verse is as general as possible, or, in other words, that since the day when it was written, it has not to be accomplished for the readers and the hearers attentive and obedient to the words of the prophecy, and that it will yet be accomplished as regards those who shall read or listen to it in like manner, at the sight of the awful signs and terrible judgments which are to announce the day of the wrath of the Lamb. It is no less evident, in my judgment, that the properly prophetic portion, namely, from chapter iv. to the end, will not begin to be accomplished till after the Church is withdrawn from the scene here below and introduced to the glory of her heavenly Bridegroom. That being so, what meaning for us, readers and hearers, the members of the Church, can have these words of our verse, "and *keep* those things which are written therein?" Or, how can we keep things, the greater part of which is not spoken in respect of the Church, and how taste thus the precious blessing which is engaging us?

It may be well said, that this also is addressed to the spiritual intelligence of the saints, and that this apparent difficulty does not exist for the simple soul who seeks the teachings of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, since all the Old Testament, which notwithstanding is not occupied with the Church of Christ, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, even as, God be thanked, we know it is by a blessed experience, why should it not be the same with the Revelation? The Spirit of God knows how to enable us to discover in the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, precious instructions, powerful applications, a nourishment sound and strengthening to our souls. Now, it is precisely that which is produced by the reading of the last book of the Bible, when this reading is done under the power of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. Oh! yes, may the Lord be blessed for it! there is always to us the means of keeping "those things which are written therein," even though the greater part of these things will only be realized after our departure from this world; there is then to us always the means of our appropriating this good promise. There is nothing in the Word of our God from which the Christian ought not and cannot reap for his soul. To assist in making myself understood, one example will suffice. If any one asked me, What instruction would you have me to draw from chapters xvii. and xviii. of this book, which contain the description of Babylon and of its terrible judgment, seeing that I hardly know what Babylon is, and that I shall not be a witness of these events? It would be easy to reply, If you know not what Babylon actually is, you ought to know how to discern around you the principles and the spirit of Babylon which reign in the world. These chapters are to you a powerful

(1) Luke viii. 15; xi. 28. Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 31—32.

(2) 1 Cor. xiv. 22 proves nothing contrary to this assertion. There the question is of the gift of prophesying for strengthening, for mutual edification in the assemblies of the saints, rather than the act of predicting things to come by the Spirit of God.

(3) Though one may also understand 1 Thess. v. 20 in the sense of the gift of prophesying for the edification of assemblies.

preaching, which calls on you to be on your guard, not to let yourselves be seduced or dragged away by the spirit of Babylon; and these words will always be a moral present reality very serious to the family of the Lord: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." (xviii. 4.)

Another striking example for the support of that which we have just said, is presented to us in 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. Paul writes to his disciple that, "in the last days" perilous times shall come, and men shall be filled with wickedness and vices, of which he furnishes the melancholy and gloomy picture. Might not Timothy have asked: What instruction can I draw from this prophecy relative to the last days? But the principles of the apostacy already reigned at that time[1] in the world, and Paul adds, as if to emancipate the objection, "from such turn away."

"For the time is at hand."[2] If this word becomes more and more serious for us, each day which brings us near the time assigned to the events, what will be its power over the conscience of those who shall observe it, when the events begin to happen quickly! The times and the seasons, which the Father has kept in his own authority, remain his secret. Every time that it is treated of his return as Son of man, Jesus himself, as such, on earth knew neither the day nor the hour, neither does any one know them yet. But the witnesses of the end of the age shall repeat with joy this good word: "Lift up your heads! deliverance is nigh, for the time is at hand."

The three first verses which we have just examined are, as it were, the superscription of the whole book, and their contents may suggest the thought that they were inspired to John after the communications which form the ground of the book. These communications were made to John, in a great measure, by visions, of which the larger part were explained to him by the Word of God, and there is what is meant by "all things that John saw."

(Verses 4, 5.)

"The seven churches that are in Asia" are only pointed out here under the same title: they represent the Church in its fulness or in its unity on earth. They are set in the first row of hearers, as constituting "the things which are," up to the end of the third chapter. The point of view of service is that which is common to all those to whom the apocalyptic testimony is confided, that is, to the servants of God, then to the seven churches which are in Asia, and to the churches; to all those, in a word, who have ears to hear.[3] All the faithful, who look for the return of the Lord to realize the promises made to their faith, find in the reading of this book a community of interest, of which He which is to come is the centre and object.

All the things which concern the world and the inheritance of the Son of God are then confided to us, as to the co-heirs of Him who is going soon to establish the immoveable kingdom which we shall share with Him. The knowledge of these things is so much more indispensable, as the preaching of "the whole counsel of God" forms also part of the ministry confided to the Church; and there is no service, I think, more sweet and more refreshing than proclaiming the return of Him after whom our souls sigh.

Nevertheless, I repeat, the narration concerns the kingdom and the reign, rather than the Church, for the latter is not the special object of the book. We are not those who have to traverse the events predicted in its prophetic part; and, in this sense, one may say that the things which are written therein, though far from being indifferent to the Church, concern it only indirectly and in a manner inferior to its own privileges and its own hopes, considered in their heavenly characteristics.

The salutation contained in these two verses is like that of several Epistles of the New Testament; and such words of confirmation, coming from the most holy God, are very precious to the disciples whom He calls to receive the revelation of His thoughts. God, speaking to the souls who have received of Him grace and peace desires that the enjoyment of these ineffable privileges should abound in them, and be multiplied to them.[4]

God the Father, author of the Revelation, is named the first by a species of Greek analysis of his Hebrew name of Jehovah, or Eternal. This name, under which He manifested Himself for the first time in Exodus iii. 15, contains an idea of the Trinity. Jesus the Eternal receives elsewhere in the book the title of "Him which is and which was, and which is to come."[1] This latter title, given here to God the Father, will be taken by the Son, in verse 8.

"The seven Spirits which are before his throne are the diverse manifestations of one and the self-same Spirit,[3] represented thus in its fulness and in its relationships with the redeemed and with creation. The seven Spirits exercise the oversight and government of the Holy Spirit over all the universe. (v. 6.) They never worship God, because they are God; and we see nowhere that adoration is addressed to them. The seven churches are here blessed by the Holy Spirit, the channel of every revelation contained in the Word, and conjointly by the Father and the Son.

Isaiah xi. 2 shews us seven manifestations of the Spirit of God, which correspond, I think, to this fulness in our verse; first, the Spirit of Jehovah; secondly, of wisdom; thirdly, of understanding; fourthly, of counsel; fifthly, of strength; sixthly, of knowledge; seventhly, of the fear of the Lord.

The New Testament always names the Son before the Holy Ghost; but here it is the contrary, because *the Son is the object of the Revelation.* The Lord Jesus afterwards appears invested with three offices: He has, first, that of faithful Witness, who has always gloriously manifested the Father, and whose appearing will be shewn in His own time by the Eternal, whom no man has seen nor can see.[4] This office of Witness of the ways of God, and Revealer of His counsel toward the world, is particularly attributed to Jesus in the Apocalypse. (iii. 14; xix. 10.)

His second office is that of Mediator between God and man. He is Mediator in the quality of God-man, who has been dead but who is alive, and who has paid by His blood the ransom of those who become the partakers of the better and new covenant, which is thus for them eternal and gratuitous. The acceptance of His devotedness is proved to us by His title of *first-born of the dead.*[5] He is not merely born *from the dead*, as head of the first resurrection, but He is the first-born *of the dead*, He who has burst the doors of Hades and caused to cease the birth-pains of death.[6] In Col. i., we find these two things: in verse 15, He is the first-born of all creation, a first-born of the dead, He who is the resurrection and the life. In verse 18, He is the first-born of the Church, or from the dead, because that in His death and resurrection Jesus is the Germ of the second creation, which is immutable, and of which the Church in Him is the first-fruits, for it is needful "that in all things He should have the pre-eminence."[7]

His third office of King and of the true David belonged to Him, though He did not ostensibly exercise it, at the time of His first advent in humiliation. He then abandoned the joy which was offered to Him as the Messiah, and from a King He made Himself a servant, in order to bring, through His rent flesh, poor sinners into the glory of His resurrection, and to deliver the world of the adversary. The crowns are all His by right, for He is the Son and the Heir.[8]

Jesus *has been* the faithful Witness, humbled and rejected on earth. (Is. liii. 4.)

He *is* the Witness in heaven, on the throne and before the throne, as slain but living. (Rev. v. 6.)

As risen, He *is* the Witness in and over the Church which is on earth. (Col. i. 27. Rev. i. 10-19.)

He *will* be the Witness in the world in judgment. (Rev. xix. 10.)

In these different positions of testimony, Jesus has set, sets, or will set in evidence the unbelief of the world and the faithfulness of God.

(Verse 6.)

The Church of the redeemed replies to the salutation of the Trinity. This praise is addressed to Jesus, as to Him who has brought us to God, the source of every excellent grace and of every perfect gift. The Apocalypse being a book essentially prophetic, God is not presented in it as the Father of his redeemed creatures,

(1) 2 Thess. ii. 7.
(2) xxii. 7, 10. Hab. ii. 3. 1 John ii. 11. James v. 8. 1 Peter iv. 7.
(3) i. 1, 4; xxii. 6, 16. (4) 1 Peter i. 2. 2 Peter ii. 2. Jude 2.

(1) i. 8, 18; xi. 17; xvi. 5. (2) iii. 1; iv. 5. (3) 1 Cor. xii. 4-14.
(4) John xvi. 12-14.
(5) 1 Tim. vi. 13-16, exactly rendered, is found to be connected with Peter i. 4, 5, and shews us the invisible God displaying Himself in the return of the Lord Jesus: until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, *which* (appearing) the blessed and only Potentate . . . . whom no man has seen nor can see, (*which appearing*) the invisible God will shew in His own time.
(6) We must distinguish more carefully than our versions do the resurrection *of the dead*, and that *from the dead*. (See, for the first, Rom. i. 4. 1 Cor. xv. 13, 21; above all, Heb. vi. 2.)
(7) Acts ii. 24. (8) Compare Rev. iii. 14. Heb. i. 5. Col. i. 18.
(9) Ps. lxxxix. 27. Rev. ii. 27; iii. 7; xvii. 14; xix. 12, 16, 19.

but as the Father of the Lord Jesus,[1] who is the object of the Revelation, and who is to bring to Him all things subject and pacified. The adoption of the Church and its full acceptance in Christ will be consummated by the glorification of all the members of His body before the apocalyptic prophecy takes its course. The Church says: "Unto Him who loveth us," because the love of Him who makes Himself like us, in order to render us like Him, cannot change, and is eternal. His blood has wrought our deliverance,[2] our redemption. The blood sets at liberty—it annuls the act which was contrary to us—it is our passport to heaven. Water washes, and though blood does so likewise, it goes much farther; it purifies us, because it makes us pass through the death and off-stripping of the flesh. The blood of Christ shed, and His body broken, have *abolished sin, taken away sin.*

The blood of Christ in which the Church was washed, this blood which is given it only to drink, is what has put the Church in possession of all its heavenly privileges, by making it to partake in the very life of the Son of God.

The anointing of blood entered into the ceremony of consecrating the priests. To be a kingdom, priests to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, is a promise very superior to that which Jehovah made to the Jewish people, for whom it will be realized on earth in the age to come.[3]

In this last case it is a question, in my opinion, not of a heavenly people, but of the earthly calling promised to Israel by the Lord.

The Church, which here celebrates the love of Jesus and the position it has acquired thereby before His Father, possesses a kingdom and a priesthood which are of an order at once holy and heavenly. (1 Peter ii. 5, 9.)

Finally, it must not be read, "a kingdom *of* priests,"[4] for the Church is not a kingdom in the midst of other kingdoms—it is more than that; it is the body and complement of Christ, it belongs to heaven; its origin is heavenly, its calling is heavenly, as well as its reign and its priesthood.

Other songs give to Jesus a far greater number of attributes; but here, love is in the foremost line, as the most excellent thing; the blood afterwards comes as the witness of this love, and the heavenly calling as the result of the sprinkling of the blood. To the Risen One glory and strength belong.

(Verses 7, 8.)

"Behold!" This interjection, repeated thirty times in the book, always announces some revelation new and worthy of all our attention.

When the King of the daughter of Sion came to her, mounted upon the foal of an ass, the prophecy of Zech. ix. 9 had only an imperfect accomplishment; for if the new generation of children, which arose (Matt. xi. 16; xxi. 15-18,) for a moment with the disciples, manifested at that time great joy, nevertheless, almost the entire nation consented not the less to the death of their King. Jesus wept over the daughter of Sion, and, far from "saving Himself," He voluntarily laid down His life; so that they who shamefully entreated Him were right in saying: "He saved others, Himself He *cannot* save." Also, when the Holy Spirit quotes Zech. ix. 9 in the New Testament,[5] He purposely omits the two parts of this passage which speak of the joy of the daughter and of the circumstance that the King would save Himself. In the present dispensation, the sword is on earth, peace returned back to heaven with its Prince, and the Lord is for the world as a man who slumbers. The Jewish home is left deserted until this people are converted.[6] This will only take place when the Lord comes in the clouds, and then He will save Himself, and will be alone for wrath as He has been alone under wrath.[7]

The time of this return is linked with the judgment of the nations gathered around Jerusalem.[8] That will be a day of destruction and judgment, of retribution and terror, for the adversaries that dwell upon the earth.[1]

In Dan. vii. 13, the Son of man cometh with clouds[2] to the throne of the Ancient of days, to receive the investiture of the kingdom; but here He returns with clouds to put Himself in possession, and that in the same manner as He ascended into heaven. (Acts i. 11; compare Rev. xiv. 14.)

The nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse gives the details of this return, of which the preparatives and the effects are prefigured in the fourteenth. This event is the centre and pivot of all the counsel of God toward the world, for the return of the Son of man takes place *for the earth* and *on the earth*, and corresponds with the prophecy of Haggai ii.: "Yet once more I will shake the heavens and the earth." Heb. xii. 26 speaks to us of it as of a promise to the saints, but to the world it is an awful threat. The final result of the coming of the Son of man will be the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, then the restitution of all the things promised by the prophets, and, finally, the reign of God, and the eternal ruin of that which is opposed to God.[3]

It is essentially important to us to understand that, at this time, God, by means of Jesus, will bring us *with Him*, and before the return of the Son of man ON EARTH, there is a return of the Lord IN THE CLOUDS INTO THE AIR, to catch up to heaven His risen Bride, in order that she may return *with Him*. It must needs be that our return with Him is preceded by "our gathering unto Him." An attentive reading of 1 Thess. iv. 14-18[4] should give the understanding of the difference which exists between the coming of *the Lord* or of *the Son of God*, IN ORDER to take away the Church out of the world, and the coming of *the Son of man* ALONG WITH the risen Church; between the coming of Jesus for our gathering unto Him in heaven, and the day of the Lord returning to destroy the workers of iniquity and the works of the devil.

In the fourth verse, God is, in the most general way, "He who is to come," In verses 7 and 8, it is Jesus who, in the peculiar characteristics attributed to God in the fourth verse, is called "He who is to come," and He thus accomplishes, as to the world, the promise of verse 4. We find then, in the comparison of these two verses, the identification of Jesus with God the Father.

Jesus, He by whom and for whom all things have been created, He who sustains by His powerful word, is found truly portrayed in this book as the Chief and Completer of faith. He is the first and the last letter of the alphabet, in which the redeemed learn to spell the name of their God, until they know as also they are known.[5]

The title of Jehovah belongs to Him, to Him who was God manifested in flesh, and who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. The unity of three distinct persons who are one God,[6] and the divinity of these persons, are indicated more clearly perhaps in the first chapter of the Revelation than in several of the passages which are cited upon the subject. The fulness of the Holy Spirit joins His voice to that of the Father and the Son to salute the seven Churches. There is but one interest, but one thought, one and the same will, and one only action, although these things be distinct in the narration. The Father and the Son have the same name, the same throne, the same characteristics.

In the time of shadows, the Eternal Jehovah was "He who should be," as being eternal, and also about to be manifested in flesh. (Exod. vi. 2.) This was fulfilled when Jesus descended from the Father's bosom as the Word made flesh; for at that time Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Now having gone back to heaven, where He is acting for the Church, He cannot longer, in the Revelation, be called "He who shall be," but "He is the Risen One who is to come." Thus

(1) ii. 27; iii. 5, 24; xiv. 1.

(2) Tischendorf reads, "who has *delivered* us from our sins," λύσαντι—ἐν.

(3) Exod. xix. 6. Is. 6.

(4) "A kingdom—priests" offers, we cannot deny, some difficulty in our language. It is probably the expression of the state of king-priests.

(5) Matt. xxi. 5. John xii. 15.

(6) Ps. cxviii. 26. Hos. v. 15. Zech. ii. 10-13; viii. 3. Matt. x. 23; xxiii. 39. Luke xiii. 33.

(7) Gen. xlix. 11, 12. Ps. xcvi. 13; xcviii. 9. Is. xxviii. 17-22; lix. 16; lxiii. 1-7. Ez. xxi. 32.

(8) Deut. xxxiii. 3. Joel iii. 12. Hab. iii. 3, which has the sense of the future, and cannot apply to Sinai, since there was no gathering of nations there. See Zech. xiv. 3 4

(1) Luke xix. 27. 1 Thess. v. 1-4. 2 Thess. i. 8-10; ii. 8. Heb. i. Rev. xi. 18; xxii. 12.

(2) Ps. civ. 3. Is. xix. 1. Matt. xxiv. 30; xxv. 31; xxvi. 64. (type Mark ix. 7.) Mark xiv. 62. Luke xxi. 27.

(3) Acts i. 6; iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 24-29.

(4) Compare John xiv. 1-6; xvi. 22; xxi. 20-23. 1 Cor. i. 7; xi. 26; xv. 22, 23. 1 Thess. ii. 19. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 1-4. Titus ii. 13, &c.

(5) The Jews call God "Ath," as the Greeks might say "Aô," and the French "Az." The cutting off, in verse 8, the words "the beginning and the end," and in verse 11, the words "I am Alpha and Omega" is not a loss for the faith which finds again those words united in chap. xxii. 13. Compare chap. xxi. 6.

(6) A mystery of faith already amply revealed in the Old Testament. Gen. i. 1, literally "God's created." See verse 26; iii. 22. Is. vi. 8, &c., &c.

when the Father speaks, it is "He who is to come," (verse 4,) and it is the same with the Son in verse 8.

In Rev. xvi. 5, Jesus, though not yet rendered visible to all flesh, has left the throne of the Father to judge the enormities of the earth, and in this sense He is there; He is no more "He who is to come;" (He is come;) but "He who is and who was holy."*

"All kindreds of the earth shall wail" indicates, above all, the despair of the Gentiles and unconverted Jews, at the sight of the Son of man returning in the clouds. I think that other passages of the Old Testament speak of the conversion of Israel by the sight of the Lord.[1] However, "all kindreds (or the tribes) of the land" is said particularly of Israel or of the twelve scattered tribes.

"Every eye," or, as Isaiah says, "all flesh shall see Him."[2] The Jews and the Gentiles,[3] "and they also which pierced Him," shall see Him in His quality of Son of God in power, of Him who is the first and the last,[4] in spite of His death, ever living. He is "the Almighty." (Compare iv. 8.) The Lord no more veils Himself now with mildness and humility, but we find Him here identified with the everlasting God, just as we have already known Him in Heb. i. 3, Col. i. 15, 28, &c. The faith of every redeemed one awaits, in the person of Jesus, the revelation and the manifestation of his salvation and even of the deliverance of creation.[5] The promise of the return of Jesus is here the first and the last thing revealed to faith. (i. 4, 8; xxii. 20.) He is the first object that the Church sees in the midst of the candlesticks and the sole object of his hope. (ii. 1; xxii. 17.)

First Part.—"The things which thou hast seen."

(Verse 9.)

The narrative of the first part begins properly with verse 9. John, the brother of the servants of God, of the prophets and members of the seven Churches, is presented as partaking[6] with them in a community of services, of sufferings, and of patient waiting,[7] and of the reign. Jesus always draws His witnesses along the path which He Himself has followed. It is not needful to say, that no believer shares in the sufferings of Christ as the Redeemer. This work which Jesus accomplished for us pertains to Him alone. But He has left after Him upon earth a testimony composed of believers, who ought to realize in their life, in the flesh, the position of Nazariteship which was that of their Saviour in the same circumstances. It is the path through which the Church is called to pass, in order to enter into glory.

Our death to the flesh and the world, which issues in conflict by the power of the life of Christ in us and in the midst of the sanctifying trials of faith, is a spectacle which God is pleased to give to heaven and earth by means of the Church, to the praise of the glory of His grace. The power of the imperishable life of Christ risen demonstrates His victory over hell and death, by the continuance of its display in those whom He has chosen to be His witnesses on earth.

It is a question in Rev. i. 9 of the participation of John, with all his brethren, in a life of testimony, conflicts and sufferings, sustained by the hope of the return of the Lord Jesus in person and of the reign with Him.[8]

* [The author rightly rejects the common reading ἐσόμενος and reads ὅσιος with the best MSS., but his inferences the reader must judge for himself. —Ed.]

(1) Zech. xii. 10, sqq. Is. xxv. 9; xxvi. 16, sqq.; xxxiii. 3-5, 16, 17; xxxv. 4, 5, 10; xl. 9, 10; xlii. 13, 16, 18-20; xliii. 8, &c.

(2) Is. xl. 5. Luke iii. 6. Is. xli. 1-5; liii. 10. Jer. xxv. 31. John xix. 37. (type, Gen. xxviii. 12.)

(3) Some interpreters see an allusion in the two words "Yea and Amen," of which one is Greek and the other Hebrew. 2 Cor. i. 20. Rev. iii. 14.

(4) Is. xliv. 6. (5) Luke ii. 31. 1 Peter i. 5. Rev. xii. 10. Rom. xii. 11.

(6) Συγκοινωνὸς, *companion, comrade.* This Greek word of the New Testament, joined here with ἐν, presents an idea of sharing in the sufferings of Christ and the glories which are to follow. The angels, as sharing in service only, are his fellow-servants, σύνδουλος. (xix. 10; xxii. 9.)

(7) Ὑπομόνη. (Rom. viii. 25. 1 Thess. i. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 5. Heb. x. 36, 37. Rev. iii. 10; xiii. 10; xiv. 12. Matt. x. 32.) In these different passages, and in others beside, the word has evidently the meaning of *wait for.* "If we hope . . . then do we with patience wait for it." "The patience of our hope of the Lord Jesus Christ" can only mean the fruit of the hope which expects to see the person of the Lord. "May the Lord direct your hearts into . . . . the patient waiting for Christ." "Ye have need of patience" . . . . to wait for Him who is coming. "Thou hast kept the word of my patience." This return is the object of the faith and waiting of the saints. It was the aim of the expectation of the remnant of the kingdom even to the end, &c. Pape says ὑπομένω also means to *wait for*; and he adds examples. Planche says, "to rest in one's place in order to wait for," and the "action of waiting with a firm foot." I do not deny that ὑπομόνη has the sense of *perseverance* and *persistance*, and especially when it is a question of tribulation. But I say that, when the return of the Lord is the object proposed to faith, the true meaning of the word is "to *wait for*," a meaning which in nowise excludes the idea of *patience*, but the contrary.

(8) Luke xxii. 28. Acts xiv. 23. 2 Tim. iii. 12; iv. 18.

The testimony that John bore to Jesus during his captivity in the isle of Patmos, could not be that of the Apocalypse before the moment when He received this revelation. It is not then a question here, as in verse 1, of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ in the Apocalyptic sense, but it is a question of evangelisation and of testimony to Jesus dead and risen. (Acts i. 22.)

It was when John suffered, because of the Gospel, that God revealed to Him things hidden up to that time in Himself, and those things belong all to Jesus and are for Jesus. God acts still after the same manner in the same circumstances; every time that the redeemed are in trial, the Apocalypse becomes to them an inexhaustible source of hope and refreshment.

John was the disciple to whom the waiting for Jesus had been peculiarly recommended in the last words of his Master.[1] His perseverance and faithfulness in waiting for the Lord, as long as it pleased the Lord to leave Him on earth, was rewarded by the vision and revelation of the things which his pen has transmitted; also, John appears here disposed to glory in his afflictions rather than to complain of them.

(Verse 10.)

John says positively that he *was* or *became in the Spirit*, but absolutely nothing authorizes us to add that he was caught up in the Spirit.[2] I think that the power of the Spirit of God had concentrated all his faculties and all his thoughts, in order to direct them to the things which were about to be revealed to him.

Without wishing to explain all, I believe I can say, by comparing the expression of Paul in a case analogous to this, that to become in Spirit "is *to be out of the body.*"

The emotion of Paul, in recounting his rapture to the third heavens, is that of *a man in Christ*, who already enjoyed the glory to come. He opposes the expression "in the body" to that of "out of the body," which is equivalent, in my opinion, to that of "in Spirit." Paul knows not if it was in the body or out of the body that he was caught up to the third heaven,[3] but John can affirm of himself that *he became in Spirit.*

There is no other example, to my knowledge, of the expression "Lord's day," and it must not be confounded with "the day of the Lord," which is always a day of vengeance and wrath against the rebellious. If we understand by "Lord's day" the first day of the week, it is then the morrow after the day of Levitical rest. In the Old Testament, the eighth day is outside the seven days of the week; it prefigures the day of resurrection, the day of our entrance into the active life of heaven, the millennial day for creation. It is in the Lord's day that Jesus, the first-born of the dead, is shewn walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks and exercising his office in their midst.

The voice that Jesus takes here was, as it were, of a trumpet, and in that is a second character of resemblance between the preparations for the first circle of visions and the preparations for the order of the purely prophetic visions. (iv. 12.)

The abuse which the world has made of the longsuffering of God is going to be manifested. The voice sounding like a trumpet announces to the saints that the hour is come to awake from their slumber, for the night is far spent in the world, and the day of wrath is at hand.

The trumpet announces the gathering of the saints; it is the jubilee[4] for heaven first, then the deliverance of the creation which shall have part in the liberty of the glory of the children of God at the time of the manifestation of the latter.

(Verse 11.)

The things which John looks at[5] become, in verse 19, the things which John saw; they form the first of the three divisions of the book. The order to write extends then further, in verse 19, than

(1) John xxi. 21-24.

(2) John became in the Spirit a second time, (iv. 2,) at the time when a new order of visions was to initiate him to the prophecy, properly so called. Later, and in the new order of visions, John was "*carried away in the Spirit,*" that is, always in the same state, whether to a desert or to a mountain. (xvii. 3; xxi. 10.) It is evident that the Holy Spirit says the word *carried away* where it is necessary, and that it is not for us to add it where He does not put it.

(3) 2 Cor. xii. 1-4.

(4) Num. x. 1-5. Lev. xxv. 9. Compare Rom. viii. 18-20. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 51.

(5) Here βλέπεις, but in verses 19 and 20, the vision being past, the Spirit says ἃ εἶδες, "*what thou sawest.*" One sees many things without taking pains to look at them.

here, where it is only a question of the vision of the Lord Jesus living and conqueror of death, manifested in His activity in the midst of the seven Churches.

The order to write[1] is found again at the head of each of the seven Epistles, and five times[2] in the rest of the book. The prohibition to write is made but once,[3] as it were, to confirm the authority of Him who dictates, and the authenticity of the Revelation.

That which concerns the names and the geography of the seven Churches seems to us better placed in the introduction to chap. ii.; it is there we shall inquire into them.

(Verse 12.)

The person of the Lord Jesus is seven times manifested in the book.—1. Here.—2. Chap. v. As the Lamb of God become a Lion; the Son of God; the Redeemer.—3. Chap. viii. The great High Priest; the Head of angels.—4. Chap. x. The Angel of the Covenant; the Heir of God, invested with the kingdom, the King of ages.—5. Chap. xiv. The Son of man, preparing the great victory of God on earth; the second Adam; the Shepherd of the remnants He has redeemed, and at once the Root and the Offspring of David.—6. Chap. xix. The mighty Victor of victors; the glorious Bridegroom, crowned, triumphing over His enemies with the Church and its retinue.—7. Chap. xx. The Judge of the risen dead, in His quality of second Adam, Son of man.[4]

In chap. xxii. 12 and following verses, it is not an appearing of the Lord, but the voice of Jesus the Branch, crowned with all His fruits.

(Verses 13-16.)

We shall examine, in their place, such of the attributes of the Lord as are found repeated at the head of the seven Epistles, and only concern ourselves for the moment with those which are not in this case.

The Lord certainly furnishes His betrothed with the oil of grace and the fire of the Spirit, all that is needful for sustaining and increasing her: it is not, however, precisely in that office He is presented here. But we see Him in His attributes of great High Priest, of Judge and Head over the house of God. He has nothing [here] to do with the world, but He declares the state of the Churches and judges them after their pattern, which is before God. (type, Deut. xxiii. 14.)

Jesus is the Son of man glorified in heaven, which was an insupportable blasphemy to the Jews;[5] therefore, they did not cease to rise with fury against this truth,[6] which was preached to them either as a prophecy and proof of the murder which they premeditated and accomplished, or as a means of raising their hearts on high, and of detaching them from the things of which they were become idolaters.

When He appeared to Isaiah,[7] it was as the Jehovah God, who comes, and whose light denounced and judged the apostacy of Israel.

As Son of man in heaven, Jesus is especially dear to the Church, as the assured pledge of her own glorification, that is to say, of our estate of exaltation far superior to the innocent estate of the first Adam and his dignity of King of the earth only.

Jesus, the Son of man glorified in the midst of the seven candlesticks, is not merely the Redeemer and Mediator. He has received authority to execute ALL judgment as the Son of man, and He employs this authority in the Church first of all. God's judgment begins with His house; and we are judged here below according to men, in the flesh, that we may live according to God in the Spirit, and that we may not be condemned with the world.

Such is the privilege of the churches, in the midst of which walks the Son of man; and that which renders His office of Judge so precious is, that having been Himself tempted here below in the weakness of the flesh, He can, with full understanding, exercise mercy and compassion toward our infirmities. Though jealous of the glory of God and the purity of the candlesticks, Jesus, while abiding a faithful witness in these two respects, can represent to the Father our feebleness and the power of our enemies, as an advocate instructed by experience in the smallest details of the cause He defends.

The Lord is clothed with the rochet,[1] or the robe which was put under the ephod. This garment was assigned to the High Priest. (Exod. xxviii. 31-35.) In Isaiah lxi. 10, we see Jesus arrayed with all His magnificence as the glorious Bridegroom. In Zech. iii. 4, Jesus, delivered from our defilements and justified by his resurrection, is clothed with the rochet.

The golden girdle at the breasts[2] indicates the exercise of strength and power, which maintains with affection the state befitting the golden candlesticks. (Jer. i. 17, and the context.)

The head and white hair are the characters of the Eternal, as the Ancient of days, that is to say, of Jesus, by means of whom the ages were ordered. The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness. "With the ancient is wisdom."[3]

The wool and snow indicate a divine wisdom in his purity. (Is. i. 18.)

The voice like great waters announces imminent judgments.[4]

His look like the sun[5] refers to what is said of His eyes as a flame of fire; (14; ii. 18;) but, moreover, the sun marks a superior power of discernment in light and government over the Church, to provide for all its exigencies. (1 Kings ix. 3.)

By reading Heb. iii. 5, 6, it will be seen that the Lord's ministry in the midst of the candlesticks is like that of Moses over Israel, and thus He here discharges an office above that of Aaron.

The absence of every crown here is so much the more remarkable, as Aaron wore a sort of crown. It was the plate of gold which was so called. And yet Aaron was not at all king over his brethren in the theocratic economy. No more is Jesus ever [presented] as the King of the Church, but when the latter is formed and gathered, she becomes Queen, joint-heir with Him who is the King of the nations, and who, as such, at His return will wear many diadems. (i. 6; xix.)

The vision of these verses has many connections with that of Daniel x. 7-13; it must have produced an effect very solemn and affecting on the beloved disciple, who had witnessed the death of Jesus, after having so often leaned on his breast.

(Verse 17.)

Although John was in the Spirit, and I suppose, as such, in heaven, he became *as* a dead man. He was capacitated by the power of the Spirit to understand and see the things of heaven, but he was not a risen one, delivered from all fleshly weakness. Jesus touches the dead and raises them again. He takes care to strengthen those whom He would instruct. The good words "*fear not*" are repeated more than three hundred times in Scripture to men in the flesh, and it is a very humbling thing for us to be constantly experiencing our want of confidence and love toward Him who so tenderly loves us. His presence is able to annihilate every thing in us which is not yet made conformed to His image.[6]

(Verse 18. See chap. ii. 8.)

(Verse 19.)

This includes the division of the book, as we have explained, and closes the first part.

(Verse 20.)

This verse contains the explanation of the symbol of the seven stars and that of the seven candlesticks.

The seven stars are a mystery; they are the angels of the seven churches (or angels of the seven churches.)

Jesus, the archangel or Head of the angels,[7] holds in His dependance seven angels, figured by seven stars. The stars are lights or subaltern powers.

(1) Jer. xxx. 2. (2) i. 11, 19; xiv. 13; xix. 9; xxi. 5.
(3) x. 4. (4) John v. 22, 23, 27. Acts xvii. 31.
(5) Dan. vii. 13. John iii. 13.
(6) Matt. xxvi. 64, 65. John vi. 62, 66. Acts vii. 56, 57; xiii. 37, 50.
(7) Is. vi. John xii. 41.

(1) Ποδήρη is found in the LXX, in Exod. xxv. 7, where our versions translate the Hebrew by *breastplate*; xxviii. 4, by *robe*; Zech. iii. 4, by *garments*.
(2) Job xii. 21. Dan. x. 5. Luke xii. 35. Rev. xv. 7.
(3) Prov. xvi. 31. Job xii. 12, 13; compare 20 and xxii. 9. Lev. xix. 32.
(4) Ps. xxix. 7-9. Jer. x. 13. Ezek. i. 24; x. 35; xliii. 2. Rev. xiv. 2; xix. 6.
(5) Ὄψις may mean "*the face*," but is properly *the act of perceiving by the eyes*. It is not the manner in which an object appears to the view, but the act of seeing which perceives an object. If one would read "the face," that would then allude to τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ in John xii. 41 and Matt. xvii. 2, and John might have had here a reminiscence of the transfiguration of his Lord.
(6) Lev. viii. 9; xxi. 12. Exod. xxix. 6.
(7) Acts vii. 35, 38. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Peter iii. 22.

The absence of the article "*the*" is important enough.* It makes manifest that the question is not about men established and already known as ordinary messengers between the seven churches of Asia. These are not men; for, on the one hand, there is not a single example of them in the New Testament, and, on the other, when, in the Old Testament, men are called *angels*, the thing is always clearly explained.[1] If John had had to write to a human messenger or to an officially appointed ministry, it would have been much more natural to say: Write to the angel of the church *who* is at .... But the Lord says, Write to the angel of the church *which* is at ....[2]

If one were permitted to replace here the word "angel" by that of Teacher, Bishop, or Pastor, which is attempted to be done in the first verse of our chapter, for example, or in chap. xxii. 6, 15, or elsewhere! And if we cannot in places where there is no mystery, how much less here when the word "angel" is precisely the definition of a mystery!

The advocates of clericalism, and, above all, those of episcopacy, have long had recourse to the seven angels of the apocalyptic churches to strengthen their views, and thence men have deduced the necessity of keeping and even revering wicked overseers at the head of the churches. It seems to me much more in keeping with the general tenor of the Spirit of the Revelation, to take the angels of the churches for that which they are said to be,—for angels,—or ministering spirits, messengers of the heavenly and invisible world.

If it be asked *how* the angels of the churches discharged their office, I answer that I know nothing about it, any more than I can explain the office of the angel of the waters, or the angel who has authority over the fire, (xiv. 18; xvi. 5,) or of so many other angelic ministries or powers who act so frequently in the Book. I believe that it is precisely the ignorance of where they were on so mysterious a subject which has induced commentators to adopt a gloss from which they could reap something; but which, after all, has embroiled far more than cleared up the true explanation of the Revelation. We can understand what bishops over churches are, but we know not what angels of churches are, and that induces us to replace the unknown by the known; an interpretation which, without removing the difficulty, raises out of it a crowd of others.

Since the angels have been changed into bishops, or pastors, or ministers, or councils of elders,—for almost every sect has desired to find here a niche for its own clergy,—the language of the Revelation, in this passage, is become almost unintelligible.

Thus then, in our sense, the angels of this verse are angels, and not something else. Much might be said upon the ministry of these spirits, whether in protecting and serving the saints, or in chastising their adversaries. It is a study which each can make, Bible in hand, and we return from it to that which more directly refers to our subject.

God makes His angels winds and ministers a flame of fire. The angels are "ministering spirits, *sent* forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."[3] The Jews, become Christians and possessing the Holy Ghost, considered the angels as representatives (or *doubles*) of the saints dead, or hindered from showing themselves in person.[4] All the true disciples of the Lord are the little ones of whom He has said "*their* angels do always behold the face of His Father which is in heaven,"[5]

In the seven epistles, Jesus had the *angel* written to sometimes in the singular, sometimes in the plural, as representing in him alone a collective body. "Repent" (thou!)—I say unto you .... I am coming unto thee. Thou art there. Ye shall have tribulation. Be thou watchful. Antipas was slain among you. I will give to each of you." And always, in speaking to the angel of a church, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith *unto the churches*."

I believe that, in general, the angels are heavenly messengers charged with keeping up spiritual and divine relations between the visible world and the invisible world.

They maintain here, between the Lord and the seven churches, the communications relating to the testimony and the word of the Revelation.

The angels transmit the message, written by John under the dictation of Jesus, to the witnesses chosen of God on the earth. The intelligent believers listen to hear that which the Spirit says to the churches by the interposition of the messengers; they become thus true witnesses of the Lord.

If we consider the seven angels united as a totality in the hand of Jesus, they personify the intelligent and responsible assembly. Thus regarded, they stand before God to render Him account.

THE SEVEN CANDLESTICKS.

"The seven candlesticks are seven churches."

The Lord does not present the seven candlesticks as a mystery. He does not say, "The mystery .... and *of the* seven golden candlesticks;" but "the mystery of the seven stars; and *the* seven golden candlesticks." No more does he say, "And the seven candlesticks are *the* seven churches of Asia," which would positively limit the interpretation to that sole point of view which I shall call "local." The Lord says, "And the seven candlesticks are seven churches." The order contained in verse 11 is not confined to the explanation of the seven candlesticks, but He charges John to write *what he sees* to the seven churches which are in Asia. This order itself is extended to all the churches, if it be compared with xxii. 16.

The seven candlesticks are, in my opinion, the fulness of the Gentile church; or the fulness of the phases of the Church's existence since its forfeiture of its first estate.

During the administration of shadows and in the time of the tabernacle, the light of reconciliation shone in symbol, represented in the holy place by a single candlestick of pure gold with seven branches, and weighing 144 pounds. Its seven lighted lamps illumined before it the golden table on which was deposited the shew-bread, and the golden altar of incense.[1]

The candlestick, which bore the light, was a type of Christ and of the church after Him.

When Israel was established in Canaan, its fidelity was to manifest in the world the outward fulness of blessings promised under the Mosaic covenant. This fulness was symbolised by ten candlesticks, placed in the temple built by Solomon.[2] One then met with ten candlesticks in the holy place, before the veil of the oracle, each bearing up seven lighted lamps before ten tables of gold bearing 120 loaves of shew-bread. Israel having failed in its responsibility, beginning with Solomon its king, the ten candlesticks became, to the eyes of the intelligent, a type of the glory of the church risen and united to Christ, when this brilliant light shall be displayed to the world. It was a promise of the visible manifestation of the glory of Christ and of the glorious liberty of the children of God. The glorified church, and each of its members transformed into the image of Christ, the church surrounding Christ and reflecting His glory and beauty, will be one day with Him, the anti-type of the ten candlesticks of gold in the temple of Solomon. God is pleased thus to reproduce, in a bright lustre and in a magnificent abundance, the lustre and abundance of the perfections of his Beloved, that the world may know that it was that one whom He had sent.

Nevertheless, Christ is always in Himself the light of the world, and, in that sense, His return to Jerusalem will accomplish the type of the single candlestick with seven branches of which Zechariah speaks.[3] This light will shine anew in the age to come and in the world to come. In the earthly Jerusalem are to be concentrated light and blessing in that which concerns the earth.[4]

When the fulness of time was come, Christ, the true candlestick, the light of the world, being come, the type was no more

* [Once for many cases, let it be borne in mind that the writer must bear the responsibility of his own remarks. I have stated ("Prospect," vol. i., p. 185) what, I have no doubt, is the true reason of the omission of the Greek article in all such instances; as, e.g. "the seven candlesticks are the seven churches," is a good English version, though in the Greek the article is wanting, as it is before "Son of man" in verse 13, and before "sound" in verse 15 of this chapter.—It ought to be added, moreover, that some of the most ancient MSS. read "who," (i. e. τῷ, and not τῆς) and so Lachmann, and Tischendorf, in chap. ii. 1, 8, 18, and even Tregelles adopts this reading in ii. 1, 18, in his version (1848) of verse 20.—Hence also, I do not omit the ecclesiastical allusions that follow, because they were not meant controversially, and it would not be well to mutilate the reasoning as it bears on the interpretation.—Ed.]

(1) Haggai i. 13. Mal. ii. 7.

(2) Griesbach and Tregelles, ii. 1, 8, 12. 18; iii. 1, 7, 14.

(3) Heb. i. 7, 14. Ps. civ. 4. 2 Thess. i. 7.

(4) Acts xiii. 15. (5) Matt. xviii. 6, 10, 14.

(1) Numbers viii. 1-4. Exod. xxv. 31-40; xxvii. 20, 21.

(2) 1 Kings vii. 48, 49. 1 Chron. xxviii. 15. 2 Chron. iv. 7, 20, 21.

(3) Zech. ii. 8-10; iv. 1, 3, and 14. Compare Rev. xvi. 11, 22, 23; xxii. 3, 5.

(4) Ps. cii. 13, 17; cxxviii. 5, 6; cxlviii. 2. Is. ii. 2, 3; iv. 4, 5; xxiv. 23. Jer. iii. 17. Joel ii. 32.

any thing; it could not even be called a shadow.[1] God having passed by angels, and chosen man to redeem him, the earth, man's habitation, is become the altar of creation and the centre of redemption. But Jerusalem was, and ever will be, the centre of the earth in the eyes of God, and it is in virtue of this privilege that she became, soon after the death of Christ, the point whence the light was to be shed in Judea, Samaria, and unto all nations.[2]

Christ, having withdrawn into heaven, the metropolitan Church of Jerusalem replaced Him as the candlestick on earth, by bearing witness to its Saviour. (Acts xv. 28. John i. 4, 5, 9.) At that time the candlestick, though it might extend its branches and carry its light on all sides outside Jerusalem, had there its pedestal and its shaft, and the light of reconciliation was manifested at Jerusalem, in the exterior visible unity of the apostolic Church. Then also, the world, by seeing this unity, might believe that God had sent Jesus. The gathering of all saints around Jesus alone, present though invisible, to be nourished by *one loaf*, as being one body; such was the realisation of the candlestick with seven branches, filled with the oil of the single olive tree, and set in the centre of the earth to lighten the Jews first, afterward the Gentiles.

But, on the one hand, the nation rejected the light, resisted the testimony of the twelve, and killed Stephen, sending him in some sort to Jesus to say to Him, We will not that thou shouldest reign over us! On the other hand, sin introduced itself into the metropolitan church;[3] since then, this order of things fell under the judgment of God,[4] and Israel, as a nation, was driven back into darkness.[5]

Then God, in His grace, made the ruin of the church of Jerusalem subservient to the diffusion of light in the world and to the more general introduction of the Gentiles into the heavenly sanctuary. God separated the seven branches of the candlestick, as a gardener would do with the slips of a single plant. Outward, visible unity being spoiled by the fault of man, God, in grace, made use of what remained. This establishment of the seven candlesticks, replacing and multiplying the light of the single candlestick, which itself replaced Christ, was not besides a mystery before the Revelation.[6]

I believe myself authorized, by the expression "I became in the Spirit," to recognize, in the seven candlesticks, a vision outside earthly things, though necessarily corresponding to the latter, and I consider the seven candlesticks as a heavenly model, set in heaven before God, and owned of Him. (*pure gold.*) These candlesticks are the rule, the pattern, and the measure of the judgment of the Son of man upon that which the churches of the Gentiles ought to be since the fall of the church at Jerusalem. The seven candlesticks form one whole, or fulness, even as their number indicates. Just as the seven stars are united in the hand of Jesus only, the seven candlesticks are gathered round His person. The Spirit and life of Jesus risen are the source of union and activity in all the body. His word addressed to the seven churches by His Spirit, and communicated to the seven messengers whom He keeps in His hand, is their rule, even as His gifts are the channels which make the life circulate, the joints which cause the body to grow and move.

Under the Mosaic economy there was only one people of God, and only one place of assembly for worship and the feasts. The tabernacle, afterward the temple, was their centre at Jerusalem. Here Jesus is the centre and bond of unity of the seven candlesticks. Jesus, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, deals with, succours, warns, exhorts, menaces, judges and chastises His witnesses, with the view of maintaining pure the light of God on earth.

The Eternal Himself discharged this office in the wilderness in the midst of the camp of Israel, before their revolt made a priesthood needful between God and the people. From that time Aaron discharged this office in the holy place.[7]

(1) The Levites did not the less continue their functions until the destruction of Jerusalem, even as the successors of Eli had done after the fall of the priesthood. Samuel had become the oracle of God, succeeding accordingly to the Urim and Thummim, and opening a new order of testimony against the apostacy. (1 Sam. ii. 35, 36, and iii. 21.)

(2) Luke xxiv. 47, 49. Acts i. 4. (3) Acts v. 1; vi. 1; xv. 1, 5.

(4) I do not believe that there ever was, among the Gentiles, a single central candlestick. People may have tried to seek it at Antioch before the division of the seven branches. But first, that would be contrary to the privilege of Jerusalem, as centre of the earth; and next, I see nothing like it in the Word.

(5) John ix. 4; xii. 35. Luke xiii. 35. The last word of this judgment is seen in Acts xiii. 46; xxviii. 28.

(6) Ephes. ii. 17, 18; iii. 3-6; iv. 4-7.

(7) Deut. xxiii. 2, 14. Num. viii. 2.

Just as the Jewish tabernacle and temple were to answer to the heavenly model Moses saw on the holy mount, so was the Church, as a body of witnesses and as representing Christ, to answer to the model of the seven candlesticks, and, in the quality of God's Church on earth, to spread around, by its very union, the testimony of Christ risen and glorified.

In continuing, for a moment, to consider the seven candlesticks as the representation of the normal and visible unity of the Gentile Church, we can say that this last epoch of the life of the Church no more answers to that of the single candlestick in the tabernacle which represented Christ.

This period, which is our own, is no more one in which the primitive Church existed as a single candlestick, succeeding Christ on earth. The economy of the Church, in general, is an economy intermediate between the shadows and the reality of Christ on one hand, and His return on the other.

The body of Christ on earth is essentially a testimony to Him who was dead, but who is coming back. The first and most glorious period of this dispensation had already closed before that which the seven candlesticks represented. The period figured by the seven candlesticks corresponds with the beginning of the churches of the Gentiles or with the establishment, such as God speaks of it here, of testimony in the midst of the nations.

After the return of Christ, the antitype of the single candlestick of Zechariah will shine only at Jerusalem in the person of the Lamb. Then also Christ and the Church, in all their glory, with all the saints, shall manifest salvation to the world delivered from the yoke of Satan. This will be the antitype of the ten candlesticks in Solomon's temple.

We can now consider each candlestick separately, just as each particular epistle authorises us to do, and here we meet with the local unity of the children of God. Each candlestick, viewed in itself in its unity and as a branch of the old candlestick, was a limb of the body. The candlestick of Ephesus represented that which God wished the Church of Ephesus to be on earth; that is, the assembly of all the saints of Ephesus united round the Lord alone, and that outside the world, and so as to give light to it.[1] In this sense, each of the seven local churches on earth was the antitype of a heavenly candlestick, and a concentration in a single focus of the entire light in one locality.

A Church, then, was to unite all the saints of the place, but separate from the world; for what communion hath light with darkness? Without separation, no union is possible, nor consequently concentration of light and collective testimony.

Each assembly was necessarily united to the whole of the body; it was a part of the totality, so that local unity merged in central or catholic unity. An Ephesian saint was, in fact and right, a member of every other local assembly; that flowed from the fact itself that he was a member of the Church, Christ's body, represented then by the seven candlesticks, gathered round Him alone, and under His sole government.

In reality, to spoil local unity was to spoil and destroy catholic unity, for if we one moment suppose a single local assembly to be divided into two candlesticks or two branches, the order established by God and represented by *seven* candlesticks was destroyed on earth, and the golden candlestick or heavenly pattern, in particular, had no more a correspondency on earth.

John saw seven Gentile Churches (including Jews doubtless) representing the Church of God on earth. Here is the order, visible and outward, established in fact, owned by Jesus who walks there, judges there and prophesies there, in order to maintain it. The Church for a while corresponded, after the ruin of the metropolitan order, with the order of the seven golden candlesticks, placed under the view of God. The seven epistles will give us some prophetic details on that which this order was to become on earth.*—(*To be continued, D. V.*)

(1) Matt. v. 14-17.

* [Several statements in the foregoing chapter upon the seven candlesticks seem to me somewhat confused. Thus, the writer appears to confound this prophetic symbol with the teaching of Rom. xii. 1 Cor. x. xii. Ephes. ii. iv. There, indeed, the apostle Paul insists upon the *unity* of the Church; but here, the point is rather *diversity*; just as in those epistles "the one Spirit" is emphatically named, whereas the Apocalypse presents to us "the seven Spirits," (i.e. the Holy Ghost viewed not in His unity, but in the diversity of His perfections.) So, I believe, in the symbol of the seven candlesticks, it is not the unity of the body which was intended to be drawn thence, (though that remains unchangeably true, and is in no way incompatible with the other truth) but rather the completeness of the different phases of the Church. But I say no more here, partly because I acquiesce in and value the general scope, and partly seeing that such discussion is foreign to the object of the present work.—Ed.]

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

We are told, in the epistle to the Hebrews, that "the law had a shadow of good things to come;" and so we find that, in all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish economy, the blessed doctrines of grace were clearly shadowed forth; every pin, every cord, every vessel and every sacrifice, showed some one or other of the great principles unfolded in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But of all the furniture of the tabernacle, or temple, the ark of the covenant holds the most prominent place. This we might gather from an expression used by Solomon at the dedication of the temple, when he says: "I have built the house for the name of the Lord God of Israel, and in it I have put the ark." (2 Chron. ii. 6.) Here we observe that, to the mind of Solomon, the ark was the all-absorbing subject: he seems, as it were, to lose sight for a moment of all beside, and only to have his thoughts engaged with "the ark of the covenant." In order, however, to have a full and expansive view of this subject, it will be necessary to inquire what it was that called it into existence at the first, and what place it occupied in the then existing state of things. In Exodus xix., we are presented with a deeply interesting point in Israel's eventful history. Up to the moment at which they stood, as here presented before Mount Sinai, their way had been marked by the actings of sovereign grace alone, and the Lord tells them so, as we read: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." (Verse 4.) Here was grace. It was grace that had led the great "I Am" down from heaven to open His ear to the groans, and to behold the tears of His harassed people. It was their bad condition indeed that rendered them the suitable objects for the display of grace. "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." (Exod. iii. 7.) "I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, and I said unto thee, *Live;* yea, *I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.*" (Ezek. xvi. 6.) "The Lord did not set His love upon nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; but because *the Lord loved you*, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers." (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) Moreover, it was grace that had led them through the Red sea, and guided them by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, and had showered down bread from heaven and given them water out of the flinty rock. All these things had grace achieved in their behalf, and it would have achieved much more, yea, it would have brought them onward, even then, and planted them in the mountain of God's inheritance.

But, alas! man, as such, has never shewn himself willing to give all the glory to God, and to say: "Not unto us." The flesh never can be the subject of grace. Vain man would ever have somewhat to do, and imagines that the operations of his polluted hands or mind could ever be acceptable to God. Thus we find, in the chapter before us, Israel giving utterance to the following words: "*All* that the Lord hath spoken *will we do.*" This was bold and singular language, specially *so* when viewed in connection with the gracious words which they had just heard. Now, nothing can be more marked than the change that takes place in the whole aspect of things the moment the above sorrowful words drop from the lips of Israel; nor can we marvel at the change, for how could it be otherwise? Surely, when man takes his eyes off the grace of God to fix them upon his own miserable doings, the change must be a sad one, and most sad in its results, as appears in the case before us; for we find God, who a moment before had said, "*I have brought you unto myself,*" now saying, "Set bounds about the mount, lest the people break through." God can bring the sinner absolutely "*unto Himself,*" provided it be in the power *of grace;* but only let the sinner say a word about what "*he will do,*" and he must at once take the place of distance, for "no flesh shall glory in *His presence*"—no one shall appear before God who is not prepared to join in heaven's eternal cry, "*Not unto us.*"

Alas! poor sinner, dost thou ever hope to scale the lofty heights of the dwelling place of God, and thus, by virtue of thine own doings, to obtain a footing for ever in His presence? or, if such could be, wouldst thou be happy in the presence of one who only "inhabits the praises of His people?" Surely not. If any one could work his way up to God by virtue of his own works, it would surely be very far from his thoughts to sing the praises of redeeming grace: how could he praise what he never knew and never felt his need of? The sinner, then, we find, is put at a distance from God, in order that he may perform his "singular vow." Man had said, "All that the Lord hath spoken *he will do;*" this was plain and uncompromising; no reservation, no doubt, no idea of contingency, but clearly and explicitly, "*he will do all;*" and God will, therefore, take man at his word, in order that he may eat of the fruit of his own doings. The law is, therefore, issued with thunderings and lightnings, blackness and darknes, and all the attendant horrors of a covenant of works. The Lord gives forth all that He has to speak to them, and, having done so, He adds the terrific words: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." This was likewise so plain, that the Lord Jesus had only to ask a sinner in His day: "How readest thou?" We find here no provision for imperfect obedience, however sincere. This is of the utmost importance to bear in mind. There is no such provision in the law at all. It does not say, Cursed is every one who does not *try* to do *some* of the things that are written in this book. No: law is law, and law and grace cannot be confounded, being totally distinct one from the other; and if any one maintains that a sinner can be justified by the works of the law, then be it so; the word is: "Cursed art thou, if thou continue not in all things," &c. And again: "The man that doeth them shall live in them." But why should a sinner stand at the foot of Sinai, and speak of mercy and forgiveness? How could mercy and forgiveness come forth in connection with thunder and lightnings, blackness and darkness? Impossible! The law breathes not a syllable about mercy. Sinai is not the place for mercy at all. "*Do this and live,*" is all the Lord had to say when standing upon the burning mount. But how has man responded to this covenant of his own choosing? Has he kept it? Nay, instead of *continuing* in *all things* written therein, he could not even *begin* to do *one* of them, for before ever that code of laws had been issued, at the head of which stood the memorable words "Thou shalt have none other gods before me," the people had made a calf and worshipped it. Thus, as far as man was concerned, *all was gone*—the law broken and dishonoured—the tables of testimony shattered to atoms—nor was it possible that man could gather up the fragments of these tables and put them together again. No; such could not be done. Man had broken the law, and, therefore, according to the terms of that law, nothing awaited him but the everlasting curse of God. In chapter xxiv., we have Israel (as it were) representatively brought up before God, in the persons of the seventy elders, in order to their receiving the law at the hands of Jehovah, and they twice pledge themselves to do "all the words which the Lord had spoken;" but, as before observed, ere they beheld the tables of testimony, they had committed idolatry. "And it came to pass, as soon as he (Moses) came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing, and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount." (xxxii. 19.)

Such, then, was the state of the question between God and man, and it now remained for God to execute condign punishment, or to devise the means whereby He could be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The latter was the course which the God of all grace and mercy adopted. Now, at such a crisis, three things were to be provided for. 1. The law should be magnified and made honourable; in other words, God must be glorified and the mouth of the enemy stopped. (Ps. viii.) 2. The sinner's blessing and interest must be secured. 3. Boasting must be excluded. In the "ark of the covenant," as we shall find, all these things were fully provided for. First, as to the magnifying of the law, it is manifest that man had proved himself utterly incompetent to magnify the law of God, for it condemned not only *his works*, but himself; *it* pronounced the curse of God upon man's nature, and consequently any expedient for magnifying the law must proceed from *God Himself.* He alone could design, develop, and bring to maturity any such expedient; therefore, we read in chap. xxxiv.: "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and *I will* write on these tables the words which were in the first tables which thou brakest." (Verse 1.) The eye of man never rested on these tables. *They were laid up in the ark*, where they might be preserved unbroken, and thus was God fully glorified. He did not call upon man to patch up the broken fragments of the tables, i.e. to work out an imperfect righteousness, for such would never have availed to "still the enemy and the avenger." Man, in his ignorance of God's righteousness, might go about to

establish his own righteousness, but it would be in vain. God, knowing this, made provision for the magnifying of His own law, in such a way that the enemy could not advance a single objection. The law was preserved unbroken in the ark, and here we see how marked a type it was of Him who "magnified the law and made it honourable." The spotless life of the Lord Jesus was, from first to last, a vindication of the law of God. In all He said and did, He put honour on the divine statutes; He showed indeed that "man must not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He could say: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; yea, *thy law is within my heart.*" Now, when the sinner sees the law thus vindicated, he is prepared to receive much comfort from that which covered in the ark, namely, "the mercy-seat." In chap. xxv., we find these two points closely connected; for the Lord no sooner says, "thou shalt put into the ark the testimony that I shall give thee," than he adds, "and thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold." (Verses 19, 20.) Here the sinner's interest was fully secured. There was no need now to approach with fear and terror, lest the thunders of Sinai should break forth; for the Lord had said: "And then will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat." (Verse 22.) The mercy-seat then covered in the ministration of condemnation. True, man had broken the law of God, and, as a consequence, stood exposed to the righteous judgment of God, but in the cover of the ark we see mercy rejoicing against judgment.

Here was the wondrous wisdom of God, which could devise a plan whereby the poor sinner could draw near, and, instead of hearing from the lips of God the thunders and judgments of a broken law, to hear the *still small voice of love* speaking to him from above the mercy-seat. Thus we have, in the ark and the cover thereof, a full explanation of God's mysterious statement as to His own character, when He calls Himself "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, *forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.*" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) What a marvellous statement, "forgiving," and yet "will by no means clear!" "He will by no means clear," for the law must be preserved unbroken as in the ark; He will forgive, for the mercy-seat, while it covers in the law, speaks peace to every conscience-smitten sinner. All this was but a type of Jesus, upon whose spotless soul all the fire of God's judgment fell, and who poured out His most precious blood, in order that the vilest sinner who walks this earth might find present peace and pardon for all his sin in the presence of God, and hear from the mouth of Him who alone had power or claim to cast the first stone: "Neither do I condemn thee; go in peace." *

If all this be true, what shall we say to those who, after the God of all grace had covered up the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, with a mercy-seat, would endeavour to tear off that cover, and thunder forth again, in the ears of those whom grace has pardoned, the curses of the fiery mount, instead of the blessings of Mount Sion? What! does the blessed God invite a sinner nigh, as it were, to a mercy-seat, and, when he has come, does He strip off that mercy-seat, and allow him to see the fragments of a broken law rising up in judgment against him? Nay; blessed be God! it is not so. When God begins to act in grace, He counts the cost beforehand, and never grows weary afterwards. He begins, continues and ends, in free sovereign grace, and He will have all the glory. But we are told that "the law is good." So it is; like every thing that ever came from the hand of God, it was "very good." So were all the ordinances and ceremonies of the Jewish economy, and yet God "found fault with them;" and "so the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;" but it is not using it lawfully to terrify a poor sinner with it, and keep him at a distance from God; for the bound was only to be put "around the mount," and not about "the mercy-seat," which was the place of nearness and communion. Neither is it "using it lawfully" to hinder and bow down the heart of a reconciled worshipper, whom God would have walking in all the liberty of a child, crying "*Abba, Father.*" What, then, is it that constitutes a lawful use of the law? The apostle goes on to tell us that it is, "Knowing this, that the law is not made for the righteous man." Now, we know that there are none righteous, save those to whom God imputes righteousness without works; consequently, we infer that the law was not made for such, but for "the ungodly," &c. Yea, the apostle left Timothy at Ephesus for the very purpose of preventing false teachers teaching the law. May we know the joy and comfort of being called away from Mount Sinai, with all its blackness, and darkness, and tempest, to meet our God, where the law is magnified in "the ark" and grace preached in the "mercy-seat!"

Little needs to be said, in conclusion, as to the fact of boasting being excluded by the law of faith. Surely, the striking expression with which the issuing of the second set of tables was connected, would fully shew out all this. "And *no man* shall come up with thee, neither shall *any man* be seen throughout all the mount." (Exod. xxxiv. 3.) Man had nothing to do with either "the ark" or "the mercy-seat." If man desired to survey the operations of his hands, he had only to cast his eyes upon the broken fragments of the tables beneath the mount; but whenever he looked at "the ark" and the "mercy-seat," he saw the blessed and glorious results of God's eternal grace. His language at all times should therefore be, "*Not unto us.*"

* It may be well to add here, that we not only see in the mercy-seat the blessed Son of God, but we may see also in the cherubim which were beaten out of the mercy-seat, and of one piece with it, that which was linked with Christ in the divine counsels, from before the foundation of the world, viz. the Church—Jew and Gentile, one body—seated within the veil. These cherubim occupied a place in the tabernacle different in some respects from that which they occupied in the temple. In the former, they looked toward the mercy-seat; in the latter, they looked toward the oracle, or the place of the glory. This exactly corresponds with what the apostle teaches us about the Church in Eph. i. It is now, in the wilderness, to the praise of God's *grace;* but "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," it shall be to the praise of His *glory.* But, whether we view the cherubim in the tabernacle or in the temple, in the wilderness or in the land, it is sweet to think of their position, as shadowing forth the Church's high and heavenly elevation. They were of one piece with the mercy-seat which was of pure gold; so the Church is one with Christ, for "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all *of one.*" They were hidden within the veil in the security and solemnity of the holiest of all; so the Church's life is hidden in God—the place of her birth is the light of the divine presence, and there she is now seated in the person of her risen and exalted head—everlastingly and inseparably one with Him. But the cherubim were also very near the sterile sand of the desert, into connexion with which Jehovah had brought the bright beams of His glory in company with His pilgrim people; so the Church is formed on earth by the operation of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to mould and fashion her and lead her onward to the rest that remains for the people of God. Thus, while heaven is the proper place in which to contemplate the Church, for there is she now seated in holy rest and blessedness, in the very presence of the glory, yet *earth* is the place of her toil; here it is that we have to "*endeavour* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." By and bye, the sand of the desert shall be exchanged for the golden floor of the heavenly temple, and the Church which now exhibits the workmanship of *grace,* shall shine in all the effulgence of *glory.*—[As a different view has been already given, and a protest even recorded in this work against the ordinary idea that the cherubim represent the Church,—Jew and Gentile, one with Christ,—I do not add any thing more for the present. Brethren must judge for themselves, or wait for further light. So as to the application of Heb. ii. 11, other opportunities may occur of expounding the text.—Ed.]

FALSE WORSHIP.

(Lev. x. 1-11.)

In meditating upon the ordinances of the Mosaic ritual, one thing in particular strikes the mind, viz. the remarkably jealous way in which God fenced Himself round from the approach of man, as such. It is salutary for the soul to ponder this. We are in great danger of admitting into our minds an element of unholy familiarity when thinking of God, which the devil may use in a very pernicious way to a very evil end. It is a fundamental principle of truth, that in proportion as God is exalted and reverenced in our thoughts will our walk through life be shaped, in accordance with what He loves and enjoins; in other words, there is a strong moral link between our estimate of God and our moral conduct. If our thoughts of God are *low,* low will be our standard of Christian walk; if high, the result will be accordingly. Thus, when Israel, at the foot of Mount Horeb, "changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass," the Lord's words were: "Thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have *corrupted themselves.*" Mark those words, "corrupted themselves." They could not do otherwise, when they let down their thoughts of the dignity and majesty of God so low as to imagine, for a moment, that He was "like an ox that eateth grass." Similar is the teaching of Rom. i. There the apostle shews us that the reason of all the abominations of the Gentile nations must be sought for in the fact, that "when they knew God, they glorified Him not *as God;*" thus they too "corrupted themselves." This is a principle possessing vast practical influence. If we attempt to lower God, we *must* necessarily lower ourselves; and herein we are furnished with a key by which to interpret all religion. There is an inseparable link between the character of the God of any religion and the character of the votaries thereof, and Jehovah was constantly reminding *His* people of the fact, that *their* conduct was to be the consequence of what *He* was. "I am the Lord thy God that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; therefore,"

&c. "be ye holy, for *I* am holy." And exactly similar is the Spirit's word to us: "He that hath this hope in him purifieth *himself*, even as *He* is pure." This principle, I conceive, carries us far above all mere systematic views of truth; it is not at all a question of mere doctrine. No; it brings us at once into the deep recesses of the soul, there to ponder, as beneath the piercing, jealous eye of the thrice *Holy One*, the estimate which we, as individuals, are daily and hourly forming of *Him*. I feel that we cannot with impunity refuse to give our minds seriously to this important point of truth; it will be found to contain much of the secret of our low walk and lamentable deadness. God is not exalted in our thoughts; *He* has not the supreme place in our affections; self, the world, our family, our daily employments, have, as regards the most of us, thrust down our gracious God from the throne of our affections, and robbed the One who died to save us of the blood-purchased homage of our hearts. This being the case, can we expect to flourish? Ah! no; the husbandman who gives his time and thoughts to something else during the spring time, shall look in vain for a golden harvest; he shall "reap the whirlwind," as many are now doing.

The opening verses of this chapter furnish a truly terrifying illustration of the inflexible justice and burning jealousy of God; they sound in our ears as a voice of thunder: "I am a jealous God." Nadab and Abihu, as it were but yesterday, stood before the Lord,—clothed in their garments of glory and beauty, washed in the blood, brought near unto God, made His priests, had passed through all the solemn ceremonies of inauguration into their priestly office. Yes, all this occurred but as yesterday, and to-day they are wasted by the fire of Jehovah, and are seen to fall from their high elevation—a spectacle to men and angels of the fact, that the greater the privilege the greater the responsibility, and the greater too the judgment if that responsibility be not fully met.

What, we may ask, was their sin? Was it murder? Did they stain the curtains of the tabernacle with human blood? Or was it some other abominable sin, from which the moral sense shrinks? No; *it was a sin with which the blessed God is grieved by multitudes of professors at this moment*—it was *false worship!* "Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not." "*Strange fire.*" Here was their sin. Here we see men apparently *engaged in making preparation for the worship of God; there is* the fire, the incense, the censer, and the priest; and, mark, they were not false or spurious priests, but true sons of Aaron, members of the really separated priestly house, clothed in the divinely appointed priestly robes; yet, notwithstanding, *struck dead*, and by whom? by Him whom we call our God and Father! How awfully solemn! Yes, and the fact receives increased solemnity in our view, when we remember that the fire which consumed these false worshippers came from off the "mercy-seat." It was not from Mount Sinai's top this fire came, but out "from before the Lord," who was dwelling "between the cherubim above the mercy-seat." God will not be trifled with. Even from the throne of grace will the fire come forth, to lay prostrate those who come before it in any other than the divinely appointed way. "They died before the Lord!" Dreadful announcement! "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou only art holy, for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." (Rev. xv. 4.)

Let us inquire, then, what the "strange fire" was which brought down such terrific judgment upon those priests; and, in order the more clearly to ascertain this, it is only needful that we turn our attention for a moment to *true* worship and the elements which composed it, in the sixteenth chapter of this book. We find the elements of true worship laid before us in the following words: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail, and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that we die not." (Verses 13-18.) Here we see that the elements composing true worship were two, viz. *pure fire* and *pure incense*. It must be *living fire* fresh from the altar of God, where it was perpetually fed by the sacrifice of God's own appointment. The doctrine of this is very apparent. On God's altar is seen, day and night, a fire blazing, expressing in the view of faith the inflexible holiness of the divine nature feeding upon the sacrifice of Christ. Again, the incense must be *pure*, for "ye shall offer no *strange* incense;" (Exod. xxx. 7,) i.e. it must be such as that God can delight therein, and of His own appointment, not that which is according to our own thoughts, for it was only *pure* incense that could offer a proper material for food to the pure living fire from off the altar. Thus, our worship, to be pure, must possess these two qualities: *Christ* must constitute the material of it, and *the Spirit* alone must kindle the flame. This is true worship. When our souls are really happy in the contemplation of Christ and His precious atonement, led into that contemplation by the Holy Ghost, *then alone* we are able to worship in "spirit and in truth." "While I was musing the fire kindled." While our souls muse on Jesus, our censer sends up its cloud of acceptable incense over the mercy-seat. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Now, false worship is the very reverse of all this. What is it? It is composed of a variety of elements, fleshly thoughts, animal feelings, worked upon by external things, an imposing ceremonial, sensuous rituals, dim religious light, fine music, pomp, and circumstances. These are the elements of false worship, and are opposed to the simple worship of the inner sanctuary, "the live coal, and the pure incense." And in looking at Christendom at this moment, do we not see numerous altars smoking with this impure fire and impure incense? Do we not see the most unholy materials consumed upon many a censer, and the smoke thereof going up as an insult rather than a sweet savour to God? Truly we do, and it is needful for us to look well to the condition of our hearts, lest we be carried away into the self-same evil, for we may rest assured that no one who thus trifles with God will escape with impunity.

Let us now note the effect of this upon Aaron. "Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. *And Aaron held his peace.*" "I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because *thou* didst it." Aaron saw the hand of the Lord in the solemn scene before him, and *was still;* not a murmur escapes him; "*it is the Lord*," and "He will be sanctified in them that approach Him." "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are around about Him." There is something unspeakably grand and awful in this scene; *Aaron in solemn silence* before the Lord; his two living sons on one side, and his two dead ones on the other. What an example of the inflexible justice of God! The bodies of these two men were, it appears, burned by the fire, but their priestly robes were untouched, for their cousins were told by Moses to go near and carry them forth; and "they carried them in *in their coats* out of the camp." Here we learn a solemn lesson: we may, by disobedience, reduce ourselves to such a condition, that there will remain nothing but the mere outward form, as seen in the "coats" of Aaron's sons. If any one had looked beneath these coats, he would only have seen the blasted bodies of two priests! The substance, the reality, was gone; nought remained but the external covering, such is "a form of godliness without the power," "a name to live while dead." Lord, keep us very solemn and watchful, for we know but little of our fearful capabilities of evil until we are brought into circumstances to develop them! We may retain the outward appearance of priests, the phraseology of worship, acquaintance with the furniture of God's house, and, after all, be void of godly reality and power in our souls. Oh! reader, let our worship be *pure*, let our hearts be simple as to their object, let us have the *pure* incense and fire, and ever remember that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints." I would here observe, that in looking at Aaron and his two sons standing over the dead bodies, we are forcibly reminded of the last chapter of Isaiah, a truly solemn chapter: "They shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

But we are now called to contemplate the finest principle of truth in the entire passage. "And Moses said unto Aaron and his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes, lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people; but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled. And ye shall not go out

from the door of the tabernacle, lest ye die; for *the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you.* And they did according to the word of Moses." When one enters upon the office of priesthood he is brought out of the region of nature's influence, and must no longer yield to its claims. This is exemplified by Aaron. Natural ties had been burst asunder violently. A melancholy blank had been made in his affections, yet he must not be influenced in the least by all that had taken place before him; and why? "The anointing oil of the Lord was upon Him." Surely this a practical lesson for us. Why has nature such power over us? Why have earthly circumstances and connections such influence upon us? Why are we so much affected by the things that are passing around us, the vicissitudes of this earthly scene? Why are we so inordinately acted upon by the mere claims and ties of nature? Because we are not *abiding* as we should *in the tabernacle*, with "the anointing oil of the Lord upon us." Here is the real cause of all the failure. In our not realising our priestly place, our priestly dignity, our priestly privileges. Hence it is that we are so carried away by present things, and dragged down from our high elevations as "Kings and priests unto God."

May we then be quickened by this passage, this solemn passage of the Word, to seek more and more of the holy elevations of mind expressed in the words, "Uncover not your heads!" May we get more deeply into the mind of God about present things, and our own place therein! God grant it, for the sake of His dear Son!

C. H. M.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PROSPECT.

My dear Brother,

As there was a little enquiry made for Scripture proof in reference to a statement in a paper of the last *Prospect*: "Evidence of the Lord's Coming to the Church being quite distinct," &c., I will endeavour to supply it. The statement was to this effect, viz. the connection between the Lord's actual coming, and the Church being ready. My judgment respecting that depends upon truth, which was advanced in a previous paper, "The Church hasting the Coming of the Lord." I there stated that one reason why the Lord had revived that blessed hope in the Church was, that He might have the Church's communion with Himself in it. It is, I think, worthy of remark, that in both cases, whether as respects the Lord's coming to the Church, or to Israel afterwards, there is a direct promise of a testimony, and preparation beforehand. The closing words of the Old Testament, that is, of *earthly* prophecy, are, "Behold, *I will send you* Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." How great the grace of God thus to prepare His people! And remark the divine wisdom in which that word is thrown upon the heart of His people, (verse 4,) "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto Him in Horeb for all *Israel* with the statutes and judgments." For this is the way, even the path of obedience, in which His people must ever wait for their Lord. As also, I think, that blessed word in Isaiah xxvi. 8, shows: "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee." And so when John the Baptist came before the first coming of the Lord, "in the spirit and power of Elias," it was "to make ready for the Lord *a people prepared.*" (Greek.)

And so with regard to the Church; for I should not doubt that in *great part*, at any rate, the Lord had the Church in the parable of the ten virgins, we find that, whilst the *general* standing of the Church at first was "to wait for His Son from heaven," "all *going forth to meet* the Bridegroom;" yet there is special revival of the hope before the Bridegroom actually comes. "*At midnight* the cry arose."

If, therefore, it has been the Lord's will thus to arouse His Church again to that blessed position, and that not only that it may give forth its testimony to others, but also may be in communion with Himself about this blessed hope; then, of course, He will effect this object; He will *have* ready for Himself "a people prepared." It is not my object to put the preparation of the Church at all as an *object* between us and the Lord's coming, but simply to throw that thought deeply upon our souls, viz. our duty to be in a true, waiting, holy position before Him. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." I do believe, and cannot help feeling, that there is a connection between the state and position of heart of the Church on earth, and the return of the Bridegroom. It is meet that the heart of the Bride on earth should answer to that of the Bridegroom in heaven.

I would say, May the Lord give us grace to go on, and be found watching! And I would say, if we saw the mind of Christ in this respect, what a tone and character it would give to any of our ministrations in the Church! When we see what He is now doing in this time-state with the Church. "He is sanctifying it with the washing of water *by the word* THAT He may present it to Himself a glorious Church," &c. With this object His eye is resting upon it. I would notice further, it is interesting to see the little remnant at the first coming. "There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the *consolation of Israel;* and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple." (Luke ii. 25.) So also Anna, the prophetess, "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Believe me
Yours truly in the Lord,
G.

NOTES ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE;

OR,

FORESHADOWINGS OF A NEW AND HEAVENLY BODY, TRACED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF CHRIST AS THEIR KING.

Chapter XIV.

It is quite evident, from the closing verse of the preceding chapter, that Israel's rejection of Christ as their King was already full and manifest; consequently, we should be prepared to find in this chapter larger revelations of the characteristics of any body which might succeed them. And not only so, but we are warranted to expect here a fuller exposure of the prejudices which led to this rejection. The chapter opens with shewing us our Lord in social intercourse with one of the highest professors,—"a chief Pharisee," one of the class in which the true lines of Judaism were deeply and broadly marked. In them it was magnified, and, as the best specimen of the Jews' religion, it became our Lord, as was ever His practice, not only to test them in their best and most boasted estate, but also to give utterance to His first warnings from the same ground, and with them the characters and principles He would henceforth seek after. "The sabbath day" is also chosen, because it had been a pledge to Israel of God's purpose to set them in unbroken rest, of which the day was in itself an earnest; but if the earnest was lost and the pledge forfeited, then the formal keeping of the day would give rise to painful and humiliating thoughts, rather than happy and self-satisfied ones. But not so with them. Nay, rather their sin was that they regarded the pledge more than the purpose, and the shadow than the substance; they were contented with form without power. Hence the Lord continually brings before them types of their varied infirmities on *that day*, at once shewing them the imperfectness of their boasting, and that He was alone able to effect and establish a real sabbath.

The infirmity here is that of "a certain man which had a dropsy;" the peculiarities of that disease are plainly descriptive of an insatiable desire for any acquisition which, while momentarily allaying it, really aggravates it, and in the end destroys the system subject to such conflicts. The thirst, the burning thirst of Israel for carnal blessings, was aptly pictured in this dropsical man. Every acquisition, as each drink with him, only increased their malady; temporary reliefs eventuated in fatal reactions. The hand of Christ can arrest this grievous disorder; and what He here so graciously effects for this poor sufferer, He is ready to do for the whole Israel of God. "He took and healed him." God's sabbath will be a day of rest from many a deadly desire, and then no proud

religionist will "hold his peace," from owning the beneficence and grace of the mighty hand which achieved it.

The Lord now enunciates a fundamental characteristic of those really blessed. He denounces the ruling passion, the aspiration of the Jew, "when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms," and shews them the uncertainty of unauthorized elevation, and then enforces the new and grand basis of all blessing: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted"—lay claim to nothing on the ground of merit—have no confidence in flesh—"be not high-minded, but fear"—were now the strange and unwelcome doctrines sounded in the ears of a people whom natural blessings and glory in the flesh had alienated from, instead of attaching to, God; and to a class without claim, or pretension, or ability to recompense, should the Pharisee (if duly consistent to his profession) extend his hospitality. God was about to do so. Instead of priests, without maim or imperfection, to minister before Him, now "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind," are to be His guests, in all the familiarity of social intercourse, not on the ground of merit, but simply their need commanding His grace and favours. One of the company is evidently interested at our Lord's allusion to the day of recompence, the resurrection of the just, and exclaims with all the earnestness of conviction: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." But the Lord's reply declares how few will appreciate the offer of it, and how none of those who have earthly interests to engage them will accept of it. It is not the question whether they are lawful or not; they satisfy the heart, and, therefore, the feast of God is disregarded. But though the Jew, the recipient of many blessings from God, may disregard the larger and highest blessing He can offer; nay, may forget Himself while they revel in His gifts; yet God's grace will find recipients for its exhaustless glories. "The streets and the lanes," the thoroughfares of "the city," must be "quickly" searched for;—"the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind," the destitute sons of earth, are suited guests for a heavenly feast;—the wayworn, homeless, friendless Jacob, with a pillow of stone his only repose, can appreciate heavenly glories, and truly estimate the marvellousness of the scene which was exhibited to him. Such were the class God would now seek; and not only should the city be searched for guests, not only should the poor of Israel be gathered in, but also, from "the highways and hedges," from all the nations of the earth, should a company be pressed, numerous enough to fill the house of God. Let them be found where they may, there must be no limit to their numbers, till that house, as large as the heart of God, shall be filled.

But upon the "bidden" who rejected the invitation, upon them is this condemnation: "They shall not taste of my supper." This, doubtless, is the present condition nationally of Israel.

We now see the natural effects of these doctrines of grace upon the multitude. There went great multitudes with Him. The marvellousness and adaptation to our need of God's grace is deeply attractive, and as long as the fulness and freeness of it are alone proclaimed, so long will the multitude be ready hearers; but our Lord, who knows how to sow the seed, turns to them and announces the path each soul must traverse that will be His disciple or learner of Him. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Every natural tie must be severed if any will be a true learner of the rejected Jesus; and not only so, but he must "daily," every day he tarries here, endure sufferings like his Master, and following wherever He may lead, not expecting rest here, but where He has found it. A disciple has two objects to accomplish: the first is represented by building a tower—a tower is a safe and secure retreat from surrounding danger. A disciple will require no ordinary zeal and expenditure to acquire a place of safety and defence from the inroads of the world, the flesh, and the devil. He must maintain a bold, uncompromising, determined front against them; this can only be at great personal sacrifice and devotedness, and one does well to count the cost ere he enters on an object he is not prepared to complete, for unfinished undertakings always expose us to reproach, as attempting things too great for us and above our ability to accomplish. In an attempt when one stakes every thing, a miscarriage is fatal. You assume a power which facts deny you.

The second object is not defence, but aggression. A disciple should not only be safe from attack, but able to make successful sallies against the enemy—he must be a warrior as well as a tower; but if a successful one, he must consult whether he, with a limited force, is able to encounter an adversary with a superior one; but if not, ere any collision has occurred, when the enemy is a great ways off he sendeth an embassage and desireth conditions of peace. How inglorious and ineffectual his effort and pretension! Yet so likewise, "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." No other preventive against such fearful and humiliating failures but entire self-renunciation in devotedness of heart and soul unto Christ. The only good in salt is its savour; let it lose that, and it is good for nothing. Let disciples fail in their objects, and they are worthless. Israel is not "fit for the land nor for the dunghill," the lowest place of the earth, (see 1 Sam. ii. 8,) but they "cast it out;" and let this be a warning to all. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Chapter XV.

In unison with the principles our Lord was unfolding, do now all the publicans and sinners draw near to Him; they perceived they were welcome, that there was grace to receive them. They who needed blessing could appreciate the largeness and fulness of the offer of it, and they who did not, "the Pharisees and scribes, murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." The gracious Lord wearies not in reiterating to them the manner of His grace, and, in fact, in vindicating it. The great point established by the two parables is, that it became the Shepherd of Israel to look for a lost one, and, faithful to His trust, to spare not Himself till He finds it; cost what it may, the sheep must be found; and, doubtless, the greater the task, the greater the joy in accomplishing it;—there is great joy in finding the sheep, for it had wandered into dark and dangerous places. This is intrinsically the grace of God, to "rejoice more over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine which need no repentance." God loves the heart that needs Him. The woman, searching for the piece of silver, tells the same tale, only with this difference, that the power which is effectual in the search is in the hand of another. The Son of God, as the Shepherd, searches—the Holy Ghost in the Church searches—and the Father, in the open arms of His love, receives the found one. This the narrative of the prodigal son fully relates.

The Jew had never understood the heart of the Father. One treading on the threshold of such blessing could say: "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." (John xiv.) The only-begotten Son had declared it, and it is only in the Spirit of the Son we can understand it. The deeply interesting details of this grace are disclosed here. The two-fold response it produces is illustrated by the "two sons." "The younger son" early desires independence, and seeks at a distance from his Father to enjoy it: abundance of gifts bound not his heart to the giver, but they abide not always. Every element separated from its source is terminable. He forsook the fountain, and he began to be in want. Such was Israel when, having wandered from God, they sought for help from Egypt and Assyria. He "Joined himself to a citizen of that country," and they took away all his labour, (see Ezek. xxiii. 29,) and left him naked and bare; "and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks." "No man gave unto him." Now, on the verge of destitution, when there was no eye to pity, when every human aid and means are sped—then, in that moment of bitterest anguish, a thought (unseenly sent, but surely felt) of the Father's love enters his soul; the one he had slighted, above whom all others were preferred, is now to be sought as his only friend; no question as to acceptance—no one knows the Father and doubts it. You may not know the measure of it, but as to the fact there can be no question. It simply depends on His goodness and my need; if either is questionable, then may the acceptance be. This is the great point pressed here—the Father's arms, open and advancing towards the returning and desolate wanderer.

Though I do not doubt that in its main features this narrative presents the return of Israel in the latter day, as described in Hosea xiii., yet I apprehend that a new purpose of present mercy is taught here, as affecting the desolate and hopeless wanderers of Israel of this day. The restored one here is not established in his forfeited, but redeemed inheritance; he is introduced into a place and portion not ever appertaining to him. The Father's house is to be the future sphere of all his glory and enjoyment. Wondrous grace! Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded. To him

who forfeited his large estates of natural blessings, and now a desolate beggar—even to him are the doors of God's everlasting house thrown open. God commands His servants now to carry out the full intentions of His love. Paul understood this commission; he desired "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." God will accomplish His purpose. "They began to be merry." This hapless one is rescued from the direst want, to abide with God in holy everlasting joys; but, instead of all wit hone voice acknowledging and applauding this unheard-of mercy, there are found within the nearest ties of nature the most hostile and averse to it. The elder brother is the open enemy of grace; for the mere reputable, well-conducted and prudent of the earth, have no appreciation of this new and wondrous acceptance and elevation. He could not catch the air of the anthem of grace; he could not sing the new song with the risen, heavenly, but once lost prodigal; "he would not go in." Such were the Pharisees of our Lord's day; but even to such the hand of mercy is still stretched out. The Father, in the person of Jesus, has come out, and entreated the self-satisfied Jew—offered him a participation in this glorious grace—grace that he does not understand—grace that he never expected or desired; the utmost of his wish only reached to "make merry with his friends." Into his heart it never entered that God would share His joys with him. God graciously vindicates His own course, an unanswerable one to any Jewish caviller, adding the promise yet surely to be fulfilled to Israel: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all I have is thine." Even God, the gracious God, could say no more!

Chapter XVI.

In the preceding chapter, we have learned the gracious purpose of God toward the lost one, the rebellious son. Here we are instructed respecting the Jew in the capacity of steward, and how grace even meets him there, if he would but understand his impending and deserved discharge; nay, his Lord, at personal loss, would mitigate an inevitable sentence, and, in the hour of degradation, lay a groundwork for future and abiding honours. Could a Jew, could any say that they have dispensed God's gifts with a faithful, unwasteful hand? The son wastes his substance in riotous living. The steward wastes it by inattention and unfaithfulness. Whatever be our standing, we have not requited God for His goodness to us. We are convicted. We can only say, one and all: "What shall I do?" In this extremity, grace opens a path not only for safety, but unfailing maintenance. We have no property save what belongs to our Lord. We have no title to the mammon of unrighteousness—possession does not establish right; we only hold it by sufferance. Such is our humiliating title and claim to all earthly accumulation. The grace of God canvasses not our title—it overlooks it. It bears with our trespass, and only desires that we so improve our possessions—ours without title or right, nay, distinctly our Lord's—that when we are called finally to give an account of our stewardship, we may have so traded on our Lord's rights, that there will be many to own our good works, and sanction honour and reception to us for our services through them.

But if we are unfaithful in our dispensing the mammon of unrighteousness, which God regards as the least, we will be unfaithful in a greater, and consequently we must not expect to be entrusted with true riches, with that which is our own, but only in proportion to our faithfulness in the least. And if your heart is devoted to mammon, to which you have no right, it cannot be devoted to God; you cannot serve both. You must regard it as the least of all God's gifts; and, therefore, it must never take a high place in your desires, much less be placed in the same view with Him the bountiful source of all.

All these sayings, which in the first verse of the chapter we find were addressed to the disciples, are quite unpalatable to the Pharisees, for their hearts were set on unrighteous mammon; "they were covetous;" they were not ready to be debtors to mercy alone. This further rejection only leads our Lord with greater plainness to declare the result. He denounces self-justification before men, and assures those popularity-loving religionists that human estimation is God's abomination; that the law and the prophets were until John, but now the "kingdom is preached," and every one (Jew and Gentile) is pressing into it; that no tittle of the law shall fail; that the law which binds a man to his wife cannot be abrogated. Let the wife be whom she may on the earth, Christ can have no queen there but Israel; but Israel is not without sin if she is wedded to another. And, furthermore, let your eye take a survey of the end: see whether poverty is preferable now, with rest and consolation by and bye, or riches now and torment hereafter. Is it better to be accepted of God, or enriched in the earth? On which was set the heart of Israel? A despised beggar here may be highly accepted in the kingdom of God. There, in Abraham's bosom, in the richest hospitalities, in the closest friendship, may such an one be placed. Here he may desire "to be fed from the crumbs of the rich man's table, and the dogs may lick his sores;" (kindness from Gentiles;) but there the rich and luxurious one, who passed Lazarus here without sympathy or notice, will then select him as alone fit to minister to him and assuage his bitter suffering. Little had been his means here for establishing a character for charitable sympathy, yet unquestioned testimony is borne to his possession of it by his once proud, rich and heartless neighbour, but now an expatriated sufferer. Strict propriety, as in the "elder brother," does not ensure the warm son-like affection the repentant younger one glows with. A beggar, reputedly destitute of earthly means, can outstrip in heart and principles for service the richest and the most largely gifted with human subsidies. Social nearness to Abraham, as the bosom figuratively expresses, is within reach of the least blessed on earth; and the blessing of the barn and the store, which some so earnestly desired as their inheritance, did not ensure that one which alone gave value to all others. It is well to notice here, that the word heaven is not mentioned in this passage, nor do I apprehend that the future state is taught in it, but the fact that the presently unblessed Jew may not be so by and bye. It is a word of comfort to the poor of the flock, and of warning to those who sought present "consolation." It is plainly a word to Israel, though it opens a door to them who could boast of no earthly portion; and if "the dogs" symbolize the Gentiles, their act but exemplifies our duty, and it moreover unfolds to us more plainly the characteristics of the people who should supersede the present religionists.

The reformation will not arouse Israel from its present state of self-security and ease. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." I make no comment on the "five brethren," as I might not be correct in doing so; but there is deep instruction in the conversation between Abraham and the now suffering but once luxurious Jew.

Chapter XVII.

From the last chapter, the impression that offences would arise is evidently forced upon us, and hence our Lord at once alludes to it. The greatest offence or hindrance to the believer now, is seeking present consolation and earthly aggrandizement; and the one who leads the Church to seek them and aids them in acquiring such, has wrought great detriment and hindrance to its welfare. The Pharisees, who desired to make a fair shew in the flesh and sought acknowledgment from men, would ever be the great hinderers of Christ's disciples. There is nothing so hard as patiently to continue a despised worshipper of God on His own earth. To have a right on account of Him, and yet to waive that right. The assertion of this right has lowered Christians into the pursuits and plans of the world and into perpetual collision with it for all that is of the world. Alas! we need not say how hindered they have been!

The Lord foresaw all, and consequently prescribes a rule which, if adhered to, would obviate such a calamity. It was simply a zealous watching of each over his fellow—a plain reversal of Cain's effective selfishness—every one must keep his brother. If thy brother trespass against thee—if he would lead thee to seek a place and name here—if he would induce thee to court the rich man's portion to that of Lazarus—he has done thee a great hurt, he would hinder thee. Thou must "rebuke him," and if he repent, if he see his weakness, thou shalt forgive him, even if he fail seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, "I repent," thou shalt forgive him. The readiness to forgive must be as great as the proneness to transgress; if we fail in forgiveness, we fail in our proper strength, in our own place with God. The trial and difficulty which these announcements disclose so affect the apostles, that they, in consciousness of their little ability to cope with them, cry out to the Lord: "Increase our faith." Nothing but confidence in God can sustain the disciple in the path now set before him; but if one has it as much as "a

grain of mustard seed," the smallest seed in nature, of no visible greatness, he would say to the hindrance—the Jewish pretension of which I think "this sycamine tree" is the symbol—"Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea," in untraceable and unexplorable distance, "and it should obey you." But all this is your duty as a faithful servant, and we are still to consider ourselves "unprofitable," though we have fulfilled it. It is not optional with us to obey or not these instructions. It is simply our duty to do so; and the heart that rightly appreciates the love and service of God will eagerly adopt them, and this the healed leper in the next passage illustrates to us.

The Lord is on His way to Jerusalem, and He passes through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. His progress to the city was typical, as is evident, of His yet great triumphant epiphany. He is at this moment journeying to that glorious epoch, but on His way, aliens and Gentiles are made partakers of His grace and mercies.

"Ten men that were lepers met Him." They cried for mercy. "When Jesus saw them,"—when His eye beheld their need—"He said unto them: Go and shew yourselves unto the priests." He would not subvert an economy ordained of God; but hearts who have learned more largely of the goodness of God, they can step beyond it. One of the ten here can recognize in Jesus something greater than the law; he can outstep its confined and distant recognition of God, and he can with his own voice, apart from interventionary ordinances, glorify God; and, delivered from the Mosaic terrors of Mount Sinai, he fell down at the feet of Jesus, giving Him thanks; but he was an alien, "a Samaritan." The Lord Himself takes note that a stranger alone returns to give glory to God. He who nationally had no right to blessing by faith, obtains everything. He hears the wondrous grace, "Thy faith hath made thee whole;" he enters into all the blessedness typified in Leviticus xiv. He felt in himself the virtue and the power of the kingdom of God, and as such is our present pattern, exemplifying to us that faith only can elevate us above the trammels of the law or the yoke of ordinances, without any display, but what passes between our own soul and the unseen presence of the gracious Jesus. All this is lost upon the Pharisees, or unintelligible to them; and hence, "When He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come," He answered, The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show. The kingdom or reign of God is learned within; there it comes first to exercise its influence. It is not for you to look here or look there, but to know that the power of it already is "among you" in the person of the Son of God. The leper had learned this.

But though now among them, yet He warns His disciples that "the days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it;" they would feel their helplessness and desolation in the absence of their Lord, but yet in their anxiety for deliverance, by His presence, they were not to believe every report of His appearance, for of it there would be no uncertainty, for athwart the heaven it would gleam with all the brilliancy of lightning, but His rejection by this generation must precede that epoch, and this in addition to the "many things" which He personally should suffer. Also, the times would be marked by a plain similarity to those of Noe. The days of Noe evidently mean the times before the flood, so must the days of the Son of man mean the times before Christ enters with His saved ones into the everlasting ark of glory. The reference to Lot is plainer, for there we learn that, on a particular day, typical of the day of Christ's appearance, Lot retreated from Sodom, and the fire of God's judgments descended upon it; and so shall it be when the Son of man is revealed. And THAT day will be no time for any one to engage themselves with earthly objects; escape should *only* engage them. "Remember Lot's wife;" her heart still lingered in the devoted Sodom; yea, many a one will be left whose companion shall be rescued; proximity to the blessed does not ensure blessing. Thrice woeful to part for ever from your closest companion, and in such an hour; and we need not ask "where?" for wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the subject of the preceding one, and sets before the disciples the spirit in which they should pass through the troublous scenes just foretold to them. If they be desolate, their strength and stay gone—if they suffer from the violence of their adversaries, and if the avenging arm of God is still unmoved for them—yet to Him, and Him alone, though there be no indication of His help, though all *appearances* be against them, must they look for deliverance and succour. The simple remedy for such times is, "that men pray always and not faint;" and the fruit of crying day and night unto Him is, "I tell you He will avenge them speedily"—when the day of vengeance begins. "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" a plain intimation that the earth, especially the Jewish land, shall not be the land of faith, as became the true sons of Abraham when the Son of man cometh. How little did their present self-satisfaction accord with the spirit of the widow! This the Lord denounces in the next parable. He is not a real suppliant whose confidence is not alone in God, and he is not a true one that is not conscious of his own unworthiness. The Pharisee depictures Israel's then present spirit: the publican represents that of the contrite remnant.* The real condition of Israel was that of a publican; they were tributaries to the Roman power. The official publicans might have exacted tribute from them, but so did they from the Lord's inheritance; one and all did this, save "the repairer of the breach," who, from the fish's mouth, from the sea, neither by toil nor from the land, provided the tribute money, the evidence of Israel's condition—but He stood above that condition.

It is evident no one can appreciate blessings rightly from God, who has not at the same time a consciousness of his need and helplessness and his entire unworthiness of relief. The widow shews one, the publican the other, and then follows the "infant," as shewing, though weak in itself, the simple confidence and submission withal, which such an one retains for its careful nurturer. This sample of Christ's followers, the disciples, who naturally (like many a religionist) expected some appearance of power and rule, are quite ready to discard, and "rebuked them that brought them;" but the Lord sets them forward as a model of the subjects of the kingdom of God. Be a widow as to your sense of need and helplessness, and a publican as to your sense of unworthiness, and an infant, though you are weak, as to your confidence and unresisting submission. A rich ruler, as the narrative next brings before us, may desire, yea sincerely, to discover a mode of inheriting the kingdom of God. He is a most amiable and very rich man in his best and favoured condition; yet, he has a sense of need, the need of the kingdom of God, but not a sense like the widow, of need and no ability to counteract it; he has kept all the commandments he is asked, and these comprise all which refer to our neighbour, save "thou shalt not covet," which, as we see from the manner in which Paul uses it in Rom. vii., touches the secret springs; in a word, he was unblemished among men, the personification of the best among Israel. To any thoughtful Jew, it must be deeply interesting what answer the Lord would give to this good rich ruler's question. Oh! how it tested his convictions of Christ as "good Master," as of God, when required to sell all that he hath, "distribute to the poor, *have treasure in heaven*, and follow me," a poor, a desolate, but a good Stranger. Such are the plain characteristics of an heir of the kingdom, entirely above and beyond all Jewish calculation, so opposed to all natural desires that the hearers in consternation cry out: "Who then can be saved?" That "all things are possible with God" can alone allay such fears. May we all know more practically the effects of that "possibility," and be able to echo the words of Peter: "Lo, we have left all and followed thee!" To this the Lord replies, announcing a large blessing not to the Jews only, but to every one: "There is no man (saith He) who hath left .... for the kingdom of God's sake, that shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world (or age, τῷ αἰῶνι) to come eternal life." I believe the word "age" is always connected with the history of the earth, and in the coming age will be the manifestation of the sons of God; so that the followers of Christ now not only receive manifold more in this present time, "blessed with all spiritual

* It would be well to observe, that though the publican is commended here as superior to the Pharisee, yet it is plain he is no exponent of Christianity. The believer in Jesus Christ is quickened from death in trespasses and sins, and by the abundant MERCY of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, has been begotten unto a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead; (see 1 Peter 1, 3;) and the contrast between the believer now and the Jewish remnant represented by the publican, is fully taught in Rom. xi. 30, 31. The one has *obtained* mercy, the other is expecting it; and the word "justified" cannot here bear the meaning of being freed from sin, but rather that the publican had made a more just account of himself than the other, and, as such, more ready, because emptied of himself for blessing.

blessings in heavenly places," (which, though not distinctly alluded to here, is perhaps no forced interpretation of "the manifold more,") but shall be manifested in living eternity in the age to come.

The Lord, "then" in company with "the twelve," proceeds on His way "to Jerusalem," and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. He does not say at what moment, but that they shall be accomplished. The order and the time are not spoken of; the fact is merely stated that they shall be accomplished, and that Jerusalem would be the great theatre of them, so that any which are not yet accomplished will be, doubtless, accomplished, and accomplished there. But while He discloses to them the cruel mockings and bitter treatment He is to receive at the hands of "Gentiles," unto whom His own people are to deliver Him, "they understood none of these things." The death and resurrection of Jesus, the cross and the glory, are subjects often incomprehensible to many an old disciple; we are unwilling to see the path Christ trod, lest we be filled with reproach and dismay at our great distance or departure from it. Israel gave Jesus to be crucified by "the Gentiles." "He is evidently set forth crucified amongst them." (Gal. iii. 1.) They are assuredly glorified with Him. Ah! how blindness in part is happened to Israel. But as a picture of their condition and the mercy that would one day arrest it, though now there was "not a man among them that should make up the hedge," and therefore "their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God," (Ezek. xxii. 30, 31,) we have, "as He came nigh unto Jericho, ("the cursed city in Israel,") a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging." This is Israel's present condition, blind and covetous; but when in deep distress, despite of all rebukings, he shall cry for mercy to Jesus, the Son of David. (Zech. xi. 8-10.) The command shall go forth that he should be "brought near," and according to his desires so shall he receive, and then Israel shall no longer be obstructed by blindness and covetousness, but endued with a power which "the ruler" (such an ornament of their nation) knew nothing of and would not receive. "He followed Jesus, glorifying God," and as was then in measure, when they saw it, so by and bye with one heart and one voice all the people will give praise unto God.

Chapter XIX.

The Lord, in His progress to Jerusalem, passes through Jericho, and as ere He entered it He illustrates His purposes of mercy toward Israel, for Israel on the other side Jordan saw the might and majesty of Jehovah ere it was so gloriously displayed in Canaan, so here now the true Joshua of His people re-enacts Jericho in moral power, the salvation which the first Joshua typically achieved. The recipient of blessing here represents the national, as the former had the moral, condition of Israel; and, therefore, he is a "chief" publican, (one enriching himself by the degradation of his nation,) and "he was rich;" in other words, "waxing fat;" but he sought to see Jesus who he was, and could not. He had to encounter the same hindrances which were insuperable to his nation—"the press," or multitude, and his own personal inability to cope with it, "because he was little of stature." But though conscious of his powerlessness, his desire to see Jesus was not to be denied. When there is true purpose of heart, there will be no difficulty in finding an expedient, and a right one; "he climbs up into a sycamore tree, for Jesus was to pass that way." A sycamore tree (which is considered the same as the sycamine, in chapter xvii.) was the symbol of Israel's national condition. It was a wild fig tree, as we see from Amos vii. 14. (Marginal reading.) The first efforts of an aroused conscience are ever directed to an increased zeal about rites and ceremonies; and as infancy in many things resembles old age, so is it true of the conscience, for an old and enervated one is only engaged with ceremonials, yet it is well to observe strictly all we know, it is strengthening and practising the mind for every increase of knowledge. Zaccheus in the wild fig tree illustrates a Jew seeking, from the height of his national condition, to see Jesus, and as a Jew he was right, and Jesus acknowledges it, not by commanding him, no more than He had done to the woman of Samaria, but by telling him to "make haste and come down," and in his own house, in happy domesticity, to receive Him, for "to-day," "the day of salvation," still existing, (see Heb. iii. iv. and 2 Cor. vi. 2,)—"I must abide at thy house," typically we may say "an habitation of God through the Spirit." The multitude may murmur as they will that Jesus was gone to be "a guest with a sinner"—a sinner indeed, but one who could descend from all his earthly height, and do so hastily. "He made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully." It is not in a moment, even though in the presence of Jesus, that we forget our own merit, and are entirely interested with our gracious and wonderful guest; but the only answer our Lord ever gives to such legal reasonings is: "To-day is salvation come to this house;" that is, above all good acts, and not for the sake of your good acts, but because of the grace of Him who is come "to seek and to save that which is lost." But "as they heard these things," this faint disclosure of the future grace of the rejected Jesus, "He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear." He would disabuse their mind of such a thought as that the kingdom of God would *immediately appear*. We should mark the difference between "the kingdom of God being among them," as was said in a preceding chapter, and that it should immediately appear. With this intention the following parable is uttered, which represents "a nobleman," one of high birth, going to a far country, "to receive a kingdom and to return." From this we see that the Lord was to go to a far place to receive a kingdom, and that He was to *return, having received it;* but ere He is long on His journey his citizens, "the dwellers at Jerusalem," sent a message after Him in the massacre of Stephen, saying: "We will not have this man to reign over us." However, in His absence, He has "ten servants," to each of whom He has delivered "a pound," with this instruction: "Occupy till I come." I believe this refers to the service of God's people. The word ten is a compound of seven and three, and well explained in page 28 of *The Prospect*, vol. ii. "The pound" is the gift for service, whatever it may be: it is silver,—metal which will stand the fire. But these gifts will be variously exercised, and perhaps the three results mentioned in this passage,—first, "thy pound hath gained ten pounds;" second, "thy pound hath gained five pounds;" third, "thy pound, which I have laid up in a napkin."—perhaps, I say, these may be typical of the Church's acknowledgment and use of Christ's gifts to them, and that the last describes the complete abandonment of recognizing the gift of Christ in service, and, consequently, no service flowing from "thy pound." And with this state let me add, there cannot be any *true sense* or knowledge of Christ as He is really to us, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and a ready help in time of need. God's gifts are never bestowed on us to be wrapped up as selfish and individual property, or *merely between us and Him*. It should be given to "the bank," a common place of exchange, and then at the coming of Christ there would be "usury" from it. Ye are my crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming, (1 Thess. ii. 13,) is the usury the heart of Christ desires. Nevertheless, the Church will eventually lose none of "the pounds;" that which has a capacity to receive will abundantly receive; and this, we may remark, is a principle true, individually or corporately.

It is evident that the judgments on the inimical citizens occur subsequent to the adjudication of the servants; and Christ has returned, for the order is: "Bring hither and slay them *before me*."

The Lord having thus, in a figure, traced His future purposes, "*when* He had thus spoken He went before ascending up to Jerusalem." He proceeds forewarned and forearmed on His destined path, yet not a whit swerving from every offer of mercy and testimony of His mission to this gainsaying people; and, accordingly, when within a short distance of Jerusalem, He prepares for a royal entry into it. Hence, we have here a momentary display of the power of that glorious period,—all willing to receive Him, save "the citizens." The ass, "on which never man sat," is willingly granted by the owner, when told "the Lord has need of him." In the *day* of His power, there will be no attempt even to resist His will. The reception is favourable and unanimous, and now, "at the descent of the Mount of Olives," it became enthusiastic; "the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice . . . . saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." Till now there was no opposition; all seemed borne along in one acclamation of joy at the coming of the King; but, as is ever the case with the natural conscience, truth only partly asserted may be borne with, but when pressed in all its reality, then opposition is at once called forth, and so here. The Pharisees cannot endure, at the entrance of Jerusalem, such plain and public testimony to the title of Christ; the *most religious* are

shocked at the idea of ascribing such honours to Him, and, in their zeal, request our Lord to rebuke His disciples. The Lord's reply unfolds the results of Israel's rejection: "If these should hold their peace, the stones (those who have no claim or pretensions, of whom John the Baptist had before warned them) would immediately cry out." Jesus loved Jerusalem. God's purpose to establish man in the earth, as His image and glory, must be dear to the heart of Christ, and now, when the destiny of the city passes before Him, he "wept over it," because the citizens were unconscious and ignorant of the time of its visitation; yet, as long as it remained, which is important to notice, He would labour to repair it and remove every wrong from it, and, therefore, from the temple He cast out them that sold and bought therein, full of that happy hour when it should be truly said: "My house is the house of prayer," and which He was so desirous to effect, for "He taught daily in the temple;" but the more He offered mercy, so much the more was it rejected. "The chief priests and scribes and chief of the people sought to destroy Him," but they could not accomplish it, for rejection was not yet national; all the springs of society had not been as yet corrupted by the spirit of envy which moved the heads of the people, for still "the people were very attentive to hear Him."

Chapter XX.

It ill suits the thread of the narrative to be broken by the chapter division, for it is on "one of those days in which He taught the people in the temple" that "the chief priests and scribes, with the elders, came upon Him," with the object to damage His influence with the people, as they could not succeed in their more malevolent design. They raise the questions: "By what authority doest thou these things, and who is He who gave thee this authority?"—questions always raised by those who wish to escape from the edge of truth under such shelter, and not by them who earnestly desire to be instructed by it. The Lord in His reply recalls to them their reception of John the Baptist, when He asked them: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" If they have not been able to declare openly the source of John's ministry, neither will they of Him who was to come after him. Strange and faithless guides were they who feared to tell the people what they would have them believe, but they loved their own ease better than the people's benefit; (according to them,) false doctrine must always be propagated privily. There is no innate strength and sustainment in it, as there is in truth to confirm and embolden the teacher of it. Oh! how self-convicted they must have been! Where was their authority? and of how much value was it? Hence, the Lord delivers a parable, which declares the results of all God's dealings with Israel. No matter how often He sent, or whom He sent, even His beloved Son. No recompense from this rebellious people; and not only this, but they despised the message and ill-treated the Messenger, and, to add to all, they would kill the beloved Son, that the inheritance might be their own, that they might do their own will. And we know how short a time they retained it after they had carried out their direfully ambitious views; and so it is foretold here: "He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and give the vineyard (not the vine) to others;" not at all to Christendom, I believe, for facts are against this. Professors of Christianity have been possessors of Palestine for very short periods, and the prediction merely states that the vineyard should be given to others; but, in connection with this, the present husbandmen were to be destroyed, and this destruction was contingent on our Lord's coming. "He shall come and destroy these husbandmen." So that I am disposed to think that "others" mean the believing remnant; at all events, they cannot mean the Church, and thus favour the assertion of its present earthly standing. The hearers deprecate this dreaded catastrophe, but Jesus "beheld them," and shews them that long since it was predicted that "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner;" at one and the same time declaring their sin, the sin of their teachers, &c., as builders in rejecting Him, but yet that He had grace and power to rise above all and take His proper place as "head of the corner." Let those who trembled at Israel's apostacy take comfort from this.

The chief priests and scribes are now exasperated to the full purpose of their enmity, for "in the same hour they sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people; for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them." Every art and every device must now be resorted to. "They watched Him and sent forth spies who should feign themselves just men," and all that they might deliver Him to the Gentiles, "unto the power and authority of the governor." They act with all the meanness and cowardice which characterize bad designs. These *just* men tempt Jesus respecting the tribute money, as if they were truly anxious to be informed rightly. He had spoken of Israel's territory as God's vineyard; was it then lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, thus owning his title to it. To be tributaries to Cæsar was a plain evidence of Israel's apostacy. Whose image and superscription did their coins bear? Did they not own him and not God? True, they were compelled to pay tribute; but why did all the coins of the realm bear the image of Cæsar? Was this obligatory on them, or was it the adulation of the enslaved? If on all their money they own Cæsar, surely, to render unto him the portion he demanded of it was but reasonable. Let them "render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," but that did not exonerate them from rendering "unto God the things that were God's." Nay, if they had done this latter, they would never have been compelled to do the former; but there was then, as there is now, a greater readiness to render allegiance to the power of the world than to Him who is head over all things, and who, being honoured, would always make us superior to the power of the world. To advocate implicitly that the world and God should each get their very own, would create a marvel in this day, and put to silence the pretended men of justice, as it had in that day, "for they marvelled at His answer and held their peace."

But for this blessed faithful servant of God to Israel there is no respite. When one opposer is silenced, another appears on the stage. "Many bulls (well might He say) have compassed me: they gaped on me with their mouths." The Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection, now present themselves to entangle the Lord on the subject of the resurrection—a subject increasingly interesting to Himself, as about so soon to be the glorious manifester of it. Satan was beginning to array all his power against its display. Israel was allowing that to be called in question which was its best hope. Could they bear to have it questioned whether God would bid "the dry bones live?" Alas! for the nation, if there was no resurrection. The revelation from the burning bush, which encouraged and sustained Moses, was that God was the God of the living, and that though the fathers were not, yet shall they still live; and, therefore, as the God of resurrection, no power of death could obstruct His purposes. God is the God of the living; if death has power over you, God is your God, for unto Him life is always directed. What is not directed unto Him is not life. She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth, for "all live unto Him." And Jesus was now a living personification of the glories impressed on Moses by that wondrous vision in the desert—the great antitype of the glory of God in a bush, and the bush not consumed—God manifest in flesh—the resurrection itself, and prophet like unto Moses, to deliver them from the grinding rule of another Pharoah. But *He is not received*, though even a scribe has to acknowledge that He has "answered well;" and so confounded and silenced are all His adversaries, that "after that, they durst not ask Him any question at all." Yet Jesus knew that their malevolence was only smothered to break forth in another form with fresh violence, and, therefore, quotes from Scripture the prophecy which was then fulfilled. His mission here was about to close. He is about, according to the will of Jehovah, to take His seat at the right hand of the Father. "How say they that Christ is David's Son?" Christ will depart and go unto Jehovah, as the Scriptures have said; let all understand this, and He will remain till His enemies are set for His footstool. Here we have unfolded Christ's present heavenly position, and His future purpose toward Israel—"the citizens," "His enemies." Hence, with the programme before Him of His return to the Father, and within hearing of Jehovah's summons, does He now denounce the scribes, who were so called from their supposed knowledge of Scripture: they sought their own glory, "and the house of the Lord lieth waste," and they "shall receive the greater damnation."

Chapter XXI.

There is properly no division here. Jesus, obeying the call of Jehovah, is on His journey, though it be a sorrowing one, to the joy set before Him, and now on His way out, at the door of the

temple, "He looked up." His eye and heart had ceased, after many a struggle, to take interest in any thing there, but He looked up when He came to the treasury, where were deposited offerings for the repair of the temple, which His heart was so entirely set on. "He saw rich men casting their gifts into the treasury." Their act did not sympathize with His purpose, but "He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites:" her act touched His heart, for it bore apt resemblance to His own destined and incipient one, for He was on His way in deep penury to give all the living that He had to repair and rebuild the temple of God; and this was her act. How different from that of the scribes! It also illustrates the future act of the nation, when in its widowhood and destitution it should readily surrender "the last farthing" for the true temple of God. I think "the two mites" may refer to a "double" suffering; (Is. xl. 1.) yet, while the Lord is meditating on the great cost at which the temple would be set up on an external basis, He is interrupted by some who, in little unison with His feelings, spake of it, "how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts." This admiration, so discordant to His mind and judgment, draws from Him a plain and succinct account of its coming destiny, even that "the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down." They cannot mistake this, and hence the questions: "When shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" We should remember, in seeking the interpretation of an answer, that it is necessary to keep in mind the question which called it forth, and it unconnected with any other thought. Some of the Jewish people here only defined the pronoun; "they" ask two questions respecting the total destruction of the temple, and, consequently, answers to these questions only ought we to look for or comprehend in the reply. To you who are interested in that sad scene, the first thing you have to guard against is, being "deceived," and by what? It is not false doctrine. It is by many coming in Christ's name, and saying, I am assuming power and authority, (earthly of course,) in the name of Christ. This will soon begin, but do not go after them. The mere commotions of nations and your own persecutions, which shall turn to you for a testimony, are no signs of proximity to this terrible moment; but "when you shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh," but "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." If the times of the Gentiles are not expired, Jerusalem must continue to be trodden down by them. When one ends, the other ends; and if one, the times of the Gentiles, still exists, as all must allow, then also must the other; and hence it is vain to expect one to cease, which many attempt, without the cessation of the other. That is, the times of the Gentiles must cease, if in this day the restoration of Jerusalem could be effected; so that they who attempt it only expedite their own removal from the scene, though it is evident they do it not *with this object:* not only shall there be signs in heaven and on the earth and sun, but also men, whose hearts are failing them with fear, shall see the Son of man (Christ in manhood) coming in a cloud with power and great glory. It is not merely Jews or disciples shall see, but those who are afraid to see Him.

These things are but the harbingers of the day of redemption, a period full of meaning and interest to an embarrassed Jew: that day comes not till preceded by all these sorrows and calamities. God is a righteous God. His grace always reigns through righteousness, and He will ever judge His people. To convey the results of all this in a mystery, plain to the instructed but sealed up to unbelief, He spake a parable. "Behold a fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand; so likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Now, I think it is plain that this parable is no part of the answer to the two questions, but rather what was to happen, consequent on the answer to them being accomplished. I believe the fig tree is a symbol of Israel's national condition, as the vine of its moral, and the olive of its testimony, and that "all the trees" represent the nations of the earth; there is great advancement among them; there is every indication of summer being nigh; they shall say peace and safety, but destruction is imminent, and man's kingdom is at an end, for "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." And let none suppose that this is addressed to the Church; for, as if to guard us against the thought that these things, after the lapse of so many years, could not happen to Israel, the Lord distinctly assures us that this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. All the predictions recorded here are either fulfilled, or this generation has not passed away; and if it is asserted that they are fulfilled, why is Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles? Why do the times of the Gentiles continue Why? have not men seen Christ in manhood, in power and great glory? for as yet He was seen by them only in weakness, "crucified in weakness;" and, surely, the time has not yet come which shall be a snare TO ALL them which dwell on the face of the whole earth, but as the earth shall be the scene of such terrible judgments, the faithful are exhorted to "watch, therefore, and pray always;" and that the more dissociated they are from earth and its enjoyment, the more sure they will be to ESCAPE the judgments coming on it. It is not that they are triumphantly to pass through, but escape (ἐκφυγεῖν, literally, to "fly out") "all the things which shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of man." I can understand how the moral of this can apply to the Church, as well as to the Jewish remnant, to whom it is evident these words are primarily addressed.

Perhaps we have, in our Lord's division of His time at this moment, for He is the same yesterday and to-day, some insight as to His present and future engagements; the nights are spent on the mount of Olives, and the days in the temple. This is the night emphatically, and Christ is on the mount, the heavenly mount; there real green olive trees flourish. But when the day has fairly dawned, He will appear in His temple, and "the people will come early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him,' for the people shall be willing in the day of His power. (Ps. cx.)

CHAPTER XXII.

WE have now to trace the sad, sorrowful path, which this blessed servant traversed from the close of His mission to Israel to the right hand of the Father, where there are pleasures for evermore. The path to the glory is through the cross. It is a holy path. It commences with the feast of unleavened bread. "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh." The chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him, but still the people are opposed. "They feared the people." But now a confederacy is formed against the Lamb of God. Satan and Judas, "the chief priests and captains," (ecclesiastical and worldly power,) are leagued in one. "The passover must be killed." Jesus is ready to spend all for the blessing of His people. He sends two of His disciples to prepare the passover. He will take His place as a Jew at that feast, which in His own person He was about to furnish with divine solemnities and everlasting cheer. "A man bearing a pitcher of water" in this dry and barren land, where no water is, is the guide now and then to the guest chamber. "He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him." They who had seen all His service to Israel and were to be by and bye witnesses of it, are partakers with Him in all the fruits of it. The sorrow is His own.

It is necessary to distinguish here between the passover and the breaking of bread, which is properly subsequent to the passover. The Lord says: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." From this it is plain that He observed this feast as a Jew in the company of Jews, and that in doing so He was anticipating the time when it would be fulfilled, for He adds: "I will not any more eat of it until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God;" and also, that "the cup" which follows is the fruit of the vine, the moral condition of Israel, of which He will not drink (or, in other words, have no communion with) till the kingdom of God is come. I think it very important to notice how the Spirit in this book is so careful to describe Israel's share in the blessings, in order that the Church may distinctly, and without confusion, understand its own. And so here. Israel's blessing from the passover is first secured, and then that to the Church. Our feast is the feast of unleavened bread, and hence it is the bread which He breaks for us, for His body is broken for us, and we are His body, built up into it by strength and sustenance flowing to us from His broken body and shed blood. We are to keep the feast, not with old (Jewish) leaven,* nor with the leaven of nature, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Popery inculcates a grievous error in asserting that "the mass is a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ." The argument of the apostle is, (1 Cor. v.) that the passover is sacrificed in the person of Christ, and, there-

* I am inclined to think that the "old leaven" was putting the shadow for the substance, the sin of the Pharisees. Is there not much of that sin now?

fore, it only remains for us to keep the feast consequent on it. Popery has gone back to the "old leaven," and probably was confirmed in this fatal error by construing what is here observed *during the solemnization of the passover* for that feast which followed it.

The remainder of this chapter mainly discloses the elements and causes of the various disorders in the absence of Christ.

The first is, betrayal by a professed friend, from love of gain.

The second is, a strife for pre-eminence.

The remedy for this is, that the Gentiles now are the channels of power and dominion; so, to assume either now is a Gentile standing. But they are to have a kingdom, and "to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," though not in a moment. Grievous trials await them here. The most forward and zealous of them shall be sifted of Satan, and shall so quail before a woman, that ere the night is passed he shall three times deny his Lord; and this is the third form in which failure will appear.

In Christ's presence "nothing" was lacked; in Christ's absence, we must part with every thing, to stand in the same power. It is not the question of swords, but of standing in the blessing which Christ's presence bestowed: swords cannot accomplish this. "The mount of Olives" is the place to prepare for trial. There a heavenly messenger comforts our Lord. If we sleep on the eve of trial, we cannot meet it as Christ did when it comes. We sacrifice the ear of our antagonist when we encounter him with carnal weapons. Jesus nevertheless repairs our injuries.

Jesus—in the hands of enemies, His own who would not receive Him, through "the power of darkness,"—Jesus—buffeted and slandered before the "council," which assumed to be gods, His own disciple within His hearing having denied Him—proclaims what is His own joy and the glory of the nation, though they now condemn Him for it: "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God." Alas! the more fully He revealed Himself, the more fully was He rejected. "His own mouth" is the fullest witness against Him!

Chapter XXIII.

This chapter details the combination of every earthly power, in spite of the remonstrances of conscience, and, at the sacrifice of all judicial honesty, to crucify the Lord of glory. "The whole multitude (of Jews) led Him to Pilate," the Gentile governor. He sends Him to Herod, and though "nothing worthy of death is done unto Him," yet the governor, contrary to his convictions and all justice, is overborne by the "loud voices requiring that He might be crucified." "And the voices of them and the chief priests prevailed." "He delivered Jesus to their will."

"Jesus is led away!" "And there followed Him a great company of people and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him." To these, who are the types of the Jewish remnant, the Lord announces the still greater sorrows which will visit their people; for, if their sorrow is genuine in a day of such apparent prosperity,—"in the green tree,"—what shall it be in the dry, when every hope is withered and gone? Jesus is now at Calvary. He is placed between two malefactors. Human enmity and malice have done their worst! His last company on earth, its offscouring!! From the cradle to the cross there was no room for Him on it!!! The people and the rulers may "deride" and the soldiers may "mock," but Jesus, amidst the company to which He is reduced, discloses the treasures of His grace to faith. To one beyond earthly hope or human aid are revealed the glories of a heavenly kingdom. His eye was fast closing on all earthly objects; in faith he sought (according to Jewish hope) a place in the future kingdom, but "to-day," we may say the day of salvation, shall paradise be opened to one of the poor of the flock, and as a first sample of the family who should be gathered there. The other thief represents Israel in unbelief. Jesus goes unto the Father. His blessed course is ended. A Gentile, a Roman centurion, glorifies God, and witnesses, (let it affect his place and station as it may,) "Certainly this was a righteous man." He condemns the act which, as a commander of Roman soldiery, he had been the instrument to perpetrate. The Jew planned, the Gentile executed, the crucifixion of Jesus.

The Jew had the law; the Gentile, power: ill was the use both made of them.

The act and language of this centurion is such as every faithful Gentile must now adopt. The power vested in the Gentile crucified Jesus; it perpetrated an unrighteous act. Can I consistently glory in and enrich myself by such power? It is the times of the Gentiles, and the power given to them is not yet re-assumed; so that he who accepts part of it, accepts it as part of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and as that which under *sufficient* pressure, as with Pilate, would again crucify Christ. The virus of that iniquity is in it; for, surely, no soldier in the execution of *his duty* could have prevented it, or attempted to do so.

When does invested power serve Christ? My personal exertions may be used of Him, but not delegated authority. Joseph of Arimathea effects nothing in the council; his attempt to serve there was vain; but, divested of official power, he begs from the Roman governor the body of Jesus. Those who "wait for the kingdom of God" *now*, will follow his example; they will, without the assertion of power, as a suppliant, remove the body of Christ from Gentile domination, and endue it with its proper character, as "wrapped in linen," that is, its appearance unto men, and laid in a sepulchre, testifying that we are not alive unto this world, that we are set "wherein never man before was laid;" for the Church's place is no common one. But they who add "spices and ointments" to give it an earthly fragrance, know not its calling, and their labour is in vain, for it is in resurrection; and this the next chapter opens out.

Chapter XXIV.

"On the first day of the week," the morning of the resurrection, the loving followers of Christ are taught the needlessness of earthly attractions. Two men in "shining garments" witness unto them that "Christ is not here, but is risen." In all this scene we are taught the tardiness and reluctance with which we learn the resurrection; the apostles will not believe the testimony of the women. Peter visits the sepulchre himself; he beholds nothing but the "linen clothes," (all that should be visible if resurrection was in spirit enjoyed,) and he only departs, "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

The disciples going to Emmaus, and the occurrences connected with it, describe to us the progress from Jewish thoughts and hopes to happy communion with Christ himself. The highest enjoyment, the most honoured place on earth, is the *knowing the presence of Christ in breaking of bread.* Here was the fulfilment of that word: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." Their hearts practically learned the blessed effects of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus; they passed from every thought to the one grand absorbing one of the presence of the living Jesus; and it is evident that the revelation of Christ, as the living head of the Church, is here in type, as the manner of it to the Jew is foreshewn in His manifestation to "the eleven and them that were with them," though the testimony of "the two," which is the Church's testimony, is priorily declared.

But Israel is not yet abandoned; all the blessings must flow out to Jerusalem first; all must begin there; but yet they will not be confined to it, for they shall be proclaimed among "all nations." (or Gentiles.) And though the disciples must continue in Jerusalem, they, as it became witnesses of the grace of Jesus, are seen "continually in the temple, praising and blessing God," for God had not yet cast it off. While God owned it, so must they; yet I say, though they are thus righteously so to act, are they taught, by the place and manner of His parting scene, the true place and manner of blessing on earth. He led them out as far as Bethany, i.e. the house of the grace of the Lord. With hands directed upwards, He blessed them. How they are practically led in the same path with Christ, as is foreshewn here, namely, from Jerusalem to Bethany, will be our inquiry while meditating on the Acts of the Apostles, which, if the Lord will, I propose to pursue in the next part.

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1 PETER I. 10-12.

We have here three stages. First, the prophetic Spirit foretelling the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow; then the accomplishment of Christ's sufferings; and then comes the Holy Ghost down from heaven to report the things that are now ministered unto us, and this according to the hope, and the power of communion with the love that gives us this hope.

THE CHURCH'S CALLING*—ITS PRACTICAL EFFECTS.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. iv. 1—6.)

THIS portion of Scripture contains two subjects, the one mainly affecting the Christian himself, the other affecting the body of Christ, through him. In fact, the deep interests of the Church of God for one member, and all, are unfolded in this passage. Hence we can understand the emphatic manner with which the apostle presses them on the children of God. He beseeches them not as the apostle or the prophet, but as the prisoner of Jesus Christ; as one in whom practically was realized the fruitlessness of all earthly expectancy; a witness of what faithfulness to Christ in the world must suffer; and as one for whom the termination of earthly scenes would be a release and rest. *Such* is the character to give emphasis to the appeal he now makes to all saints. And, as such, he beseeches them "to walk worthy of their vocation wherewith they are called." He had, in the preceding chapter of this epistle, opened out the nature and blessing of their vocation, and therefore, in this passage, he addresses the Church as understanding it. It is evident if one is ignorant of the nature and principles of his calling, he cannot walk worthy of it; a servant may be willing and obedient, yet he cannot fulfil the duties of his service unless he knows them; and, consequently, in every case in Scripture, we learn that our gracious God always establishes His servant in the practical blessing of his service ere he enters on it. Doubtless service deepens it, but the truth I am called to exhibit is my own strength and guide in the work, so that "he that watereth is watered also himself."

The Old Testament times were before the Holy Ghost was given as the witness of Christ's heavenly glory, the abiding unction of each believer, and the power of the unity of the Church on earth. (2 Cor. iii. John vii. 38; xiv. 26. 1 John ii. 27. Gal. iv. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Ephes. ii. 22.) Then the nature and principles of the believer's calling, from which a corresponding service should flow, were explained in vision and inscribed on the soul of the servant, as by the finger of God, the deep truths he was to be a witness of; for God never left Himself without witness.

Moses learned in the "burning bush" (Exod. iii.) the power and unchanging faithfulness of Jehovah to manifest Himself amidst the frail, contradictory things of earth, in wrath remembering mercy; and this scene sustained and instructed him in all his course, while conducting Israel from the iron rule of Pharoah to the mount of Pisgah, where He should bequeath "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush," (Deut. xxxiii. 16,) as one who had largely experienced it. To Joshua (chap. v.) again, the Captain, rather than the apostle of the Jewish calling, there appeared, with a drawn sword, the Prince of the host of the Lord. Each had a vision suitable to, and characteristic of, his own peculiar mission.—So, a live coal from the altar, in the circle of the ever holy glory, and the presence of the King, the Lord of Hosts, touching the lips of Isaiah, not only set his heart ready for service, but gave strength to him, and guidance in all the details of it. The nature and principles of that scene were embodied in all his testimony. The holiness and glory of the Lord, the uncleanness of His people, the purging of a remnant, judicial blindness of the mass, and the preservation and return of holy seed, were all comprised within the vision of chap. vi.

In the instance of Paul we have a remarkable sample. His first view of Jesus in the glory taught him the elements of all the great truths of which he was afterward so faithful an expositor. He begins as unconnected with earth; neither seeing, nor eating nor drinking, the great links with earth; and so he ends his course: at first, a bondman *by* Christ's glory; and, at the last, a bondman *for* His glory. Peter, as it has been strikingly observed, might truly style himself a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. But Paul was the converse of this. Paul was a witness of the glory of Christ, and a partaker of His sufferings. That heavenly Christ, whose glory shone brighter than noon-day sun on him, and on him only by sovereign grace, (Acts ix. 7.) called the astonished convert to know and to preach that the Lord of glory was the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, and that the Church was one with Him in glory. "Why persecutest thou *me*? *I am Jesus whom* thou persecutest."

These examples will suffice to establish the necessity (if any should doubt it,) of being truly and accurately instructed in the nature and principles of our calling, if we really desire to walk worthy of it, and that we *readily* will not, is not only evident practically, but from the marked manner in which the apostle presses it upon us. He knew, the Spirit knew, the many hindrances which arise to our walking worthily of our calling. But why no effort, desire, or response to this touching appeal of our apostle? Do we know, in any energy, the nature of our calling? Have we patiently, like Mary at the feet of Jesus, sought from the Word the momentous meaning of "our vocation?" Has every Christian, by the unction of the Holy Ghost, sought after a faithfully desired acquaintance with a subject so earnestly put before us? Or, are we content with the ignorance of Thomas (John xiv.) on a kindred and connected subject: "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we tell the way?" I have said already, that the apostle, in the preceding chapters, gives a full and clear detail of our vocation, and as it must be first known ere practical effects follow from it, it may be well to ponder a little on it.

First, let us enquire whether our vocation, as taught in this epistle, is a new revelation, and demanding a new and peculiar path on earth; or such as all, in God's line of witnesses, from the creation to the cross, had known, enjoyed, and walked in.

When we have it once a settled axiom before our souls, that God has been always, though in very different and even opposite ways, unfolding the various rays of His own glory, at one time His creative wisdom, at another His power and government; here, as a righteous Ruler, who guards and exalts a peculiar nation on earth; and there, as a Father who seeks sinners in electing, though indiscriminate, grace for heaven: when this is simply and clearly seen, it follows as a consequence that the calling and walk of believers are modified, moulded, and governed by these respective revelations of God's character.

I believe each and all of God's people, in every age, knew that all their "springs were in Him," knew "that His lovingkindness was better than life itself," and that "in His presence was fulness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures for evermore." They reckoned their blessing to flow from Him, and the power, and in whatsoever place He would be, there would be glory, unspeakable glory to them; and, therefore, it does not interfere with their enjoyment, rest and blessing, whether their hope reached forward to the epiphany of Christ in glory on the earth, (of which we have many proofs,) or to the simply heavenly glory and the full blessedness of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Of this latter we have no intimation, save such passages as "heavenly country," and "a city," in Heb. xi., be supposed to bear that meaning.

The saints, before Christ was rejected from the earth, expected and waited for the accomplishment of the promises in an earthly glory; not human achievement, but an irresistible and universal halo emanating from Immanuel—from God manifest in the flesh. We do not indeed find that God had abandoned man in the flesh as irretrievable, until the Fairest—the Holy One of God—is allowed no place among them, but is cast out and dishonoured as an evil doer.

We must not circumscribe our ideas to the narrow limits of human selfishness. Man was destined by God to fill a glorious place on this earth; he was made in the image and glory of God. Not only in Eden, but in the post-diluvian earth, and especially as an elect separated people in Canaan, did the Lord make trial of man. In all these cases man was set to maintain godliness and lordship in the earth. He had not fully proved himself as yet totally unfit for God's high destiny respecting him, *for the destiny itself could not be rescinded.* But now, every trial being made, and Israel under the power of Rome, "the fourth beast," the Son of God is revealed as one to repair all and to accomplish, through Himself, God's purposes respecting us. "He glorifies God on earth." He proves himself fit and more than fit for man's high destiny, for He was, in truth, "the brightness of God's glory and express image of His person." But, while honoured of God, He is rejected and crucified by the very people to whom God had committed His oracles, and to whom He had been sending prophet after prophet to instruct and counsel—by the people whom He had

* The calling in Ephesians is connected with the one body of Christ: the heavenly calling in Hebrews is linked with the priesthood of Christ. These things are quite distinct, though too often confounded.

chosen as His own peculiar people, from amongst all the nations of the earth.

The blessed Jesus who had to manhood, and as a man, accomplished all God's purposes and destiny respecting man, being rejected and crucified, rises to the right hand of the Father, not that God's great purpose in setting forth man as His image and glory, in this earth, has been frustrated, but to wait there "*till*" the period determined of God will arrive. Of that time and season there should be no disclosure. It is reserved in God. Yet the interval was not to be lost, for in this interval is the Church being gathered, not to any earthly standing, *for all had failed*, but as in union with Christ in heaven, manifesting the characteristics of such an union *down here*, and this is properly our vocation; the revelation of a secret as to which there was profound secret since the world began. (Rom. xvi. 25, 26.) We can aver boldly that it was emphatically Paul's Gospel—"according to my Gospel"—though it was also revealed NOW unto the other holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. A Jew, righteously, ought to have sought to fill the place to which God's favour had called him, if apostacy had not deprived him of it. But of this there could have been no doubt, for the power *once* delegated to David had passed into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, and was *now* swayed by his Roman successor over Israel; but yet they looked for a Deliverer. *Before* the understandings of the disciples were opened to understand the Scriptures, they expected that Jesus "would have redeemed Israel," i.e. I suppose by external power. They little expected that any power, not even death, could divert Him from this work. And again, *after* their understandings are *opened*, we find the apostles asking the Lord, as He was on the eve of taking His place above: "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Surely, up to this they had no *hope* of a purely heavenly glory, apart and unconnected with earth. Nor reasonably could they then, for the Lord had not made the last offer to Israel, of which we so largely read in the first chapters of the Acts.

We find the same thing in the penitent thief. With a Jewish hope, his eye rested (and it was eminent faith) on Christ's glory, in His kingdom, wherein he asks to be remembered. The Lord refuses it not, but He promises a still more immediate blessing, and this Luke alone of the evangelists notices, because, as the companion of Paul, and in all probability a Gentile, he was led of the Spirit to every link, however undefined, with the present hope of saints. Again, we can understand the resistance and difficulty as to receiving the Gentiles, and the consistency of those who argued that they should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, for into mere Canaan privileges there was no other passport.

To Peter, *in a figure*, (Acts x.) is shewn the calling of Gentiles as well as Jews into the kingdom of heaven, whose keys had been given him. (Compare Matt. xvi. Acts ii.)

To Paul, *in person*, (2 Cor. xii.) unconscious of every thing but the consciousness of unspeakable glory, is revealed the present portion of men in Christ, the Gospel of the glory, the nature and privileges of "our vocation."

Man in every trial has failed. The Holy One, rejected and crucified, is "set down at the right hand of God," "head over all things to the Church," His Spirit now gathering members unto Him, to be shewn by and by, *as also now in truth* His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. And as we realize His headship, and consequently our union with Him, (on the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven dwelling in us,) we understand our vocation. Not an union with Him only, but also union with all the members of His body, however disjointed here or failing to witness the traces of this blessed oneness, which as of one body we *must* desire, and, when *in the power of the Spirit*, express.

I think it is not possible to trace any similarity between the common notion of our calling, as held even by evangelical Christians, and that enjoined in this epistle. The one owns, and so far rightly, the doctrine of free grace; but with this great truth is added, without proof or consistency and in much confusion, a hope (it may amount to assurance) of heaven when we die, not a heaven the sphere of our citizenship *now*, but the final and beatic abode of the redeemed by and by. With death earth is to be totally abandoned, and yet, strange to say, while we are on it, (that is, Christians,) we are to embrace as much as possible of it under even our temporal rule, not only to propagate Christianity in the hearts and affections of men, but to endeavour to induce the powers of the world to adopt it as the wisest governmental policy, or it may be, as the best political economy. Will any thoughtful person say that there is not great confusion and incoherency in this involuted notion? and, coupled as it is with the doctrine of free grace, (glorious truth!) many are prevented from investigating the grounds for such ideas. The Reformation, in God's mercy, brought to light, as from the tomb, the doctrine of free grace and justification by faith. That was the first step, a grand stride, from the deep darkness and ignorance in which Christendom was plunged; but, could there be no advance, no progress from it? In Ephesians ii., we are distinctly taught that grace confers *more* than life from a death in trespasses and sins. The argument of that chapter, in connection with the first, is, "that Christ being risen and sat down on the right hand of God," is "head over all things to the Church, which is His body;" that the power which raised Jesus and set Him there, forthwith "fashions in continuance" the members of that body, quickening us who were dead in trespasses and sins, raising us together, and making us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The means whereby this mighty work was effected we next trace, viz. by the blood and death of Christ, who broke down thus the middle wall of partition, and reconciled Jews and Gentiles unto God in one body by the cross. This *new* man, this one body, is called in Scripture the Church of God. It is not merely isolated believers here and there, but Jewish and Gentile saints are now builded *together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Hence, it is one body here below, where the Holy Ghost is sent down and abides. Still, its origin, its character, its privileges, and its destiny, are of heaven *and not of* earth. United to the ascended Lord, the Church's blessings are where He is, and where she looks to be manifested ere long with Him in glory. Now, *this is all* of grace, "that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace." And yet how few Christians seem interested save but in *one* portion of "the exceeding riches!" I cannot deny that *part* of it is enjoyed, for, if it could be denied, Christianity would be unknown; but I am convinced that we all seem to value one portion of the "exceeding riches of His grace," to the exclusion of the rest, or mainly so. But if it be granted, and it cannot be denied, that being raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, is a component part of the gift of grace, then evidently it is important and essential to know it as one part of it. Our selfishness may be quieted by so much of it as assures us that we are alive from death in trespasses and sins; but, surely, we are not at liberty, nor are we wise to accept one portion of a gift of God and neglect the rest; and we cannot excuse ourselves on the ground that the part we have learned is so full and blessed that we are satisfied therewith, when it ought rather to have been, from its very blessedness, a pledge and a stimulus to us to learn the remainder.

Now, the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ at God's right hand is the foundation, as the mission from heaven and presence of the Holy Ghost is the efficacious agent, of the Church; and we are even now one with Him whose glory is accomplished on high, and await a common appearing together. Does ordinary doctrine admit such a heavenly standing, even while we are here? I may be answered that Christians generally believe that the spirits of saints will be raised to heaven after death and the dissolution of the body. But this, surely, is not what is taught in the passage before us; for if it were, their quickening from death in trespasses and sins would not occur *till then* also, which is a manifest fallacy. Hence, if the one is true, and declared and *enjoyed*, so ought the other, and, therefore, the notion that we *only* belong to heaven when we die is not a correct idea of "our vocation."

It was, too, plainly recorded that heaven was the portion of believers to be utterly repudiated; but, as ever with Satan, when he cannot destroy "the meal," the food of souls, he will leaven it. And accordingly our heavenly standing is not denied but *postponed till* we quit this earthly scene; and this device has succeeded in engaging the mind of Christians with earthly things, and led them to hope for a repetition of Jewish blessings, as the people of God set on earth. But Ephes. ii. 5, 6, is plainly contrary to all this. It declares that believers *now* "are raised up together and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." There is no idea whatever (but the reverse) that heaven is postponed to any particular period, and nothing whatever as to an earthly expectancy, seeing we are distinctly instructed in the foregoing chapter, that

we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, entirely apart and dissociated from earth, even in that place to which we are now called by grace. True, we are actually on earth, but not with the power and interests of earthly blessing. We are here alive from death in trespasses and in sins, and ought to be practically exhibiting here conformity to the risen Jesus, who is our head, strangers to all earthly maxims, and manifesting ourselves as the body of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost, who witnesses of Him; and this is our vocation, however little we have learned it, or, alas! are disposed, because of our carnality, to learn it. "There is one body and one Spirit."

Again, I must repeat, that it is not only important for us to know the nature and principles of our vocation, because of our own blessing; but, furthermore, unless we walk worthy of it, we shall not be able *rightly* or *adequately* to express that testimony to which God has called us, even that practical use to which the apostle so earnestly applies it; and how essential it is for this purpose we best arrive at by considering the nature and extent of the demand on us.

As walking worthy of our vocation, the first stage in this interesting course, we are exhorted to cultivate certain dispositions and habits, in order to produce a grand result, even the endeavour to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." No self-denial is to be refused which may tend to the accomplishment of this great object. "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." A right eye or a right hand is not to be spared, if any *barrier* to the jealous observance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This is the wonderful testimony to which Christians are now called; and if it is little displayed and found difficult to be accomplished, it only increases the necessity of our acquiring proper instruction to enact it. It is one great point to know what ought to be our *object here.* There is a sevenfold oneness with which every Christian has to do: "One body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;" (verses 4-6;) and, therefore, unity amongst themselves should be the manifest fruit of it, and would surely be testified, if simply, and practically, and exclusively enjoyed. I say exclusively, for it is evident that no division can arise if no other element but Christ engaged our hearts, for there is simple unity in each of the parts of that whole with which *alone* we have to do. Whence then arises division and the little manifestation of this duty? Firstly, I believe it is not felt to be paramount and all-important. Our real position around Christ and in Christ is not *individually* maintained and valued, and hence no ability or interest to manifest the *effects* of it corporately. Popery has retained the shell of this truth when it requires all its votaries to adopt the same language in every nation, and to proclaim themselves "the one holy catholic church." But, alas! how little have believers declared they had the kernel of this assumed unity and catholicity. Christians may be careful about their own personal walk, either to avoid judgment and promote their own happiness, or, still better, to please God; but I fear with very few is it of the deepest *interest* and *labour* "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" and, consequently, we know the sad effects of this indifference. No believer *now* can individualize himself, for all are baptized by one Spirit into (εἰς) one body. This was not known of old. True, an open transgression, by any member of the nation, as in the case of Achan, and such like, demanded temporal judgment and expurgation; but who will say that the sin of any one individual affected all the rest spiritually? In former times, they were baptized in the cloud and the sea unto Moses; now, we are baptized by one Spirit into one body. The Spirit has something more to do with me than merely to lead me into joys of salvation. He has an ulterior object, adopting me into that wonderful system, the body of Christ, and making me feel my interest and sympathy in it. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." How so? Surely, there could never be any natural intercourse or acquaintance maintained with all; and if not, it must be spiritual, flowing from a very real union, if unseen, for we are one Spirit with the Lord, and members of one another. And there is mutual blessing, even "that which every joint supplieth," as such are practically led by the Spirit; otherwise, one is not walking according to the mind of Him by whom we are baptized into one body. This is the work of the Holy Ghost, present in the Church on earth—His *ultimate* object, for the body is the fulness of Him who filleth all in all; and we cannot walk in fellowship with Him unless we are agreed; and we cannot agree with Him unless we follow the *same* objects and interests with Him; and if we are not in fellowship, it is evident we cannot enjoy the strength, guidance and comfort which are derivable from Him. On the other hand, if we are, we participate in all the blessings which His presence affords.

It is important to ascertain why we have not more spiritual power. It is simply because we prescribe a limited selfish course for His operation, and not the large comprehensive purpose into which He would lead us. We cannot have one without the other, for He is one; and if we are deficient in one, we must be in the other. No believer, really *labouring* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, but *must* know the power and comfort of the Spirit. It is vain to suppose that I can enjoy the power and comfort of the Spirit, and yet not aim to walk in sympathy with His desires. The object of the Holy Ghost is to edify the body of Christ—to build for the absent Jesus a glorious Eve, to be presented to Him by and bye, but now curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth; and this, assuredly, must be at least my aim and desire if I am in unison with Him, and, if not, barrenness must enter into my soul; "my right eye shall be utterly darkened;" my "salt will lose its savour." There is no such thing now as simply singular blessing. No one, however exalted, is the body, and no Christian, however weak, but is of it. You are elevated and advanced in proportion to your use to Christ's body: you are weak, as you are a mere drain on it. I can never view myself apart from it, unless I return to nature, and truly, as I widen my separation from the body, do I re-establish myself in nature.

The Jew expressed union naturally, we must spiritually. The temple in Jerusalem was the centre of the one; Christ in heaven is the centre of the other. It does not lessen our responsibility, because there is failure, and little expression of the Spirit's work; *for if our responsibility can be lessened, then the Spirit may slacken in His purpose and object,* which could not be true. Believers have been unwilling to submit to the sacrifices which the endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace inevitably entails. And if they have resigned the object and desire of the Spirit of God, they have accordingly forfeited the strength, grace, and cheer of Him in *their own* souls; and there is *no way* to obtain these blessings but by being renewed with purpose of heart, to be led by Him, and to fulfil all His counsel. Weakness, failure, and disunion are no grounds for our indolence or indifference to make the endeavours. I believe if a Christian was cast alone on a desert island, that the energy of the Spirit in him would lead him to seek the conversion of the natives, not only for the joy in heaven over one sinner repenting, but also that in communion with two or three, he might glorify Christ and fulfil the will of the Spirit, and it would assuredly increase his own strength and gladness. The Jew did *not* maintain the natural unity. The Church has *not* endeavoured to maintain spiritual unity. But what was the strength and testimony of the faithful Jew, even in Babylon? Why "he prayed three times a day with his face toward Jerusalem." But where was Jerusalem? A heap of ruins! save in the mind of faithful Daniel, who could not forget Jerusalem, "the city of the great king." And, in like manner, when the Jews returned from Babylon, Haggai admonishes them to go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house of the Lord," for the Lord would take "pleasure in it," though that very temple was afterwards to be so defiled by Antiochus. A few walking in faithfulness could never forget or swerve from *the object of God;* whether, as with Daniel, there was no appearance of the expression of it, or as with the rebuilders a temple with another failure. And so with, as neither non-appearance of the object of God now is to dissuade us from endeavouring after it, nor a fear of failure to discourage us from making the attempt. Similar is the instruction of Paul to Timothy, in the second epistle, which we may well characterize as the last words of Paul. If the great house (Christendom) has in it vessels to dishonour, Timothy's course is, while purging himself from these, to seek still an expression of unity with them "that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii. 20-22.) None others could express the unity of the Spirit. This is important as the alone ground for discipline and separation from professionists; but no failure or magicians, ("Jannes and Jambres,") or similarity (chap. iii.) to godliness, should lessen his exertions, but rather promote them. Nay,

his *only remedy* for such a state of things was CONTINUANCE, (verse 14,) as we find Moses aforetime, when encountering the same opposition before Pharaoh. In fact, as a faithful one, he was to do more because others did less. And again we have the same truth enforced in Jude's epistle, which contemplates Christians in a very tried state, and subject to great disorder. Yet a course is plainly marked out for "the beloved." But ye, beloved, (verse 20,) building up yourselves in your most holy faith, (simple dependence on Christ, not yielding to growing laxity and self-will,) praying in the Holy Ghost, expressing unity in the Spirit as touching all your need and circumstances, and forthwith strengthened and blessed, *not to omit* searching after members, who, from one cause or another, are deprived of their fuller blessing. So that the expression or manifestation of the unity of the Spirit was never to be lost sight of, but was ever to be the aim and object of the faithful in the darkest time. Hence, in the Lord's supper, as well as in our mere salutations, there was to be an evidence of it. Thus was manifested, by the familiarity of the expression of affection, the great unity of Christians. And this is simply what the Church of God on earth was called to manifest. The Lord stir us up, and fill us with zeal for His house which lieth waste! But, alas! interest for our own things is mainly the cause of our neglecting the great end and object of the Spirit, which is a manifested *counterpart* on earth of that unity which is "infallibly," as another has said, maintained above, and this naturally follows from not understanding our vocation. For if conscious of our unity, there so unbroken and blessed, and if filled with the power and interest of it, we *could* not but endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Hence, in conclusion, is seen that if I do not understand the nature and principles of my vocation, my endeavours to keep the unity will only be right intentions wrongly attempted, and therefore ineffectual; and, on the other hand, I cannot have entered into the sweetness and power of my vocation. Thus, I must labour for a manifestation of that fellowship one with another, of which in "light" I am partaker. "O Lord, revive thy work!"

J. B. S.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THERE is no phrase which it is more important to understand in connection with prophetic inquiries than "the kingdom of God." To ascertain the origin and force of this expression in the Scriptures of truth, is the object of my present communication.

It must be obvious at the outset that our inquiries must commence further back than the actual use of the phrase in the New Testament. No one can observe the way in which it is used by John the Baptist, as well as by our Lord himself and His disciples, without perceiving that it was an expression with which their hearers were conversant. It was no new expression, and the mere utterance of it communicated no new thought to the minds of men; that is, among the Jews, of course. It would be of little moment to inquire what *their* thoughts of this kingdom were. The only source from which they could receive right thoughts on the subject is as open to us as to them; and open to us, blessed be God, with this difference in our favour, that the Holy Spirit, by whom holy men were inspired to write the Scriptures of the Old Testament, now dwells in the saints—dwells in us, for this purpose among many others, to open to us fully, as the friends of Christ and members of His body, what was hid from saints in former ages, yea, what was but very obscurely seen by the prophets themselves. Even they are represented as "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Yes, it was not to themselves, but to us, that they ministered those divine communications of which they were made the vehicles; and we are thus in better circumstances for understanding those communications than even the holy men through whom they were made and recorded. And it is this, and this alone, the teaching of the indwelling Spirit, the Comforter, that can enable us to understand those varied testimonies to the grace and glory of Christ. It is not any natural clearness of judgment, or any amount of humanly-acquired information, that will make us well instructed scribes in the kingdom of heaven. We are ignorant alike of the "old things" and the "new" which pertain to that kingdom, except as we sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him, whose voice it is by the Spirit that we hear in the prophets of the Old Testament, as well as in the apostles and prophets of the New. May it be in the spirit of child-like submission to Him and dependance upon Him that we pursue our present inquiry; and may it be, through His grace, fruitful in instruction and blessing to our souls!

There is one point on which there can be no question. God is often spoken of as a King. "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto thee will I pray." (Ps. v. 2.) "The Lord is King for ever and ever." (x. 16.) "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever." (xxix. 10.) "Thou art my King, O God." (xliv. 4.) "For the Lord most high is terrible; He is a great King over all the earth." (xlvii. 2.) "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises; for God is the King of all the earth." (Verses 6, 7.) "They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary." (lxviii. 24.) "For God is my King of old." (lxxiv. 12.) "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." (xcv. 3.) "With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King." (xcviii. 6.) All these are from one book of Scripture, and many more might be quoted. See also the following: "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Is. vi. 5.) "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King." (xxxiii. 22.) "I am the Lord, your holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." (xliii. 15.) "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?" (Jer. x. 7.) "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts." (Zech. xiv. 16.) We cannot suppose that God would have so largely spoken of Himself as King if it had not been important for us to know Him in this character; and it will be found on examination of some of the above passages, along with many others of like character, that we have very explicit and copious instructions in God's Word on this subject. May it be ours to receive it in simplicity of heart and godly subjection to the authority of the written Word!

The first point to which I would solicit attention is this, that while God, the everlasting King, unquestionably reigns uncontrolled over all the works of His hands, visible and invisible, overruling by His power even the rage and rebellion of His enemies, it has pleased Him, at various periods for the display of His glory as King, to delegate His authority over a certain sphere, putting those entrusted with it under responsibility to Himself to exercise their delegated power and rule according to His will. Adam, for instance, was made ruler over all the lower parts of creation, as we read, Gen. i. 26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." The fulfilment of this we see in verse 28. The whole passage is referred to in Ps. viii. 4-8, which is again quoted by the apostle in Heb. ii. 6-9, as a prediction of the *future* dominion of Christ, the Son of man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. I would not now dwell further on these passages except just to remark that Adam, failing to exercise his delegated power in obedience to Him who had entrusted him therewith, God's purpose to put this earth under the dominion of man was not to be set aside. The full remedy for the failure of the first man being found in the obedience unto death of the second man, the Lord from heaven, *He* becomes the inheritor of the dominion and glory forfeited by the first. And for Him it waits. We see not yet, as Paul says, all things put under him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and in due time we shall see His dominion established over the whole sphere of Adam's delegated rule, and then will be fulfilled the first verse and the last verse of the eighth Psalm, which treats of these things: "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." But more of this anon.

Before this great and final result in the universal blessing of Christ's acknowledged dominion was to be accomplished, further trial was to be made of man in various ways. Not to dwell on intermediate events, we find one nation selected of God to enjoy the blessing of His kingly authority, and it is in connection with this nation that we first find God spoken of as King. But, before pursuing this, I would notice for a moment a remarkable passage, which shews alike the foreknowledge and providence of God, and

the exceeding importance of the subject on which we are entering, viz. the connection of God, *as King*, with the nation of Israel. The passage I allude to is Deut. xxxii. 8, 9: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." Thus it appears that long before the children of Israel existed as a nation, long even before the call of Abraham, God had his eye upon that nation, and made it the centre of all His providential arrangements in dividing the earth amongst the progeny of Noah. The perfect divine wisdom of these arrangements will be manifest in that period of universal blessing of which the eighth Psalm treats, as has been noticed, when, according to another Scripture, "they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem." (Jer. iii. 17.)

The first passage in which the Lord's reign is definitely spoken of is in the song of triumph chaunted by the victorious hosts of Israel, when they had passed safely through the Red sea, and left Pharaoh and his chariots and horsemen "sunk as lead in the mighty waters." They not only celebrate the triumph already accomplished for them by their almighty Captain and Deliverer, but they anticipate those further victories pledged to them in the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And then they add: "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (Exod. xv. 17, 18.) Connect this with the passage already quoted from Deut. xxxii., and you can hardly fail to see how the reign or kingdom of God is connected with the place which He had made for Himself to dwell in, and the nation of which He says: "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

In Exodus xix. and the following chapters, we find God exercising His kingly government over this nation which He had separated to himself; giving them laws, and statutes, and judgments to be observed by them, with suited penalties for any breach of those enactments. I do not stop here to consider the character of that covenant of works under which they were thus, with their own full consent and choice, placed. Their immediate failure under that covenant, in chap. xxxii., and the renewal of it, with certain modifications, through the intervention of Moses as Mediator, (typical, no doubt, of the mediation of Christ,) are points of extreme importance to any who would understand God's recorded dealings with them. But I cannot enter into them here, further than to notice, that in chap. xxxiii. nothing less than the Lord's actual presence with them can satisfy Moses, who pleads on their behalf, and this is pledged to him in verse 17. In consequence, we find that when Balaam (inspired as a prophet, though a worthless, wicked man) pronounces a blessing upon Israel, he says: "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent, . . . He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." (Num. xxiii. 19-21.) This was what distinguished Israel from all the other nations of the earth. *They* were under the controlling power of God's invisible government in providence; but God was present *in Israel* as their King. The symbols of the divine presence, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, went before them from the time when Pharaoh pursued them into the very bed of the Red sea, till they crossed the Jordan at the close of their forty years' wanderings in the desert. Their laws they received direct from His mouth; all their officers and judges were constituted such by His appointment; and in every time of difficulty and danger He was present to be consulted by them, nor did He ever fail, when they were obedient to His voice, to guide and to preserve them. And when they crossed the Jordan, He still accompanied or went before them. The cloud of the divine glory, which had journeyed with them in the wilderness, now rested between the cherubim which overshadowed the mercy-seat; and after their conquest of the land under Joshua, the tabernacle of the congregation, enclosing alike the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, and the shekinah and cherubim above, was set up at Shiloh, which from that time became the seat of government. It was there, "before the Lord," that Joshua divided the land among the tribes for an inheritance. (Josh. xviii. 1-10.) The house of God was there during the period of the Judges,* and up to the time of Eli and Samuel. It was in the days of the latter that the people, wearied of being under the direct government of God, who from time to time appointed judges over them, and desiring to be like the nations which surrounded them, asked Samuel to make them a king over them. This displeased Samuel, and he prayed to the Lord. What was the answer of the Lord to him? "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Sam. viii. 7.) This is very plain. Up to this time the government of Israel had been a pure theocracy. God was their King. He might act by Moses at one time, who is himself said in this sense to have been king in Jeshurun, (see Deut. xxxiii. 4,) or by Joshua at another, or afterwards by the judges who were successively raised up. Still, God was their King. All kings have their ministers and officers by whom they exercise their government, and God had his. *But He himself was King.* And hence, when the people desired to have a king like the nations round about them, God said to Samuel: "They have not rejected thee"—he was but an officer, a subordinate ruler—"but they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them." And yet he acceded to their wishes. First, he let them have a king after their own choice, a great man after the flesh, "higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards." (1 Sam. x. 23-24.) Of him God says: "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." (Hos. xiii. 11.) His reign terminated in death and disaster, and defeat both to himself and to the nation. Such is ever the fruit to self-willed man of his own perverse ways, and to teach Israel this lesson their first king was given them. But God had a deeper purpose in permitting them to have a king. In His eternal counsels, he had determined that all things should be subjected to the sway of Christ, the faithful and unfailing heir of all those dignities and glories committed for a while to one and to another, but forfeited by all through unfaithfulness and sin. Just as Christ is to inherit in the millennial earth, the lost and forfeited dominion of the first Adam over all this lower creation, so is it the purpose of God that He should inherit the throne of Israel. As the first unfolding of this purpose, we find that when Saul, by disobedience, had forfeited the kingdom, God sent Samuel to anoint one to be his successor, who was a man after God's own heart. He had not the natural attractions which were possessed by Saul; even the prophet supposed that his elder brother had been the one to whom he was sent; but David was the man of God's choice; and though rejected for a time and driven out by the wilful one who actually occupied the throne, he was kept from avenging his own quarrel or lifting his hand against the Lord's anointed; and in due time, when Saul and his family were set aside, he was exalted by the hand of God Himself to the throne of Israel. I need not say how in all this David was the type of a greater than himself, rejected for a while, and meekly submitting to be so, but in the end receiving from the Ancient of days a kingdom, and dominion, and greatness under the whole heaven, so that all people, nations and languages, are to serve Him. Still less need I remark, that this inheritor of a greater glory than David's was David's son according to the flesh. David had many sons, and a long line of descendants, but there is one called David's Son, in distinction from all the rest. He who is "the *root*" as well as "the *offspring* of David, the bright and morning star." God's eye was upon *Him* when he made choice of David to sit upon the throne of Israel. And the covenant God made with David can only be understood in the light of this fact. It was when David had built Jerusalem, the place which the Lord had chosen to put His name there, and had brought up the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem, that having it in his heart to build a house for the Lord, the prophet was sent to him to forbid this, but at the same time to assure David of the faithful mercies of his God. Not to him only were these mercies pledged, but to his seed after him. "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart

* See Judges xviii. 31, and other passages.

away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever." (2 Sam. vii. 12-16.) There are evidently two things contemplated in this prophecy. The mere natural seed of David, Solomon and his successors on the throne, and also that blessed One, who, besides being the seed of David, is God over all, blessed for ever. If the mere natural seed of David, Solomon and others, were not regarded here, there could have been nothing said of their committing iniquity and being visited with stripes. And if David's seed had not included the Messiah, David's Lord, there could not have been this unqualified promise that his house, his throne, his kingdom, "should be established for ever." Solomon was doubtless regarded, and that very prominently, in this prediction. He was the immediate successor of his father, and he did build an house for the Lord in Jerusalem. Under his reign, Israel for a little season enjoyed the extent of the dominion secured to them in the covenant with Abraham. (Compare Gen. xv. 18-21 with 2 Chron. ix. 26.) In his reign, Israel attained a pitch of glory, as well as an extent of dominion, unknown in any other period of their history. Read the whole of 1 Kings x. and 2 Chron. ix., and if you compare these with Is. lx., which is a prediction of the future reign of Christ, you will not wonder that the one is so interwoven with the other, the type with the antitype, both in the passage we are considering, viz. God's covenant with David, and in the seventy-second Psalm, which is such a magnificent prophecy of millennial times, as typified by the peaceful reign of Solomon. But Solomon committed iniquity, and he and his successors were chastened with the rod of men. And even before Solomon succeeded to the throne, the failure and disorders of David's house were such that he was quite sensible that there was to be no immediate fulfilment of the highest promises made to his seed. The last words of David shew clearly enough that he looked forward to a greater than Solomon, to One whose coming (after the manner therein described) is even yet future. "David, the son of Jesse, said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me, 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. Although my house be not so with God," (here is the distinct confession that there was no present fitness in his house for the introduction of blessing like this; that He of whom the Rock of Israel spake had yet to be looked for in the distance. But His coming was no less sure because it was not immediate,) "yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands. But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place." How evident that the dying monarch and Psalmist of Israel here looks forward to the day in which "the Son of man shall send forth his angels to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

It is only thus that we can understand such a psalm as the eighty-ninth. There we have the faithfulness of Jehovah pledged to David and his house. "My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted . . . Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth . . Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." Such are Jehovah's words. But immediately after we have a strain of affecting lamentation . . . "But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown, by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his edges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame." Nor is this a mere passing stroke of the rod immediately followed by the sunshine of God's favour. It is of such continuance that the prophet asks, "How long, Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself for ever? Shall thy wrath burn like fire?" Yea, so long delayed is the fulfilment of this covenant of mercy with David's seed, that the Psalmist goes on: "Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, which thou swearest unto David in thy truth? Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed." How this reminds one of the scoffers of the last days, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" And how the context of this latter passage lets us into the blessed secret of the delay which is such a trial of faith to the poor persecuted remnant whose cry we hear in the psalm from which we have so largely quoted. Blessed God! thy long-suffering, thy unwillingness that any should perish, is what affords occasion to the enemies to reproach, while waters of a full cup are wrung out to those who wait for thee. But thou shalt appear to the joy of these, and all thine enemies shall be ashamed.

It would obviously be beyond the limits of a paper like the present to notice all the passages in the prophetic Scriptures, which speak of the reign or kingdom of David's Son and Lord. But there are two great divisions of the period during which the prophecies as to it were delivered; the one prior to the incarnation of Christ, the other subsequent to it. Then again, the former of these divisions is subdivided by an event of much greater importance than is generally attached to it; I mean the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the captivity of the Jewish nation. Until this event occurred, God had a nation or kingdom on the earth. In that kingdom the descendants of David's royal line wielded the sceptre and occupied the throne as the anointed ones of God. They held their dominion by virtue of God's gift of it to David and his seed, and God Himself was still dwelling at Jerusalem, and it was by His laws that the royal authority had to be exercised. It was God's kingdom. It is true that many of the kings rebelled against God and set at nought His laws. And here it was that the ministry of the prophets came in. They testified against the sins of the nation and its kings; foretold the judgments by which those sins were to be punished, and called both kings and people to repentance. And then, for the comfort of any who, either then or afterwards, should hearken to their voice, they foretold the glories of the coming kingdom of the true Son of David, the heir of all the blessings promised to David and his seed. This prophetic ministry, in its most definite form, began with Isaiah in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Abaz, and Hezekiah, and includes his prophecies, with those of Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah. After the overthrow and captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, things were entirely changed. It was not that there was any transfer of royal authority from the house of David to some other family in Israel, as there had been from Saul and his house to David and his seed. No; the covenant with David and his seed is not broken; so far from this, the captivity was a part of the chastening promised in that covenant if the children of David should fail to walk in his steps. But there was a transfer of power; a transfer of it from Israel altogether to the Gentiles. But this transfer of power to the Gentiles did not constitute them God's kingdom. Israel had ceased to be such. The city which He had chosen for His habitation was destroyed; His presence was no longer manifested in the magnifical temple which Solomon had built for His glory. Ezekiel had seen that glory remove first from the temple, (see Ezek. x. 18, 19,) and then from the city altogether; (xi. 23;) and the temple where that glory had once dwelt was now burned with fire. Israel was given over into the hands of the Babylonish king; and to the king of Babylon it was said: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." (Dan. ii. 37, 38.) But, large as was this gift of power, it did not

constitute Nebuchadnezzar God's anointed, nor did it make his empire the kingdom of God. All that had made Israel such was now removed from that guilty nation, but not bestowed on their Gentile oppressors. There was no shekinah at Babylon; no sacrifices there to the God of heaven; nor was there any divine code of laws to regulate the exercise of the imperial power with which the monarch was invested. One of the first acts of that power was to establish idolatry and punish with death all who refused to worship an idol. And all that is foretold of Gentile dominion is its being used in one act of rebellion against God after another, till it is destroyed at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then, we are told, "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. ii. 44.) This is quoted from a prophecy delivered and recorded during the latter subdivision of the period preceding the birth of Jesus. Ezekiel in a manner belongs to both subdivisions. He was himself a captive in Chaldea, but his prophecy was in part addressed to those who still remained at Jerusalem. Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, belong to the period which succeeded the carrying away captive to Babylon. These last prophesied to a poor feeble remnant who had been permitted to return. Not that the dominion was restored to them, or the kingdom of God again set up. No; they were tributaries and subjects of the king of Persia; and the chief end for which they seem to have been restored to their own land is, that among them Christ might be born, and that to them He might be presented as their long-expected king; the seed of Abraham and the Lord of David, as well as the seed of the woman and the Son of God. But, before considering this great crisis in the history of the world as well as of Israel, let us glance at some of the principal points in the Old Testament prophecies touching Christ's kingdom. In doing this, I can only refer to the passages without quoting them; and let those who may be interested in the inquiry consult them with their contexts, in God's holy Word. There seem to me to be four great leading traits in the prophetic picture of the kingdom so often spoken of. There are, of course, innumerable details: I confine myself to the grand leading features.

1. He who is to reign as King is the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ps. ii. 6-9; xxi.; xxiv.; xlv.; lxxii.; cx.; cxviii. 22-26. Is. ix. 6, 7; xi. 1-5; verse 10; xxxii. 1, 2. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; xxxiii. 14-17. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; xxxvii. 22-25. Dan. vii. 13, 14. Mic. v. 2-4. Zech. vi. 12, 13; ix. 9, 10.) All these passages, and many more, under various names and titles, set forth our Lord Jesus Christ as the One who is to reign in Israel and over all the earth.

2. Jerusalem or Zion is the place of the special display of the glory of Christ *on earth* in His kingdom. (Is. i. 26, 27; ii. 3; xii. 6; xxiv. 23; xxvii. 13; xxxiii. 20, 21; lx. 14; lxii. 1-12; lxvi. 10-20. Jer. iii. 17; xxxiii. 10, 11. Joel iii. 16, 17. Mic. iv. 7, 8. Zeph. iii. 14-17. Zech. ii. 10-12; viii. 2-8; xiv. 16-21.) I say *on earth*, because the rejection of Christ by Israel and the putting off, as it were, of His reign, have made way for the unfolding of God's purpose, that His Son should have an heavenly Bride as well as an earthly kingdom; that He Himself should have a family in heaven, as well as a kingdom on the earth. But as to the kingdom of Christ *on the earth*, it is clear from all the passages cited, as well as from others, that in it Jerusalem has the chief place; that it is, so to speak, the centre, the metropolis of Christ's kingdom on the earth—"the city of the great King."

3. In the kingdom of Christ, the Gentiles are to be subject to Israel; they are to hold a subordinate, an inferior place. This is important, for under the present dispensation the great truth is, that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free." For proof that it will not be thus in the kingdom of Christ, foretold in the Old Testament, see amongst others the following passages: Is. xi. 10; xiv. 1, 2; xlix. 22-26; lx. 3-16; lxi. 5-9; lxvi. 12. Mic. v. 7, 8. Zech. viii. 22, 23.

4. The effects of this reign of Christ will be universal righteousness and peace. (See Ps. lxxii. Is. ii. 2-4; xi. 6-9; xxv. 7; lix. 19; lx. 1-22. Mic. iv. 1-5. Zeph. iii. 9, 10. Zech. xiv. 9.)

The light shed on this subject by the further revelation of the New Testament may be considered, if the Lord will, in another communication. Meanwhile, the Lord grant us, in deep reverence of spirit, and yet in the joy which His own presence alone can inspire, to pursue these meditations on His Word, and to be by them more and more separated from all else to Himself! W. T.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

(Mark xiv. 14-50.)

There are two sides in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus: the sufferings which, during His career, He endured from men, and the sufferings which He knew, when, taking the cup He had to drink, He bore the weight of the wrath of God.

The extent of man's iniquity appears in two ways: directly in all that man did in opposing and rejecting Jesus; but, above all, in the weight of sin the Lord Jesus had to bear when He drank the cup which the Father had given Him. For Him this was no light thing. He "began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy; and saith unto them: My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." (Verse 33.)

Among those who may read this, are there not several who have never been saddened because of their sins? Is there any thing which more lays bare the folly and levity of the heart of man? We who by sin have made so bitter and awful the cup which Jesus drank, we may consider sin as trifling in the eyes of God. But it is He, it is Jesus who found how horrible it was. If our hearts, miserable as they are, feel not sin, Christ felt it when He drank the cup for us and bore sin for us. If the heart does not understand the gravity of sin, not to the same point as Jesus knew it, but at least in some degree—if, feeble as it may be, the feeling of the gravity of sin is a stranger to us—we have not at all entered into the mind of Jesus.

It is very different to have the heart touched by these things, or merely to have the knowledge of them; for it is not of this knowledge that I would speak here. To have the knowledge of the gravity of sin, of what sin cost Jesus, and not to have the heart touched by it, is even worse than to know nothing about it whatever. The state of the heart is, in one of the cases, even worse than in the other.

We are going to see feebly, very feebly, what were the sufferings of Jesus.

No one, alas! can fathom to the bottom what those sufferings were. Every day you have thoughts, you say and do things, you have the sins which caused Christ to drink the cup and undergo the wrath of God. And, in spite of that, you perhaps think that you have not been so wicked! If you have the thought that Christ suffered for your sins, you will find that Christ did not judge that these sins were not most grave. He was sore amazed and very heavy for them. In the garden of Gethsemane, Christ prepared Himself for others to meet with His God, according to the holiness of His judgment. His soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. xxvi. 38.)

You who think to prepare yourselves to meet your God, have you these sorrows and that sore amazement? However vague may be the thought you may have of them, if you would learn what they have been, consider how in Gethsemane Christ was heavy and sore amazed at sin! And if you have not done so, no more have you appreciated the love of Jesus, nor the work of Jesus in grace. What is important and needful is, that our consciences should be touched by the thought that Christ was there for us in suffering that He might bear our sins. If my soul is not brought to own it, it is necessary that I should pass there myself, and suffer for myself the wrath and justice of God, such as Christ has undergone. If, when His Son, His beloved, who had no sin, was made sin for us, God had to smite sin in Him; if His justice and His holiness could not spare Jesus, think you to escape when you shall meet the face of God? And when I consider Christ suffering the wrath and curse, can I think that my sins are a trifle? The evil I had done was so serious in the eyes of God and in those of Jesus, that, when Jesus charged Himself with it, this evil made Him agonize, and caused to fall on Him the weight of God's wrath. Christ suffered on the cross the wrath of God, and why? Because you deserved this wrath and eternal condemnation.

Often, without knowing it, souls go to meet God with their sin upon them. Souls are often there without having the consciousness of it. Is it not true, for many among you, that you walk in this life to meet God and to face His judgment, and that you fear nothing? And if it is thus, if you thus walk at ease in the face of this judgment, what is it to say this, except that the conscience is not awakened, nay, is even hardened, in spite of the agony of Jesus, in spite of the sufferings of Jesus, and in spite of which Jesus had to drink because of sin?

How beautiful it is to contemplate Jesus in the midst of this agony and of these sufferings! We see Him perfectly calm and weighing with calmness the weight of the cup that He would drink. And in what circumstances? In the midst of all that which was calculated to break and bruise the affections of His heart. The more the world rejects and despises us, the more also have we need of affection. Jesus was full of goodness and of tenderness for His disciples. He had loved and borne with them. What happens to Him? What does He find in their midst, when the iniquity of man is about to be let loose against Him? What He finds is, that in the midst of those He loved, of those with whom He was at table and lived as with His friends and companions, (verse 18,) Jesus can say: "Verily, I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me." Yes, one of you who have been with me, one of you, my familiar friends! His heart is wounded to the bottom. And as they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, Is it I? Jesus shews how His heart is broken. "It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish." One of you, who have known me, who have seen me, and who were received into my intimacy. And Jesus was perfectly calm.

Verses 22-26. They went to crucify Him. Of whom does He think? Of His disciples. His body was going to be broken and His blood shed. He was about to undergo the wrath of God, and He explains to them in peace the cost of what He is going to do for them. He transports Himself beyond those ages in which we live, to the time when, satisfied with the travail of his soul, (Is. liii. 11,) He will drink anew in the kingdom of God the fruit of the vine. (Verse 25.) How beautiful it is thus to see the Lord Jesus cast His glances through the ages! In the midst of the frightful circumstances in which He is found, His soul is calm enough to think of the everlasting happiness achieved for His disciples by His sufferings, and of the joy that He will experience in again seeing them in this state of glory. Without letting Himself be turned away by the thought of His sufferings, without agitation, without amazement, He contemplates in peace the value of His sacrifice and the happiness of again finding His disciples at the end. The treason of Judas, the denial of Peter, the forsaking of the disciples, the rejection of the world, the enmity of Satan, nothing troubles Him. "They sung a hymn." (Verse 26.)

Verses 27, 28. "Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me, this night." To be ashamed of Him, miserable as we are! And yet, how this puts in relief the unutterable love of Jesus! He tells His sheep, who are going to be scattered, that He will rejoin them shortly, and that, as soon as He shall have completed all this work which is to save His own—to manifest, alas! all the feebleness of the flesh in them, and all the perfection of obedience in Jesus, He will go before them into Galilee.

Verses 29, 30. Peter has the false confidence of the flesh. Does Jesus reproach him with it? What does Peter's presumption produce in the heart of Jesus? He warns Peter and prays for him. His love steadfast, unchangeable, never slackens. His heart is not discouraged. It is He, He who was to bear all the pain, who encourages and consoles His disciples.

Verse 31. It may happen to others beside Peter to say: "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise," for "likewise also said they all." Where Christ is honoured and owned, in the midst of His own, in the midst of such as confess His name, people may well own Him, they may well have a Christ, though rejected of men; but, in other society, in the midst of those who reject Him, how ready is the heart to conceal that it knows Him! And if you find it evil in Peter to have thus denied Him, is that less awful in you? And if, when we are exposed to disgrace for His name, we do not love to confess it, do we not deny Him as much as Peter? And it is done because the conscience is not awakened and touched because Jesus suffered for sin. What I desire is, that the conscience should feel the weight of the sin which made Jesus suffer, and this sin is yours; it is that your heart should be touched by the feeling of the love of Jesus, by this power of love in virtue of which Jesus has charged Himself before God with the weight and the responsibility of sin, and in virtue of which He has borne all this weight when He was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." (Is. liii. 5.)

Verses 32-39. Jesus tells his disciples to pray. (Verse 38.) It is no more for Him the time of consoling His own. He must meet for them the wrath of God. He now reviews in spirit before God that which He is to suffer in drinking the cup of the wrath of God. Jesus, who was holy, and who had abode in the love of the Father, alone understood what was the holiness of God and of what cost His love was. He was thence so much the more capable of alone understanding how horrible sin was, and how awful was the wrath of God. Indifference to this wrath cannot be found save in those who, being in sin, know not the holiness of God, and who, strangers to God, have not tasted His love. It is awful to see us calm, contented with ourselves and careless, when one knows the pangs which sin has cost the Lord Jesus, and why he was sore amazed and very heavy.

In His career of obedience, Jesus suffered the contradiction of sinners. Never did He turn away from them, and never did He demand that such a cup should be taken away from Him. Why this? Because this was not merely the cup of the iniquity of men, or of Satan's malice, but that of the wrath of God. In what He had had to suffer before from men, He had the joy of accomplishing the will of His Father; but, in this cup, which was that of wrath, there was not one drop of sweetness. Jesus prays that, if it be possible, this cup might be far removed from Him. And why impossible? Here is the reason. It is impossible that God should endure sin, and (since Jesus Himself was made sin for us) that the wrath of God should not be accomplished against sin.

Behold, dear readers, where you are! If Christ has not borne your sins, impossible that you should escape the judgment that God has pronounced against sin. It is a serious thought. Weigh this expression of Jesus: "If it be possible." Certainly, if that had been possible, God would have heard Jesus, and He would have spared His beloved Son this unparalleled sorrow. Why does Jesus say, "If it be possible?" Because He who knew what the love of God was, was also in a condition to know how terrible was His wrath.

What was the state of the disciples? They slept. (Verse 37.) They had not enough affection for Him to watch one hour. Peter, who was willing to face prison or death, could not watch one hour. He had slept on the mountain during the transfiguration, (Luke ix. 32,) and he sleeps on Gethsemane. This discloses, at the bottom of our hearts, the selfishness which is a stranger to the affections which make our hearts enter into the glory, as well as into the sufferings of Jesus.

Verses 40-43. Was the love of Jesus disheartened or fatigued by all that? No; He must, He would glorify His Father, and save His own, and He is not arrested by any difficulty. Impossible that we should be saved if He drink not the cup, and He takes it. His love is mightier than death. He presents all to God. And from the moment He found it impossible for this cup to pass without His drinking it, calm again possesses His soul, and He takes it.

Verses 44-50. Of what is not the heart of man capable? God has allowed that all the perfidy of the heart should be laid bare, and that man should betray Jesus by a kiss. Not a pang, not a trial that Jesus had not to endure in order to put His heart to the test. Without that, something would have been wanting to the cup which He had to drink. The trial of the Lord would not have been complete, and the question of man's iniquity would not have been cleared in the presence of the judgment of God; but Jesus has perfectly glorified God His Father in the midst of all the iniquity of man and all the malice of Satan. All that which could wound and crush, God's wrath, Satan's wickedness, man's iniquity, all bruised His heart to pieces, and all made the immeasurable excellence of Jesus to shine before God. The heart of Jesus was probed to the bottom. And what is, after all that, the position of sinners? There remains nothing but the cost and worth of Jesus for them; and in the eyes of God, he that believeth has all the worth of Jesus before God. He may present himself before God, as loved of God to the point that God has given His Son, and as having the cost of all the sufferings of Jesus.

If Christ is thus presented to you, of two things, one: either you are guilty of the sufferings of Jesus, if you despise them; or, if by grace you lay hold of their infinite value by faith, you enjoy the effect of these sufferings. If you despise them, you will be treated as those who despise them. If, by grace, your eyes are open to understand what Jesus has done, all the efficacy of His work is applied to you, and you enjoy the love of God. Either, you are guilty of the sufferings of Jesus, or you enjoy the cost of His sufferings.

To confess what are your sins which have made Jesus suffer, is really to believe that He has borne them. If you say, It is I who have made Christ thus to suffer, you also say, For me, I shall never suffer like that. If Jesus has borne my sins and undergone their consequences, I shall not undergo them, and I am delivered and set free from condemnation.

May God, by the feeling of the love of Jesus, touch your hearts, and make you conscious at what infinite price it is for you that Jesus presented Himself in order to undergo the wrath of God! Oh! how precious is the love of Jesus!—(*From the French of J. N. D.*)

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

LEVITICUS X. 1, 2. XVI.

SO ARRANGED AS TO SHOW THE ORDINANCES OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT TO BE TYPICAL OF THE DISPENSATIONAL WAYS OF THE LORD, BOTH FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD AND FOR ISRAEL; WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES AT THE END.

BY SIR EDWARD DENNY, BART.

N.B.—The letters [A] [B] here mark the *alternate*, and also the *simultaneous* actings of Aaron, (*thrice* in each case,) for his own house and the people—a point most needful to notice in reading this chapter.

LEVITICUS X.

THE FAILURE OF THE PRIESTHOOD. (See Note 1.)
(Verses 1, 2.)

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and OFFERED STRANGE FIRE before the Lord, which he commanded them not, and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they DIED BEFORE THE LORD.

LEVITICUS XVI.

THE RESULT OF THE ABOVE FAILURE.
(Verses 1, 2.)

And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy-seat, which is upon the ark, (Exodus xxvi. 33.34,) that he die not; for I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD UPON THE MERCY-SEAT.

[A] **Aaron and his House.** (See Note 2.)

The sin and burnt-offerings *chosen*. (Verse 3.)

Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young BULLOCK for a *sin*-offering and a RAM for a *burnt*-offering.

AARON CLOTHED. (Verse 4.)

He shall put on the holy linen COAT, and he shall have the linen BREECHES upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen GIRDLE, and with the linen MITRE shall he be attired; these are HOLY GARMENTS; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

[B] **The Congregation.**

The sin and burnt-offerings *chosen*. (Verse 5.)

And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel TWO kids of the GOATS for a *sin*-offering, and one RAM for a *burnt*-offering.

[A] **Aaron and his House.**

The sin-offerings *presented*. (Verse 6.)

And Aaron shall offer his BULLOCK of the *sin*-offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself and his house.

[B] **The Congregation.**

The sin-offerings *presented*—lots cast. (Verses 7-10.)

And he shall take the TWO GOATS, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall CAST LOTS upon the two goats; one lot FOR THE LORD, and the other lot for the SCAPEGOAT. (*Azazel.* Heb.) And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a *sin*-offering. (*to be killed.*) But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be *presented alive* before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

[A] **Aaron and his House.** (See Note 3.)

The sin-offering *killed*—the blood *with incense* taken within the vail, foreshowing the intercession of Christ for the *Church now*. (Verses 11-14.)

And Aaron shall bring the BULLOCK of the *sin*-offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering which is for himself: and he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of SWEET INCENSE beaten small, and BRING IT WITHIN THE VAIL; and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not; and he shall take of the BLOOD of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

[B] **The Congregation.**

The sin-offering *killed*—the blood taken within the vail, foreshowing the intercession of Christ for *Israel hereafter*. (Verse 15.)

Then shall he kill the GOAT of the *sin*-offering that is for the people, and BRING HIS BLOOD WITHIN THE VAIL, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat.

(Verses 16-17.)

And he shall make an atonement for the HOLY PLACE, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for HIMSELF, and for his HOUSHOLD, and for all the CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE HALLOWED. (See Note 4.)
(Verses 18, 19.)

And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, (see Exod. xxx. 1-10,) and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the BULLOCK, (for Aaron and his house,) and of the blood of the GOAT, (for the congregation,) and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

SIN CONFESSED—THE SCAPEGOAT SENT FORTH. (See Note 5.)
(Verses 20-22.)

And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the LIVE GOAT; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and CONFESS OVER HIM ALL THE INIQUITIES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man (*or "a man of opportunity, Heb.—see margin*) into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited; ("*of separation*," Heb.—see margin;) and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

AARON CHANGES HIS GARMENTS. (See Note 6.) (Ver. 23, 24.)

And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall PUT OFF THE LINEN GARMENTS, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there; and he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and PUT ON HIS GARMENTS, AND COME FORTH,

[A] [B] **Aaron, his House, and the Congregation.** (Note 7.)

The burnt-offerings killed. (Verse 24.)

And offer his *burnt*-offering, (the RAM, *see verse* 3,) and the *burnt*-offering of the people, (the RAM, *see verse* 5,) and make atonement for himself and for the people.

[A] [B] **Aaron, his House, and the Congregation.**

The *fat* of the sin-offering burnt. (Verse 25.)

And the FAT of the *sin*-offering (i.e. of the BULLOCK for Aaron and his house, and of the GOAT for the congregation) shall he BURN UPON THE ALTAR.

HE WHO LETS GO THE SCAPEGOAT WASHED. (See Note 8.)
(Verse 26.)

And he that let go the goat for the SCAPEGOAT shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

[A] [B] Aaron, his House, and the Congregation.

The sin-offering burnt outside the camp. (Verses 27, 28.)

And the BULLOCK for the *sin*-offering, and the GOAT for the *sin*-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. (*See Heb.* xiii. 11, 12.) And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT A STATUTE FOR EVER. (See Note 9.)

A day of *affliction* and of *rest*. (Verses 29-31.)

And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the SEVENTH MONTH, ON THE TENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, (*i.e. the day on which the year of jubilee fell every forty-ninth year,*) ye shall AFFLICT YOUR SOULS, and do NO WORK at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a SABBATH OF REST unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever.

AARON'S SUCCESSORS. (See Note 10.)

The day of atonement to be "once a year." (Verses 32-34.)

And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: and he shall make an atonement for the HOLY SANCTUARY, and he shall make an atonement for the TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION, and for the ALTAR, and he shall make an atonement for the PRIESTS and for all the PEOPLE OF THE CONGREGATION, and this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins ONCE A YEAR.

AND HE DID AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

NOTE 1.

(Leviticus x. 1, 2; xvi. 1, 2)

THE failure of the Aaronical priesthood, fully developed in the person of Caiaphas, when he, together with the Jewish nation, rejected their king, led to the appointment of the unchangeable priesthood of CHRIST. For this cause the sin of Nadab and Abihu appears to be noticed at the opening of the sixteenth of Leviticus. This act of the priests, in offering strange fire, was *in embryo*, the failure of Aaron's house at the outset. And this it was which led the Lord to appoint a new ordinance (namely the great act of atonement made on this day) wherein, in the services of Aaron once every year, both for HIMSELF AND HIS HOUSE, and at the same time for the PEOPLE, we discern *in type* the actings of Christ once and for ever, both for His holy priesthood, the CHURCH now upon earth, and hereafter for ISRAEL.

Observe, the action of Caiaphas in rending his garments, a thing strictly forbidden for the high priest to do, (see Lev. xxi. 10,) is very significant. He did so at the moment when he accused the Holy One of blasphemy; when he, together with the Jewish elders, pronounced him guilty of death. Hence, in thus rending his garments, he unconsciously showed that the Levitical priesthood was wholly defiled, *that his office was ended*, to be superseded by the priesthood of Him who never will fail, through whom we draw nigh in the full assurance of faith.

The more closely this chapter (Lev. xvi.) is studied, the more clearly the divine order thereof will be seen. Here Aaron is shown acting *alternately for his own house and the people*, the distinction between them being so accurately defined, that there is no confusion whatever. All here is in order with regard to the priests and the people, together with the victims offered for each. Here, observe, the sacrifices are of *two kinds*, namely, the *sin*, and the *burnt*-offerings; the former being expressive of Christ "made sin" for His people, and therefore forsaken by God on the tree; the latter, of the delight which the Father, notwithstanding, took in His Son, at the very moment when He was bearing the curse for His people.

The above is the more *enlarged dispensational view* of this chapter. In another and more limited sense, regarding it as *exclusively Jewish*, it doubtless applies to the redemption of Aaron's house and the people hereafter. In this light it is presented in Lev. xxiii. 26-32, namely, as merely foreshowing *the repentance and forgiveness of Israel.* (See Note 9.)

NOTE 2.

(Verses 3-17.)

In the choice, the presentation and the death of the victims, together with the entrance of Aaron into the holiest, *alternately*, as we here see, for the *priests* and the *people*, we trace Christ, the true offering for sin, chosen by God in the first place, (verses 3-5,) next coming forth as the obedient servant on earth, (verses 6-10,) and, lastly, laying down His life on the cross; and then, having ascended to heaven, there making intercession, both for His *Church* and for *Israel.* (Verses 11-15.)

Observe, before Aaron is clothed, in verse 4, with the holy linen garments, which show him as the type of Christ coming forth to do the will of His Father, the victims for himself and his house are selected. (Verse 3.) *Afterwards*, when he has put on his garments, the offerings for the congregation are chosen. (Verse 5.) Thus, *from everlasting*, before the course of ages began, Christ was set apart to die for His Church. *Within the limits of time*, on the other hand, after He had appeared upon earth, He was fully revealed as the one who was to suffer for Israel. This surely is characteristic of the calling of Israel and of the Church, the history of the one being connected with *time*, that of the other being linked with eternity. (See Deut. xxxii. 8. Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8.)

This, it is true, can be shown more in a *negative* than in a positive way. In Ephes. i. 4, 5, we read of the Church of God being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, while nothing of the kind is stated of Israel, or of Christ in connexion with Israel. True it is, God's counsels are from everlasting to everlasting; but still there is, in this way, a marked difference in the aspect in which the calling of the Church and of Israel, with regard to *time* and *eternity*, are presented in Scripture.

NOTE 3.

(Verses 11-17.)

The high priest, having slain the sin-offering for *himself and his house*, takes the blood of the victim, with sweet incense, into the holiest. (Verses 11-14.) So Christ having died, having risen and ascended to heaven, there intercedes for His *Church* (*not Israel as yet*) at the right hand of God.

Then, having finished his action within the vail for himself and his house, Aaron comes forth, and, entering the second time into the holiest, there atones for *the people.* (Verse 15.) So the intercession of Christ for His Church having closed, (she having been caught up to the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 15-18,) His intercession for *Israel* will begin. This gives us a glimpse of the last week of Daniel, the time of Anti-Christ's power, when Christ will intercede for, and also, in spirit, walk and act in the midst of His suffering remnant, the nucleus of the holy nation for whom the kingdom is destined.

In connexion with this, we may notice Rev. viii. 1-4, where we read as follows: "And when He (the Lamb) had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels stand before God; and to them were given seven trumpets, and another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." Now, what does this mean? Perhaps it symbolically describes the *beginning of intercession for Israel*, after the Church has disappeared from the earth; the cry also of the remnant, answered by judgment on the wicked world, shown by the angel casting fire into the earth. Then, again, this "*silence in heaven*" may express an *interruption*, a *pause* in the intercession of Christ, between the ascension of the Church and the calling out of the remnant; and if so, we may imagine this silence, this pause, yea, the rapture of the saints, to occur in Lev. xvi., in the interval between the services of Aaron for himself and his house, in verses 11-14, and his actings in verse 15, for the congregation of Israel.

In the intercession of Aaron for the congregation, it is interesting to observe, that there is no mention of *incense*, as in the case

of himself and his house. This expresses the deep delight which Christ takes in His CHURCH, His own elect body, the bride, the Lamb's wife; deeper by far than that which His Jewish people will ever awaken. True it is, the above quotation (Rev. viii. 1-4) does speak of *incense*, which, whether Israel or the Church is in question, must always accompany the intercession of Christ. Seeing, however, that Lev. xvi. presents *a contrast between Israel and the Church*, its being *noticed* in verses 11-14, and not in verse 15, has surely a significant meaning.

Observe, what is said in verses 16, 17 does not describe an *advance in the action of Aaron*, their object being simply to show that the blood of the bullock and that of the goat both avail for the purification not only of the *priests* and the *people*, but also for that of the *sanctuary*, and that thereby the holy *places*, as well as the *persons*, of Aaron's house and the congregation, are cleansed.

NOTE 4.

(Verses 18, 19.)

The golden altar of incense, the symbol of worship, thus cleansed with the blood of the bullock for the *priests*, and that of the goat for the *people*, foreshadows the communion of the CHURCH and of ISRAEL hereafter, the former in heaven, the latter on earth, in giving glory to Christ, the Saviour of both. The Church *now* in spirit has free access to God through His blood; *hereafter* the way will be opened through the same blood for Israel.

It is not the brazen altar of burnt-offering, observe, but the golden altar of incense that is here meant. This is evident from Exodus xxx. 1-10. And this being hallowed before either the scapegoat goes forth, or Aaron changes his garments, shows that the Jewish remnant will learn the song of redemption, that they will unite with the Church, above in heaven at the time, in praising the Lamb, before Israel, *as a nation*, is accepted—before Christ appears in His glory. As an instance of this, in Rev. xiv. 1-5, the hundred and forty and four thousand with the Lamb on Mount Sion, who had been previously sealed for blessing *on earth*, (chap. vii. 1-8,) learn their song from others *in heaven*; not that these others, who are heard "harping with their harps," can be said to be THE CHURCH, but, at all events, it is clear that their place is *above*, and there with the Church unite in praising the Lamb.

NOTE 5.

(Verses 20, 21.)

The Azazel or scapegoat let go into the wilderness, charged with the sins of the people, expresses the full public declaration of Christ in the sight of heaven and earth, that the sins of the whole house of Israel are forgiven, that they are owned once again as God's people. The goat that was slain, whose blood was taken by Aaron into the holiest, shows the Lord simply dying for Israel, while the scapegoat, on the other hand, presents Him who had died, as alive again from the dead; and now, after the lapse of ages of dispersion and sorrow, making an end of the sins of His people. (See Dan. ix. 24.) Thus the great leading doctrines of death and resurrection, of Christ shedding His blood, and the Spirit hereafter applying that blood, are declared through the medium of these two mystical goats.

NOTE 6.

(Verses 23, 24.)

These garments of Aaron, emphatically termed "*his* garments," were those, it would seem, which were made "*for glory and for beauty*," (Exod. xxviii. 2,) and which especially belonged to him as the high priest. Here they are contrasted with the holy linen garments above-named, which he exclusively wore while dealing with *sin*; namely, while offering the sin-offerings, and which, when this part of his work is concluded, he changes, and comes forth arrayed in those garments which mark him as the type of CHRIST IN HIS GLORY. Thus clothed, as we read, he offers the *burnt-offering*, the expression, not of God visiting sin on the blessed person of Jesus, but of the delight of the Father in the work of the Son in redemption.

It is blessed to see that the garments of the priests, Aaron's sons, though simpler and less costly than Aaron's by far, like his, were made "*for glory and for beauty*," (Exod. xxviii. 40,) shewing thereby the oneness of Christ and His Church in that hope which is laid up for both in the kingdom.

NOTE 7.

(Verses 24, 25.)

Up to this point all the sacrifices were *for sin*, the expression of Christ bearing the wrath of God on the cross. Here the *burnt-offerings*, (namely, the *two rams*, together with the *fat* of the bullock and of the goat,) the expression of God's infinite delight in His Son, sums up the sacrifices of this mystical day. Observe, "the fat," though part of the animals offered for *sin*, was in itself, nevertheless, a *burnt-offering*, a most full and blessed expression of the intrinsic perfection and excellence of Christ, showing that He who was bearing God's wrath was, at the same moment, "*a sweet savour unto the Lord*." (Lev. i. 9.)

NOTE 8.

(Verses 26-28.)

Christ having fully completed the work of atonement, having been *made sin* for His people, will appear the second time *without sin*, (without the imputation thereof,) unto salvation. (Heb. ix. 28.) Typical, therefore, of this, in verse 24, we have already seen the high priest washing himself in the holy place, putting on his glorious garments, and then coming forth. So now also (in verses 26, 28) expressive of the same blessed truth, we see him who had let go the Azazel, or scapegoat, into the wilderness; and him also who burns the sin-offering outside, washing their clothes, bathing their flesh in water, and then re-entering the camp.

NOTE 9.

(Verses 29-31.)

In Lev. xxiii., where the day of atonement occurs at the close of the chapter, only *this last part of the ordinance*, which speaks of the affliction of the souls of the people, and of their ceasing from work, is alluded to; no notice whatever being taken of the Levitical services which are here so minutely detailed. The reason for which difference appears to be this, the object of Lev. xxiii., like the chapter before us, being designed to exhibit the dispensational ways of the Lord from beginning to end, and the day of atonement being there viewed in *one aspect*, and used for one purpose alone, namely, to point to the time, in the history of the world, when Israel will repent; more than this especial part of the ordinance, where such repentance is foreshown, where the people are told to afflict their souls on this day of redemption, was not needed, in order to fill out the picture which that dispensational chapter presents. This is an instance of the harmony which Scripture ever presents, of the order and beauty which may be traced in the ways of God with His people.

NOTE 10.

(Verses 32-34.)

"*Once every year*" atonement was thus made for the children of Israel; "so Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many, and" (as we see foreshown in this most beautiful chapter) "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 28.) Here we have a summary of all that was cleansed on this day of atonement, namely, the *holy sanctuary*—the *tabernacle of the congregation*—the *golden altar*—the *priests*—and the *people*, (both *places* and *persons*,) *so Christ*, having made peace through the blood of his cross, will not finish his work till He has reconciled all things which are on earth or in heaven to God. (See Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20.)

How sweet and emphatic are the closing words of this chapter, "HE DID AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES." Thus, at the bidding of Moses, Aaron obeyed, so Christ, the obedient servant, having finished the work given Him to do upon earth, will never cease till He has fulfilled the whole purpose of God in redemption.

The following analysis will be found an assistance in reviewing this subject, in tracing the order and harmony which this portion of Scripture presents.

LEVITICUS X.

THE FAILURE OF THE PRIESTHOOD. (Verses 1, 2.)

LEVITICUS XVI.

THE RESULT OF THE ABOVE FAILURE. (Verses 1, 2.)

[A] **Aaron and his House.**
The sin and burnt-offerings *chosen*. (Verse 3.)

AARON CLOTHED. (Verse 4.)

[B] **The Congregation.**
The sin and burnt-offerings *chosen*. (Verse 5.)

[A] **Aaron and his House.**
The sin-offering *presented*. (Verse 6.)

[B] **The Congregation.**
The sin-offering *presented*—lots cast. (Verses 7-10.)

[A] **Aaron and his House.**
The sin-offering *killed*—the blood, with *incense*, taken within the vail, foreshowing the intercession of Christ for *the Church now*. (Verse 11-14.)

[B] **The Congregation.**
The sin-offering *killed*—the blood taken within the vail, foreshowing the intercession of Christ for *Israel hereafter*. (Verses 15-17.)

THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE HALLOWED. (Verses 18, 19.)

SIN CONFESSED, THE SCAPEGOAT SENT FORTH. (Verses 20-22.)

AARON CHANGES HIS GARMENTS. (Ver. 23, 24.)

[A] [B] **Aaron, his House, and the Congregation.**
The burnt-offerings killed. (Verse 24.)

[A] [B] **Aaron, his House, and the Congregation.**
The fat of the sin-offering burnt. (Verse 25.)

HE WHO LETS GO THE SCAPEGOAT WASHED. (Verse 26.)

[A] [B] **Aaron, his House, and the Congregation.**
The sin-offering burnt outside the camp. (Verses 27, 28.)

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT A STATUTE FOR EVER.
A day of *affliction* and of *rest*. (Verses 29-31.)

AARON'S SUCCESSORS.
The day of atonement to be "*once a year*." (Verses 32-34.)

THE ALTAR OF ABRAHAM.

(Gen. xi. 27; xii. 1-7.)

We are going to examine the various circumstances which furnished Abraham occasion to offer his worship to God. We will also consider his walk and the character of his worship, and how he was led by faith to present this worship to God.

It is very precious to find in Genesis the elements and the broad principles of the relations of God with man in all their freshness, from the creation, sin, and the promise of the second Adam. We also see how the government of God was exercised; in what manner man fell; the judgment of the deluge, which put an end to the old world; the promises made to Abraham; the two covenants of Sarai and Hagar; the relations of God with the Jews in the beautiful typical history of Joseph.

In a word, we find in Genesis, not only a history, but the grand bases of God's relations with man. Abraham under this holds a chief place as the depositary of the promises. We may understand that by what the apostle Paul says to the Galatians. (iii. 13, 14.) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith.

We see by this word, "*blessing of Abraham*," the importance of that which is attributed to him. In considering the blessing of Abraham, we shall see the position God has made for us, in his grace, as to the accomplishment of the promises; even in considering it as a principle, we shall better understand the glory of Christ, heir of all the promises of God. It is true that the relations of Christ with the Church were yet partly hidden, having been revealed only after his death, save at least in type; nevertheless, the various aspects of the relations of God with man, in all their freshness, and the various cases in which they have place, are found in the germ, in this book.

In the ninth chapter, after the account of the deluge, we find that Noah, to whom the government of the earth had been entrusted, fails in this position. He got drunk. We see afterwards the iniquity of Ham, who mocked his father; then, in Babel, the separation of the nations, each after his tongue. In the tenth chapter, men united amongst one another exalt themselves against God. In the midst appears Nimrod, the violent man upon the earth; while the family of Seth, blessed in the earth, is that in the bosom of which God establishes particular relations with men. Babel presents itself, whether as the commencement of the kingdom of Nimrod, or as the false glory of those men whose unity was in Babel, and who were dispersed of God.

Such are the principal features of the three proceding chapters. Noah had failed; then the nations. Men exalted themselves against God instead of being subject to Him; they joined themselves together to make themselves a name, and not to be scattered; but their exaltation becomes the cause of their dispersion.

Before we stop at the race of Shem, concerning whom God is particularly occupied, one remark is needed. A terrible principle is come up in this state of things! Man exalts himself in separating from God. But, insufficient to himself, he becomes a slave; he submits to Satan's power, serves him and adores him. Having abandoned God, Satan usurps this place; he alarms the conscience; he takes possession of the heart and energy of man who gives himself up to idolatry.

You will find this fact in the twenty-fourth chapter and second verse of the book of Joshua. It is the principle of Satan's power on earth; that adds to the history of man. Joshua furnishes us with what we add to this account of the things which came to pass after the deluge,—the violence of man, the dispersion of the nations; that is, that the family of Shem even, these children of Heber, worshipped other gods than the true and living God. The apostle tells us they were demons.—"The things which they sacrificed, they sacrificed to demons and not to God." Such is the new world; Satan becomes the ruler of the one we inhabit, (a circumstance we set too much aside.) God can deliver us, in one sense, from the yoke of Satan as ruler, although it abides true that this latter can tempt us by the lusts of this world, and make us fall morally under his yoke. For example, if the Gospel be received outwardly in a country, and if the Word of God have its free course there, whilst in another country evangelization is not even permitted; it is evident that, in this latter, souls labour under a yoke which does not weigh in the former, and that Satan rules over one of these countries as he does not over the other. I believe it is important in these times to discern these two things.

The simple fact of being entrapped by one's own lusts is a yoke of Satan, but is not the rule of which we speak. Now, it may happen that several persons of the enfranchised country may be more guilty, for the very reason that they have superior advantages; but the yoke is not the same.

Independence of God is the desire of all men. Man will do his own will, and he falls into the enemy's hand. Such was the state of Abraham's family, as of all other men. In the midst of all this evil, God comes, and manifests these three principles to Abraham: election, calling, and the promises. He finds him in the evil, and He calls him according to the choice He has made; then He gives the promises to him He has called, and Abraham receives them.

Besides this, we get the manner in which God does this. He manifests Himself, then He speaks. Often, in those days, He visibly did this. He came down to the earth and spoke to the individuals, and He has even done this since. Let the manner be what it may, He manifests Himself to faith, in producing confidence. For example, when Jesus manifested Himself to Paul on the road to Damascus, He did so by a visible glory, but in acting on the conscience and drawing the heart. Paul says himself: (1 Cor. ix.) "Have not I seen our Lord Jesus Christ?"

In Acts vii. 2 you will find these words of Stephen: "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran."

God manifests Himself to the conscience: it sees itself in the presence of God; it feels that God is there; it perceives beforehand a judgment which is impending, and whatever be the lack of outward manifestation, man must find himself before God, must follow Him, whereas before this he did his own will. So it happened

to Saul of Tarsus. Saul had not troubled himself about God's will; but so soon as he had heard Christ, he must enlist himself. The effect produced in the heart is expressed in these words: "What wilt Thou have me to do?" The communication of life, we know, takes place in the soul. Also, God speaks, even though He should have manifested Himself to the sight, as to Saul. It is His Word which makes itself to be heard, even when it is written; and the written word is in fact of authority, without question, to judge what is said, though it were an apostle who spoke. The Lord Himself refers His disciples to it, ("they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them"—Luke xvi. 29,) and places it as an instrument above His own words. I say as an instrument, or rather, as a rule; for, whether written or from His own lips, it is from Himself.

This authority of the Word is immediate. The Lord may employ Paul, Peter, John, as messengers, but He wills that it be received from Himself. The Word of God addressed to man, must be received on this sole authority, that it is God who has spoken it: if he does not know how to discern the voice of God and to submit to it, without the authority of man, it is not faith in God; the man does not receive it because it is God. In the natural state, the heart does not hear His voice. The principle of Abraham is, that he believed God, and God puts him to this trial. There is hard work in the heart of man before the authority of God Himself be established in it.

I daily perceive more and more the importance of this. In an exercised soul which has felt that God has manifested Himself to it, that has known its responsibility, whose heart is in activity, the Word has often but little authority; such a soul may have received a strong impression; God has manifested Himself, the conscience is awakened; but it does not receive what God has said in that quiet faith which, having owned that God has spoken, is arrested by His Word, confides to it unhesitatingly, unquestioningly, and is found in peace.

We must not despise the first of these positions, neither must we abide in it. If I belong to God, I can no longer do my own will, and this is what God says to Abraham. "Get thee out from thy country and thy kindred" .... This is neither pleasant, nor easy; but hearken to what Jesus says: Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. There is the grand principle. God will have a people that absolutely belongs to Him.

Christ gave not Himself by halves; circumstances may vary, but the principle is ever the same. Whatsoever be the friends, the things which retain us, we must nevertheless come to this: "Get thee out from thy country and thy kindred" .... This order is terrible to the flesh; it is not that we must hate our father and our mother as the flesh hates; but it is the chain that is in one's self that must be broken; it is from within the heart that we are detained; it is also from that we would escape, it is with *self* that we must break.

But God, who knows the heart, makes it deny itself, in making it break the ties with the world, which are without it. "Get thee out of thy country," says He. He goes further. "Leave thy kindred and thy father's house." Because God had manifested Himself to Abraham, he must belong to Him entirely.

Abraham does it, but not completely. He did not, at first, all he ought to have done. He truly left his country and his kindred generally, but not his father's house; he goes no further than Haran, and stays there.

He desires not, like many, to take all with him; he gives up a great deal; but that is useless: Terah cannot enter into Canaan. He was not called. In chapter xi., verse 31, Terah took his son Abraham, and Lot his grandson, and Sarah his daughter-in-law, Abraham's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran and dwelt there."

We see by this verse that Terah took Abraham; then he did not quit his father's house, and could not make much way. The thing is evident in the eleventh chapter of Genesis; and Stephen speaks of it in these words, Acts vii. 2, 4: "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, &c., and from thence when his father was dead, he removed him into their land wherein ye now dwell." God had said to him: "Get thee out of thy father's house," but he leaves it not. Just so it happens to a heart that has not understood that it must give itself wholly to God. It gives up a great deal for duty, it receives nothing. When the question is of following God, it keeps something for itself. Nevertheless, grace acted towards Abraham, but thus it is that one often plunges one's self into doubt.

The Lord had said: Get out and come into the country that I will shew thee. Abraham, not having done so, might have said, What will become of me? I have not left my father's house, what will befall me? I have only followed half way the command of the Lord; I have not done all that He said to me; my heart not being in it, I have here neither the word nor the promises, I am about to perish in Charran. But such was not God's thought. Now, in chapter xii. 1-4 it is said: "So Abraham departed as the Lord had said to him." All goes well, Lot goes with him; Abraham was seventy-five years old. They come not to Haran to live there, but into the land of Canaan they came; that is to say, as to us, as soon as we will do God's will, all goes well, God takes care for all.

Before this, Abraham had stayed at Haran, and there was no blessing. It is only when his father Terah is dead that he goes forth and comes into Canaan. This is what we see in the four first verses of chapter xii.; we may remark how God presents Himself to Abraham. He does not reproach him. The obstacles are removed, he is put in the way of faith.

In the seventh verse, God appears to Abraham; it is a fresh manifestation. He says to him: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." He renews the promises in a more definite way; He had already brought him to live and walk in dependance on Himself; now, he shews him the land and renews to him the promises, explaining to him the accomplishment of them: He will give the land to his posterity. In our case, it is heaven. God wills that we also should be in blessing, walking in dependance on Him.

In the second verse, God had said to him: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee." Verse 3: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." God will be glorified, and He will bless; two precious things, for He glorifies Himself in blessing. He encourages Abraham in the way of faith, in identifying Himself with the blessing. He engages him to trust in Him; "those who bless thee shall be blessed."

Thus Balaam cannot curse; and in Jesus we are blest. God Himself conducts us, and identifies us with the blessing of Christ. The church may be tried, may encounter difficulties; but the blessing resulting from it is assured in Christ.

God then brings Abraham into Canaan; what is there for him there? Nothing as yet to be possessed. The Canaanites are there; enemies all around in this land of promise; he has only his faith for his pains. Not a place where to set his foot on, which properly belonged to him. Stephen tells us so in Acts vii. 5: And He gave Him none inheritance, no not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

This also happens to the church; in the land of promise we find the wicked spirits, and we are *pilgrims* here below. Abraham also was a stranger and a pilgrim. He had not where to set his foot. It is a little hard to the flesh to have forsaken all and to have found nothing. But he cannot yet possess the country. This happens to us as well as to the Jewish people; they go up into the wilderness, and find but a *wilderness*. Man must sacrifice all he loves, and rise to the height of the thoughts of God. But thus it is that the call and the deliverance make us strangers even in the very land of promise, until the execution of judgment be come.

We read in Heb. xi. 8: "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, *not knowing whither he went*." There is that which characterises this faith. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In drawing him by the path of faith and renunciation in the land of promise, God gives him nothing; but He sets him on a position elevated enough to see the city which hath foundations.

God draws us also into the wilderness; and when we are there, He gives us nothing; and if we ask for any thing, God answers: "It is not *good* enough." The disciples would have liked to remain and for Jesus to remain; but Jesus tells them, It is good enough for your heart, but not enough for mine; I would not that ye should remain where ye are; but where I am, there ye shall be also. He desires a complete felicity for His own. He tells them,

before leaving them, I go to prepare a place for you. For where I am, I desire that there ye may be also.

When we are come out of this world and of that which keeps back our heart, then He can receive us. Abraham being thus separated from his earthly ties, He shews him the city which hath foundations. The great principle we find here is, that these Canaanites (to us the wicked spirits) not being yet driven out, we are strangers in the land; but, on the other hand, Abraham being in the land, the Lord appears to him.

He had the revelations from God, no longer to make him walk, (it was no longer a question of manifestation for the walk,) but for him who has walked in order that he may enjoy God Himself.

I have wished you to observe, that God begins by making the conscience act. Afterwards He gives the enjoyment of Himself and of converse with Him after we have walked; there is this difference. The God of glory appeared indeed to Abraham in Ur. Thus perhaps He reveals Himself to our souls to draw them. But after that, He will have the conscience touched, and completely separates us from all that nature would retain, or by which nature would retain us, and that we should walk as called of God and belonging to Him, that the heart may thus peaceably enjoy Him in communion with Him when we have walked.

God can speak to Abraham, not now to make him go, but that he may enjoy Him and converse with Him; and further, to communicate to him all His thoughts as to the fulfilment of the promises. God will bless. Here is his position. He has walked with God, but as yet possesses nothing of the inheritance in the place to which God has led him. The enemies are there. But the Lord appears to faithful Abraham. In the enjoyment there of this communion and of this hope, Abraham builds an altar to Him who thus appeared to him.

God introduces us into the position of promises, in order that we should pay Him worship, and makes us understand distinctly how He will accomplish His promises. When Christ shall appear, then we shall also appear with Him in glory. We shall have all things in Him.

The portion of God's child is communion, intelligence of the counsels of God for the enjoyment of what God will accomplish. Thou shalt be a stranger, but I will accomplish my promises in giving the land to thy posterity. "And Abraham builded an altar to God who had appeared to him." His first manifestation made him walk; this makes him worship in the joy of communion in the land of promise wherein to faith introduced him, and in the intelligence of the promises relative to it. We see God by faith, and how by and bye He will fulfil the promise. He makes us see Jesus, true "*seed*" and "*heir*" of all things, and gives us the enjoyment of it in our souls.

Abraham, stranger-like, goes here and there. He pitches his tent and builds an altar. It is all he has in the land. Happy and quiet he rests in the promise of God. And this also is what we ourselves have to do. Perhaps it will happen to us as to Abraham, to buy a *sepulchre*, (chap. xxiii.) and that is all.

The Lord give to us a like position, that is to say, a quiet faith, like his who left all; God cannot be satisfied with a half obedience; but, having walked in what God says, we may rest in His love and have His altar until He come in whom are all the promises; even Jesus, in whom all the promises of God are YEA and AMEN, to the glory of God by us.—(*From the French of J. N. D.*)

IMPORTANCE OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH.

THE life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to his own dispensation. This is so true, that if he only believed what belonged to the last, it would not be life to him —it has ceased to be the test of faith to him. To Abraham, faith in Almighty God was living faith. Is that what living faith consists in now, though living faith surely owns it? A Jew not owning Jehovah would have failed from the covenant. And it is true of power too. If the Holy Ghost be not fully owned—if the proper, heavenly place of the Church be not fully owned—no general ideas of salvation, however true, will give the power, nor form and guide for Christ's glory those who neglect the former. What is special to the dispensation is the power and testimony of the dispensation, and not what is said to be common to all.

GRACE AND GLORY,

VIEWED AS FLOWING THROUGH THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

[Though differing widely from the general drift of this paper, I insert it as the communication of a dear brother I respect, only subjoining a paper upon the same question, which contains, in my opinion, a view more subject to the Word of God.—ED.]

BY GRACE, I understand (taking the term in its widest signification, Ephes. ii. 5,) that indefectible security, acceptance, favour, and friendship with Jehovah, which is contra-distinguished from the state of alienation, helplessness and condemnation in which we are born.

The Abrahamic covenant or promise is *the channel through which this grace flows to us.* Since the fall of man, no human being ever was, is, or can be, translated into a state of grace otherwise than through this covenant, which, though tardily and gradually developed, has been in operation from the time of Abel downwards.

The truth is, that not the *substance* only of the Gospel, but also the *Jewish Channel* through which it flows to us, are stumbling blocks to this day. A promise made to an obscure Jewish family, is to this day deemed too unimposing a medium, too unattractive a prelude, too foolish a proceeding, too weak a foundation, for such results as the regeneration of individuals and the restoration of a world! Nevertheless, through this weak covenant, the earth shall be renewed. (Acts iii. 21.) Through this foolish promise we are made partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter i. 4.) He who adorns the new Jerusalem and the new creation with the cognizance and crest of the family of Abraham, writes the charter of human salvation in Jewish characters, and subscribes it with the Jewish name. Thus it is done to the pedigree of the man whom the king delighteth to honour. The honour poured upon the Jewish name, (Is. li. 16; lxvi. 22. Jer. xxxi. 36,) which is honour ascribed to Jesus, (Heb. ii. 16. Rom. ix. 5,) renders very intelligible *our* interest in the Jewish promise.

The Jewish or Abrahamic promise is *identical* (Gal. iii. 14-17. Eph. iii. 6) *with the new covenant* spoken of by the prophets, (Jer. xxxi. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. Hosea ii. Zech. viii.,) &c., which new covenant the Holy Ghost, speaking by Zacharias, declares to be included in the oath which He swore unto our father Abraham. (Luke i. 68-75. This covenant is called the NEW covenant from its amaranthine nature, and in contra-distinction to that which decays and waxes old, (Heb. viii. 13,) for which reason it is also called the EVERLASTING covenant. (Heb. xiii. 20.) It is called the NEW covenant, though the more ancient of the two; (Gal. iii. 17;) also from its posteriority (as to its general operation) to the Sinai covenant, and with especial reference to Judah and Israel, to whom, as all the prophets testify, it yet remains to be fulfilled; which especial reference, however, does not diminish its extensiveness or inclusiveness in regard to human salvation.

As the Abrahamic promise is identical with the new covenant, so is *the new covenant* also *identical with the New Testament.* (Heb. ix. 15; xii. 24. Thus, the true nature of the Abrahamic promise begins to appear. Thus, it begins to rise increasingly in magnitude and importance upon our view. The new covenant, henceforth the New TESTAMENT, supposes the death of the divine TESTATOR. (Gen. xxii. 2. Heb. xi. 19.) The death of the Testator is so linked with the Testament, that the one would be incomplete without the other. (Heb. ix. 16.) The offering of the death of Christ is always linked by the Holy Ghost with the grace-giving Testament. (Heb. x. 14-18.) When Jehovah says, "I will put my laws in their hearts," &c., He virtually appeals to the covenant. "I do this for my beloved Son, His death, righteousness, and atonement." This was made known to, and understood by, the ancient saints with more or less clearness, from Abel to Zacharias, (whose song satisfactorily marks the coherence and consistency of the divine plan;) and, therefore, they were perpetually reminded that without shedding of blood there is no remission. (Heb. ix. 22.) *By means of death* they which are called receive the promise. (Heb. ix. 15.)

He who declares himself the TESTATOR, forbids us by that very appellation to dream of grace attainable through Himself, *otherwise than as through the Testament*, the yea and amen with which the Testament is marked. (2 Cor. i. 20.) Not through the Testator irrespectively of the Testament—not through the blood of Christ irrespectively of the covenant—but in the New Testament, in His

blood, (1 Cor. xi. 25,) we have remission of sins and all the other graces of the covenant of life. By the *promise* or promises, we are partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter i. 4.) God shews more abundantly to the *heirs of promise* the immutability of his counsel; (Heb. vi. 17;) and the apostles Paul and Peter quote the prophet Hosea in proof of the Gentile interest in the *new covenant*. *The promise* must be sure to all the seed. (Rom. iv. 16.) If we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed and heirs *according to the promise*. (Gal. iii. 19.) Eternal life is nothing else than the fulfilment of the *promise* that He hath promised *us*, Gentiles as well as Jews. (1 John ii. 25.)

From what has been said, it appears—and we should steadily bear it in mind—that the words "promise," (whether used in the singular or plural number,) "new covenant," and "New Testament," are convertible terms, signifying, as far as salvation is concerned, the same thing.

It also appears that the Abrahamic covenant is stamped with the peculiar character of UNCONDITIONALITY. Conditional covenants on the part of God, always result in failure on the part of man. "A mediator is not a mediator of one: but God is one." (Gal. iii.) This passage, the context being taken into consideration, refers to the *unconditionality* of the covenant of grace. "God is one;" that is, God is the SOLE covenanting party in THIS covenant; the other party, man, receives all by grace. It is the grace of the promise which is here asserted, in contra-distinction to the conditional requirements of the law.

As conditional covenants then always end in failure on the part of man. As the foregone dispensations, the types, the doctrines, the prophecies, the narratives of Scripture, all bear upon the subject of man's utter depravity, and shew his *need* of grace, so, the grace which we *need* is *brought to us* by the Abrahamic covenant, in the shape of a new, righteous, holy nature, (Ephes. iv. 24,) fearing, (Jer. xxxii. 40,) knowing, (Jer. xxxi. 34,) loving, (Rom. v. 5,) serving and honouring God, hating sin, and delighting in the perfection of the divine law. (Rom. vii. 22.) This new nature —the inseparable accompaniment of salvation, (John iii. 3,) and the immediate source of all that God approves in the creature—is, as I have said, the effect of the operation of the covenant of life in the individual in whom it is found. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) This covenant being confirmed by the blood of Christ, is the book of life, (Rev. xx. 12,) the great charter of human salvation; neither is there salvation in any other.

By GLORY, I understand that beatitude and perfection, free from all mixture of alloy, which Jehovah Himself delights in. *Terrestrial* glory was exemplified in Adam before the fall, and shall be yet exhibited more securely and permanently in those yet to be born in future dispensations. (1 Cor. xv. 40, 44.) *Celestial* glory, shining through the veil that is spread over all nations, has been exhibited to encourage our faith, on various occasions, since the fall.

Both the one and the other, celestial and terrestrial glory, are included in the Abrahamic promises. The promise "I will be their God," spoken by Jehovah Himself of Abraham's seed, (Gen. xvii. 8,) more than includes all revelations made to any subsequent saint.

As the promises were made to Abraham *and his seed*, (which seed strictly and primarily is Christ, Gal. iii.,) as that which belongs to Him in the way of right, flows from Him to us in the way of grace, as we receive the promises in the right of our HUSBAND,—it is proper here to assert the universality of the spousal relation between the Redeemer and the whole of the redeemed family, whether in heaven or on earth, in future dispensations. (Is. liv. 5; lxii. 4, 5. Hosea ii. 16.) Great distinctions indeed may here be insisted on; which distinctions, however, though true in the main, may nevertheless, while we are yet in the flesh, be insisted on too much.

Grace, grace is the great foundation from which the whole building springs, whether we consider the heavenly or the earthly superstructures in the new creation. Let us see to it then that we are built upon, and that we do not swerve from, the great, the only ESSENTIAL point of difference, the solid foundation, the general landing place from natural perdition; I mean the grace of God which brings salvation. So shall all the rest be added unto us; so shall celestial glory be secured to us; and THIS shall be best explained by the lustre of its own brightness. H.

GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, AND HIS GRACE TO THE CHURCH.

No one denies that the promises made to Abraham flowed from the grace of God. But it is a serious mistake, affecting our faith, our communion, and our conduct, to confound these promises to Abraham with God's promise in Christ by the Gospel, spoken of in Ephes. iii. 6. It is agreed that the Abrahamic covenant involved security, acceptance, favour and friendship with God, for its objects. The question is, whether the Epistle to the Ephesians, for instance, does not reveal a far deeper and higher purpose of grace, which was never promised to Abraham, but was intentionally kept hid until the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, consequent upon the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of God in heaven. Neither reason nor tradition will help, but hinder, the solution of the question. But, what saith the Scripture? Let us compare the two things, which I affirm to be totally distinct in range and character, though both find their source necessarily in the grace of God.

The call and first revelation of the promise to Abram is found in Gen. xii. 1-3: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Subsequently, the Lord appeared unto Abram and said: "Unto thy seed I will give this land." (Verse 7.) What can be plainer? A particular land given to Abram and his seed, a great nation, and a great name; blessing from God to Abram, and he a blessing to others; God treating men as they treated Abram; and in him blessing secured to all the families of the earth. Blessings natural and spiritual to Abram and his seed, and so even to the Gentiles are, I believe, conveyed in this inalienable promise, part of which is repeated in still clearer terms in chap. xiii., and confirmed by sacrifice in chap. xv. Then we have circumcision enjoined as the covenant sign in chap. xvii., where the name is changed to Abraham, "for a father of many nations have I made thee;" and, finally, after the son of the bondwoman is cast out, in chap. xxii., we have Isaac, the son of the freewoman, the child and heir of promise, raised up from the dead in a figure, and the oath. (See Heb. vi.) "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Verses 16-18.)

All the nations, or Gentiles, are to be blessed in the seed, but they and the seed * are quite distinct parties. The nations blessed therein are no more to be confounded with the seed, than are the enemies whose gate the seed is to possess. There is blessing for both; but are the nations blessed in exactly the same way and in exactly the same degree as the seed? If it be so, where is the honoured place of Abraham's seed; where is their peculiar privilege in virtue of the promises to the fathers? Or, after all, do they stand on one level of common indiscriminate blessing? If it be not so, and the seed is to have its own special promised place by divine favour, above all the nations who are blessed in it, then is it evident that the covenant with Abraham is one thing and "the mystery" is another, wherein no such differences are found, but the Gentiles are *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same body*, and *joint-partakers* of God's promise in Christ by the Gospel. The believing Jew from the heights, and the believing Gentile from the depths, of their earthly estate, are ushered into an unheard-of sphere of heavenly oneness in Christ, which is made good by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. Such is "the mystery."

For the doctrine of Ephesians is not merely justification by faith, and the death of Christ, as the basis of this divine righteousness, the sole ground on which stand all the saved from the beginning to the end of time: in Romans, we have that fully discussed, and applied to past, present and future dispensations. Much less do we find here the death of Christ connected in a special way with

* In the most blessed and important sense, the seed is Christ. (Gal. iii. 16.) But, literally and most truly, the seed means the Jews, as the Holy Ghost shews in Acts iii. 25. Either sense suits the argument in the text.

the Jewish nation, or even with the spared Gentiles who may be saved during the future reign of the Messiah: of these things the Psalms and prophets abundantly treat. But we are taught in Ephes. ii. 11-18, that, beside and apart from these applications of the death of Christ, there is a new and most glorious use to which the wisdom and grace of God have turned it. He has founded on the cross, and effected by the Holy Ghost thereon given, a novel and heavenly structure, without parallel in the millennial period, and without precedent in the ages and generations which closed with the crucifixion. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Now, it is plain from Scripture that the distinction of Jew and Gentile, with all its accompaniments, was set up of God, had His sanction so long as the earth in any way was owned, (Matt. x. 5,) and will be resumed when the Church is caught up and God begins to interfere immediately, and not, as now, in mere secret providence, with the course of human things here below. The moment He enters upon the visible proof that there is a God which judges the earth, the Jew appears first in responsibility — in guilt, no doubt—but first, assuredly, in blessing, in virtue of the promises to the fathers. The new covenant already ratified in the blood of Christ, but suspended in its application, save to a remnant of the Jews and an election from the Gentiles, who are together brought into and form the Church, and enjoy its blessings,—this new covenant, when it takes effect in all its value and in its literal results, will not neutralize, but sanction, the divinely ordained separation of the Jew from the Gentile, and the supremacy of the former above the latter. "I will make a new covenant *with the house of Israel* and *with the house of Judah*." (Jer. xxxi. 31.) Is there a word said in this covenant of obliterating the difference of Jew and Gentile, of forming both into one new man, and of introducing them on the same level of intimacy to the Father? On the contrary, there is not a syllable about the Gentiles, but an emphatic assurance of blessing to the Jew, Jehovah undertaking to put His law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; to be their God, and they to be His people; all of them to know Him from the least to the greatest, for He will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

There is no question that abundant blessing will flow to the Gentiles. "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 22, 23.) "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Zech. xiv. 16. Mic. iii. v. vii. 16. Jer. iii. 17. See also Ps. lxxvii. xcvi.-cvi. &c.) That is, the covenant order of blessing will be the Jews in the inner, and the Gentiles in the outer, ring, when all lands make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Nevertheless, nothing can be more certain than the fact that Israel, sanctified by having Jehovah's sanctuary in their midst, will be kept aloof from and above the Gentiles, instead of both being made one body in Christ. That is to say, the abolition of Jewish exaltation above the Gentile is only in the Church of the heavenly places. It was not so before Christ came the first time; it will not be so when He comes again. The space between these two boundaries is filled up by the formation of the Church, where is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all: not a mere collection of all the individuals in every different dispensation, but a body now gathered into one by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, and united with the Lord Jesus Christ in His heavenly glory. Neither of these things could be till Jesus was glorified. (John viii. 39. 1 Cor. xii. 13.) It was then that Christ took His place above as Head, and then that the Church began to be called here below, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 20-22.)

As the difference just insisted on is of all importance, let us look at Is. lix. 20, 21; lx. 1, 2, 3: "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Here, also, it is clear that, in the coming dispensation to which the Holy Ghost in Rom. xi. applies the passage, preeminence over the Gentiles is guaranteed to Israel. "The wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto *thee*." (Verse 5.) "The Holy One of Israel . . . . hath glorified *thee*. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and *their kings shall minister unto* THEE." "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." (Verses 11, 12.) Compare also the rest of this chapter, as well as chapters lxi. and lxii. One other portion is so decisive and striking that it may be well to cite it. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them; and their seed shall be known among *the Gentiles*," (is this the same common position?) "and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them that *they are the seed* which the Lord hath blessed." Here, indisputably, we have the literal completion of the promises to Abraham and his seed, but it is evident that the terms of the prophecy, equally with those of the original covenant, are irreconcileable with the notion of identical blessings to Jews and Gentiles, all difference between them being utterly nullified. On the contrary, great as may be the privileges to the nations of the earth, resulting from these promises, decided and blessed superiority will be the indefeasible prerogative of Israel. The Gentiles are to serve them, and the nations that will not shall perish. All this is in perfect accordance with the Abrahamic covenant, but has not one feature of resemblance in the Church, which is entirely above such distinction.

The prophecy of Zecharias (Luke i. 68-79) is evidently Jewish in its sources, its associations, and its hopes, as indeed had been the previous announcement of Gabriel to him. (Verses 13-17.) "Blessed be *the Lord God of Israel;* for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation *for us*, in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets," &c., (is this the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God?) "that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;" (is this the character or manner of salvation to the Church?) "to perform the mercy promised to our fathers," (are they really *our* fathers, or fathers of the Jewish people?) "and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us," &c. It is conceded that many of the blessings are common, such as "in holiness and righteousness before Him," "knowledge of salvation," "remission of sins," &c.; for there are, of course, general principles which characterize all the people of God in all ages. But I affirm that, as a whole, this prophecy, whose accomplishment, in any strict sense, is yet future, and which is clearly based upon the oath sworn to Abraham, is *not in any way the charter of Church privilege.* To say that it is, would be to efface, in effect, the peculiar doctrine of such epistles as Ephesians and Colossians; or, in other words, to deny unwittingly the being and proper character of the Church of God.

Moreover, it was no secret that the nations were to be blessed. It was as ancient a promise, we have seen, as that which secured the peculiar seat of honour to Abraham's seed. It was repeated to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 4) and reiterated to Jacob. (xxviii. 14.) A Jew ought not to have thought of Jehovah's pledge of blessing to his race without remembering that he himself was to be the channel of blessing to the nations. Will it be affirmed that this most familiar assurance of blessing to the Gentiles in the promised seed, published frequently and undisguisedly (as the apostle Paul showed) in Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, is the same thing as the mystery which has been "hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints"? (Col. i. 26.) Is that secret and silent which was published from age to age, and rehearsed from generation to generation? Can a simple and familiar covenant, revealed so often by the Lord, and so often appealed to by His people, from the book of Genesis till the last prophet wound up the Old Testament canon (Mal. i. 11)—can this be deemed a mystery, altogether concealed from the sons of men? Surely not. Gentile blessing, therefore, as involved in the Abrahamic covenant, which was the constant expectation of Israel, wholly differs from the mystery of Christ, which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery was not revealed before. It is NOW revealed. From the beginning of the world it was (not known to God's people, but) hid in God. (Eph. iii. 9.)

Indeed, we have only to read Matt. xvi. 18 in order to see that, even in the Lord's life-time here below, the Church did not exist save in the purpose of God. It was His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, but actually existed only after His death and resurrection. During His ministry He was not even beginning to build it: "Upon this rock I *will* build my church." Hence it is said in Col. i. 18: "He is the head of the body, the Church, who is *the beginning*, the first-born from the dead." Christ Himself, in resurrection, was the beginning. Souls had been born again; sinners had been saved, by the faith of the Saviour. But the Church was a new body formed by the Holy Ghost, after its risen Head took His seat in heaven, and Heb. xii. 23 distinguishes the Church from the spirits of just men made perfect, (i.e. the Old Testament saints,) as plainly as from the innumerable company of angels. Scripture applies the term "Church of God" only to the saints of the present period.

Is it maintained, then, that election, redemption, faith, life, saintship, are peculiar to the Church? By no means. The Church of God shares these and other blessings with all the faithful of all times; but this does not make all the faithful to be the Church. This cannot annul the peculiar standing which is traced as the Church's portion, in Ephes. ii. iii. iv. It is admitted fully that to us, members of Christ's body, it can be said, "All are yours." Of the new covenant, though, strictly speaking, made with the house of Israel, we yet enjoy the blessing, and if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. But it by no means follows that millennial Israel, for instance, though enjoying the new covenant, and the Abrahamic promise still more literally than ourselves, will have any portion in that mystery which is distinct from either.

Scripture speaks of the faith of Abel, of Enoch, of Noah; but that the Abrahamic covenant was in operation as to them is pure assumption. Faith ever rests upon the word, upon the revelation of God, and the Abrahamic covenant was not disclosed until the time of Abraham, though the Saviour had been pointed to from the first. (Gen. iii. 15.) They rested on a revealed Redeemer, not on an unrevealed covenant.

The real stumbling-block, as appears in Scripture, has ever been, not so much the Jewish channel of outward testimony traced in Rom. xi. as the temporary levelling of Jewish prerogative, and the grace which gathers out of Jews and Gentiles, as alike children of wrath, traced in Eph. ii. The ordinary notion, which prevails to the present, is a specious form of the same evil which vexed the Church from its early days.

The new covenant and new Testament are merely various versions of the same Greek phrase, καινὴ διαθήκη, of which the former is always, I believe, the right rendering, as regards the use of the phrase in Scripture. If so, the reasoning about the testator has no place. I do not believe the new covenant to be identical with the Abrahamic covenants, which are more extended in their scope, though, so far as Israel is concerned, they may coincide; but it is needless to discuss the point. Nor is there such an idea in the Bible as the grace-giving Testament. The grace of God brings salvation, even to such as were strangers from the covenants of promise. There is no doubt that the shedding of blood is essential to the remission of sin, and that the new covenant is founded upon the death of Christ; but that God restricts His death to the new covenant is unfounded. Ephes. ii., as we have seen, overthrows the idea. Nor is it scriptural to say, that "the promise" and "the new covenant" are convertible terms, though they may be intimately blended. But we can heartily agree that unconditionality stamps the Abrahamic covenant, as the apostle so strongly insists in Gal. iii. It is evident that when the Judaizers insisted upon the law, the apostle could appeal most powerfully to the promises of God, given so many centuries before the law; (Gal. iii.;) when they insisted upon circumcision, he could triumphantly point to the faith which their father Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised. (Rom. iv.) If, therefore, God now justified the uncircumcision through faith, it was no more than He had done in the case of faithful Abraham. Nor could any objections be more completely silenced. But, to say that the Abrahamic covenant is the channel of God's grace to us, argues an inadequate view of our wretchedness as outcast dogs of the Gentiles, as well as of the bright, heavenly atmosphere into which we are brought, as baptized, Jews or Gentiles, by one Spirit into one body.

On the head of GLORY, Ephes. iii. 21 seems to shew that the Church, as the reflection of Christ's heavenly glory, will not lose its singular blessedness "throughout all ages, world without end;" and Rev. xxi. 1-8 appears to confirm the idea that, even in the everlasting state, the holy city, new Jerusalem, is distinct though connected with the men who people the then purged universe. It is true that the Old Testament speaks of Jehovah marrying Israel, and Israel's land. Is it really meant that this equalizes them or their land with the Bride, the Lamb's wife? But here one may pause. The grand principle has been already asserted.

SIMPLE OUTLINES OF PROPHETIC TRUTH.

No. 3.—THE TWO ASSIZES.

IN calling attention to the solemn and happy subject of the return of our blessed Lord and Saviour in the clouds, one is continually met by the following question: "Do you suppose then that Jesus will come again in person to this earth, before He comes to judgment?" We desire to furnish an answer to this question.

It is submitted, then, to the prayerful consideration of any one that may have asked, or may be disposed to ask, this question: *That there are two judgments presented to us in the Scriptures.* There are *many* such, indeed; but there are *two* special and peculiarly prominent judgments connected with our present question.

There are two assizes or sittings of the royal court of heaven (we speak after the manner of men) recorded as having yet to transpire.

The first of these two *assizes*, or sessions of judgment, is an introductory one; the second is one that winds up affairs. The first is at the commencement of the reign of Jesus, and the second at its conclusion. The first will introduce the day of the Lord, and will take place on the morning of that day; the other will conclude it, and close in the evening of that day. The first of these assizes will be held in order to the introduction of the millennial kingdom; the second, in order to the yielding up of that kingdom, at *the end*—the literal and proper termination—*of the world's existence*, and the commencement of the everlasting state, and the new heaven and earth.

Should this thought then, that there are to be two judgments of the earth, be a true one, (and we do hope to establish the point fully in the course of our present *Outline*,) it will be easy to give an answer to the objection which is intended in the question, "*Will the Lord return to earth, before He comes to judgment?*" The plain answer is, *The Lord* WILL NOT *return to the earth,* before He comes to the first judgment, or assize, or sessions; but* HE WILL *return, long, long before the second and final judgment.* He will return in glory, at the period of that great introductory assize which we

* When the Lord comes to take the Church, it is not yet a return *to the earth*. The Church is caught up to meet Him in the air. (See 1 Thess iv.)

have spoken of as being in order to the establishment of the kingdom, and not, as is even yet supposed by many, in order to its surrender into the hands of the Father, at the end of the world.

Let us look at, and compare with each other, the revelations made in Dan. vii. and in Rev. xx.

As to Dan. vii., in terms so plain and explicit, that, if considered with even a very slight amount of attention, they must place our first statement beyond a doubt; we have the representation of *a pre-millennial assize*, or *judgment*. Whilst in Rev. xx. we have, in equally plain and explicit terms, a representation of *a post-millennial and final judgment*. In this latter chapter indeed we have a view of each of these *sessions* of the court of heaven. Whilst, as to the former or pre-millennial assize, we have in other Scriptures further and abundant confirmation.

And first, in Dan. vii., commencing with verse seven, we read as follows: "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 up among them another 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. 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 the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice 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. 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 people, 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." Now here, in the middle of this quotation, we have a verse which so certainly and expressly describes *a process of judgment*, that it has been regarded most frequently as having reference to the final one. "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 the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Here is presented to us the "Ancient of days sitting on a throne," whilst "thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." Thus "the judgment was set, and the books were opened." What then is the result of this judgment? It is thus stated, as we have read already: "I beheld then because of the voice 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. 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 people, 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." We read these verses more than once because of their importance to our question. The result of the judgment was—what? the end of the world? No; it was the destruction of the fourth or Roman beast, because of the blasphemy of its last and apostate horn or king, and then the establishment of the universal and enduring kingdom of the Son of man.

The prophet saw this fourth great beast. It had seven heads and ten horns. Need we notice here that in this chapter we have, under the figure of beasts—of four wild beasts—an evident exhibition of the same empires which we found placed before us so impressively, as a great image, in the second chapter of this prophecy? In verse 4 of this seventh chapter we have, under the figure of a lion, the very same empire, viz. that of Babylon, which, in the second chapter, was represented by the head of gold; the head which formed part of the great metallic image seen by king Nebuchadnezzar. The second beast, here, doubtless corresponds with the same empire as the silver portion of the image, viz. the Medo-Persian. The third beast is equivalent to the brazen portion of the image, or the Grecian empire; and the fourth, or ten-horned beast, answers to the iron portion, or Roman empire. Now, at the time of the solemn judgment, or assize, here presented to our notice, we find this fourth, or Roman empire, *still in existence*, and in existence *in a state of open blasphemous revolt*. The little horn is blaspheming the saints of the most High, when the judgment takes place. The judgment alone is found effectual to its destruction. How then can this judgment be otherwise than a *pre*millennial one? How can it possibly be regarded as *post*millennial by any thoughtful reader? The wicked Roman empire holds its impiously appropriated sway up to the very opening of the books at this judgment. Is it possible that the next event should be the world's destruction? If so, where is the *millennium?* What, in such a case, has become of that all-embracing, permanent, and peaceful reign, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea? Or, after all, is there to be no such reign? Surely, it will not be contested that this reign must take place *before* the *final* judgment, if it takes place at all. Yet, here we find that all through the period which elapses before and until THIS judgment, there is wickedness—open, rampant, prevailing, and unparallelled wickedness upon the earth. Indeed, there is wickedness which, instead of having ceased a whole period of one thousand years previously, comes to its height and consummation only just before the judgment here set forth. The words of Daniel are: "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." How then can the millennium be supposed to have transpired at this period? Wickedness, it may be said generally, has flourished on earth all through the course of the earth's existence hitherto. It is judgment only that destroys the Roman beast. There must therefore yet transpire, *before the final judgment*, one thousand years of universal peace and righteousness. The judgment here presented, then, must be, beyond all possibility of reasonable doubt, a premillennial judgment. This must be allowed by all who believe that there will be, *at some time*, a millennium here below; and for such only I am now writing.

And not only is this established by the plain fact that there cannot have been any millennium before the judgment and the ensuing destruction of the fourth beast; but further, by the express and unambiguous statement of the prophet, it is plain that the millennium takes place afterwards, and that it is immediately consequent thereupon. Nay, it is most manifest that the judgment itself is held purposely, in order to the establishment of that happy period, although that period cannot begin until the pride, and persecution, and public apostacy of the little horn, end in the awful destruction of the beast. The event immediately next to the destruction of the beast, was given, as we have seen, as follows: "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 people, nations, and languages should serve him." The Son of man is here seen coming to the Ancient of days: "they brought him near before him." The Ancient of days is seen, seated on the throne of judgment, whilst "thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." The "judgment is set, and the books are opened." The little horn and the beast are judged and overthrown; the Son of man is solemnly put in possession of the long-promised, long-expected kingdom. The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, &c. (Verse 18.) And, as we read in verse 27: "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Such, then, is the premillennial assize, or judgment. Now, this is the judgment to which the Lord will come, when he cometh in

his kingdom, with ten thousand of his saints. When the Saviour returns, it is indeed *to judgment*, but quite as certainly *not to the* FINAL *judgment*, unless you view the whole millennium as a period of judgment, which is in one sense a true thought.

Let us now go to Rev. xx. It has been already said, that in this chapter we have a representation of that final judgment, but not of that only. There is a clear statement of the premillennial assize as well, or, at least, of the course of the reign of judgment or righteousness which is then ushered in.

In verses 4-6, we have an introductory description, and then after it, in verses 11-15, a final and concluding scene, so far as this present heaven and earth are concerned. "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image . . . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," &c. Here we have "thrones," and certain which sat on them, and "judgment was given unto them." Let this be compared with Dan. vii. 9, 10, &c. Here "the thrones were placed or set," (not "cast down," as the authorized version gives it,) "and the Ancient of days did sit;" and subsequently we find to the Son of man, and to the saints of the Most High, was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, &c. Just before this scene in Rev. xx., we have the destruction of the beast, (and with him the false prophet,) which beast, we know from Rev. xiii., had seven heads and ten horns: "these were both cast alive into the lake of fire." In Dan. vii., we have the very same destruction; the beast was "given to the burning flame." In both cases the kingdom ensues. So that here again we have a premillennial judgment; and if Rev. xix. 11 to the end be read, the advent in the clouds is also most impressively introduced in immediate connection therewith.

Then the reign transpires, and for one thousand years all goes on well. The Lord reigns, and earth rejoices and obeys. The heavenly people reign with Him over the abundantly blessed people of the earth. There is an intercourse between them; for it is the "dispensation of the fulness of times," and all things being reconciled unto Himself, He has united in one all those things, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in Himself. Wonderful, glorious consequence of the premillennial assize!

But the thousand years were seen to pass away, and another, even yet another, rebellion occurs. This is followed by the closing scene, the final judgment. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Now, here we have a judgment quite as manifestly *post*millennial as that in Dan. vii. has been seen to be *pre*millennial. Immediately after the judgment of the revolt by fire out of heaven, we are presented with this solemn spectacle: "A great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them." Then, "the dead, both small and great, stood before God; and "the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell, (i.e. Hades,) delivered up the dead that were in them." And then, and not until then, was death itself destroyed, and *Hades*, the place of disembodied spirits, was no more; for "death and hell (*Hades*) were cast into the lake of fire." Now, here is "manifestly the final judgment." And let us make one suggestion now, having reference to *the advent*. There is no mention whatever here, throughout this whole representation of the final scene, of *any advent*, of *any coming in the clouds of heaven at all*. No: the *advent* is seen transpiring, in the previous chapter, as introductory to the reign. Here, at the conclusion of the reign, we have not a single word respecting it. Surely, this should be remembered well.

Let us now produce a further testimony as to what takes place at the period of *the end* of this world's existence. It is from 1 Cor. xv.: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies beneath His feet. The last enemy that shall be subdued is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that did put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (Verses 24-28.)

Here is the end of all the divine dispensations, "*that God may be all in all.*" Most blissful consummation! GOD ALL IN ALL! Blessed eternal day! Meet conclusion and worthy result of the labours and sufferings of the second man! Glorious rest, we may truly say, "that remaineth for the people of God." May we hasten towards it with readier affections and yet fleeter footsteps!

We have seen that, at the period of his advent in the clouds, the Lord will take possession of His kingdom, and enter upon His millennial reign. We see here, in the passage now before us, that at *the end* He will "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father," and that "then shall the Son Himself also be subject to Him that put all things under Him." This is most explicit as to the truth of the introductory statement which we made, that the final judgment would terminate and wind up the affairs of the kingdom. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

We are quite aware that an exception is taken by some to the use we now make of this our testimony, one which is supposed to find its ground in the position of the word "*then*." As to "*then* cometh the end," &c., we are reminded that the connection in which the word stands is as follows: "But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they which are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end," &c. Now here, it is alleged by the objectors alluded to, we are told expressly that the coming of the Lord and the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, will both take place at one and the same period of time. But this can by no means be maintained, however plausible the objection may seem to such as bestow a hasty thought upon the word, and upon its position in the passage.

For, first, it must be recollected that the English word *then* itself does by no means always signify *at that time*, or *at the same time*. This is frequently its meaning doubtless. But, even to this day, we continually use it to mean *next after*, or *next in order to*, &c. As, for the sake of example, it is said with reference to the order of the operations of the husbandman: "There is first the seed-time, then the time of rooting up weeds, and then the time of harvest." Or, to use our Lord's own words, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." In this place, assuredly, we have the word in question "*then*" used to signify, not *at the same time as*, but, merely *next in order after* the event or fact previously mentioned. No one will imagine the meaning of the Lord to be, "first the blade, and at the same time the ear, and also at the same time the full corn in the ear."

Similarly, the word *then*, as used in the case before us, indicates, not coincidence, but simply consecutive order, and means *next after*, and not, by any possibility of legitimate interpretation, *at the same time*. The apostle is describing the order of certain great public events connected with resurrection. The succession of the events named is stated thus: Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, then they which are Christ's at His coming, and then, when Christ shall have had put under Him all things—absolutely all things, save Him which did put all things under Him—then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, after all resurrection and judgment is completely over. This is the true purport of the apostolic statements. All other Scriptures are thus, and thus alone, harmonious and consistent.

And we must further remark, to any who may know the English version of the Scriptures only, that the word rendered *then* in this place is the very one that, in Mark iv. 28, (in the case of the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear,) is rendered "*after*

that," as well as "*then*," in the same verse. The word is εἶτα. "First the blade, εἶτα the ear, εἶτα the full corn in the ear;" so in this fifteenth chapter of 1 Cor. "And he was seen of Cephas, then (εἶτα) of the twelve." (Verse 5.) "After that he was seen of James, then (εἶτα) of all the apostles." (Verse 7.) The word always implies an interval of succession long or short, but interval there is. Those brethren to whom all this has long been perfectly familiar will kindly excuse its introduction here, since we seek now to present *simple outlines* merely *of prophetic truth.*

We learn from the whole tenor of this majestic revelation of 1 Cor. xv., that what will transpire at the coming or presence of the Lord is, not the end and surrender of the kingdom, but the resurrection of those "who are Christ's;" whilst, at the period of the final judgment, when the wicked dead are raised and dealt with according to their works, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom immediately after to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

The kingdom here delivered up, let it be remembered well, is the *millennial* kingdom. We point out this, that we may have an opportunity of correcting an expression which appears to be a mere result of confusedness of thought. It is continually said, that the kingdom here delivered up is the "mediatorial kingdom." We submit that this expression is by no means that "sound speech" which cannot be gainsayed. "*Mediatorial kingdom*" would seem to be simple confusion of terms. Were it *mediatorial priesthood*, there would be an intelligible thought conveyed by it. But, does *mediatorship* constitute the one that exercises it *a King?* The Lord is indeed Mediator, and He will be Sovereign too. But priesthood and sovereignty are distinct functions; though both may be exercised by one blessed Being, our Lord Jesus Christ. He will sit indeed "a Priest upon His throne;" that is, a Priest, even whilst upon His royal and millennial throne. But the confused expression "mediatorial reign," it is believed, had its origin in minds which supposed the Lord to be already on His own throne, and not as yet sitting, in the expectation of His own throne, upon that which is fully and clearly distinguished therefrom by the Lord Himself, as properly and emphatically His "*Father's throne.*" No; the Lord Jesus has not yet ascended *His* throne. He is as yet *an expectant*, sitting, until a certain period, on His Father's throne; for still the words He utters to His people are: "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne." (Rev. iii. 21.)

Another somewhat discursive remark may be allowed in this place. Is there not, on the whole, very rare allusion made in the Scriptures to the *final* judgment? Almost all the solemn passages which describe a day, or season, or crisis of general judgment, will be found, on careful and impartial examination, to be descriptive of the *premillennial* one. The proximate crisis is that which is most frequently presented to our notice, and this for the warning of a careless world—alas! we may add, of slumbering disciples. We have intelligence indeed, as we have seen in Rev. xx. and in 1 Cor. xv., as to what will transpire at that remote period which shall bring the history of our present world to its termination. We have in those two Scriptures at least a final judgment and crisis presented with ample clearness and certainty; but it may be doubted whether in any others we have such information in direct terms. None of the passages in which *the Lord's coming* * is introduced do seem, to my own mind, to place *any advent in the clouds*, in connection with the final judgment. That is regarded naturally as a far distant event. The reign must intervene between our days and it. The premillennial judgment is what most and first concerns us. Let us seek to have our attention fixed on the approaching, rather than on the ultimate, assize. This will open up to us a new field of edifying truth. All our proper hopes are bound up *first* with the introductory assize, and with it a vast mass of Scripture is occupied. Let us turn our thoughts now to some of those premillennial Scriptures and events.

The special object of the *Church's* contemplation, indeed, is not *judgment*, but *the love* and *glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.* It is *Himself in His glory*, and, as a result, *our fellowship in that glory.* Our happy, immediate portion, in connection with the advent, is the being called up to His presence who then shall come, and the joyous and triumphant reunion above thereupon, and our being for ever with Him there. But yet we should understand what is revealed as to the judgments also, for it is part of the Lord's glory, and we have the mind of Christ.

I would venture a remark as to the meaning of 2 Tim. iv. 1: "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." Here the appearing is placed pretty plainly not *after* His kingdom, but *at* or on the coming of His kingdom.* The appearing and kingdom seem manifestly to transpire at the same time. But in what sense, then, is it that "He will judge the quick and the dead" at His appearing and kingdom? Is not that, it will be inquired, the "general and final judgment?" It is certainly a *general* judgment, but it does not follow that it must be regarded as the final one. We thoroughly allow, indeed, of the thought of a judgment of "the quick and the dead," connected with the appearing and the kingdom of Christ. The appearing introduces judgment on the quick or living, and when the kingdom ends, all judgment of dead or living is past.

Let us now pass to some other Scriptures, which will be found still further to confirm and illustrate the truth of a premillennial assize.

What can be plainer than Ps. l.? Let us read the first few verses: "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself." (Compare Ps. lxvii.; lxviii.; lxxxii.; lxxxiii.; xcvi.-xcix.)

From Is. lx. 12, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, we find that judgment, more or less, goes on during the whole period of the millennial kingdom, as well as at the commencement and the conclusion. See for this also Zech. xiv. 17-19.

Again, in Zeph. iii., we have the means of the earth's subjugation, and the period of the turning of a pure language upon all people, set forth in the clearest way. The "determination" of Jehovah is "to gather the nations, and assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy." What then is the result of the solemn crisis? Is it the end of the world that is here pourtrayed? No; it is the introduction of the millennium. Mark the words which follow: "For THEN will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call on the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent." THEN will the reign be established—THEN, when this universally poured out judgment has been executed—THEN, and not until then—by that means and not by any quietly progressive and peaceful process, will the nations of the earth submit to the Messiah's sway.

In Joel iii. we read as follows: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles," &c. (9-17.) Here, again, we have a crisis of judgment presented as introductory to the reign. Neither this, nor yet any other of the passages we have produced with reference to this crisis, is offered as giving the same precise particulars or features of the judgment they set forth as the rest do. They vary considerably in their details. Each one of them has its own *burden* of truth. But that in their grand scope they are the same, and that it is the same great event which they refer to, we think there need be no reasonable doubt.

One other similar prophecy may be noticed: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh," &c. (Zech. xiv. 1-9.) Here we have the coming of the day of the Lord, and a gathering of all nations to it. We have then the "coming of the Lord Himself, with all His saints." And the result of all was this: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." Such, we see once more, is the result of the premillennial judgment, or assize.

To supply the full development of this most momentous day, as furnished in the Scriptures, would be a task, dear brethren, quite beyond the power and beyond the purpose of the writer. He refers you to those full revelations themselves, and prays that all wholesome and salutary consequences may accrue to you in the pursuance of your further inquiries. T. S.

* As to Matt. xxiv. 31 and xxv. 31, see "The Prospect," vol. i. pp. 133-137.

* That is, supposing the common reading κατὰ to be right. It is well to recollect that Griesbach and nearly all the modern editors read καὶ, in which case one would translate: "I testify .... both His appearing and His kingdom."

REVIEWS.

CARDIPHONIA LATINA: SIVE EPISTOLAE QUAEDAM HUMANIORES, &c. Editio Altera.

Londini: Impensis S. Bagster et Fil.

THIS neat and accurately printed little book is a translation of a few of John Newton's letters, entitled *Cardiphonia*. The object was to meet the wants of such as might desire to become more familiar with the Latin language, without becoming in a corresponding degree familiar with the folly and impurity of heathen habits of thought. Of course, the thought is to supply a work for the many persons who require a slight acquaintance with that tongue, without having leisure or inclination for the attainment of a high degree of classical knowledge. In this point of view, which is avowedly the object, the translator has succeeded well. He has furnished a manual, so far as it goes, "of sound matter, and correct Latinity, for the use of such as may desire to familiarize themselves or others with the Latin language, without exposure to the evils too commonly resulting from the study of Roman authors."

EL CATOLICISMO NETO.

Londres: en casa de Partridge & Oakey, 34, Paternoster Row.

THIS is a religious journal, (published at indetermined periods,) which aims at presenting the truths of the Gospel to Spaniards in their own tongue. It can be had stamped by post. The last part, No. 3, appeared in January of the present year. Hitherto, much of the contents consists of answers to the objections of Romanists, Materialists, and the like; but even here the editor has mingled with his reasonings plain scriptural testimonies to God's grace to sinners, and to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Might one suggest the propriety of making its staple consist of sound statements of the truth, rather than of controversial matter, or what might bear the appearance of it? Many Christians, I trust, will pray that this work may be owned, guarded and blessed of God, and will sympathize, as He may enable them, with the dear brother who has undertaken this labour of love. Communications are to be addressed to him, 11, Ordnance Road, St. John's Wood.

HYMNS. By a Clergyman of the Church of England.—1850.

London: W. E. Painter, 342, Strand.

"IN the following hymns," says the author in his preface, "I have endeavoured—not to write poetry, but to express *truth*—something of the efficacy of the grace of God—something of the effects of the blood of the cross—a subject on which the weakest babes and sucklings are encouraged to sing—a subject on which the songs of the highest archangels, who fell down on their faces before the throne of Christ, are chargeable with weakness and lameness."

The hymns contain some good wholesome thoughts as to God's grace and the coming glory, though occasionally conveyed in a rugged style, which cares not for rhyme nor rhythm either. But I cannot agree with the esteemed author, that in Dan. iv. Nebuchadnezzar stands as the type of the human race in the different phases of succeeding dispensations: *flourishing*, as representing man in his paradisaical state; *bestial*, as representing man fallen; *restored*, as representing man reinstated in the second Adam. We may use it as illustrating truths of this kind elsewhere revealed; but did God mean us to gather this teaching from the chapter? This thought is alluded to in several of the hymns and largely entered into in the preface.

THE PRISM: a Parable. By the author of the "Royal George."

London: J. K. Campbell, High Holborn.

THIS little tract illustrates, by the comparison of a prism, that especial manifestation of God's manifold wisdom by the Church of which the apostle speaks in Ephes. iii. 10. It may suggest some wholesome thoughts and correct some erroneous ones. A few remarks on the use and abuse of parabolic illustration are appended, and they point out in a plain and terse way the dangers and the right limits of this style of illustration, applied to or drawn from Scripture. Let me just observe one or two slips of expression, which might be easily corrected in another edition, in page 20: "How her (the Church's) place in Scripture is often not found because 'God has taken her' into *union with Himself*, and because we would seek her out of Christ, under the form of some worldly designation—how *she 'is not here, but is risen.'*" One can understand what the author means in both phrases here marked in italics, but they are capable of being gravely misused.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, &c.

London: J. Nisbet & Co.

THIS little treatise contains many useful hints on the subjects of which it treats. But is it not too much assumed that you can imbue the unconverted young with principles which only suit the regenerate, and that Christians may lawfully desire a pretty wide margin of the world's demands in the training of their children? The morals of Christianity, and Christianity itself, it is well to remember, are very distinct things.

THE COMPANION OR KEY TO THE PROPHETICAL STREAM OF TIME. By Sir Edward Denny, Bart.

As the "Prophetical Stream of Time" has been already fully reviewed, my object in noticing the Companion is to commend it to those who may not have it in their power to procure the larger work. It is sold distinct, at a moderate price, accompanied by a miniature sketch, whereon are marked the leading points which are illustrated in the Chart itself. Those who desire a clear and pretty full outline of God's revealed dealings with the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church, from the beginning to the end of time, will find their want well supplied in this "Companion." It is an excellent substitute for the more expensive work.

THE TAUGHT OF THE FATHER, &c.

London: James Nisbet & Co. Bath: Binns & Goodwin.

THIS is, to use the author's words, "one more case, where, by the alone teaching from above, one naturally of defective understanding found peace and joy in believing." (Preface, page ii.)

GOSPEL REMINISCENCES IN THE WEST INDIES.—OLD NARQUOIS, THE NEGRO DRIVER, &c.—THE CONDEMNED NEGRO; OR, MAN'S VICTIM GOD'S CHOSEN, &c.

Bath: Binns & Goodwin. London: Whittaker & Co., &c.

THE author's aim in these "Reminiscences" is to narrate some special manifestations of God's goodness to sinners which came under his own observation.

PSALMS AND HYMNS, SELECTED AND REVISED FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP. (With several original.) By the Rev. J. Kelly, M.A., &c.

Bath: Binns & Goodwin. London: Nisbet & Co.

THE compiler well observes how important it is that testimony on such subjects as the coming and glory of the Lord Jesus should not be counteracted, but assisted by the hymns which are simultaneously employed. "Other considerations, however," says he in his preface, "have not been neglected; for instance, the recognition of the standing of all real worshippers as already 'accepted in the beloved,' and children of God—and 'if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' This assured sonship of the believer thus evoking from the heart joyful anticipations of the future; and, again, the increasing contemplation of the shedding of the precious blood, as the basis of all blessedness to himself and others: these important elements of acceptable praise will also be found, I trust, to have been attended to." The selection, on the whole, forms a good and satisfactory little volume, though one may be permitted to wonder that love for poetry overpowered love of truth in admitting so pretty but mistaken a strain as Heber's well known missionary song, "From Greenland's icy mountains," the doctrine of which Mr. J. Kelly heartily repudiates.

FOOD FOR CHRIST'S FLOCK. Nos. 1-5. (From January to March.)

London: J. K. Campbell, High Holborn.

THE greater part of this little work hitherto consists of a brief comment on the Apocalypse, substantially similar to the notes upon that book which have appeared in the present publication, and presented in a form as simple as possible. Here and there are papers containing Gospel truth, and suited to inquirers. May I observe as to a text or two used in page 60, that Heb. xii. 23 refers to the spirits of just men, not in the imperfect state of separation from the body, but "*made perfect*," which will only be in fact in the presence of Christ. They are the Old Testament saints distinguished from the Church. Again, Rev. xiv. 13 applies to a definite period yet future. It is not general blessedness, but blessedness *from henceforth*.

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THE PROSPECT.

"THE DAYS ARE AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION."—EZEKIEL, XII. 23.

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ELEMENTS OF PROPHECY,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHURCH, THE JEWS, AND THE GENTILES.

THE first grand and capital point is, to have the end and design of God clearly and settledly in mind, so that it should be constantly before us as the key and test of all. For no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The divine glory is ever the end of all things; but I speak now of the effect of divine counsels in which God glorifies Himself. Now, this is altogether in Christ known in the various glories in which He is revealed. In the Church, the office of the Holy Ghost, who moved the holy men of old, is to take the things of Christ and shew them to us. Hence, though Jerusalem, or Israel, or even the Church, may be that in connection with which Christ may be glorified, it is only as connected with Him that they acquire this importance. So of the word even of the Old Testament Scriptures: they are all to make us wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* On the other hand, as it is evident that this alone gives, to whatever subject may be mentioned, its true and just importance, so, if Jerusalem is connected with Christ, with His affections and glory, Jerusalem becomes important; and I get in its connection with Christ, so far as I understand His glory, the key to interpret all that is said of it. It has, in the mind of God, its development in connection with the manifestation of His glory. There may have been in the times of Israel certain manifestations of the governmental dealings of God, important for their faith and subjection to God by the way, which were partial accomplishments of such or such a prophecy. But these, though true, and though research may discover them, are, in a certain sense, comparatively lost now in the sum of the whole scheme of all which closes in Christ. It may be interesting and instructive historically, as regards God's dealings, to observe them in their place, but they become history,—important, interesting history, not prophecy, for us. The first point, then, important to understand is, that neither the Church, nor Jerusalem, nor the Gentiles, are in themselves the *objects* of prophecy, still less Nineveh, or Babylon, or the like, but Christ. But this is what gives us the true scope and intelligence of the real importance and place of each subject; namely, as Christ is to be the centre in which all things in heaven and earth are to be united. Various subjects become the sphere of His glory, as connected with Him, and each subject is set in its place in its connection with Him, and by this connection I get the means of understanding what is said about it. Thus, if the Church is the Lamb's wife, it is in this character and in this relationship I must apprehend what regards it. If Jerusalem is the city of the great King, it is in this that I shall get the key to the dealings of God with it. If the saints are to live and reign with Christ, and to be kings and priests unto God and His Father, here I shall find the intelligence of what concerns them in this character; not united with the Bridegroom, but associated with the King and Priest. And so of the rest. Not only is this the only way of understanding prophecy as to the objects of it, but the affections being right, the understanding is clear,—the eye is simple and the body full of light. I see with God in the matter, for He regards Christ; and thus prophecy becomes sanctifying, not speculative, because what it teaches becomes a part of Christ's glory for the soul. The importance of this cannot be well overrated. I ought not to have to persuade Christians of the truth of this. I gladly would of its importance. This, however, is the work of God. Objectively, I may cite Eph. i. 9-11, as stating this great truth according to the purpose of God.

I may now endeavour to present some of the main subjects or landmarks for the study of prophecy; that is, of the revelation of God's ways for accomplishing His glory in Christ. No present circumstances, note, though they may be historically instructive and also confirmatory of faith, can be the proper accomplishment of prophetic truth, because, though they may be conducive to it, under God's superintending government, and a lesson at the time and afterwards, they are not identified with the manifestation of God's glory in Christ, nor the immediate objects in which that manifestation takes place. (for we are supposing things precedently accomplished.) This shews that, in *accomplishment*, all necessarily is found in the actors of the scene at the close, when judgment will fully manifest, not in measure to intelligent faith, but by the public acts of God, what His judgment is; and as this judgment is on *ripened* evil, the full character of this, (whose principles have from the beginning been working, been discerned spiritually, judged partially so as to stay their power for the accomplishment of God's gracious designs,) the full character, I say, of their fruit will then be shewn, and God publicly justified in His judgment before all, as well as bring in blessing, by setting aside in power the evil, and replacing it by His own reign in good. And this is the vast moral difference of our present state, as well as of true saints in all times, with the world to come. We have the power of God internally, through grace and by the Spirit, to make good the will and glory of God in the midst of evil while subsisting; whereas then, i.e. by the presence of Christ, the evil will be put away by power, and good be at ease.

The next simple remark that I have to make is, that though the relationship of heaven with earth may be discovered to us, in so far as heaven and those there are revealed as the established governing power, (that is, that there are, in the seat of government placed above, objects of special revelation,) yet the proper subject of prophecy is the earth and God's government of it. And it is only so far as the heavenly company are connected with the government of the earth that they become a collateral subject of prophetic revelation.

Further, Providence is not the subject of prophecy. By Providence I mean the ordering of the course of all things by divine power, in such sort that all results that happen in the world are according to the divine purpose and will. Often inscrutable to us in its reasons and even the means it employs, and leaving the government of God obscure, still it is certain to faith, and that by which it remains true, that God is not mocked, but what a man sows this will he reap. Faith will recognize the hand of God in many things, and believes it in every thing, but to the world all of it is hidden. Certain principles, universal with God in their application, by this means are verified, as "righteousness exalteth a nation." The men of this world see nothing of the bearing of the moral causes on the effect, or, if they do see the causes, the result issuing thence is that they ascribe the effect to them, and God is shut out. His immediate action and government is excluded. Now, the subjects of prophecy are the contrary of this. The public products of God, coming in in power, are revealed. They are either the *day of the Lord*, or the characteristic results which bring it about—a judgment which *man* has to acknowledge as of God. Now, it is evident that the day of the Lord, properly speaking, closes the history of this world; it is the opposite of that secret course of government which is carried on, and from the checks of which the pride of man rises again to pursue his course of evil. When God sets to His hand, the proud helpers do stoop under Him.

I do not deny that certain grand and remarkable judicial interventions of God are called, in a subordinate sense, the day of the Lord, in virtue of their practical analogy with that time of which it shall be said "the Lord alone is exalted in that day." But even these are in contrast with the course of providential government, which, in its very idea, does not interrupt, but regulate, the ordinary course of events. There are prophecies which may, to some, seem to refer to the course of Providence, but these confirm, in a remarkable way, the distinction.—Take the ten horns. What is the providential history of these horns, taken as usually applied by commentators? Scourges, which continued some one hundred and fifty years, from first to last, working the overthrow of the

Roman empire, as previously settled, and establishing themselves as conquerors in all its western territory. We may inquire, if done humbly, with profit, why this scourge was permitted. Whether it was the public civil evil, or the corruption of the Church? What moral causes led to it? How it executed the moral judgment of God on the evil? Why the east was spared? How it led the way to a more terrible spiritual tyranny than had yet been seen in the world?—Take the prophetic account. A beast rises out of the sea with ten horns, all full grown, after which a little horn comes up, and the beast, horns and all, are the subject of God's judgment, not the executors of it. This is prophecy; that was Providence. We have what characterises the object of prophecy and its judgment, and the reason of it. All the providential part, out of which commentators have woven an immense system, is left out.—So of the statue. It is all there at once, the application of it to the four empires given, the character of the closing object of judgment in the feet and toes, and the execution. The providential course of events, by which one takes the place of the other, we find nothing of.—I have taken the cases which would seem to give the greatest room for it, and of which in this respect men have said the most; and with what result? Such that, if taken as a literal accomplishment, a child can see the discrepancy. What analogy between one hundred and fifty years' war to destroy an empire; and ten kingdoms, all in full energy and growth, arising out of it and forming part of it, as the symbol of its force? In the Apocalypse, before the end, we find summary judgments executed with progressive severity in the seals, trumpets, and vials, before the King comes forth to destroy the beast; judgments inflicted of God; but not, in *Scripture*, providential history. They are all proper immediate judgments, though they be but preparatory and introductory, inflicted either on the circumstances or the persons of the men of this world—on the wicked. The hand of God is seen. But there is no explanation of causes or providential course. We find their moral state, exceptionally, in that which they refuse to repent of in one case; but, in general, it is not the course of events guided by Providence to order all things well, but the earth subject to the judicial vengeance of God. No careful reader can question this. The end of Providence is the present ordering of God's government to bring about His designs. The Apocalyptic history consists of judgments inflicted.

Further, we may add, that Providence is occupied in the daily discipline of the children of God. Prophecy treats of the judgments of God, removing out of His sight those whom He judges, and of the full blessing of His people. I do not think any prophecy can be alleged speaking of a course of events applied to His people while they are owned. The nearest approach to it is Is. ix. 7 to x. 25; but these are inflicted judgments, and no course of Providence.

Having thus spoken of the subjects of prophecy morally, I may turn to the positive subjects it embraces.

Besides the creation, of which He is the head, in which we may comprise angels, there are three great spheres in which Christ's glory is displayed—the Church, the Jews, and the Gentiles. The Church, properly speaking, is not the subject of prophecy. As to Old Testament prophecy, the New declares in the most absolute and positive manner that it was a mystery hidden in all ages, and now revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The Church belongs to heaven, is the body of Christ seated there, and while He is so seated. Prophecy relates to earth. The Church is viewed, it is true, when it takes part in the government of the earth for that reason; and the marriage of the Lamb and the description of the heavenly Jerusalem give the epoch from which dates the character of this relationship with earth.

In the New, the relationship of the Church with Christ caused the Holy Ghost to remain in it, and communicate the needed light on its position while waiting for the Lord. There was no presence of God attached to formal institutions subsisting, to consistency with which a series of prophets was to recall a people, necessarily, while they subsisted, the people of God. In one respect, however, though the Church was not the proper subject of prophecy, while it subsisted as owned of God, certain things connected with it are predicted; that is, its decay and corruption, as a present moral warning; but this passes into mere apostate wickedness, as a distinct object of judgment. Hence when, as I doubt not, and as a vast number of Christians believe, the Lord would give a picture of the Church's history as an external body in the world, in a state for the most part in which He could not at all own it as His heavenly body, He selects, with divine wisdom, seven churches which afforded the moral character of the states into which it would successively fall, and presses His judgments morally on them. But it is not made a positive subject of prophecy. Whatever may be our judgment of the subsequent part of the Apocalypse, which treats of events subsequent to the period of the seven churches, it is certain it consists of judgments on the world, not of any prophecy of the Church, save, as stated, at the close. There is the simple fact, that the beast overcomes certain saints, and that he puts to death two witnesses. No general prophecy of the Church itself is found in the course of the Apocalypse. It was right to give these facts. The reason is evident to one who knows what the Church is. It is not of the world. It, as such, sits in heavenly places in Christ, where prophecy reaches not. It never will be established on earth, as the Jews. It is not its calling. The government of God will never settle it there in peace. His blessing for it will be to take it away from earth, to be with the Lord in the air. A partial application of the Apocalypse to what has the name of the Church, but is *the power of evil in the world*, I do not deny; but this does not make the Church a subject of prophecy. Accordingly, we find, as we have said, the Church in heaven at the end, in connection with the earth, when all is united in Christ; but no account of any dealings of God to establish it, or a progress towards a result of any kind. She is to reign with Christ, and suffer *with* Him.

The remaining spheres of the display of the glory of the blessed Lord are the Jews and Gentiles, subjects in different degrees of His earthly government, as the Church was the full exhibition of His sovereign grace in redemption, which places her in heavenly places in Christ, that, in the ages to come, God might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. This distinction is full of interest. Man is not governed in introducing him into the Church. He is taken as a rebellious, lost sinner, a hater of God, a child of wrath, be he Jew or Gentile, and set in the same place as Christ. That is not government, it is grace. The Jews are the centre of God's immediate government, morally displayed according to His revealed will. The Gentiles are brought to recognize His power and sovereignty displayed in His dealings with them. I speak of the thing, properly speaking, in its revealed character; for every sinner, in all ages, is saved as such, individually, by grace, and every Christian is under the immediate government of the Father as of the heavenly family; but even so the object of government is different. With the Christian, it is to prepare him for heaven; with the Jews, on the contrary, it is to display God's righteousness on the earth: I speak of them as a body or people. Christ and the Church suffer for righteousness, and reign. The Jews, as a people, suffer for sin, and the result of their history will be, "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judgeth the earth."

Further, prophecy does not apply to a state where God's people, responsible under the immediate government of God, walk well, so that He can bless them as walking under His own eye, in testimony of His favour. This special intervention, for such prophecy is, applied to the case of their failure. Hence, when Shiloh was overthrown and the ark taken, Samuel was raised up, of whom the Lord therefore says: "Beginning at Samuel and all the prophets." This character of prophecy is completely evident in reading the prophets, who addressed their prophecies to the people in general. Indeed, its principle is evident. But, if they shewed the people their transgressions, they pointed out constantly the Messiah, the great Deliverer. Thus, in Hannah's song, (1 Sam. ii. 9-11,) where the government of the world by Jehovah in sovereignty * and the exaltation of Messiah are fully brought out. So, historically, Samuel was raised up on the failure and ruin of Israel, and introduced David. Prophecy judges the people in their responsibility, and announces the sovereign purpose of God.

But this leads me to note two characters of prophecy, arising, as regards the Jews, from two different positions in which we find them in Scripture. First, a people more or less fully owned of God; God acting amongst them on known principles of government. Secondly, rejected for a time, the sovereign power in the earth being confided to Gentiles. This last period forms the times of the Gentiles. For the moment, I confine myself to the Jews.

* It will be well for the reader to consult this passage, which, as the introduction of the new order of Israel, gives the character of prophecy in a very remarkable manner.

God, while He could in any sort own His people, addressed Himself directly to them. Until Nebuchadnezzar's time, God's throne and presence was in the midst of Israel. From that period, the sovereign power in the earth ceased to be immediately exercised by God and was confided to man, among those who were not His people, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. This was a change of immense importance, both in respect of the government of the world, and God's judgment of His people. Both lead the way to the great objects of prophecy developed at the close, the restoration, through tribulation, of a rebellious people, and the judgment of an unfaithful and apostate Gentile head of power. However, the previous relationship of Israel and the nations is not left out; but we must introduce another all-important point for the development of this. Israel, we have seen, as between it and Jehovah, had been unfaithful, and Ichabod written on it; the ark of God, His glory and strength in Israel, delivered into the enemies' hand—enemies left in the land by their unfaithfulness. But God comes in, in sovereign grace, and raises up David, figure of Christ, who descended from him according to the flesh, king of Israel in grace and deliverance. Evil arising in his descendants, the major part of Israel revolt from the king of his family: two tribes remain, and to a residue of them brought back from Babylon, *Christ is presented*, and rejected. Hence two things gave occasion to Israel's judgment—idolatry and rebellion against Jehovah, and the rejection of Christ. Having brought out this second ground of judgment, I leave it for the moment, in order to consider the former ground, rebellion against Jehovah. Israel ought to have been the witness of the blessedness of being in such a relationship with the Lord. "Happy are the people who are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God." Israel, on the contrary, learnt the ways of the heathen; yea, became more corrupt than they, and the Lord allowed the surrounding nations to attack and distress them. This had its full development in the ten tribes; the house of David, raised up in grace, being for a time a stay to Judah. Though all the surrounding nations had their share in these attacks, the principal in result was Asshur. Accordingly, in the end, this power prevails entirely against Israel and overruns Judah, the Lord only at the close defending Jerusalem, where the son of David was a stay in righteousness. Still, if Israel had deserved all this chastisement, these rods of chastening had despised, in their animosity, the Lord, His people, and His throne. Asshur especially had exalted himself against Him that hewed therewith. Hence, they become the objects of destroying judgment themselves.

All these elements are found at the close, though they have a partial historical fulfilment, Nebuchadnezzar executing the judgment at that time. The nations will overrun the country. The Assyrian, in particular, will be the scourge of God as an overflowing flood, and the double event will take place; the whole people (even Judah and Jerusalem, then by an attack before the end,* proof of its application at the close) will be overwhelmed; but afterwards, when the true Son of David shall be there, and the land will be actually Immanuel's land, Jerusalem will be preserved and all these nations judged. Jerusalem shall tread them down as sheaves upon the threshing floor. These circumstances, under God's teaching, open out a vast mass of prophecies, of which Isaiah gives the most complete and orderly course, other prophets taking up divers parts of it.

But the family of David itself, as placed responsibly on the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem, was, we know, unfaithful, and the sin of Manasseh made their government insupportable to Jehovah. Judah was removed out of His sight, as Israel had been. But, then, what remained of the sphere of the direct government of God on a given law? Nothing. His glory left Jerusalem and the earth, for it had filled the temple of Jerusalem. (See Ezek. i.-x.) This judgment then was of a far weightier character and import. It removed the government of God from upon the earth, and confided power to the head of the Gentiles. Israel was laid aside for a time. But Judah, providentially restored in a partial way, has Messiah presented to them, but, as we have seen, rejects him, declaring that they have no king but Cesar. This placed Judah under the Gentile power, not only as a chastening for their rebellion against Jehovah in the persons of their king and of David's race, but on the ground of their own rejection of the promised Messiah and taking the Gentile for their head. This also consequently has its accomplishment in judgment in the latter days. The special Gentile part of it is scarce alluded to in the prophets, who address Israel as more or less owned. It is the subject of Daniel, and we may add of the Apocalypse, for a reason we will add just now. Judah is seen in prophecy in the latter days under the oppression of the head of Gentile power, deceived by a false Christ, and oppressed. But God regards still Israel as His, having caused it to pass through the deepest tribulation. Those who, through grace, cleave to the Lord, call upon His name, and receive the word of the Spirit of Christ, instead of joining idolatry with the Gentiles and their chief, will be delivered, and the apostate Gentile power and the false prophet judged.

Another element introduces itself here. On the rejection of the Jews, as we know, Christianity came in. But, alas! man was as unfaithful here as in Judaism. Early in the apostles' time, the mystery of iniquity began to work, resulting in an apostacy, and the ten kings of the Gentile world make war with the Lamb. In a word, a public apostacy in the sphere of Christian profession and the revelation of the man of sin, the open war of the beast and kings associated with him against the Lord, come in as an element of the latter-day events, completing the character and description of the Gentile power which had taken the place of God's throne at Jerusalem, and to whom He had confided authority in the world. This, with its antecedents, is that which the Apocalypse furnishes of the prophetic volume. The result of the destruction of this power, as well as of that of the Assyrian and other nations, is the establishment of Israel in blessing under Christ upon the earth, the throne of the Lord being thus re-established in surety at Jerusalem. The destruction of the Gentile power does not reach this latter period entirely. Hence Daniel, who treats of the period of Gentile power, never speaks of the millennium. He is made just to reach the deliverance, and stops there. The effect of the destruction of the Gentile power is to reunite the Lord, Jerusalem and Israel, and then comes the judgment of the Assyrian and the various enemies who have risen up against the Lord and His people. This brings in the full reign of peace.* Their connection with Israel has led, in many respects, to the anticipation of what regards the Gentiles. However, it will be well to speak of them also.

We have a double character of the Gentiles in Scripture, as will have been already seen: their opposition to the people of God when they had this character, at least externally; and their pride, and rebellion, and oppression of those who had borne the name of His people when power was given to them of God. The difference of these two states was great. Until the time of Nebuchadnezzar, various kingdoms and nations were owned as such in the providential government of God, though left entirely, morally to themselves, their existence being the fruit of His own judgment in Babel. Israel was the centre of this general system, being owned as His people (known alone of all the families of the earth,) the Lord having, in separating the sons of Adam and dividing to the nations their inheritance, set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. But Israel having failed in this position, and the nations, and especially Assyria, having been guilty of wrong, God judges them all, for "he contemneth the rod of his son," and how should the rest subsist? The whole governmental order is set aside, and with Israel the independence of all the nations is lost, and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the dominion of Adam is placed in the hands of the head of the Gentiles. Of all these nations, which existed previous to Nebuchadnezzar, (besides which Is. xviii. refers to some unnamed people outside their limits, and Ezekiel introduces the northern Gog in his inroad in the latter days,) the history and judgment in the latter day is given in the prophets, and they are found in one way or another hostile to Israel, and gathered against Jerusalem in the latter day. In general, we find Zech. xii. and xiv., Is. xxx., Mic. iv., and other passages, reveal the gathering of the nations

* There will be two attacks. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the first; at the second, Christ will be there, and the judgment takes place. Isaiah and Zechariah are clear as to this.

* As regards Israel, the moral effect is this.—In order to save themselves from the overflowing scourge, Judah, who had rejected Christ, will associate themselves with Anti-Christ and the apostate Gentiles, and even join in idolatry; but the scourge will for all that pass through. A residue, despised, suffering, and rejected, will recoil from this, own Jehovah, and gradually grow up into more light, but in the midst of such distress as never was. When all hope is shut out and the enemy is coming up again in pride, the Lord will appear and save them, and take them up against all their enemies.—As regards the ten tribes, at least the great body of them, this will not be their history. Having determined to be like the Gentiles, God has not suffered it; they are not under Anti-Christ and not cut off in the land, but brought, like Israel coming out of Egypt, under God's rod, and the rebels cut off, so as not to enter. Israel and Judah will then be under one Head, Christ, who will gather from all sides any left in divers lands.

against Jerusalem. But these passages reveal also that it is taken once, and a second time is not, because the Lord is there and defends it. The nations themselves are judged. In this the haughty pride of the nations is broken, as that of Israel (who, save the residue, have sought help far from God, and have been broken and oppressed) is brought down by their own trials. And, however the nations may have exalted themselves, they are found to bow to the sovereignty and power of God, and own that He is in the midst of Israel whom they have despised. Those spared of them will own Jehovah in Zion when He has appeared—Zion established in peace by the presence of Jehovah.

Such is the history of the nations, as such, but the statue (or the beasts) is besides all this a distinct history, as we have seen, and also a distinct prophetic subject. Man used the power confided to him of God to exalt himself against Him, to oppress His people and trample down His sanctuary. Nor was this all, the last beast in particular imbrued his hands (vainly washed before men) in the guiltless blood of the Son of God, and thus associated himself with the apostate part of the Jewish people. Alas! this was not all. The mystery of iniquity working in the midst of the Church brought on apostacy there, and evil men, crept in, brought out the peculiar character of those to be judged by Christ at His coming in the last day. This apostacy gave occasion to the rise of the man of sin, the full expression of the wickedness of the human heart under the full power of Satan. Owning no God, setting up to be God, deceiving as a false Christ by signs and wonders; such is the religious end of man left to himself: all this associated with and maintaining the public power of Satan on the earth; such is the last character of the power of the Gentiles where Christianity had been introduced. It will have at once an atheistical and an apostate Gentile form growing out of and accompanied by apostate Christian forms. The last rebellious and self-exalting actings of power at Jerusalem will bring down ruin on the chief and his supporters, by the manifestation of the Lord Jesus. Thereon will follow what we have already spoken of—the taking up of royal power in Israel by the Lord Christ, and the destruction of all the enemies who will have gathered together against Him.

Here it is we find the Church in prophecy. The marriage of the Lamb having taken place with the Church already *gone* up on high, the saints come forth with the Lord on the white horse to the triumphant destruction of the beast and the false prophet. And then the Church is seen in her relationship with the earth in blessing, as the heavenly Jerusalem, striking contrast with the corrupt and corrupting intercourse of Babylon with the kings of the earth, which ends in the nations and the beast hating and destroying her.

In this scene of woe, which precedes the destruction of the beast, we find in the prophets a remnant of Jews, who, in the depth of their distress, look and learn more and more to look to Jehovah, being animated by the prophetic Spirit of Christ and taught by it. To this the whole body of Psalms apply, giving us, besides Christ's sympathy with them, the various expression of it. Is. lxv. lxvi. dwell upon this remnant. One other circumstance must be noted here, of which prophecy speaks. Before the execution of judgment, there will be within the circle of special evil and without it a testimony of God. These must not be confounded. In the earlier half of the last week of Daniel, there will be a testimony rendered to the *God of the earth*. The beast, rising up in his last form, will put an end to this, adding this to his other wickedness, in order to please men and pursue his career of evil unchecked. During the last half week there is none, save the refusal to adore the beast. At the same time, there will be a testimony of the coming kingdom sent abroad among the nations, that all that have ears to hear may, through grace, escape the coming judgment. This gives occasion to the judgment of Matt. xxv. For this the reader may consult Matt. xxiv. 14, Rev. xiv., and Ps. xcvi.

The result will be the full establishment of what was shadowed, or rather, connected with the responsibility of man in the previous condition; namely, the full blessing of that people and the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem; but there is added what was shadowed out in the Gentile power, the full dominion of the Son of man over the world. It remains to add, that Old and New Testament prophecy alike declares that Satan will be bound, driven from on high, (whence he has corrupted even the good that God has placed in the hands of men,) and from earth soon after. He is shut up in the bottomless pit, and the blessing of the world is uninterrupted till he be loosed again. Even then it does not appear that the saints will suffer. They will be assembled together apart from those seduced. The judgment of the dead follows, and the new heavens and the new earth, the mediatorial kingdom being closed and delivered up, and the family of the second Adam enjoying the full, everlasting blessing acquired for them by their Head.

D.

THE RIGHT POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

(Rev. xxii. 17.)

It must be obvious to any one but moderately versed in prophecy, that the right position of the Church, whilst here upon earth, is that of *waiting for the Son of God from heaven.* (1 Thess. i. 10.) Still, though abundantly proved by Scripture, any help, however humble and unpretending, that will act as an inducement to prosecute inquiries, cannot under God fail to be useful; and the more so, as the mass of conflicting opinions of good and learned men is apt to blind the eye to the sureness of the Divine Word, if we be not watchful.

The better our knowledge is of the nature and constitution of the Church, as given in Scripture, the better (all other things being equal) will be our knowledge of its right position, whether as to its corporate capacity, or as to each member's individual responsibility.

What a change in actual condition from Acts ii. to Revelation ii. and iii.! from the time when they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, when all that believed were together, the Lord adding daily to the Church such as should be saved, until the Church in Ephesus is threatened with having its candlestick removed, and that in Laodicea with being spued out as a thing nauseous to the Lord's mouth! And yet how instructive to see that no divisions foreseen, no decline lamented, no corruption denounced in the professing body, leads *the Spirit* to deny what the Church was to the Lord's heart. It is in the very last chapter of the Revelation that we read, "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Yes, fail she might, failed she was, but was she not, is she not still, THE BRIDE? Observe, too, it is the Church, not in heaven, but on earth. When she is with the Lord, she will not say, Come; she will not, when in heaven, be inviting sinners on earth to take the water of life freely. It is the beautiful position of the Church while she is still here below. Have we not much need to take care that, in our present isolated circumstances, we lose not sight of the wideness of affection, as well as joyous hopes of the Bride? We may groan to see God's children trammelled by earthly priesthood, with its human succession, its worldly sanctuary and its fleshly rites, in whatever quarter, form, or degree they may be sanctioned or allowed. And it is well we should thus groan. But are we saying, "Come"? Are we saying, as *the Bride*, Come, Lord Jesus? Are we seeking to stir up the affections of all our brethren to this their hope, as well as ours, whether they know it or not? Are we asking perseveringly of the Lord that He would draw out their hearts to long for His coming?—Not that this should weaken our earnestness for the conversion of sinners. The more we taste and enjoy the sweetness of the treasure we have found in the Lord, the more shall we turn round and beseech men to be reconciled to God. The more we realize what it is to be ourselves the Bride, the more shall we feel what the world is in all its terribleness. Nothing can be more opposed to Scripture, to the nature of things, or to experience, than the notion that the knowledge of our blessedness as the Bride of Christ and our longing desires for His return, make us insensible to the misery of the unbelieving, or indifferent about their welfare. Rev. xxii. 17 connects the two things together, instead of setting them the one against the other.

Such is the right position of the Church. It is not right to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine. The world, the wretched faithless world, is not the Bride of Christ. It is not humility to deny our own blessings, nor is it charity to call and treat the world as if it were what it really is not. The Church is the Bride, the whole Church, and nothing but the Church.

On the other hand, we call the thirsty soul, not to ourselves, but to Christ, for it is He, and not the Church, who can give a well of water springing up into everlasting life. We have drank at that heavenly spring: we have heard Him *ourselves*, and *know* that this

is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world, and hence can we invite the poorest Samaritan around to come and take of the water of life freely.

Believers, are you entering into your own proper joy as the Bride? If some of you are not, you are so far, at least, out of communion with the Holy Ghost, for the Spirit without doubt says, "Come," if some of you do not. The Spirit longs for the fullest joy and glory of the Lord Jesus. Is it not so with you? with you who are to share that joy and glory as His Bride? If you are saying, "Come," be not weary. He will soon descend from heaven. Shortly shall we be summoned to meet Him in the air, and to be ever with the Lord. Be patient, therefore, brethren, even though you do suffer affliction. It is a little while. But while we wait, let us not forget how many lips are parched around us, and *we* alone know the stream which can refresh them. Shall we then be silent? Shall we not lift our voice as a trumpet, to proclaim the worth and the grace of Jesus? Is it thus we are found, habitually found? Or, are we often resting when we should be toiling, just as if we had done some great thing in separating from this or that evil to which our consciences at one time were dull? Is that the spirit of a Bride?

In proportion as we appropriate the Bride's place, we shall find ourselves in the experience of the Bridegroom, and we shall feel the force of that Scripture: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But the hope, the certain, confident expectation, of God's ultimate purpose towards us, will cheer and fortify us.

We are taught in Rom. viii. 29, that it is God's purpose that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. This will take place at His manifestation to us, (1 John iii. 2,) for we shall see Him as He is. Such is the destiny of the Church of God. The Lord Jesus shall present the Church to Himself, glorious, and spotless, holy, and without blemish. (Eph. v. 27.) She is the Bride, the Lamb's wife, (Rev. xxi. 9,) the sharer of His glory and heavenly object of His love. As such, the present utterance of her heart should be, with the Spirit, "Come." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

Thus, to faith is made known the riches of the glory of the wondrous mystery hidden from ages and from generations, but *now* made manifest to His saints and summed up in these words: "Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col. i. 27.) When this hope of a new and heavenly glory—a hope, therefore, as open to Gentiles as to Jews—possesses the soul, waiting for Christ is a necessary consequence. "But hope that is seen is not hope." Patient waiting for it is therefore needed. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that *wait* for their Lord."

Many students wait for the fulfilment of prophecies which have a special, if not exclusive, reference to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, or to the events which precede and accompany it. Hence they see not the essential distinction between the Church, Christ's body, glorified with Him in the heavenly places, and the glory of Israel in the latter day. This lowers the hope, and the practical walk too, beyond calculation.

Doubtless, all Scripture is given for our profit and instruction; but, in studying prophecy, the exact order of it must not be overlooked, as well as the exact persons to whom it applies. Now, we are sure to go astray if we are watching for events out of their revealed order, or if we are converging upon the Church that which is really written about Israel. Whatever system of interpretation weakens our daily constant expectation of the Lord's coming for the Church, it is not too much to say, *must be wrong*. There may be some real and many apparent difficulties on this, as on every other, branch of revealed truth; but our text, with many others, establishes this prophetic test very plainly.

Before the kingdom of Christ is established upon earth, "every thing that offends must be rooted out," and terrible inflictions will overtake His enemies. But how does this show that the Church is to be here upon earth when these direct closing judgments are executed? The pouring out of the judgments will not take place until iniquity, or lawlessness, is no longer a *mystery*, but the Lawless One is fully *revealed*. As the false mystery opposes the true mystery, or the mystery of Christ and the Church; just so, when *the Lord* is about to be revealed, Satan has an antagonist disclosed, even the man of sin. "For he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way, and *then* shall that Wicked One be revealed," &c. When the *light* is removed, darkness will ensue; when the *salt* is taken away, there will be no preservation from utter corruption. The presence of the Spirit in the Church now may be this restraint upon the full development of wickedness. The spring tide of evil will set in when the Church is taken away.

I conclude with the words of the Psalmist, (Ps. xxxix.) after he had been taught that "man walketh in a vain shew." "And now, Lord, what *wait* I for? my hope is in thee."

M.

THE SECOND ADVENT OF OUR LORD.

Extract of a Letter from Capt. H—, in India, with a few alterations and additions.

I CANNOT enter fully on the subject now, nor indeed do I desire to do so. All I wish is, to bring it to your consideration, and to induce you to study Holy Writ; begging of you, as you value the glory of God, to seek the blessed Spirit in prayer, that an understanding heart may be given you to see and receive this most glorious truth. I speak not in *doubt* or *uncertainty* as to this being truth. These are not mere opinions; but, the grand outline of what I may be enabled to state on this point, I know to be truth, I know to be the mind of God, and as plainly revealed in the Bible as that Christ died for sinners. The general doctrine then is this, that Christ is to come again, that the dead in Christ are to be raised from their graves, and the living saints are to be changed (1 Thess. iv. 13-17; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 51, 52,) and to meet the Lord in the air; that the man of sin (2 Thess. ii. 3) shall subsequently be destroyed by the brightness of His coming; (2 Thess. ii. 8;) that all living in apostacy and infidelity, having received the mark of the beast upon their hands or their foreheads, (Rev. xiii. 16, 17; xiv. 9, 10, 11; xix. 19, 20, 21,) shall be slain, and the beast and the false prophet shall be cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone; that there shall be a judgment of the nations *then alive on the earth;* (Matt. xxv. 31, 46; compare Joel iii.) that in that day, without defining the hour of it, so to speak, the heavens which are shall pass away, (2 Peter iii. 10, 12,) the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up, and there shall be a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; (2 Peter iii. 13; Is. lxv. 17; Rev. xxi. 1;) that the living saints and the *dead in Christ*, already gathered to the Lord, are to reign with Him one thousand years over the earth; (Rev. xx. 48; v. 10;) that, during this period, Satan is to be bound, (Rev. xx. 1, 2,) universal peace and righteousness shall prevail, every knee shall bow to Jesus, "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;" (Hab. ii. 14; Is. xi. 9;) that, after these thousand years are passed, Satan shall be loosed, (Rev. xx. 3, 7,) and shall go up to deceive the nations, (Rev. xx. 8,) who, being tempted and led away, shall compass the camp of the saints about, (Rev. xx. 9,) and they shall be destroyed by God; (verse 9;) the devil, death and hell, shall be cast into the lake of fire; (verses 10 and 14;) the great white-throne judgment shall take place; (Rev. xx. 12, 13;) *then cometh the end*, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that GOD may be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.)

Now, this is the outline of the doctrine of Christ's second coming and the most striking features which mark this blessed truth. There are many minute points which I have not touched upon, but which perhaps I may be enabled to do at some future day. Now, I implore you, my dear friend, to study this subject in prayer and dependance on the Holy Spirit. Look for yourself; examine all the passages of Scripture with their context. Read all the parallel passages; for it is a most glorious truth, and one which is more calculated to raise the soul, fix the affections, prepare the heart, and make Christians watchful over their lives and ways, than any other doctrine perhaps of the Word of God: *Christians*, I say, for to all others *the cross* is the one first need. If you have read the New Testament with care, you cannot have failed to perceive that the hope of *Christ's speedy return* was the consolation, joy, and comfort of the apostles, and all the primitive Church. For an example of this, first look at 1 John iii. 2. John is rejoicing at himself and all Christians, being sons of God; yet his and their chief joy consists in looking forward to that time when Christ shall be manifested, because then they would see Him and be like Him. Now, mark, John does not say that this is *death*, nor a *going to rest*, but the hope and joy is "*when He shall*

appear." John says again, in chapter ii. 28: "Abide in Christ, that we may have confidence *at His coming*," not at death, but at *Christ's coming*. Paul says, in Col. iii. 4: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then we shall also *appear with Him in glory*." Paul knew that, when he died, he should be with Christ, for he says, in Phil. i. 23, he desires "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better;" and, in 2 Cor. v. 8, he is desirous of being "absent from the body and present with the Lord." This refers *to his death*, which, to a Christian, must indeed be an object of joy and comfort; but *death is not the object to which the Bible directs a Christian's hopes and joys*. Paul's hope expressed to Timothy is, that he shall receive a crown of righteousness at that day. At what day? not the day of his death, but the day of Christ's appearing, when He (Christ) shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day. (2 Thess. i. 10.) Passages to prove this might be adduced in numbers, but I will leave it for you to seek them in prayer and study on this point.

I wish you to understand that the event expressed by the *coming of the Lord* occupied that precise place in expectation of the first Christians which the event of death, the prospect of going to heaven, occupies in the thoughts of Christians in the present day. How this delusion has taken place I cannot explain, but, doubtless, Satan, taking advantage of man's departure from the simple truth as it is in Jesus, has sown this error and darkness. To prove to you that death cannot be the object, *the chief hope* and object of the Christian, I may say that, if it were so, there could be nothing further to look for after that event was fulfilled. Once dead and with Christ, the Christian hope would have been fully accomplished. But, just turn to Heb. xi. 39, 40: there you see that Abraham, Isaac and Moses, and all the godly array of holy men, although dead and with Christ, *had not received the promise*, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Until Christ *comes* again, the saints will not receive their glorified bodies; their spirits are in heaven, but their bodies will not be raised incorruptible and glorious till the coming of Christ; for St. Paul says: "In a moment, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised incorruptible." (1 Cor. xv. 51-54.) This can only refer to the saints, as the bodies of *the wicked* cannot be raised incorruptible, nor bear the image of the heavenly. Neither can death to the wicked be *swallowed up in victory*.

You will perceive that there are two distinct resurrections mentioned in the Word of God. (See Rev. xx. 4, to end.) It is plain, in the fourth verse, that there is a judgment, which, as I before stated, is of the nations then alive. When Christ comes, all the saints who had died in Christ, and the saints living on the earth at His return, receive their glorified bodies, and reign with Christ a thousand years; now, mark, "but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." The sixth verse states, that those who are partakers of the first resurrection cannot be affected by the second death. The seventh verse says, that, after the thousand years, Satan is loosed and goes out to deceive the nations then on the earth; and, observe, it is not the saints, but the nations, for it says afterwards that the nations, headed by Satan, go up to fight against the holy city. They (the nations who are tempted) are destroyed, Satan is cast into hell, and then (verse 11) is seen the great white throne of judgment; there stand all the dead, great and small; the sea, death and hell, give up their dead, and every man, i.e. who is then judged, is judged according to his works, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. This is the *judgment of the dead*, and is followed by *the end*, when Jesus shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even His Father; when He shall have put down all authority and power: for He must reign till He hath put down all enemies under His feet: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Cor. xv. 24-26.) Now, death is not destroyed till after the millennium. (Rev. xx. 14.)

The doctrine of the first resurrection is very important, and you ought to study it. It is clearly laid down in the following passages. (1 Thess. iv. 15-18.) You will observe that there is no mention there of the resurrection of the wicked; but the consolation given to the Church is, that they which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him, and that when the Lord cometh, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with the now risen saints, and meet the Lord in the air. Now, this exclusively refers to the saints. It cannot be said that the wicked sleep in Jesus. In 2 Thess. i. 5, where allusion is made to the sufferings of the saints, it is said that it is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye suffer. Now, connect this passage with Luke xx. 35, 36. Therefore, see that when the Sadducees come to our Lord with the question concerning the woman who had had seven husbands, and they, not believing in the resurrection, asked whose wife she should be. Observe the answer of our Lord: "The children of this world (or age) marry and are given in marriage, but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection of the dead do not marry." Now, the world or age of which they were to be accounted worthy, is connected with the resurrection of the dead, and also with the kingdom of God, for which the suffering saints are to be accounted worthy; (2 Thess. i. 5;) it is clear that the kingdom of God and that world, of which they are to be accounted worthy, are intimately blended. Now, as the resurrection here alluded to is only of those who were accounted worthy, it is plain that there are two resurrections; one which is here referred to, where the wicked rise not at all, and another in which they are raised: for we know that the wicked shall be raised, and that to damnation or judgment; consequently, the resurrection of which the righteous are accounted worthy must be a distinct resurrection. You will find the same doctrine in Luke xiv. 14, where it is taught that those who imbibed the spirit of God's grace shall be recompensed in the *resurrection of the just*: the clear inference here is, that there will be also a resurrection of the unjust, as indeed is taught in Acts xxiv. 15. I might quote other passages, but I conceive the doctrine to be so clear that it is unnecessary to say more.

I find there is not sufficient space in one letter to enter fully on this glorious and engrossing subject, but, God enabling me, I will write more another time. Before concluding, I would beg you to observe one point, which, if seen, will much facilitate your reception of this truth. You cannot but have remarked throughout the Scriptures, that God promised to raise up One from the seed of David who should reign over Israel for ever. The following are some of the texts, but there are many more which I need not repeat now: 2 Sam. vii. 14, 16. 1 Chron. xvii. 11, 14. Ps. lxxxix. 29, 34, 37. Is. ix. 5, 7. Luke xxxiii. 17, 20. Ezek. xxi. 26, 27; xxxiv. 23, 24; xxxvii. 24. Luke i. 32, 33. Now, Christ never yet has sat upon the throne of David. The angel's promise to Mary was, that she should have a son who should sit upon the throne of David, and reign over the house of Jacob for ever. This has not been fulfilled. It could not have been at our Lord's first coming, for the Jews rejected Him, and after His death, when the apostles asked (Acts i. 6) whether at this time He would *restore the kingdom to Israel*, Jesus did not tell them that they were wrong in expecting a kingdom, but merely said that it was not for them to know the *times and seasons* of the Lord. They are however assured, very soon after, that "this same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." We see afterwards, in Acts iii. 19-21, that the Holy Ghost, speaking by Peter, says that the heavens *must receive Jesus until the times of the restitution of all things*, at which time *God shall send Jesus*, which before was preached unto us. Christ is not now sitting on the throne of David; for what throne can David have in heaven? and the Jews up to this moment have the veil upon their hearts, which veil is not to be removed till they turn to the Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.) And in Is. xxv. 7-9 we find that the veil is to be destroyed from off all nations, *when Christ shall come* for them, and not till then shall the rebuke of his people be taken away, and all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, and then shall this glorious cry ascend: "Lo! this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

You are aware that the Jews were looking for a King who should deliver them from all their enemies. They were all expecting a glorious reign of splendour, for all the prophecies dwell upon this point in the most glowing language; and their sin was not in their expecting and looking for a King who should reign over them and raise them far above all nations, but their sin consisted in not seeing that this King was *first* to pass through sufferings to enter into glory, (Luke xxiv. 26,) which had been clearly revealed in Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets. They rejected the many prophecies referring to Christ's death and suffering, and only

received those that bore reference to His reign and glory. The consequence was, that when Christ came in humility, poverty and sorrow, their pride and arrogance caused them to deny Him. They could not brook the idea of their King and Deliverer being a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—a carpenter's son, and the companion of publicans and sinners. An attentive perusal of the New Testament will convince you that the Jews were not wrong in expecting a King to reign over them, and our Saviour, in many instances which refer to this subject in the Gospels, never rebuked the Jews or exposed their error, by shewing them that they misinterpreted prophecy by looking for a King, but in all His allusions to this point, the Saviour merely corrected them as to the period of this glorious event. (or prepared the way for another purpose of God in the Church, undisclosed in the Old Testament.)

The Jews expected it immediately. Our Saviour laboured to point out and shew that this could not be till certain events had been fulfilled. To substantiate this, I will refer to one or two passages, for I have not room for more. If you turn to Luke xix. 12, you will observe that the Lord speaks a parable to disabuse the Jews concerning the immediate setting up of the kingdom. "He spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because *they thought* that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." You know that before this, in John vi. 15, the people desired to take Jesus by force and make Him King; and more, when they saw Him approaching Jerusalem, which He was going to enter in triumph, surrounded by multitudes, crying out, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," they fully anticipated that at this time Jesus was coming to restore the kingdom to Israel. If they had been wrong in looking for a King and kingdom, surely Jesus, the God of truth and light, would have undeceived them, checked their ardour and exclamations, and warned them of their error in looking for any further demonstrations of a kingdom than that which was thus spiritually represented; but I put it to you and to every candid mind, was the parable then spoken fitted to make the Jewish disciples say to themselves, We are altogether mistaken in looking for any different state of things from what we have just now? Does He teach us that the kingdom of God has come in every sense in which it is to come? Nay, does not the parable in question distinctly recognize this expectation that the kingdom was yet to appear, as a right expectation? Thus, the only thing in which they were wrong, and which the parable was intended to correct, was regarding the time of its appearing. The Jews thought the kingdom would *immediately* appear: the Lord says not a word to undeceive them as to the reality of His coming, but merely endeavours to put them right as to the time of it. He says: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." Now, in this nobleman, our Lord is represented to us. Thus, He goes, as we see in Acts i. 9, into the far country, which is heaven, where He is now waiting until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and in Dan. vii., you have the installation into His kingdom; there you see the Son of man invested with dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, &c. So, in Rev. v., we see the Lamb opening the book to reveal the dealings of God which usher Him into the purchased possession. No one except Jesus had redeemed the world, or had a right to reign over it; none but the Root of David prevailed to open the book. Then there is joy in heaven and the anticipative song of all on earth, for then are all the prophecies to be accomplished and all the promises abundantly recovered. Then it is that the saints in heaven shout for joy and sing: Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign over the earth.—If it were not to reign with Him, what possible delight or wish could they have to quit heaven and the presence of their God, and return again to earth? But Christ does come with them; (Dan. vii. 13. Zech. xiv. 5. Matt. xxiv. 30; xxv. 31; xxvi. 64. Acts i. 11. Col. iii. 4. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 2 Thess. i. 10. Jude 14. Rev. i. 7;) and then, and not till then, do "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." And then does the shout arise: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned." (Rev. xi. 15, 17.) See also Luke xix. 15, and there you read that it came to pass when he was returned, having recovered the kingdom, He commanded His servants to be called unto Him, &c. Now, the great thing the Lord desires to teach us in this parable is, that, instead of entering immediately upon the kingdom, he was going away into a far country first, and then to return. Whilst He is absent, the parable is given for the instruction of His servants, who trade with his gifts.

Again, observe Matt. xx. 21. When the mother of Zebedee's children asked Christ if He would grant that her two sons might sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left, in *His kingdom*, this strongly denotes the expectation of a kingdom among the followers of Jesus. James and John came with their mother and worshipped him, asking the high favour. Now, had they been wrong in looking for any further manifestations of a kingdom than were then displayed, think you that their loving Master would not have pointed out their error? Undoubtedly, he would; but is His answer any way calculated to impress them with the idea that they were wrong? The Lord says: "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, save to them *for whom it is prepared of my Father;*" evidently and unequivocally implying that there is a kingdom, and that those for whom it is prepared would sit there. Compare chap. xix. 28, and connect it with Rev. iii. 4, where the throne of Jesus is clearly stated to be a distinct thing from the throne of the Father. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father on His throne." Now, Christ is God, and His throne as God is in the heavens, and was so from all eternity; but His throne as man is and must be a distinct thing. He gained this throne by a victory, and as there was nothing to gain or to overcome in heaven, it must be the earth, which is called in Ephes. i. 14 the purchased possession. In Luke i. 32, it is declared that Jesus is to sit upon the throne of His Father David; and in Acts ii. 30 it is written, that of the fruit of David's loins God would raise up Christ to sit upon His throne. In Matt. xix. 28, Jesus most forcibly impresses upon his disciples the certainty of a kingdom, and teaches them to look forward to it as the climax of their desires. He tells the twelve, that they who had taken up their cross and followed Him shall, when the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory, sit also upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It is not His throne as God, but as the Son of man, which is emphatically called the throne of His glory. It is the peculiar hope and privilege of the Gospel, that those who suffer with Christ are also to reign with Him. (See Rom. viii. 17, 18. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 8. Luke xxi. 28, 30. Rev. ii. 26; iii. 21; v. 10; xx. 4, and many other passages.)

I will not press this point further, but will conclude by just pointing out to you that the thief on the cross, though he saw the Saviour of the world expiring at his side, yet expressed his firm conviction that there was to be a future kingdom, and asked the Lord to remember him when he came into His kingdom. Observe also at His birth, that Jesus was, by the wise men of the east, hailed King of the Jews, and that at the judgment-seat of Pilate, when asked if he was King of the Jews, He answered him and said, Thou sayest it. Lastly, mark the overruling providence of God, who, notwithstanding the opposition of the Jews, ordained that Jesus should die with this inscription over his head: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," which, though essentially true, has not yet been accomplished. But the day is at hand when the Lord of glory shall [not only be crowned on high with the Church of the heavenly places, but] appear and be recognized as sovereign King by His grateful subjects on earth, and then shall He enter into Jerusalem, the city of the great King and angels, and all the choir of saints below, as well as above, shall sing the inspired song: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." (Ps. xxiv. 7, 9.) O that every child of God would pray for this blessed consummation! This is our duty and our interest, our joy and our obedience. Hear what the Holy Ghost, speaking by Isaiah, says: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." O that glorious period, when, instead of sin, there will be holiness; instead of ignorance, knowledge; instead of rebellion, submission; instead of selfishness, love; instead of discord and war, harmony and peace; for then all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and holiness shall be written upon the bells of the horses. (Zech. xiv. 20.)

I will now conclude this long letter with one remark, and that because some, in the blindness of their hearts, have stumbled at it. The Lord says, in one or two places, that the kingdom of God is within you; that my kingdom is not of this world, as, in the ser-

mon I have requested you to get, this subject is largely dwelt upon. I do not mean to dilate upon it, but merely to say that *now, at this time*, is the secret and spiritual kingdom of God. The Lord Jesus has now a kingdom in the world, which is not of it, but it is a spiritual invisible kingdom, set up, if you will, in the hearts of His people, and preserved there through the sanctifying influence of His Spirit; and it is only by having this kingdom of God in our hearts during this dispensation, that can enable us to indicate our claims to the glories of that kingdom, when it shall be fully revealed and manifested. Oh! my dear friend, let us serve the Lord with our hearts and souls. Let Jesus reign within us, and when He comes He shall confess us before His Father and the holy angels. It is, my friend, the will of God that we should look for and haste the coming of the day of God, (2 Peter iii. 12,) and we should daily pray, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Oh! let us respond to it in our hearts and souls: "Amen. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." Let the intervening space of time that may elapse before that blessed hope comes, be swallowed up in the anticipated appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus ii. 2-14.) Let us think, speak, live and act, as those who have that event continually before them—as those, not only believing it, but expecting and desiring it. Oh! what Christians should we be if this hope were ever before our eyes! The pressure of our earthly troubles would be lightened, and the fear of death totally extinguished. What Christians would there be on earth if all realized this! All their differences would vanish, all sects and parties would be united, and every selfish, earthly, carnal feeling would be swallowed up in the expectation of the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Oh! let us pray for it, and ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit to add fervour and efficacy to our prayers. Let us be very jealous over ourselves, and watch continually. The Lord admonished His own disciples, and surely we need it. He says, in Luke xxi. 34: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all the earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all the things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man."—Oh! I pray you, stand fast in the Lord, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. The day of the Lord shall be as a thief in the night, and as a snare to the careless and worldly; but, glory be to God, *that day shall not overtake us as a thief;* for we are not of the night, nor of darkness, but the children of the light and the day. (1 Thess. v. 1-11.)

Space now fails me, though I have much to say, and often wish we might talk over these things, for it is almost impossible in a letter to enter into the vastness of the subject, for I do not hesitate to say that the whole tenour of Scripture leads more or less to this blessed truth, and every book of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, bears reference to it. I have not arranged my argument in the best order, but I have written just what came first into my mind, and I leave you, through the grace of God, to study the subject, and arrange and settle the various heads. May the God of peace bless this letter to both of us! Into His hands I commit it, for I have written in prayer and dependance on His Spirit. I have sought the Lord's blessing therein; and, as I firmly believe what I have written is truth, so do I trust God will bless it to both your soul and mine.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES.

[A copious analysis of a paper bearing the above title, and printed originally in the *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy* for July, 1849, (vol. i., pp. 412-424,) was sent some time since to beloved and honoured brother, at present labouring in the South of France. Hence the following remarks, extracted from two letters, which communicate the writer's judgment of its false and dangerous doctrine. Of this the reader can judge for himself by the ample quotations, in the shape of notes, presented below. If the statements were merely ignorant, and withal faulty, as pretending to accuracy with the greatest confusion, one might have passed them by in silence; but where *fundamental principles*, are wanting, unknown, and virtually denied, it is surely worth while to rouse those who value the truth of the Gospel, and to put simple, unsuspecting souls on their guard, even though some who see not beneath the surface may be quick to charge us with a lack of charity.—Ed.]

My dear K——, Pau, March, 1850.

I send you some lines on the paper you refer to. It has a character far more important than mere error, as to a dispensational arrangement. The writer, whoever he may be, is evidently one of the semi-Irvingite school, who retain the foundation error which led to all poor Irving's heresies and wanderings; namely, making an incarnate Christ head, instead of a Christ who had accomplished redemption, and thus excluding redemption as the ground-work of the new, accepted creation of God. It is quite true that the glorious person of the Lord Jesus gave Him the title and competency to hold all things, but then it was not His being a man that did so. That is expressly based, in Colossians, on His divine competency. He is the first-born of every creature, for by Him were all things *created*. It is quite true that His being a man entered in the marvellous wisdom of God into the place of headship, but this was not His personal title *de jure*, but by the counsels of God. "*Thou hast set Him*,"—and then His death, and redemption accomplished by it, and His resurrection, enter necessarily into those counsels, as in Ps. viii. and Heb. ii. Further, when we take up the question of the elements of a dispensation, the principles on which it is carried on form part of the elements, as well as the person to whom it is confided.

But, having touched on the spring of deep-laid and deadly error which is the basis of this system, I will now speak of the statements it contains. First, where *οἰκονομία* is spoken of, what is said seems to me to be a dispute about words. I admit fully that there were two grand headships—as do all Christians, with different degrees of light—the first and Second Adam's, whether as heads of families or lords of the spheres put under them of God. The primary title of Christ, let us only remember, is paramount to that of having things put under Him. That refers to the Son of man. His primary title is His being Creator as Son: all things created by Him and for Him. But I am not aware that the first, or Adamic, state is ever called a dispensation, or *οἰκονομία*, or any thing like it.*

But there is another word which is employed in Scripture, which does give distinct periods entirely overlooked in the paper, and which altogether overthrows its denial of divisional periods, which Christians in general call dispensations,† when the principles on which they are carried on are distinct; namely, the word *αἰὼν* and *αἰῶνες*. Of these, Scripture does speak, but it never speaks of *οἰκονομία* as a period at all. This latter word is employed, says the writer, "only once in the New Testament, to denominate a distinct

* "If the generic character of what, in Scripture, is called an economy, or dispensation, be, as we hold it is, government delegated to one who is constituted, either in a more or less limited sense the Head of creation—then it is evident that, from the beginning of the world, till the first coming of our Lord, there was only one dispensation that, with its specific differences, possessed the same general character as that of the fulness of times. We refer to the period during which Adam was clothed with authority, as head over all things in this lower world. That period formed the dispensation, as it may be called, of the beginning of time; and while time was still only in its beginning, that primary dispensation was, through the illapse of sin, precipitated to a close. The interval between the fall and the incarnation, between the ruin of the first and the appearing of the second Adam, does not, in its whole history, present any distinct order of things which might, with scriptural propriety, be termed a dispensation. There was doubtless a peculiar form of government set up during the interregnum; the administration of affairs was entrusted to the angels of heaven, and especially during the Mosaic period, as Scripture abundantly testifies; but the angels were not placed in a relation of headship towards men, such as was occupied once by the first Adam, and is now occupied by the second; therefore, their exercise of government did not possess a true dispensational character. They were not constituted lords of creation, so far as appears from Scripture, but were rather ministers of state, who stood before the throne of Jehovah, and were, for a season, charged by him with the functions of executive government." (Pages 416, 417.) "There being only two dispensations, based on the principle of creation-headship, namely, the Adamic and the Messianic," &c. (Page 419.)

† "The government will be for ever on Christ's shoulder; therefore, the dispensation, which has already begun, will never terminate. In the proper and scriptural sense of the expression, there can never be another economy than that in which we have already entered. *In so far as true dispensational elements are concerned*, we have been cast on times destined to be eternal. There will—there must—be changes. Owing to the general, the well-nigh universal non-recognition of Christ's headship, it is necessary that unexampled changes—changes subversive of the whole apparent order of things, should take place, in order to unfold the real nature of this dispensation, and win for the great truths which form the basis of it, the willing acknowledgment of the world. . . . Let not the *prestige* of stupendous coming change create the idea that yet another economy must be ushered in upon the theatre of creation. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the economy that now exists, identified as it is with Christ's headship, shall never pass away." (Pages 415, 416.) "The dispensation of the fulness of times, then, was not preceded by any order of things possessing a proper dispensational character, except the Adamic, which was only of very brief duration; and it never will—we must for a moment recall the attention of our readers to the fact—be superseded by any other dispensational system. No changes, however great, that may yet set in upon the tide of time, will shake or undermine its God-laid foundations. In its grand, generic principles, it will endure throughout eternity. The millennial age will, in no true dispensational element, differ from the evangelistic age that is now revolving. Our brethren, whether premillenarian or holding opposite views, who speak of *the thousand years* as a new dispensational era, we are far from being disposed to charge with rashness; but we are persuaded that they use the term dispensation in an improper sense." (Page 418.) "The eternal duration, speaking prospectively, of the very economy that is now running its course, is so far from being admitted by some of our brethren, that they regard the present economy as merely parenthetical . . . . Were any thing of that kind introduced, it would necessarily suspend the existence of the established or current economy; in other words, it would supersede, for an interval, the existing Head of creation from his right of government; but the right referred to, after being once conferred, and so long as it has not been forfeited, cannot possibly be, even for a brief interval, superseded, or thrown into abeyance; and, therefore, the insertion of a parenthetical dispensation is impossible." (Pages 419, 420.)

period of the world's history;" and, again, "'the dispensation of the fulness of times' is just, in other terms, the delegated administration, or government, of the fulness of times; or, by an obvious and easy transition, the period during which that administration, or government, exists." But this is out of place in insisting on the accurate force of a word. The Scripture, the Lord Himself there does speak of periods carried on under God on different principles, (which are very justly called dispensations,) whereas, one of the writer's periods is never called *οἰκονομία*, nor is this word ever applied to, nor does it mean, a period at all. "So shall it be in the end of *this age*," (*τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*,) says the Lord. (Matt. xiii.) So He appeared *ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων*. (Heb. ix.) Now, *αἰὼν* clearly signifies, in such passages, a period or course of time in which certain principles have sway on God's part. Thus, until the end of the age, judgment, which plucks up out of this world, is not to be exercised by the Lord's servants; whereas, in the end of it, judgment will gather out of the kingdom of the Son of man all scandals. And hence it is also that this present time is called (not I judge a dispensation, but) a parenthesis,* because the Lord Jesus speaks of "this age," when He was upon earth, as the same as that which will close by judgment at the end; but this was a period connected with His relationship with Jews, and which will not be closed till He again is present in person; whereas, in the interval, the Church of the first-born has been gathered for heaven. Another reason why it has been called so, and proof that it is so, is, that sixty-nine of Daniel's weeks are run out, and then there is an interval of ages, and the last week begins again to run on and be counted.

I need not say that I admit the headship of Christ, but I have shewn briefly that Scripture speaks of periods, and that in reference to the most important subjects possible, by words very justly, in substance, translated dispensations, and I am not here to discuss language but things. But I add, on the other hand, that *οἰκονομία* does not mean headship of creation at all, but administration; and that it cannot mean it in the passage referred to, because there is another word (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι*) which does precisely mean it, and which states that that is the particular form of the *οἰκονομία*, or administration, here ordained of God. Nor does it mean, by any transition, a period, for another word (*καιρῶν*) is used to express that also. I give the passage literally: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself for the administration of the fulness of times, [namely] to head up all things in Christ, the things in heaven and the things on earth, in Him in whom also we have an inheritance," &c. Now, here *οἰκονομία*, administration, is as simple a word as possible. The *particular kind* of administration is heading up all things in Christ. The importance of this remark is this, that it overthrows absolutely all the reasoning on *οἰκονομία*, which seeks to identify the headship of Christ and the term *οἰκονομία*, and thereby exclude all other periods, this being in terms the only one. The whole reasoning is based on this, which is a total mistake.†

But there are other grave errors in things, not in words. The writer has confounded the right flowing from the person of Christ with the state in which He exercises the right, and this with increase of error, because he has misstated the ground of the title, declaring it to be the incarnation, and *hence* fixing the period at the time of that event; whereas, Scripture in terms founds it on His Divine Creatorship, which is clearly wholly independent of that. Hence the argument founded on incarnation wholly fails, because it is not at all the epoch of *de jure* title.* That is His being Creator. His incarnation gives us the person who is to hold this power, and we have to search from the Word when it is that God is pleased to set Christ over all things. The incarnation is the formation or manifestation of the person who is to possess, but is neither the epoch nor state in which the right begins, or possession is had, for, as man, Christ *receives* the headship. It is a matter of divine counsel, not inherent right, though this man, as Creator, had the right. So Scripture always speaks, and we cannot depart from Scripture. "*Thou didst set Him* over the works of thy hands: *Thou hast put* all things in subjection under His feet." (Heb. ii.) "Whom He hath *appointed* heir of all things." (Heb. i.) "*God* hath highly exalted Him, and *given Him a name* which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth," &c. (Phil. ii.) Again: "*He raised Him* from the dead, and *set Him* at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality," &c., "and hath put all things under His feet," &c. (Eph. i.)

But this brings out another and fatal error in the system. Though incarnation manifested the person who was to be set over all things, it was not in incarnation at all that He was set over all things. This very grave error *excludes redemption title altogether*, than which nothing can be more grave. But let us see what Scripture says. On earth, Christ is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. xv. 24.) In John you will find His divine person brought out, but never supremacy or the time of glory: "My time is not yet come;" and, again: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii.)

Further, how is man to be set over all things? Being made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death,† then crowned with glory and honour. We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see the person, and the work accomplished necessary for it, and the personal glory in which He is to take it, which is consequent on death. And the Lord Himself is most positive and explicit: "All power is *given unto me* in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) But it is only after His resurrection that He says so. Previously, He had forbidden to go to the Gentiles. (Matt. x.) Now, as a consequence of that exaltation, He sends them to all nations. For He had a baptism to be baptized with, and how was He straitened till it was accomplished! (Luke xii.) For indeed it became Him *for whom are all things, and by whom are all things*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. And note, that this is in immediate connection (Heb. ii.) with putting all things under His feet. The passages I have already cited are positive on the subject that it is Christ as risen, *and not before*, who is set over all things. Philippians ii. gives further the con-

* "If the scriptural basis be, as we hold the principle of creation-headship; and if Christ be now, by God's appointment, the head of creation; then, clearly, the period between Christ's resurrection and His second advent is so far from being parenthetical, or interruptive, that it belongs, as a necessary and integral portion, to the dispensation of the fulness of times." (Page 419.) "Some seem to be of the opinion, that all premillennialism labours under the vicious necessity of putting these Gospel-times within brackets—of making the present age a mere parenthesis in the world's history." (Page 420.)

† "The critical accuracy is not to be despised as little or unworthy, which aims at ascertaining not only the general import of each divinely-indited sentence, but likewise, if possible, the precise idea attaching to each divinely-indited word. Indeed, accuracy of verbal interpretation is absolutely necessary to determine, even the general drift of much that is written; and it were an easy, though not a grateful, task, to illustrate the justness of this statement, by adducing many instances of erroneous exposition, attributable to nothing whatever but the want of verbal accuracy.". . . .

"These remarks may seem foreign to the subject announced at the head of this article, but we have been led into them naturally enough by the course of our meditations on that very subject. We apprehend that *dispensation*, or *economy*, for the words are identical in meaning, is generally used as a theological term, with greater latitude than the Scripture application of it warrants. A less arbitrary use of it,—one more exactly conformed to Scripture precedent, would afford a correct, as well as comprehensive, principle, for the classification of God's dealings with our world, and prevent much loose speculation, perhaps much barren controversy."

"The word referred to, is employed only once in the New Testament, to denominate a distinct period of the world's history; but an examination of the passage in which it occurs will enable us, without much difficulty, to ascertain the idea there attached to it, and the characteristic features of the period which it designates. . . . The Greek word, here rendered *dispensation*, literally signifies *stewardship*, and in that signification it is repeatedly used in Scripture,—most frequently to denote the ministerial charge, &c. . . . In this its proper and more common Scriptural acceptation, the word involves the ideas of delegated authority and responsible trust. These ideas are not excluded from the meaning of the word as it is employed in the passage before us. Indeed they constitute the essential and generic portion of its meaning, wheresoever it is used in the New Testament. 'The dispensation of the fulness of the times' is just, in other words, the delegated administration, or government, of the fulness of times; or, by an obvious and common transition, the period during which that administration, or government, exists. To determine the peculiar nature of the economy, or administration, referred to, we must consult the statement made by the apostle regarding it. 'Ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ is the explanatory language which he uses. It means, according to the English version, 'that he might gather together in one (i.e. concentrate under the rule or government of one head) all things in Christ.'" Then after a quotation from Owen (Exp. Ep. Heb. cap. i.) to the same effect, the writer sums up: "Christ's government, then, or his headship over creation, is the grand characteristic feature which marks the dispensation of the fulness of times, or, as it may be termed, the Messianic economy." (Pages 412-414.)

* "That the dispensation" (i. e. of the fulness of times) "did not begin before the incarnation of our Lord, is evident from the manner in which it is spoken of by the apostle; besides, though unquestionably the Lord acted throughout all preceding ages with a reference to the character in which he was afterwards to appear, yet it was not till he actually appeared in that character, and formally claimed as his own the government of the world, that the dispensation could properly be said to take its commencement. On the other hand, the commencement of the dispensation cannot be postponed to the date of the incarnation. No sooner had that marvellous event set an historic seal to the announcement of ancient prophecy: 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,' than the government was, *de jure*, or by God's act of devolution, laid on the shoulder of Christ, and the economy of the fulnesss of times thus put in movement." (Pages 414, 415.)

† [Taking the version of those who connect "on account of the suffering of death" with His being crowned, a construction preferred by Winer and many modern scholars, the case is at least as strong.—Ed.]

trast of His life here with His exaltation over all things, and the reason why it is so, in contrast with the first Adam. "Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant," (not of headship,) "and was made in the likeness of men;" (this is incarnation, then, the *opposite* of what the writer makes it;) "and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. WHEREFORE, GOD ALSO hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The meritorious title of Christ is set aside by the imaginatory system of the writer. The first Adam exalted Himself and was abased; the second humbled Himself and was exalted. It is not, remark further, that this is necessary to obtain the recognition of the government by man; it is the "wherefore" of His being there on the part of God.

But it is said, Christ was born a King.* King of what? Is that His headship as Son of man? In no wise, but in contrast with it. He was *born King of the Jews.* On this footing He was presented to the Jews, as the prophets had been on the footing of the then dispensation, (for dispensation it was,) and if received would have crowned and glorified it. But that could not be; for, after sending many messengers to have the fruit of the vineyard, He said, I have yet one Son; it may be they will reverence my Son. That is, Christ was sent as having right there in God's name, and was presented as a stone to the builders, but in vain. As He says, "then have I laboured in vain." Hence we find that, instead of Messianic being the same thing, (though He be always the Christ,) it is said, that He commanded them straitly not to tell any man that He was the Christ, for *the Son of man* must suffer many things, &c. And then He shews the glory. (Matt. xvi. Mark viii. Luke ix.) So even in the Psalms: we have Psalms i. and ii. the righteous man and anointed King in Sion, and then, in the intervening Psalms, His rejection, resulting (Ps. viii.) in the fuller glory of Son of man—the Psalm quoted to shew the testimony of infants when rejected as Messiah, and His exaltation to the headship of all things. (Heb. ii. Ephes. i. 1 Cor. xv.)

That God had always in purpose to set man in Christ over all things, I freely admit, and that God never swerved from it, nor suspended it. The question is, What were His dealings with man in respect of it? Adam forfeited by the fall, as to conferred title, his headship of man; so that a second and other Man needed to be introduced, and Christ was another Head set up in resurrection. The judgment to be executed was finally executory on Christ's rejection, not because Adam had not forfeited, but because it was proved there was no remedy for the forfeiture in the first Adam—not even by the presence of the incarnate Son of God,—and a new man must be set up, in resurrection, who had triumphed over all the consequences of the failure of the first man, and over the power of him who had brought it in, both in living temptation and in his power of death, and had borne also the consequences on the part of God, according to His holy counsels and righteous nature, in expiation and for reconciliation. Such a new man, I say, set up in resurrection, as Head, as so risen, of the new creation, was to be established Heir of all things. And hence Paul does not hesitate to say that, though he had known Christ after the flesh, he knew Him henceforth no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God. (2 Cor. v.)

But supposing, then, Adam's forfeiture, but that it was not, as to God's public dealings with man, held irreparable till he had rejected Christ, *was* all chaos? † Did *God* do nothing meanwhile? He employed all the means which would prove whether it was reparable. He would leave man without law, though not without testimony, and then be obliged to destroy creation; He would place him under government in Noah; He would call him by promise in Abraham, make him a peculiar people, and put him under law, apart from all others in privilege. And as to this, with whatever discernment in detail, Christians speak of dispensations. But I deny entirely that the Adamic state is called an *οἰκονομία*, or that *οἰκονομία* signifies period any where. On the other hand, when Adam had forfeited his title and was driven out from the place where God had set him, he then became, and not before, the head of a sinful race, and God did deal in new ways with man, as "do these things, and thou shalt live," to prove what his state was. And Christ becomes head of a new race when risen; for the grain of wheat otherwise remains alone. (John xii.)

Next, though Christ has now all power in heaven and on earth, and faith is to be exercised on that, He does not, as regards the government of the earth, exercise His power in judgment. He does not act in its public government, as He will act when He takes to Him His great power and reigns. HE IS HID IN GOD, and hence He forbids His servants to root up the tares; whereas, He will root them up hereafter; that is, contrary to what is stated by the writer, the principles of action are distinct. What is forbidden now, is executed then; and unless grace and judgment be the same, the present time and the future are different. We suffer with Him while He is hidden in God; we reign with Him when manifested. Present things remain in this sense, that that by which I am called, that which I enjoy as a Christian will remain. Now I have it in hope, and by the Spirit then actually in an incorruptible body. But the state of things does not remain; nor is the grace in which all is carried on now in the government of the world, so that judgment of the tares is forbidden, the same thing as judgment and righteousness according to which Christ will reign as Melchisedek in that day.* The things that remain are in contrast with the Mosaic dispensation, but the things which remain are my heavenly portion in Christ, and as to this we are already in union with Christ, sitting in heavenly places.

Further, the writer says: "We ought to consider the Mosaic age, or system, not as a dispensation at all, but merely as a shadow of the dispensation that was approaching." † The figures which accompanied it were types of various parts, or of the whole of what was to come, but in no sense was the Jewish order itself. There was no delegated head at all; and, as to its principle, was law the same as grace, or a figure of it? Was the ministry of death and condemnation a shadow of that of righteousness and of life? The Aaronic service (for the law had a shadow of good things to come in the parts of it) was a figure of what is *now*, but not of the millennial time. Melchisedek is that. The person of Christ is like his title to priesthood; but the figure of Aaron refers to Christ hid in heaven, not manifest on earth.

The economy of the fulness of times, then, was *in no sense* put in movement by the incarnation; nor could it be, because death, and

* "Who can deny that Christ was born a King? Or that he came into the world as the second Adam, head over creation? He appeared, it is true, and that *for great reasons of state*, if the expression may be used, in a condition of deepest abasement; He was so disguised that there was scarcely one who could 'declare His generation' as the eternal Son; yet He spoke with authority, as one who was conscious of universal lordship, and had claims on universal loyalty. His claims were not recognised except by a few who had been waiting for him, as the consolation of Israel; and till this day they have never been recognised except by the election of grace; but want of recognition cannot divest him of his authority, nor abolish his claims. We, therefore, maintain that ever since the day of the incarnation, or the day when Christ began to exist in a condition of God-manhood, the dispensation of the fulness of times has been running its course." (Page 415.)

† "The moment of the fall leaves us, so to speak, without dispensational ground whereon to stand; we are flung forthwith upon revolutionary or transition times—we are involved in the wreck of old creation; every thing around us is collapsed and ruinous: chaos resumes its ancient reign—and, once more, all things are 'without form and void.' God's Sabbath is interrupted; again He arises to work, and to make all things new. Meanwhile, no proper headship, or dispensational government, obtains; a provisional and temporary administration, under different outward forms, is established, and so things continue till what may be termed descriptively the sixth day of new creation arrives. Then Christ, the second Adam, is miraculously formed in the womb of a virgin; a new economy, infinitely better and greater than the first, is consequently brought in; the government is laid upon Christ's shoulder, and headship given to him over all in heaven as well as on earth." (Pages 417, 418.)

* "There are men who shrink with exceeding nervousness from the doctrine of our Lord's premillennial advent, under the apprehension that the doctrine referred to sweeps away the economy of grace altogether, and brings in an economy of a wholly different kind. Let these men not tremble, as they do, for the ark of God; the name of our coming Saviour is not *Ichabod*. The glory will not depart when He comes, far less because of His coming into our world,—His world and ours. The grace that reigns now will reign then; then will the outgoings of grace be more abundant, and its triumphs more illustrious than now." (Page 418.) "Is it a dispensation of grace *now?* So it will be after the appearing of our great God and Saviour. Is it a dispensation of the Spirit *now?* So it will be during the thousand years. The Advent will even usher in the spring-tide of the dispensation, as regards its element of grace, no less than as regards its other necessary elements. Then, windows will be opened in heaven, and blessing be poured out so abundantly that there shall not be room enough to receive it. The Spirit shall be poured out from on high, and 'the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest.'" (Page 419.)

† "Non-scriptural expression has so stereotyped the expression, that it is now difficult to avoid speaking of the Mosaic in contra-distinction to the Christian dispensation, as if the periods referred to were characterized by two several forms of government, having distinctive peculiarities, but generically the same; whereas, we ought to consider the Mosaic age, or system, not as a dispensation at all, but merely as a shadow of the dispensation that was approaching. Whatever in the Mosaic institutes had a dispensational aspect did not exhibit that aspect, because it possessed in itself, intrinsically, or really, a dispensational character, but solely because it was representative, or typical of the Messianic economy." (Page 417.)

resurrection, and redemption came in, and a new creation, which changed every thing IN THE VERY GROUNDWORK OF OUR RELATION, AND THE RELATION OF ALL THINGS, WITH GOD. It is not in detail merely the writer is wrong, but in the foundations of truth. The incarnation manifested the person of the Head in the midst of the old creation; the resurrection and glorification set Him, according to the counsels of God, in the place of the Head of the new. Only that, as it was part of the counsels of God that He should have coheirs, He does not take the power and reign until they are gathered; and all is spoiled, consequently, again here below.

Further, the writer is entirely ignorant of what the principle is which others have spoken of, when saying that what now is was hid. It is not the sufferings and glory of Christ which were hid: no absurdity could be greater than such an assertion.* It is *the Church*—the union of Jews and Gentiles in one body, and the union of this one body to Christ—which was, according to the apostle, "hid in God." A member of Messiah would have been the most incongruous and absurd of expressions and ideas to an ancient saint. Messiah was a person. The whole doctrine of the body of Christ, and even its existence, was a hidden mystery revealed *now* to apostles and prophets, and manifested *now* to angels. (Eph. iii.) Many truths, which render its reception easy to a Jew, were revealed in the prophets, but never the mystery itself. Some types perhaps can now be understood, but revealed nothing then. [It is true that the Church is not the whole of the mystery of God's will, but it is certain that what Paul specially preached (and this he identifies with the doctrine of the Church) was from the beginning of the world hid in God. Here is his statement of the mystery: "That He might gather together in one (head up) all things in Christ," &c.; "in Him in whom we also," &c., which he developes in the same chapter as being "head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all." The mystery thus includes Christ's administrative headship over all things, and the union of the Church to Him as such, as His body. This mystery was made known to Paul by revelation. It had been hidden in God before ..... Do we not find the apostle quoting passages constantly from the Old Testament prophets, to vindicate, and prove, and make known what was not at all revealed there, but what maintained certain truths when they were revealed? as "He hath stretched out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people;" "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people;" "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" and "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles, for thus it is written, I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles." But surely they did not reveal the mystery. They were found accomplished in the mystery when it was revealed, and so used in making it known; but by themselves never would have revealed it. And this was just the wisdom of God, to provide, while leaving the Jews to their own proper responsibility, for a system to be set up when they should fail in it; (and which was yet shewn to be according to the previous purpose of God, when once it was revealed in its time;) a system which *was* set up when they failed in that responsibility: established in fact, but suspended in revelation, till they had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the exalted Messiah, as well as crucified the humbled One; and thereon fully revealed, and their whole system and existence for awhile replaced by it. For I avow unequivocally here, that all the objections and difficulties raised against it have only confirmed me in the distinctive character of St. Paul's ministry, set up consequent upon the rejection of the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Jerusalem in the martyrdom of St. Stephen. It was the turning point of the whole present position of the Church. No one denies that the Church was then *in Jerusalem*. But no passage can be adduced to show the revelation of its position as one heavenly body with Christ, all difference between Jew and Gentile being lost therein. The case of Cornelius had shewn that God would visit them on earth, and take out of them a people, (little as it was understood, the nation having been preached to by the Holy Ghost as still God's people, and the disciples still holding their place as Jews,) but its proper place, as sitting in heavenly places, was not brought out; nor does Paul ever refer to the case of Cornelius, as establishing the views he taught.]

In fine, Christ did not formally claim as His own the government of the world at His incarnation. His government and headship over creation are not to be confounded. The government laid on His shoulder is not His headship over creation. His being born a King is not His headship over creation either. And, though it be the Messiah who is set over all things, it is not as Messiah, but as Son of man; and as Son of man, it is not till after His death that all power in heaven and in earth is, by God's act of devolution, laid on Him. Till then, though the person was there who was to have it, man and the Jews were put to the test; and until Christ was rejected, the time was not come for Him to take this place. The first born son of a king is designated heir; but, till his father's death, the government is not in his hands. *First*, says the Lord, He must suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.

I have thus rapidly given you some words in reply to your analysis. You will see that I have taken, as I necessarily must take, your statements as accurate, and founded my arguments on them in reply, though the doctrine of the writer be evident, so that my reasoning is, at any rate, just. Still, its form necessarily refers to the actual statements you have given.

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DEAREST K——, MONTPELLIER, April, 1850.

There are some points on which I could have shewn more clearly, I think, how entirely without foundation the groundwork of the paper on οἰκονομία is, but nothing important that I am aware in principle. For instance, headship is not at all involved in οἰκονομία. That, I think, I have noticed. But when the writer says, "the administration of affairs was entrusted to the angels of heaven, and especially during the Mosaic period," (page 416,) that is precisely οἰκονομία.—The principal point is the entire absence of redemption and the resurrection state in the author's plan.

His reasoning about grace is all false. Grace from the beginning was, through the introduction of sin, the only means of remedy, and shall be to the end; but the reigning in righteousness is not now the principle of God's direct government in the earth. It will be in the millennium.

Another point is forgotten, that the Church is to be taken up to heaven, and forms part of the earthly system only so far as reigning over it. The Old Testament speaks, no doubt, of the millennial state on earth, and partially of principles now in activity, which warrant the present state of things by the testimony of God, so as to close the mouth of a Jew; but it never speaks of the Church's condition in the millennium, more than of its state now. It does *not* enlarge on the *Church's* portion at that time, nor on its heavenly state more than on its present condition. It is not only, that the Old Testament prophecies speak largely of the millennial glory, and little of this earlier age of the dispensation, (adopting, for a moment, the writer's phraseology,) but that they never speak of *the Church at all.** It was a hidden mystery. The total ignorance of this mystery makes all the writer's remarks a blank in spiritual intelligence to him who knows it.

The rest is, I believe, sufficiently noticed; but I would observe, as to the passage in Ephesians, I do not think πλήρωμα τῶν αἰώνων would have any just sense. Αἰῶνες form a series of which we can have a συντέλεια, but not, as it seems to me, a πλήρωμα. Whereas, καιροὶ are seasons or opportunities, time in a moral character of suitableness according to God. There is a time of having all complete according to God, as to administration, and that will, I apprehend, be τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν καιρῶν. We have (Acts i.) the χρόνους and the καιροὺς, the suited times which the Father has kept in His

* "No one can say that this Gospel era is omitted or overlooked. The predictions of the Old Testament tell of the sufferings of Christ as well as of the glory that was to follow; they point to the days, that are even now passing, as well as to happier times. Yet they attest their divine authorship, by glancing," &c. (Page 421.) "Let us not then expect to find prophecies, the object of which is to give a well-proportioned view of the *whole* Messianic dispensation, occupied especially with details relating to *the present stage* of the dispensation,—a stage of it which is merely initial and preliminary." —*Ibid.*

* "The predictions relating to the wilderness journey are rapid, cursory, and allusive, while those which direct hope to the land flowing with milk and honey are of an absorbing and final character. Is it then reasonable, in the other case,—we mean the case of the antitype,—to expect that prophecy, comparatively overlooking the full maturity of this dispensation, and the great object of the Church's hope, should fill up with its revelations this interval of unripe and imperfect experience between the Church's exodus, so to speak, and its entrance into Canaan? Was it right that prophecy should descend from Pisgah, and veiling the eternal glories that were brightening afar along the edge of the wilderness, shed its strongest light on the fading scenes of the wilderness pilgrimage, in its transitory sufferings, and its imperfect joys? Those who expect to find Old Testament Scriptures full of present times, &c., who endeavour to extort from its reluctant prophecies a deliverance consonant to their views, cannot but be labouring under the erroneous idea that this Gospel age belongs to a dispensation different from that which is to proceed after the Lord's appearing." (Page 422.)

own power. If καιρὸς is taken in the more material meaning of period, the sense is evident, as the accomplishment of a date known to Divine wisdom, not of systematic αἰώνων having each a specific character.

But another point struck me in reading the passage. I cannot doubt a moment that the apostle *treats it* as a thing *yet future.* We *have* redemption through His blood, says he, and God has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself for the administration of the fulness of times. We have part in this inheritance, and have the Spirit meanwhile as an earnest *until* the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory. Hence, he speaks of the *hope* of His calling, and the riches of the glory of *His* inheritance in the saints. All this language is absolutely demonstrative to my mind that the apostle speaks of the fulness of times as a thing wholly to come.

The grand mistake as to reasoning already noticed is, that the existence of the person who is to govern is the epoch of the administration being committed to Him. It is not even the revelation of His person in the state in which it was to be committed to Him; nor were the circumstances such that He could hold it.

I have treated the *de jure* question in my letter. As to οἰκονομία, administration, it is not a question of *de jure*, but of exercise of power in the actual ordering of what is administered. No one could have said that the period of Cromwell's power was the administration of Charles II., however royalist he might have been. When did Christ, while living, formally claim the government of the world? *Even down here*, of heaven He clearly did not, while as man in a life of flesh and blood. But all is confusion in the tract between Messiah, Son of man, and Son of God. I have already noticed the comment of Heb. ii. on Ps. viii., but even the sure mercies of David proved, according to the apostle, the resurrection. (Acts xiii.) And, instead of claiming the world as His own, Christ repeatedly declared the contrary; and I think we may say, in the most positive manner, that He was not asked as yet to have the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. He prays for His elect; but when He takes the world, He will rule the nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. And I repeat, the title of His person is not administration. Nor, though all saved are saved by grace, is ruling with a rod of iron the principles on which God's dealings are now carried on with the world.

. . . . . .

Ever yours affectionately,

J. N. D.

[I do not believe that the passage (Eph. i. 10) applies to the postmillennial state, which cannot properly be called a dispensation; for it is eternity;* and the heading up all things to be administered by Him in whom we have received an inheritance who have first trusted (or pre-trusted) in Christ, (that is, before His manifestation in glory,) evidently speaks of the special time of Christ's administration as the glorified man, and our association with Him in that glory. The fulness of times itself is not an expression for eternity. That would not be called times or seasons, (καιρῶν,) and the heading up all things in the man, as administrator, is not God being all in all, and the Son subject, as in 1 Cor. xv., Rev. xxi.; and this view of the passage is completely confirmed by verses 22 and 23. The heading up all things in Christ for the οἰκονομία, the administration of that fulness of times, is hardly the period after His having delivered up the kingdom; nor does the administration of the fulness of *times* or *seasons* signify eternity. It refers to the inheritance in which we are joint-heirs with Christ, when, having suffered, we reign, having meanwhile the earnest of the inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession. After that, God is to be all in all, and the Son Himself subject, and not reigning as man.]

* "The present face of things is such as to obscure the glory of the eternal dispensation that is in progress; nor will the obscuration cease till the world that now is be dissolved, and all things, by a creative, or regenerative, process, be made new. Then will the dispensation, emerging from its long eclipse, unfold its predicted glories, and the wheels of its divine machinery be seen in free, untrammelled, and resistless movement." (Page 416.) "The long interval was occupied in making manifest the utter failure and irretrievable ruin of the Adamic economy, as well as in making due and orderly preparation for the inbringing of another that was to be everlasting." (Page 417.) "In its grand, generic principles, it will endure throughout eternity." (Page 418.) "The eternal duration, speaking prospectively of the very economy that is now running its course," &c. (Page 419.) "The days in which we live being only the threshhold, or porch, of this eternal economy," &c. (Page 420.) "The resurrection of the wicked follows; they are judged, and cast into the lake of fire. Now, at length, the earth is purged from every spot of defilement, and freed from every vestige of the curse. The saints, who have been converted during the millennium, are perfect in holiness, and, subject to the everlasting reign of Christ and His elect Church, they enjoy supreme felicity. The dispensation of the fulness of times is thus completely unfolded, and glory, by means of it, redounds 'to the eternal King, the immortal, invisible and only God,' throughout all ages, world without end." (Page 424.)

"FULNESS OF TIME;" "FULNESS OF TIMES;" "TIME SHALL BE NO LONGER."

[As an Appendix to the extracts above given, it may be well to present to the reader the paper on "Fulness of time," &c., written by the same author many years ago.—Ed.]

The mind of man is so narrow that it would ever attempt to reduce the revelations of God to a few heads, which it might retain even when occupied about many other things. And hence we find "systematic divinity" perfectly compatible with worldly-mindedness. And this must ever be the case when the end of God in revelation is put out of sight, and another which meets man's selfishness is put forth for it. Even if we put forth the Church itself, an object confessedly dear to God's heart, as the end unto which God is working, rather than the glory of His own great name, we, by this substitution, not only promote our own self-complacency and high-mindedness, but destroy the present use of the Church as the repository of God's counsels. One of the most painful and alarming features of the day in which we live, is the existence of so much doctrinal truth together with very great ignorance of the Scriptures. The whole effort of men seems to be to bring all that is stated in Scripture into a certain number of propositions. And it is by no means believed that in Scripture are laid out to the spiritual apprehension all the Divine counsels and arrangements: so that we can look *back* and discover, under God's own comment, that His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; and *forward* and assert, upon God's own declaration, what is coming to pass. The relation which the Scriptures bear to the Christian Church is very remarkable. These *writings* occupy the place to the Church of God's *actings* unto Israel. "The things that happened unto them for ensamples, are *written* for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the * world are come." We have, first, by direct inspiration of God, a narrative of facts—of facts so selected and arranged as to manifest a purpose of God: many material things—material, as man would judge—are either entirely omitted or but slightly touched on; and many apparently immaterial and trifling circumstances are largely expatiated on. Hence the man who would regard the narrative of the Scripture as mere history, would find it, to his apprehension, very imperfect; whereas, he who reads it in order to the ascertainment of God's purpose and mind, finds it complete and perfect. For the Spirit of God gives prominence to those facts which are in pursuance of God's purpose. But we have, further, the comment of God Himself on those facts; and this forms a material part of the *Prophecies* as well as of the New Testament. And as we stand at the ends of the dispensations or ages, before they are all wound up, and their great results are fully brought out in the day of the appearing of Christ, all the truths that they severally teach converge and bear on *us;* and, therefore, are said to have been written for *our* admonition. Scriptural accuracy becomes therefore of the greatest importance to us; and when we see how the apostles of old used a single scriptural quotation, as warrant for the assertion of a principle, and that our Lord has said, "the Scripture cannot be broken," this certainly demands much more attention than we have been ready to bestow. On reflection also, it will appear, how much of Scripture we have received traditionally. There are numerous phrases in almost every one's mouth, which, from their having been received in this manner, carry no force with them, and are almost absolutely unmeaning. And constantly we find the soul of a saint resting on a promise of the Old Testament, when the same promise, with the addition of all the blessed relationship in which we stand, is given to us in the New Testament, in connection with Him "in whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen unto the glory of God by us." As a familiar instance, we constantly find Isa. xxxiii., "bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure," used as a kind of traditionary promise; when the same security, with the blessed addition of the loving care of a Father's hand and a Father's heart, is given us in Matt. vi. 25-34: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have

* Τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντησεν.
The ends of the ages are met.

need of all these things." Surely, the other promise may be rightfully used; but how much more fully do we get it when it comes to us in our proper place—as children! Another instance where tradition has led to perfect mis-statement, is in the confusion of quoting Col. iii. 11, as though it were 1 Cor. xv. 28, "Christ is all in all." The truth is not denied; but it is, "Christ is all *and* in all;" that is, in the day of the manifestation of the Church, all that will appear will be Christ—nothing of the old Adam, and Christ will be in all; and we are called on to act on this truth now: to recognize Christ as every thing, and in every believer, be his condition what it may, as his grand characteristic. And this is quite different from God being "all in all;" which will not be manifested till after the millennium.

Now, I believe that such phrases as "the fulness of time," "the fulness of times," "time shall be no longer," convey for the most part very vague ideas to the mind of Christians, when, at the same time, they are pregnant with meaning and instruction.

The passage in which the first phrase occurs is Gal. iv. 4. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." In all that God has done, He has revealed Himself to those who are in fellowship with Him, as abounding "in all wisdom and prudence." So that, if it be asked why so long a period elapsed before the promise made to the woman was fulfilled in the Babe at Bethlehem, the answer is, the time was not fully come. Much instruction needed previously to be given to man—much was to be taught him, through his painful experience of his real standing, before the great truth could be brought out, that creature unupheld by the Creator must fail—that tendency to fail is the very essence of creature; stability, the attribute of God alone. And what is the proof of both, but man's failure under every possible advantage, and his stable standing only in and through his union with the Son of God? * The first great lesson taught was the instability of man, though coming forth from God's hands in all the perfection of creatureship. By disobedience he became independent of God; and being left to the trial of all his powers, he was unable to reinstate himself in the place of blessing which he had originally occupied. He had become as God, to know good and evil; as God, to assert his own will as his rule; but that will had not power equal to its pretensions, and could never open the way for him back into Paradise. "God drove out the man," and the condition into which man had fallen was impotence of will. Yes, had man had power equal to his will, he would have actually done that to which he will yet and shortly pretend—hurl God from His throne, and occupy it himself. (See 2 Thess. ii.) But God has many times proved Himself to be the blessed and only Potentate: and the creature man has, whenever left alone, proved himself to be wise and powerful only to do evil, and to corrupt his way on the earth. How deeply important is it to recognize that the trial of man's power has been made, and that it has failed; and that all the activity and energy of the present day is but the busy bustling of that power which had failed before the flood; and that man, notwithstanding his toil and efforts, has not regained Paradise!

In the setting up of Noah as the head of restored creation, man was not similarly circumstanced as before. He had now had experience of the power, and justice, and grace of God. He was therefore called upon to acknowledge himself, not as creature standing in his own strength, but as having found grace with God as one lost, and this, by God's own prescription as to blood, and to acknowledge God as the righteous Judge, in His punishing murder with death—a punishment not hitherto appointed. But God was recognized neither in His grace nor in His justice; and men became "vain in their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darkened, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man;" and thus all the world went into idolatry. Thus man furnished a proof of his inability to sustain the new standing in which God had put him.

And now we meet with a new feature in God's dealings—"calling out;" and as this is connected with the purpose of God, it rises above failure; and the proof that the security rests, not in him that is called, but in Him that calleth, is immediately afforded. The condition in which man was when we are made acquainted with this part of the divine procedure, is thus given us of God. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods. And *I took* your father Abraham from the other side of the flood." Now, here we see a certain fulness of time for the interference of God in this special manner. Previously to the flood, judgment had not been tried; nor had man been *ostensibly* set as a sinner standing in grace, and acknowledging God as the Judge of all the earth. But now, all had gone into idolatry, as previously all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth. There was therefore the opportunity for God thus to interfere, and to show the irremediableness of the condition of man; (the only blessing being to rescue him *out of* his condition;) and further, to show that the standing of the one so called out was not in any communicated strength, (for this standing had been tried in the case of Abraham, and it had proved man's failure, for Abraham went down into Egypt,) but in the unfailingness of Him who called him. "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Now, this principle of "calling out" thus established, has been the principle and basis of God's blessing unto whomsoever: although, after its establishment, man was put under further advantages of trial, in order to prove that this basis alone could ensure the blessing of the creature. "The gifts and callings of God are not repented of by Him." God might create and destroy, and again create innumerable beings for the display of His glory; He might too uphold creature, (as He has upheld the elect angels,) by His sovereign power, so that the creature might keep its first estate. But then the great lesson of the failingness of the creature, and of the unfailingness of the gift and calling of God, would not have been afforded. Therefore is it that the promise made to Abraham in the way of grace was, four hundred and thirty years after, proposed to Abraham's descendants to be realized by their own competence. Such conditions they undertook; and, accordingly, the law was introduced: a system originating from Divine wisdom, having for its end the present blessing of the nation of Israel; yet, so absolutely did it fail, in that it was weak through the flesh, that the possession of the land of Canaan was gotten, not by Israel's obedience to the Sinai-covenant, which was broken as soon as made, but for His name's sake who could say, in spite of all failure, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious."

Now, I do not think it is adequately considered that the law, as given by God, was in truth an experiment to determine what moral training under all the advantages of the consummate wisdom of the Giver, and of present interest to those receiving it, would effect; and it is not duly considered that the result was failure most manifest. "There is none that understandeth—none that seeketh after God: they are all gone astray; there is none that doeth good, no not one." And this the law says of them who had been under its discipline. The failure was not in the law. No alteration *of that* could have produced a different result; for "the law was holy, just, and good." The importance of seeing the law in this more extensive bearing is very great and practical, in an age of advanced intelligence, putting forth all its moral as well as physical energies. And the attentive reader of St. Paul will find that he, in speaking of law, argues on it in the abstract, showing its necessary insufficiency and failure; for if the law of God failed of producing a desirable end, *à fortiori*, the law of nature, and every other law, must fail:—because the material to be worked on by it has in itself a principle opposed to law altogether. The great truth brought out is, that moral training, as a means of leading man unto God, has been tried on him under the most favourable circumstances; and that it has signally failed. Not to the impeachment of His wisdom, who gave the rule of training, but to show how entirely man had departed from God, and to open the way for the introduction of a new power to bring him back to God.

But, before this was introduced manifestatively, trial was made of what moral suasion would effect towards bringing back disaffected and revolted man:—there were proclaimed, as immediate consequences, judgment in the case of refusal to hear, and blessing in the case of hearing. This formed the ministry of the prophets:—"Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets:" (Hos. vi. 5.) "I have also spoken by the prophets; and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets:" (Hos. xii. 10.) But the prophets, whilst they were thus a wit-

* [The author would probably now prefer to say, "only through life in and from the Son of God."—Ed.]

ness against man, were also a witness for God; and by reiterated declarations of God's faithfulness, they turned the faithful from considering the failure of that which was before them, to rest upon the promises which they brought in.

The concluding words of the second book of Chronicles show to us the failure of this ministry also. "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." It is this very ground which our blessed Lord Himself assumes, when opening, in parables, the divine counsels in mercy and judgment. "Again he sent another, and him they killed and many others, beating some and killing some." "There was no remedy." "Having yet therefore one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also, saying, They will reverence my Son." (Mark xii. 6, 7.) The intermediate judgment and restoration appears to be passed over, although the same ministry* is reckoned as being carried on during the whole period:—"the law and the prophets were until John." Then something new was to be introduced; but the very newness testified the complete failure of man. He had been tried before the flood, whether, left to himself, he could find his way back to God; but, instead of this, he only corrupted his way on the earth. He had been brought under the discipline of fearful judgment, the vestiges of which were all around him;—but he went into idolatry. He had been tried by being brought into special favour with God in all outward blessings, and by a law being given him to secure him in the possession of them;—but he lost them all. He had been tried to be reclaimed by the ministry of the prophets, that he might return and be blessed;—but he mocked and murdered these messengers of God's love. "There was no remedy." Here the history of man, as a moral and intellectual being, might close; and, as to remedying his condition by any moral means, it does close. The statement made by the apostle in the first two chapters of Romans is to this point:—the Gentile given over to a reprobate mind;—the Jew, no understanding in seeking God;—none doing good; no fear of God before their eyes. And this too at a period of very advanced civilization among Gentiles, and of great external religion among the Jews.

It was when man was in such a condition, so that there was no remedy, that the fulness of time was come, and God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. Under these two conditions, the Son shows forth unswerving dependance and perfect righteousness; vindicating God in never departing from Him, in the midst of the most trying circumstances, and in carrying His obedience to the uttermost. Here was the One in whom God was well pleased:—yet, this bright example, His gracious words, His devotedness of life to cure man's misery, and His mighty miracles, —all failed of producing in man's mind any emotion correspondent to the love declared in "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Surely, if moving appeals to the feelings, if MORAL SUASION could have reclaimed man, here was the opportunity! It is important to trace the personal ministry of the blessed Lord in this point of view, and to note the result of it: not the *improvement* of man, but the manifestation of man's entire inconsistency with God. It is a striking word, "the husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." There wanted apparently only such an opportunity as the love of God afforded in the gift of His Son, to evidence the latent enmity of man's heart, and to shew forth the fulness of its evil. And thus the rejection of the Son of God was the demonstration that the fulness of time was come for God to bring forth His wisdom and power in triumphing over such manifested failure. And this He did in the Cross—at once the evidence of man's total failure as man, and of the necessity of setting up a new creation in resurrection; to be sustained in one, as a Head who had proved Himself to be above failure. What a mass of moral truth there is contained in that expression, "the fulness of time!" And how constantly need we now to recur to where we are, when God addresses us, preaching peace through the blood of the Cross:—even as having been already proved to be irreclaimable by any other means than by being brought into union with one who can uphold us by His own power! And surely, after this, for any to go back to moral improvement as the way of bettering the condition of man before God, is only to manifest, through protracted bitter experience, that which He, who knew what is in man, has fully brought out and manifested already.

The expression "fulness of times" occurs Eph. i. 10; and it is so distinct from that of "fulness of time," that the one is applied to a *past* fact, the other to one yet *future*:—"that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." There is a connection between this expression and that which declares our standing, "upon whom the ends of the ages are met." (See note, p. 108.) These ages or dispensations had all been cut short,—each αἰ ὢν had failed in man's responsibility; and before God takes them up again, He has (so to speak) left them: as it is written, "For, said the Lord unto me, I will take my rest, and consider in my place;" and before He sets to His hand the second time to prove His superiority to failure,—whilst we stand at the end of these ages,—there is a secret process going on, of gathering out from every nation a body for Christ. When God takes up again these ages, then are we introduced into "the dispensation of the fulness of times." On this expression I would dilate a little. This is the *time* of God's long-suffering and bearing with evil, instead of judging it. It is a limited period. "*Once*" the long-suffering of God lasted one hundred and twenty years, and then came the judgment. But now it may be said, speaking generally, that God's long-suffering has been from the flood to the present day, and will be limited only by Christ's taking His power and putting His enemies under His feet. This period, therefore, becomes the period of testimony, corresponding to the times before the flood* for, although the long-suffering began at the fall, yet is it specially marked at its close, as a period of testimony, when Noah was a preacher of righteousness. So now, when man is despising the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, it is the period or *time* of testimony to the Cross and Resurrection to all the world; because all the world will be involved in Christ's coming to judge it in righteousness. Therefore the testimony is to every creature. The command is, "Go εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, and when the Son of man shall come in His glory, before Him shall be gathered πάντα τὰ ἔθνη." Connected with this is another time, and that is "*the time of misrule*" because power is in the hands of men, and not directly exercised by God. (Compare Ps. lxxxii., Rev. xi. 17.) Consequently, it is *the time* of the Church's suffering; for the Church being righteous and faithful to God in the midst of an evil age, and God not as yet interfering in judgment, suffering is necessarily its portion. But, to speak more definitely, it is "*the time* of Israel's blindness and rejection, which is the mystery made known to us in Rom. xi. "blindness in part is happened unto Israel until," &c., and it is co-extensive with the period of "preaching unto the Gentiles." Again, there is *the time* of Gentile supremacy; that is, their being the head, and Israel being the tail. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Once more, it is *the time* of creation's thraldom. "*We know* that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." And this groaning is limited by another "until," as we read in Acts iii., "Repent therefore, and be converted, that (or unto the blotting out of) your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive *until* the times of the restoring of all things." There is *a time* also for Satan to "deceive the nations," (Rev. xx. 3,) "to be going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and the limit of this we find thus stated.—"he laid hold of Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." But all these afore-mentioned *times* depend upon one yet to be mentioned. The Lord Jesus occupies His present position only for a definite period, according to that Scripture; "Sit thou at my right hand *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now, "the dispensation of the fulness of

* It is important to notice the place which prophecy occupies in the dispensation of God. It is introduced *upon failure*, of the fact of which it has to testify, and, where the testimony is received, it has to sustain by promise.

* It is important to mark the parallel, that God has not interfered in such manner in judging the living of the world and the things of the world, since that time; and that He will again so interfere at the coming of Christ. (Luke xvii.)

times" is that in which *all these several times* will have run out, and into which they all are now running; and when the Lord Jesus leaves the right hand of God, then will God visibly interfere with all that is measured by these times. The threads of them had been cut off at the rejection of Christ, and now they are resumed again. "The time of misrule" ends by Christ's taking His power and reigning. "The time of testimony" ends by judgment. "The time of the Church's suffering" ends by her being glorified with her Lord. "The time of Israel's blindness" ends by the vail being taken away; (2 Cor. iii.;) when the Lord Christ shall say, "Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind." (Is. xlii. 18; compare verses 6, 7.) "The time of Gentile domination" ends by the Stone cut out without hands smiting the image. "The time of creation's thraldom" ends by the manifestation of the sons of God, (Rom. viii. 21,) and this, we know, is when Jesus shall be manifested. (1 John iii.) And Satan, who had in the ministry of our Lord asked not to be tormented before the time, will then know that the time of his restraint is come, though his judgment will even then be in prospect. Surely, a dispensation so marked is of the deepest importance!—a dispensation in which all the apparent failures af God will be proved to have been but the means of displaying His power and wisdom. And so far from time *being done with*, as men say, at that period, it would be more proper to say that God is not *now* interfering in temporal things, but is only gathering to an eternal state, and that *then* He will interfere with things both temporal and earthly. This is of great importance; because the saint has now to do only with things *heavenly* and eternal, except so far as the present evil circumstances of the world afford occasion for his learning obedience through suffering.

And this leads me to notice the other expression. "Time shall be no longer." It is usual to say that time ends and eternity begins—a statement very vague and unmeaning, and involving much practical error. For the believer in Christ has *already* entered on eternity, and has begun to look, not "at things which are seen, which are temporal, but at things which are not seen, which are eternal." The expression is found in Rev. x., and the context fully explains that it has no such signification as that "time ends," but that it means no more time shall be allowed to elapse before the interference of God, and that God will no longer allow man to go on to the apparent frustrating of His purposes. "The angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer; (no longer any lapse of time;) *but that in the days* of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished *as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.*" Now, if we have at all attentively considered how much of the prophetic testimony is yet unfulfilled, we shall immediately see that many of the declared events require a course of time when once the action begins; and, more than this, that the prophetic testimonies have most expressly to do with things connected with time. The expression, therefore, clearly does not mean that time is no more, but that the strangeness of God's ways, the mystery, as it is here said, of letting man go on without God's interfering in judgment, is now finished: in other words, God's long-suffering has reached its limit.

It would appear, from this expression, that the whole period (of which we are so boastful) of modern history is but as a blank before God; that His history of the earth, and the things in it, is already written in the Scriptures of truth; and whatever revolutions may take place, God's purpose of introducing earthly blessing is very definitely arranged, and all man's efforts will only tend to illustrate the completeness of his failure. "Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 13, 14.)

HOLINESS.

HOLINESS is not innocence. Innocence is ignorance of good and evil. You would not say that God was innocent, but He is holy. He makes us partakers of His holiness: it is *His holiness*. The holiness is as much a part of His grace, as the love that does it.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.

IN a former number of "The Prospect," a paper of mine appeared, entitled, "THE CYCLE OF SEVENTY WEEKS," wherein I endeavoured to prove seventy weeks to be a *great dispensational cycle* (namely the *half of a millennary*) in reference to Israel, and also the whole human race. In the course of the argument, I there spoke of the seventy weeks of Daniel, dwelling especially on one feature alone of this prophecy, namely, "*the unnoticed cancelled week of Messiah's rejection.*"

Now, however, I propose to confine myself to the ninth chapter of Daniel, and other chapters connected therewith, presenting, in a condensed form, a view of this prophecy, in its several parts, and as a whole. And here, let me add, that much that I shall say has already appeared in "THE COMPANION" to my two Charts on the Seventy Weeks of Daniel, and the Cycle of Seventy Weeks; it being my object to bring some of the leading subjects therein under the notice of the readers of "The Prospect."

And now, before I proceed, I will make a few observations on the state of the Jews, in connexion with the circumstances and the times of our prophet.

In the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the throne of Judah was cast down to the ground, the times of the Gentiles began. By the term "Times of the Gentiles," we are to understand the whole period from the Babylonish captivity to the Lord's second coming, during which, instead of the Jews holding their proper place upon earth, as God's elect nation, four Gentile dynasties, namely, the BABYLONISH, the MEDO-PERSIAN, the GRECIAN, and, lastly, the ROMAN, were destined to arise, and to exist one after another, to each of which, in succession, the Jews were bound to pay tribute. It was the unfaithfulness of the house of David which, observe, was fully developed in the act of king Hezekiah, in showing his treasures to the Chaldean ambassadors, which brought this trouble upon them, which caused the removal of the throne of the Lord from Jerusalem, and the transfer of power, from that time, to the hands of their enemies.

When Hezekiah had failed as above, the prophet Isaiah was sent *to him with the following message*: "*Behold, the days come, that* all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." (2 Kings xx. 17, 18.) But then there was to be a *limit to this*. "It shall come to pass," as we read, "when SEVENTY YEARS ARE ACCOMPLISHED, THAT I WILL PUNISH THE KING OF BABYLON, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." (Jer. xxv. 12.) And then again, "Thus saith the Lord, that AFTER SEVENTY YEARS BE ACCOMPLISHED AT BABYLON, I WILL VISIT YOU,* and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jer. xxix. 10.)

Accordingly, when the above seventy years had expired, deliverance being sent to them through Cyrus, king of Persia, they were free to return home. Let me however add, that, though in their own land again from their deliverance from Babylon, to the first coming of Christ, and, after that, to the time of the invasion of Titus, they were there only *on sufferance*, being subject to one Gentile power after another, till at last they were scattered, not to return again till the Lord's second coming, at the termination, as we shall see, of the seventy weeks of Daniel.

And now, as to the seventy weeks; the wondrous revelation connected therewith (so deeply interesting and important as it is to all the Lord's people, namely, both to the Church of God, and the Jews) was made to our prophet just when the seventy years above-named were nearly accomplished, and when the Chaldean empire, which began with Nebuchadnezzar, had now passed out of the hands of his grandson, Belshazzar, into those of Darius the Median, and was now about to be supplanted by the kingdom of Media and Persia.

In the first year then of Darius, the Median, now become king over the realm of Chaldea, we find Daniel, the captive, (himself

* There is more connexion between these *seventy years* and the period of *seventy weeks* than perhaps is generally supposed. In the Companion to my Charts on the Seventy Weeks, I have sought to explain this connexion. (See pages 88-91.

one of the seed royal of David, who, as we have seen, had involved the nation in trouble,) in this ninth chapter of his book, discovering, on reading the above-cited words of Jeremiah the prophet, that seventy years was the time appointed by God for His people to groan under the dominion of Babylon; and seeing that this period had now well-nigh expired, we see him, as a true son of Abraham, setting himself to seek the good of his people, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. The discovery to him was both happy and humbling: happy, because it told of the unchangeable goodness of God; humbling, because that goodness at once brought before him, in the strongest relief, the long-standing sins of the nation; and hence, as representing the whole house of Israel, he makes his confession, he offers his prayer, and is answered accordingly.

In verses 3-15, we read his *confession*—in verses 16-19, his *prayer*, and from verse 20, on to the end of the chapter, *the answer*, namely, the vision of the angel, with the prophecy of THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

"And whiles I was speaking," he says, "and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee: for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

THE PROPHECY.

1 The whole period.

1.—"SEVENTY WEEKS are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish (or restrain) the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (or Holy of Holies.)

2 From Nehemiah to Christ.

2.—Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince shall be SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS.

3.—The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in STRAIT OF TIME. (SEVEN WEEKS contrasted with the threescore and two weeks before-named, it being the shortest, most "strait," or contracted, of these periods. This appears to be the true sense of this passage. See *margin.*)

4.—And AFTER the (*Heb.*) THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS (above-named) shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself.

3 The time of desolations.

5.—And the people (the Romans) of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood,

6.—And unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

4 The last week.

7.—And HE ("the Prince" above-named) shall confirm the covenant with many for ONE WEEK.

8.—And in THE MIDST OF THE WEEK he shall cause the sacrifice and the 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 (desolator.) (See *margin.*)"

Now, the plan which I propose to adopt is as follows: Having first thrown this prophecy into a certain order, which lately, from experience, I have found to be of the greatest assistance in showing the *connexion*, and, at the same time, the *distinction* between the different parts, in reference to time and events, I shall suppose the angel Gabriel, after having delivered his message, commencing again, and taking up each of *the eight parts in succession*, interpreting it for the satisfaction of Daniel. This strikes me as a simple, lucid, and natural method of showing how one part bears on another, and of giving, in a brief space, a connected view of the whole.

The order of which I speak is as follows:

The whole period, without noticing either the threefold division or the break therein.

1. SEVENTY WEEKS are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish (or restrain) the transgression and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (or holy of holies.)

The seven weeks, and the threescore and two (or 62) weeks.

The seven weeks.

2. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS.

3. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in STRAIT OF TIMES. (SEVEN WEEKS, contrasted with the threescore and two weeks before named, it being the shortest, most "strait," or contracted of these periods. This appears to be the true sense of this passage. —*See margin.*)

The 62 weeks, with the *unnoticed* week.

4. And AFTER the (Heb) THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.

The time of Israel's dispersion.

5. And the people (the Romans) of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood.

6. And unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The last week.

7. And HE (the Prince abovenamed) shall confirm the covenant with many for ONE WEEK.

The half week.

8. And in THE MIDST OF THE WEEK he shall cause the sacrifice and the 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, (desolator.—*See margin.*)

Thus having, as it were, listened to the voice of the heavenly messenger, let us now fancy "the man Gabriel" speaking again, and explaining himself. In doing so, however, we must bear in mind that Daniel, notwithstanding all the wondrous revelations which were made to him by the Lord touching his purposes, had not the light which we in this dispensation, who have the whole Word of God, together with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, possess, if we will but use it aright. Therefore, in this, I am supposing him to be let more into the secret purposes of God than properly belonged to him as *a Jew dispensationally under the law*. This, however, is only a method which I adopt, for the sake of greater perspecuity, order, and brevity. Now then to proceed.

INTERPRETATION.

FIRST DIVISION.

SEVENTY WEEKS are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish (or restrain) the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy (or Holy of Holies.)*

Seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, so it is decreed by the Lord, are to elapse before thy people and city are blest, before reconciliation is made for iniquity, everlasting righteousness is brought in, and all that has been foreshown and foretold, both in vision and prophecy, is accomplished, and the temple of God is anointed; that is, before it becomes once again the abode of the Shechinah, or glory, which has been absent from thence for seventy years, and will continue to be absent for nearly two thousand six hundred years longer.

How or when this period is to commence, I do not now say; but when I enter into the details connected therewith, which I shall presently do, thou shalt hear. And now, before I proceed, there are *four things* which I will notice. 1st. That though I have spoken

* "To *restrain*," not "to *finish*, the transgression," is, I believe, the true rendering; and, if so, it may apply to the Lord acting in the way of *judgment* on apostate Israel hereafter. The rest of the passage, of course, tells of the *grace* of God to His people.

of the seventy weeks as though it were an *unbroken, continuous period*, I shall have occasion, in tracing the history of the Jews, as I shall do, from its commencement to its close, to divide it into *three distinct portions, or parts*, namely, SEVEN WEEKS, THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS, (making sixty-nine weeks together,) and ONE WEEK. 2dly. That while the seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks form a *continuous period* between the threescore and two weeks, and the one week; on the other hand, *a pause*, as it were, in the Jewish division of time into weeks will occur, (Lev. xxv.) a period of years will elapse, which the Lord, in his reckoning, will count as a *blank in the history of his people*. 3dly. That while the prophecy will be *completely fulfilled* at the close of the SEVENTIETH WEEK, it will have a *partial, an initial, a sort of germinant fulfilment*, "AFTER" THE SIXTY-NINTH WEEK, and at the beginning of the blank period above-named. And, 4thly. That while blessing will be *secured* to thy people at the close of the seventieth week, blessing will be *proposed to them and rejected* at the termination of the sixty-ninth week, and for a brief space of time after that, (a period, though brief, of the deepest importance,) showing, in the one case, that man is a failing, impotent creature; in the other, that, let him fail as he may, the blessed God cannot fail, that He must and will be true to His promise.

SECOND DIVISION.

Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS.

Now, then, I proceed with the details of the prophecy; and first, learn what I have not told thee as yet, namely, that the seventy weeks will commence with the going forth of a decree which Artaxerxes, the king of Persia of that day, will issue, in the *twentieth* year of his reign, with regard to thy people (subject then, as they will be, to Persia, as they now are to Babylon) empowering one of thy people, a certain faithful servant of God, named NEHEMIAH, to return home, and to rebuild (*not the temple*, observe, which will have been previously built by EZRA, a certain priest, in the *seventh* year of his reign,) but *the city*—even the holy city, Jerusalem. And next learn, that between Nehemiah's return, and "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God," (See Mark i. 1,) even the announcement of the promised Messiah, the Prince, the true Son of David, the heir of his throne, by a certain prophet named John, his forerunner and witness, SEVEN AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS (that is, 69 weeks in all) will elapse.

THIRD DIVISION.

The street shall be built again, and the wall, even IN STRAIT OF TIMES. (SEVEN WEEKS contrasted with the THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS *before-named, it being the shortest, most "strait," or contracted, of these periods. This appears to be the true sense of this passage.*—See *margin.*)

And now, having heard of the going forth of the decree of the king of Persia, with regard to the city, learn further how long it will take to rebuild it. "The street shall be built again, and the wall, in STRAIT OF TIMES." (*See margin.*) Now, do not mistake me. By this I do not mean times of *straitness, perplexity, danger*. "TROUBLOUS TIMES," it is true, they will be, because of the opposition of the heathen to God in the work of rebuilding his city. But of *this* it is not now my object to speak. My present purpose being to instruct thee as to the disposal of the threefold division of the great prophetical period of seventy weeks. And what I am speaking of now is the *period within which Nehemiah will accomplish his work*, namely, the SEVEN WEEKS of which I have spoken before, and which I now turn, before I proceed, to notice again. This being the space of forty-nine years between two years of jubilee, will be the *shortest, most "strait," or contracted, of the two* periods above-named—SEVEN WEEKS, as contrasted with THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS. And this, let me add, will account to you for the BREAK which occurs in the interval, between the going forth of the command of the king of Persia, and the announcement that Christ is at hand, otherwise I should have spoken of it simply as *sixty-nine* weeks, *without any interruption.* *

FOURTH DIVISION.

And AFTER *the* (*Heb.*) THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS *shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself.* *

I come now to that part of my subject which claims the closest attention; therefore, listen, O Daniel, and mark what I say. "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." Thou hast before heard that, at the close of this period, Christ will be offered to Israel; that between the edict as to the city, and his proclamation by John, seven weeks, and threescore and two (that is sixty-nine) weeks shall elapse. And now thou art told that Christ is to die, to be cut off; and when? "*after*" this period—yes; but not *immediately after*. No; because seeing that John is to witness to Christ for three years and a half; and then Christ, for the same length of time, is to declare the name of the Father, you must, of necessity, allow for an *interval* between the going forth of John as his messenger and the death of the Mediator; and this space, composed, as I have said, of twice three years and a half, is A WEEK; so that, according to this, by adding these three periods together, namely, SEVEN WEEKS, THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS, and THIS LAST WEEK, you reach the close of the SEVENTIETH WEEK.

And now, O Daniel, the thought of thine heart assuredly is, that I have reached the point in the history of thy people when the kingdom of Christ will begin. But, alas! it is not so. Two thousand years from this point, *an utter blank in their history*, must roll on, ere an end shall be made of their sin; before my prophecy is accomplished, before the reign of Messiah begins. Dost thou ask, Why is this? Surely, thine own heart should answer the question. Messiah, as I have said, is here to be slain. His people, having no eye for his beauty, no heart for his grace, will put their King, their Deliverer, to death. And hence, from this time, they will be disowned, cut off by Jehovah, and left as a prey to their Gentile oppressors. "How is this?" thou wilt say. "Seventy weeks is 'the *set time*' which is to end with the redemption of Israel; and now, seventy weeks having run out, instead of being blest, I find they are cut off!"—"How," thou wilt say, "is God true to His promise in this?" Now then, mark me—seventy weeks, it is true, *is* "the set time" which is to elapse before Christ comes in His glory; accordingly, when the sixty-ninth week shall end, and the seventieth begin, *all things being ready*, a voice will be heard in the wilderness proclaiming the King, and saying, "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND." And then, after three years and a half, in the midst of the week, the King himself will come forth, declaring that "THE TIME IS FULFILLED." But then, at the end of the week, instead of ascending the throne, as He should do, He will die on the cross; His people will hate, will despise, and will slay Him. What then becomes of the Jews after this, thou hast heard. But what becomes of *the week*, I have not told thee. Mark then how the Lord will act in reference thereto. It will be a PROBATIONARY PERIOD, during which, for twice three years and a half, the question will hang in the balance, whether the Jews will repent, whether they will accept of the Lord's goodness or not. It will be, in an especial sense, a time of long-suffering, a season of mercy, when the Lord, for the last time, will give Israel a trial, when the voice of the Baptist, as foretold by Isaiah, (xl. 3-5; Luke iii. 3-6,) the voice of him who will be more than a prophet, the very herald of the kingdom, if they would but receive him, will be lifted up in the wilderness, calling on Israel to repent. It will be the time too, when, according to Isaiah again, (lxi. 1-3; Luke iv. 17-21,) the blessed Jesus himself, after John has been imprisoned, will come forth as the Lord's anointed, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim "THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD," the true year of jubilee. But all will be in vain.—John will be beheaded; Messiah will be cut off. And though, even after his

* Here it may be thought that I have assumed almost the tone of *infallibility*. This, however, is far from my desire to do. But having clothed my interpretation in this peculiar form, it was necessary, in thus supposing an angel from heaven to speak, in order to preserve the unity of the subject, to represent him as doing so in the language of the fullest authority. *I, for my* part, believe "troublous times" not to be the true rendering. Others may see it in a different light, and thus it lies open to candid and prayerful inquiry.

I here add the various translations which have been given of these words, all agreeing, more or less, with each other. "In strait of times"—*margin*—"In angustiâ temporum, i.e. in the narrowness, or narrow period of the times." *Vulgate.*—"In coarctatione temporum," i.e. "the contraction of times." *Montanus.*—"In the narrow limit of the times." *Wintle.*—"Dans le peu de tems." *Encyclopédie.*

In pages 21-27 of my "Companion," I have entered somewhat at length into this subject.

* If this passage were read with the following interpolations, it might help to make it clearer to those who may have some difficulty in catching my meaning. "And *after* (yea, *seven years* after) the threescore and two weeks (above-named) shall Messiah be cut off."

death and resurrection, when he shall have ascended to heaven, he will be offered * again; still all will be in vain. They will not only have spoken against, but they will have slain, the Son of man. And now they will sin again, in rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the glory of Christ at the right hand of God. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that (or "*in order that*") the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts iii. 19.) Such will be the testimony of the apostle Peter, after the ascension of Jesus, showing that Israel, *as a nation*, will be called to repentance, and that, were they, as such, to give heed to the call, then the very blood which they will have shed would avail in their favour. In this case this very prophecy would be fulfilled,—the time of Israel's blessing be accomplished. But they will not repent. They who have no eye for the beauty of Jesus, will surely have no ear for the voice of the Spirit; speak to them as he may of pardon and blessing, they will despise him and his testimony, and for this there will be no forgiveness. Israel will thenceforth be rejected, and that name of reproach—the name of "LOAMMI," "not my people,"—will be written upon them. Thus then the Lord, seeing that his purpose touching both his Son and his people has failed, that Christ has laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought, and in vain, he will look on the week as *lost time*, and, acting in the way of retributive vengeance, he will, as it were, *blot it out*, he will *cancel the period*, not suffering it to stand, as it should do, as the last of the seventy weeks which is to end the captivity of thy people.† A terrible proof thus of the indignation of God; a fearful sign that he had hid his face from his people!

And now I turn to explain to thee how the Lord shows that he will thus deal with this period. It is thus: in delivering my message, didst thou mark that I *passed it over in silence?* that I touched, it is true, upon that with which it will *begin*, even the first notice that Christ is at hand, by his messenger John; and then, that I spoke of that with which it will end, even the cutting of Messiah; but that I left the week itself altogether *unnoticed*. Yes, I treated this week as a *blank*, as forming no part in the reckoning of time in this prophecy; but just as a part of the unmeasured age of rejection and blindness which is to roll on between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth. It will be, as it were, the last, the seventieth link of the chain, and so would continue to be, were Israel to give heed to the offer of mercy. But this will not be; and hence the Lord thus breaks it off from the chain, its place to be supplied, as thou shalt hear, by *another week* at the end.

And now, dost thou see what I meant in dwelling so emphatically on the words "*after* the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off?" "*After*," I said, but "*not immediately after;*" this being an indefinite word, which, for the reason I have told thee, leaves the space wholly unnoticed, unmeasured, between the proclamation of Christ by his witness, and his death.

And here dost thou ask what will occur during the time of Israel's dispersion? "Can love," thou wilt say, "be inactive? Can the Lord cease to bless?" Assuredly not. And now, for a moment, I draw the curtain aside, to shew thee a secret hidden from ages and generations, even "THE GREAT MYSTERY," foreshown by the type of Adam and Eve in the garden, the mystery of THE CHURCH OF GOD, the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

Up to this point, the Jewish people alone will be set apart for the Lord, the chosen nation of God upon earth; but now, they being scattered, *another people*, unknown, and unthought of till then, a people whose calling and destiny is *higher than Israel's by far*, will be called into being; yes, an *election out of Israel and the Gentiles*, one in Christ Jesus, his mystical body, his bride, whose place in the kingdom will not be *on earth*, like the Jews, but *in heaven;* who, moreover, will be coheirs with Christ in his glory, in his dominion over all things; this people, this "people for his name," (Acts xvi. 14,) will, I say, then be fashioned on earth. And, at last, toward the close of the period, the whole elect body being completed, they will be removed from the earth, will be caught up to meet the Lord at his coming. (1 Thess. iv. 15-18.) After which, having thus disposed of the Church, now in heaven with him, he will turn again and pursue his original purpose with regard to his ancient people, the Jews.

This, however, as I said, is "A MYSTERY," therefore *tell it to none*. Yea, even forget that thou hast heard it thyself; because, as a Jew, thou art not admitted, like the saints in the next dispensation, into this secret purpose of God; besides which, though as an *individual* thou art a partaker of grace, as one of this nation thou art under the *law;* and this which I tell thee, concerning the Church, will be the full revelation of *grace* which, being inconsistent therewith, will displace, in its day, the law altogether. *

FIFTH DIVISION.

And the people (the Romans) of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood,

Thus, having disposed of the period of seventy weeks, fulfilled, as I have shown, in a sense, in connexion with the first advent of Christ, I next reach the BLANK PERIOD above-named. And here learn, in connexion with the cutting off of Messiah, that in retributive judgment, the Gentile avenger will be sent in due time, that "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Now mark my solution of this. The Roman empire will be in existence at the time of the first coming of Christ; the Jews being then under its sway, as now they are subject to Babylon; and seventy years after Christ, in the reign of Vespasian, the Roman armies, under the conduct of Titus, his son and successor, will be used by the Lord to punish the sin of his people in slaying their King, their Messiah. They will destroy both the city and temple.

Again, about two thousand years after this, just previous to Christ's second coming, and the setting up of his kingdom, this empire, still in existence, will be under the dominion of a mighty prince, whom the whole world, both Jewish and Gentile, will wonder after, and worship, owning him as their Lord, as the promised Messiah. This, then, is "the prince" whom I mean. And as Cæsar led the way in the work of destruction, so he, when he comes, will be used by the Lord as a far heavier scourge.

This, then, explains what I have said, "THE PEOPLE" (*the Roman people*) will exist in the time of Cæsar, (of Vespasian, I mean,) and will be thus used as a rod in the hand of the Lord; while "THE PRINCE," on the other hand, their last head or chief will not arise till the latter times of the empire. Of this prince and his actings thou shalt hear more as I proceed.

"And the end thereof," as I have said, "shall be with A FLOOD;" so it will be; as a flood of water, in the days of Noah, swept the apostate world away, so a judgment more fearful by far awaits this wilful king and his subjects, his worshippers. They will all be destroyed, while the faithful servants of God, the believing remnant of Israel, groaning at the time under his iron yoke, will be saved.

SIXTH DIVISION.

And unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Thus, as I have shown thee, the work of desolation will begin with the destruction of the city and temple, by "the people of the prince that shall come," even the Romans; and from this, down to the close of the blank space before-mentioned, yea, to the end of the seventieth week, for about two thousand years, the afflictions of Zion will last. "Unto the end of the war desolations are determined." "THE WAR," of which I here speak, will be the great battle which is to be fought between Christ and "THE PRINCE" above-named, the man of sin, or the Anti-Christ, even "the battle of Armageddon," of which thou shalt presently hear, at the close of the last week of the seventy. Here mark the distinction between these "desolations," and "the war." The former will continue *for centuries*; while the latter, as I have shown thee, will be fought *at the crisis*, when Christ is revealed at the head of the armies in heaven.

SEVENTH DIVISION.

"*And he shall confirm the covenant for ONE WEEK.*"

Thus, having told thee of the sixty-nine weeks, from Nehemiah

* [Offered i.e. in testimony.—ED.]

† This may remind us of the case of the Nazarite, (see Num. vi.) after the head of his consecration had become defiled, when he had "sinned by the dead." *The days that were before shall be lost*, (even the days when he was holy to the Lord,) because the head of his consecration was defiled.

* That Daniel, and all the Old Testament Saints, will be in the *first resurrection*—even *in heavenly* glory, I fully allow; but whether he and they will form a part of that elect body which is termed the *Church of God*, is the question. All will be caught up, all will enter heaven together, but when there, will there not be different spheres for those who, when on earth, were in dispensations distinct from each other? That the Church of God (called out, as we know, upon earth, between the day of Pentecost and the rapture described in 1 Thessalonians iv.) will hold an especial place of her own, I, for my part, am strongly disposed to believe.

to Christ; then of the last week of grace, and, lastly, of the long age of Israel's estrangement from God, I now have to tell thee the history of that which will prove to be truly THE SEVENTIETH WEEK.

The stream of time which, in reference to Israel, will flow under ground, will now re-appear; the times and the seasons again will be numbered, and thy people, *though yet unforgiven*, will be owned, in a sense, as God's people. Here also, the Jews having first, without either the aid or the sanction of God, made their way home to the land of their fathers, and having built their city and their temple, the false Messiah appears, "THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME"—the wilful king is presented. This "PEOPLE," as I have said, in the reign of Vespasian, will begin the desolations of Zion. But now "HE," the little horn of the fourth beast, the head and leader of Gentile apostacy, the usurper of the power of David, abruptly appears on the scene.

Now, then, we have reached the "ONE WEEK," which will hereafter come in to supply the place of the forfeited week of Messiah's rejection, and so perfect the period of which I have spoken at first. And for this week, this deceiver (for such he will will be at the outset) will enter into a covenant with the deluded children of Judah. They having slain the true hope of Israel, will now be left to themselves, and so, falling into the snare, will receive another who, coming to them in his own name, in the pride and blasphemous independence of man without God, will treat them *according to their treatment of Jesus*, so that, with the same measure which they mete to him it shall be measured to them again.

Having thus spoken of Anti-Christ, (so I call him, as being opposed altogether to Christ; yea, more than this, a blasphemous counterfeit of the blessed Messiah,) I will now tell thee something of him who will give him his power, and show thee how the creation and establishment of this royal infidel's glory was Satan's great object from the very beginning, that at which he has ever been aiming since man first revolted from God.

Thou knowest that from everlasting God's object was CHRIST—the great centre of all his counsels; "the power of God and the wisdom of God," in, and through whom, as the Head of the new creation, it is his purpose to glorify himself, and to communicate blessing to man; of him it is written, under his title of "wisdom," "The Lord possessed ME in the beginning of his way; I was set up FROM EVERLASTING, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." (Prov. viii. 22, 23.) In due time, accordingly, the heavens and the earth, the destined scene of God's glory in Christ, were created; and to Adam, made in his image, the head of the old creation, was given dominion over all things on earth. But this did not last long; being left to himself, Adam soon proved that the creature, even in innocence, could not stand, Adam fell under the power of Satan. Thus occasion was given for the display of the marvellous grace of Him who had ordained and arranged all things for the bringing forth and the display of all his everlasting counsels in Christ; and before Adam was banished from Eden, to wander over the face of that world which his own transgression had marred and defiled, the serpent was given to know, within the hearing of those whom he had beguiled, that his head should one day be bruised by the blessed Seed of the woman. This, as thou knowest, is the earliest notice in Scripture of redemption through Christ; and the whole history of man after this shows that the actings of God have had one grand object, namely, blessing to man, and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on the ruins of the empire of Satan. And this will yet come to pass. The true Heir of all things at last will come forth, destroy, and displace the usurper, and Himself take the kingdom. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

Against such an one, therefore, thou mightest well be prepared to see all the malice and power of Satan directed. And so they ever have been from the outset. To exalt man in the flesh, to make him independent of God, has been Satan's great object, so as, if possible, to defeat all the divine purposes towards him in Christ. What have all the great ones of this world been, such as Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, and others, but just the minions and slaves of his will, mere tools in his hands, through whom he has hoped to compass his object? Through them, as his vassals, he has worked with unwearied activity, since the fall of man in the garden.

And more than all this, so daringly bent on his object was this mighty deceiver, that when the blessed Jesus shall come forth to do the will of His Father, to make Him known to the children of men, Satan will approach Him with the promise of universal dominion, if He will but fall down and worship him; and were this possible, could he for a moment draw Jesus aside from his allegiance to God, he would be the most suitable instrument wherewith to effect his designs; in this case the ruin of man would be complete, the glory of God irretrievably tarnished. But this cannot be. Thy heart, I well know, shrinks from the thought. Christ, the Holy One of God, I need not tell thee, will stand in the conflict, He will master His enemy. But Satan, not chained as yet, as he will be at last, as the god and prince of the world, will continue to work in the hearts of the children of men. And when the evil of the world has well nigh reached its maturity, when the last of the four empires is just reaching its close, just before the second coming of Christ, he will meet with one who, so far as he is suffered to go, will carry Satan's plans into effect; one who, assuming to himself all the power and glory of the real Messiah, will draw to himself the admiration, the worship of all but the disciples of Christ; one whom Satan will clothe with all that is fitted to dazzle and captivate the natural mind, seeing that all the glory, the strength, the intelligence of man's unrenewed nature will centre in him, so as to exalt him in his own eyes, and also in the estimation of others. In him will be fully developed all the principles of evil which have ever lurked in the flesh since man fell, and which have been only partially shown in those who are openly impious, or who, thoughtlessly, live without God in the world. Human nature, in short, enslaved and debased by the enemy, will be shown forth in him.

Such is the one who, at this time, will arise, and be used as a snare, and as a scourge, in the end, to thy people, O Daniel. And what wonder if the whole *Gentile world*, as well as the *children of Israel*, (that world which, urged on, it is true, by thy people, will nail the Lord to the cross,) will fall into the very same snare, and become their companions in evil? What wonder, if attracted by the false glory and beauty of this mighty deceiver, with their ten kings of that day at their head, they give their power and strength into his hands and become tributary to him? Yes, so it will be. The whole world, *both Jewish and Gentile*, will "wonder after the BEAST," (a name which he will yet bear in the pages of prophecy) will fall prostrate before him and own him as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, titles which, it is needless to tell thee, belong only to One—even the blessed Messiah himself. Thus this "ONE WEEK," these seven years of this wilful one's empire, will be the period of the world's ripened apostacy, when the unrestrained power of those three great agents of evil, THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL, will be fully expressed, and be seen linked in a daring attempt to cast the blessed God out of this world, which He has made for the eternal display of His own goodness and glory in Christ.

EIGHTH DIVISION.

"*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 desolator.* (*desolate.*) *

Now then we come come to "THE MIDST OF THE WEEK," when the deceiver will throw off the mask, and discover himself. Like Dan in the prophecy, (Gen. xlix. 16, 17,) he will act as '*a serpent*" at first, and then, having compassed his object, he will show himself forth as *a tyrant, a murderer;* in order to flatter his people, he will set up at first that species of worship which alone will take with the Jews, even the services of the sanctuary, the temple worship of Israel. But now, this is all set aside, he causes the avowed worship of God, even the sacrifice and oblation, to cease; and for "forty and two months," or "time, times and a half," the latter half of the week, even three years and a half, he opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and oppresses His people.

These will be "*the days of vengeance*," when God, through the false one, (the enemy and the avenger) will punish His people. This will be "*the time of Jacob's trouble*," the "*great tribulation*," when the holy city shall be trodden under foot, the abomination of desolation set up, and the image of this beast—even that of this desolator himself—shall stand in the holy place; and when all who will not worship the idol will be slain.

* Though the marginal reading "desolator," is here given, I am informed that the textual rendering "desolate," or "desolated," is correct, still meaning the Anti-Christ, that is, the desolator, in his turn, made desolate.

And now, mark the *resemblance*, the *coincidence*, and, at the same time, the *contrast*, between the week of this wilful one's reign, and the cancelled week of Messiah's rejection. John the Baptist, as thou hast heard, will come forth, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Then Jerusalem, and all the region round about Jordan, will go forth, will be baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. All this will look well. It will, however, be but for a moment. Their repentance will be false and deceitful. This the Baptist himself will discover, who, like his Master in measure, will know what is in man. "O generation of *vipers*," he will cry, "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" showing that the Spirit within him will detect the evil, the fearful hypocrisy of those who will show, in the end, what they are, by murdering him in whose light they will for a season rejoice, even this prophet of God, yea "more than a prophet," the very herald of the Messiah himself.

And now, as to Christ, He will be met at the outset by the open hatred of Israel. In his infancy even, they will seek to destroy him; through the whole of his walk upon earth they will loathe and despise him, and, in the end, put him to death on the cross. Thus, *deceit* in the one case, and *violence* in the other, the characteristics of Satan (the liar and murderer, John viii. 44,) will be found in thy people at this time of proffered deliverance and blessing. Hence it is that these two sins will be visited upon them at last, through this false one, this "*bloody and deceitful* man," this betrayer and murderer, who will begin with *beguiling*, and end with *oppressing*, his victims. And this will continue for "forty and two months," or three years and a half, corresponding exactly with the time that the Lord will walk as a stranger and pilgrim through the land, enduring the hatred and scorn of those whom he will come, to deliver and to bless.

In the midst, however, of the blasphemies and idolatries of these times, there will be an ELECT REMNANT, who, standing wholly aloof from the infidel nation, will be brought to look for the promised Messiah. This remnant will be divided into two distinct portions: some who, standing forth in that day, as the champions of truth, will die for their testimony; others who, true to the God of their fathers, will be preserved by the sheltering hand of the Lord through these dark times of Anti-Christ, and will form, in the end, the seed or nucleus of the redeemed, the millennial nation of Israel; and, at the voice of their cry, while suffering at the hand of their enemies, the Lord will awake, and come forth to their deliverance, at which time, he of whom I now tell thee, having been used as a rod in the hand of the Lord, will, in his turn, be judged. Man, in the person of this great wilful one, having been suffered to go to the full length of his native iniquity, having displayed the evil of the flesh in all its enormity, will come to his end, and none shall help him. At the battle of ARMAGEDDON, namely, "THE WAR," of which I have told thee before, the confederate powers, yea, "the ten kings" of the earth, with this great apostate king at their head, will be seen in personal conflict with Christ. And there his impious career will be cut short—there Anti-Christ will fall with all his confederates, both Jewish and Gentile. Thus, then, we have reached the close of our period—the end of Anti-Christ's week—the last of the seventy—the point when the Lord who, through their sin in rejecting his Son, will have been estranged from his people for ages, will show himself faithful to his ancient covenant with Abraham, and returning again to the scene of his former presence on earth, will be known once again as the God of Jeshurun, as the rock of his people.

Thus, having followed the angel through his *supposed* interpretation of this wonderful prophecy, this *seventy and sevenfold purpose of forgiveness to Israel*, we here reach the close of our subject, having traced the history of the Jews, from Nehemiah's return to the second coming of Christ, at the end of the seventy weeks. And what have we seen? *Evil*, nothing but evil, on the part of the *creature*; *grace*, wonderful grace, on the other hand, on the part of the *Lord*. That which appears to me to be especially sweet and profitable in these meditations on this ninth chapter of Daniel, is the application of the *very same truth to ourselves*, as individuals, which belongs to the Jews, as a nation. How often, alas! do we find that we have little heart for the blessing which He graciously lays at our feet, just as little as Israel had at the first coming of Christ. The consequence of which is, that, like Israel at present, we get awhile into deadness, darkness, and estrangement from God; and in the end, like the Jews in the latter day, under Anti-Christ, we find ourselves plunged in a sea of trouble and sorrow, all the result of our folly and sin in not walking in happy child-like obedience to God. Blessed, however, is it to know that such is not to be the end of the path, either of the saint in this dispensation, (however perverse he may be,) or of Israel hereafter; but that blessing, full blessing, is reserved by the Lord in his goodness, for both one and the other!

Such is the moral to be drawn from this prophecy, which so fully displays the aboundings of grace over the aboundings of sin. Happy is it to trace the gracious ways of the Lord with his ancient people, the Jews, and to know that the God of Israel is *our God and Father*, the one with whom our souls have to do, who, notwithstanding all our shortcomings, will surely perfect his own blessed work in our hearts.

Well may we say, as we trace the Lord in his ways, both with Israel and his elect Church, in the words of St. Paul: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

APPENDIX.

Thus, having gone through this prophecy, I shall now add an appendix, wherein I purpose, in connexion with the subject of the *cancelled week*, to speak, 1st, of the testimony of *John* and of *Elias;* (Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 10-13;) 2dly, of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew; 3dly, of the force of the word "*generation*," in the thirty-fourth verse of this chapter; and, 4thly, of the reply of Jesus to his disciples' inquiry as to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. (Acts i. 6, 7.)

1st.—And now, as to *John* and *Elias*, the forerunners of Christ, at his first and second appearance. Their's is, we shall find, exactly a parallel case to that which we have been considering; these prophets standing, as to their testimony, in the same relation one to the other that the *two weeks* (namely, the *cancelled* week, and the *revived* one) are here shown to do, in the counsels of God.

In Malachi iv. we read, in connexion with the Lord's second coming, as follows: "Behold, I send you ELIJAH THE PROPHET, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord;" words which, we need not say, will yet be fulfilled. But, in the meantime, when Christ, at his first coming, presented himself to his people, claiming their allegiance, as the heir of the throne, he was preceded by one who, "*in the spirit and power of Elias*," came to prepare the way of the Lord, to make his paths straight. Of him, therefore, it was that the Lord said: "IF YE WILL RECEIVE IT, THIS IS ELIAS, WHICH WAS FOR TO COME." (Matt. xi. 14.) Observe here the words of Jesus in connexion with this, "*If ye will receive it.*" It was all *a contingency*. It depended on this—had John been received, (his reception involving the reception of him to whom he came to bear witness,) he would *really have proved* what he *ostensibly was* the harbinger of the kingdom, THE VERY ELIAS; and *no other Elias* would, in this case, have been needed to announce the coming glory of Christ, which would even then have been revealed. But John, and his testimony, as in the case of Jesus himself, were alike set at nought; and hence the Elias originally foreknown in the counsels of God, will come, and, as Jesus declared of him, after the slaughter of John by king Herod, will be, in the full sense of the word, "THE PROPHET OF THE HIGHEST." * (Luke i. 76.) Yes, he will assuredly come; and, taking up the burden once uttered by John, "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord*;" he will really be *what John ought to have been*, "even the messenger" sent to declare that "the Messiah the Prince," "THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT" HIMSELF, in whom his people will delight, is at hand; which covenant, observe, will depend for its establishment, not on the will of the Jews, as of old, but on the power and grace of Jehovah himself.

* The following facts mark a strong coincidence between the two weeks. John, through the first half of the one, bore witness to Christ. For 1260 days, the first half of the other, Elias hereafter, together with Moses, will prophesy. In my "Companion," (pages 54-56,) I have endeavoured to show that the witnesses of Revelation xi. will be Moses and Elias; my argument being founded on the fact that, according to the Levitical law, "*two witnesses*" at least were required to substantiate a murder in Israel. (Num. xxxv. 30.)

2dly.—And now as to Matthew xxiv., a chapter which we shall find to be closely linked with our subject, containing, as we shall see, *the history of Daniel's last week.*

Many, supposing this chapter to relate to the destruction of the city and the sanctuary by Titus, say that *it has been fulfilled.* Others again regard it as *future*, believing, at the same time, that some of the things here foretold will occur *before*, and others *after* the Anti-Christ rises; the former, namely, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and so on, being, as they suppose, *precursory judgments*, which may have already begun; the latter being those which will follow in the train of this wilful deceiver. Now, I confess that I take a different view of this passage from either of these; believing, as I do, that all this will occur after this dispensation, in which we stand at present, has ended; that is, after the Church has been caught up to heaven; and, not only so, but *strictly within the limits of Daniel's last week.*

In answer to those who take the *first* of the above views, I reply, that the moment when Jesus uttered this prophecy was one of the deepest solemnity. Darkness had now begun to close in on the nation, and not only so, but on the spirit of Jesus himself. His hour of suffering was near; the week of grace had now almost expired; he had given up the city and the temple as defiled and desolate, for a season. Therefore, to suppose that at such a moment as this, he meant to predict the invasion of Titus, or anything short of those judgments which await the children of Israel hereafter, (the fully ripened fruit of their sin in rejecting himself,) seems to me to be by no means in harmony with a crisis like this. The Lord's word, at the close of the foregoing chapter, may, I am aware, be pleaded on the opposite side. "Behold, your house is left desolate," said he, as he went out of the temple, not to enter it again till they should own him as blessed. Now these words, though they seem to favour the thought that the destruction here spoken of occurred comparatively soon after this juncture, (namely, under Titus,) do not really do so. The phrases "*left desolate*," and "*thrown down*," as applied to the temple, do not mean the same, and therefore should not be confounded. The moment he left it, in the solemn way here described, it became desolate. His words imply this: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate, *for, I say unto you, ye will not see* ME *henceforth*, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." So that, notwithstanding all its magnificence up to the time when it was burnt by Titus, so great as to lead the conqueror to strive to hinder its being set fire to by his soldiers; still all was desolate; and when rebuilt hereafter by the Jews, and it becomes the place of the abominations of Anti-Christ, it will be desolate still, simply because he, the Lord of the temple, will not be there. Observe, I speak of the temple as one temple all through, without reference to its ceasing to exist for a season. In this light the Lord views it himself, and in this we should carry our thoughts onward in association with his. Let me observe, however, that while I do not regard the destruction by Titus to be the fulfilment of the Lord's word in this chapter, I do believe that this was allowed to occur in the interim, as a terrible *sample* of far heavier judgments hereafter. The ninth chapter of Daniel, we may remember, takes especial notice of this, where it is written, "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," which, just following the announcement of the solemn fact that the Messiah should be cut off, shows that there was something, in the way of retributive punishment very especial therein. The truth is, that the destruction by Titus so closely resembles that yet to come, the full judgment that awaits the betrayers and murderers of Jesus, that it is no wonder that they should often have been confounded.

Then, in answer to those who take these judgments, some of them at least, as *preceding the week*, I reply, that neither the Church of God, nor apostate Christendom, seem to have had place in the Lord's thoughts at this moment. Here he exposes the sins of *the Jewish nation*, denouncing desolation and judgment on *the city and temple alone.* The Lord, in fact, is here shown as *the Messiah of Israel, addressing Jewish disciples cognizant of the affairs of their nation, and exclusively so.* This we gather especially from what he says to them at the beginning of the twenty-third chapter: "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do;" words which could be addressed to *Jews only, and to no others.* Then, as to their enquiry of him in the third verse of the twenty-fourth chapter: "Tell us," say they, "when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" "These things,"—what things do they mean? The answer surely is simple—those of which he had just spoken, the destruction of the very temple of which they had been boasting. "Thy coming"—what coming? Surely, his coming *to Israel*—that of which he had spoken at the end of the twenty-third chapter; They, as yet, knew of little beside. Then, as to "THE END OF THE AGE"—what age do they mean? Surely, this also is *Jewish;* they knew of no other; neither do we; seeing that ages belong in no sense to us in this dispensation, but only to Israel. "*The age*," then, I believe to be nothing less than THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL; and, if so, "the end of the age" must mean THE LAST WEEK OF THIS PERIOD, within which all that is here foretold will take place.

And now, let us turn to consider what the disciples meant by the term "the end of the age." They were in full expectation that the kingdom of God was at hand. From the knowledge they had of the time of Nehemiah's return, with which, as I have shown, the seventy weeks began, as well as from their perception of "the signs of times," they judged that this period was now near its end, as indeed, according to what I have said, in one sense, it was. The truth is, the setting up of the kindom of Christ at the very time that he came, was an event of which the Jews were in full expectation; so that there were those in Jerusalem, such as Simeon and Anna, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel; and even the woman of Samaria, half Gentile as she was, could say: "We know that Messiah cometh," *which expectations were founded alone* on this very prophecy; nothing else do we know, within the whole range of Scripture, which could have served as a guide to the Jews, as to the time of His coming, and to this, I believe, his disciples referred, when they spoke of "the age" and its "end."

The time, as I have said, in a sense, was well nigh fulfilled; and this being the case, they believed that, though hidden for a time, their rejected Master was now about to appear in his glory, as the expected Messiah. (See Luke xxiv. 21; Acts i. 6.) Such were their thoughts at this moment; and the Lord's answer, though not meeting *their thoughts*, was a reply to *their question;* inasmuch as, leaving unnoticed *what they meant by the end of the age*, (namely, the week of grace, which had now nearly expired,) he passes that over, as well as the whole course of this dispensation, this period of Israel's rejection, (blotting them out, as it were, in his mind, much in the same way that the angel Gabriel had done in his prophecy,) and bears them onward, in spirit, into that week with which the age will really close.

And now, let us look a little more closely at this twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. It coincides, I believe, with the book of Revelation, from the fourth chapter nearly down to the end of the nineteenth, containing a prophetical history of the very same week, which there is presented under different aspects. And not only so, but in it we may, with wonderful accuracy, trace the *twofold division thereof.* For instance, from the fourth verse to the eighth, we have "*the beginning of sorrows*," a time of *deceit, of delusion*, when one shall come in his own name, saying, "I am Christ." This, I believe to be the earlier part of the week, before the great deceiver throws off the mask and discovers himself—the thousand two hundred and threescore days of Revelation xi.

Then, from the ninth verse to the fourteenth, we have the other division, a time of *hatred and violence*, when "the violent man," the great deceiver above-named, having fully discovered himself, the saints shall be afflicted and killed, "worn out," as Daniel foretells: the "time, times, and a half," or, "forty and two months" of the beast. "THEN COMES THE END," as we read; not "the end of the age," which, as I have said, means the whole of our week, but the termination thereof, THE CLOSE OF THE LAST WEEK OF DANIEL.

Then, as to what we find from the fifteenth to the twenty-eighth verse, this is not an *advance* on the foregoing subject, but merely *a more detailed account of the actings of Anti-Christ through the forty-two months of his tyranny.* In the foregoing verses, false Christs and false prophets are seen, in a general way, each seeking to gain the ascendancy. But here we have something more definite still; namely, the history of the time when the false Christ will be in the plenitude of his power, when he and the false prophet of Revelation xiii. will join in a blasphemous league to deceive and to destroy. Not that either the beast or the false prophet are here

named, or personally appear in this chapter; no, but the effects of their evil doings are seen. The chief object here seems to be, to mark the great "*sign*" of "the end of the age," and this I take to be "*the abomination of desolation*," namely, "*the image of the beast*" set up in the holy place, which all will be called on to worship, or to perish. (Rev. xiii. 15.) This will be the sign, I believe; and when this is set up, then the Jewish remnant are to know that evil has come to its height, and are counselled, yea, commanded, to fly.

Then, in verses 29-31, we have that which especially marks "the end" above-named of the week—I mean the Lord's coming in clouds to scatter his enemies, and to gather in his elect. Observe, "*his elect*" here are his *remnant of Israel*. In vain he had sought again and again, as he says at the close of the twenty-third chapter, to gather the nation together; as he touchingly cries: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, *how often would I have gathered thy children together*, even as a hen gatheredh her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." But now the desires of his heart will at length be accomplished; they will be gathered at last from the four winds of heaven. At last, overcome by his grace, they will say: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Thus the thirty-seventh verse of the twenty-third chapter may serve to throw light on the thirty-first verse of the twenty-fourth chapter, which last is often wrongly applied (because of the mistake as to the term "*elect*") to the *Church of God*, instead of to *Israel*. And here I will cite two passages wherein this term can only refer to the Jews: "I will bring forth a seed out of *Jacob* and out of *Judah*, an inheritor of my mountains; and *mine elect* shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there;" and again, "they shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and *mine elect* shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Is. lxv. 22.)

3dly.—And now, with regard to the thirty-fourth verse of this twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew: "Verily I say unto you, *this generation* shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," I will say a few words. This chapter, as I have said, is by many considered to have been accomplished in the time of Vespasian, and these words seem, at first sight, to favour this thought. But to me, looking at them a little more closely, they do not really do so, as I shall endeavour to show. And now, let us first just consider this passage, and ask what it means. It means simply this—that the generation (whatever this word may import, or to whomsoever it may apply) should exist up to the point when "the great tribulation" here predicted by Christ should come to its close, and then pass away; that is, that the tribulation should light on the generation itself, and end with their being all swept away, as in the days of Noah of old. Now, taking the word "*generation*"* in its popular sense to mean "*a single succession, or one gradation in the scale of genealogical descent*," (the meaning given by Johnson,) this was not actually the case. No, because the generation, in this sense of the term, *did not reach down to the days of Vespasian*, about forty years from the period when Christ uttered this prophecy. By that time, the generation, as such, had died off, and a new one had succeeded. Some few of those cotemporaneous with Christ might have been alive at the time, it is true, and so perished in the seige of Jerusalem; but they were merely *relics of the past generation*, being both too old and too few, either to form, or to belong to, that existing, and owned as such at the time of our Lord. If all this be true, how can it be said, in the above sense of the term, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled?"

Then again, if the word "generation" be taken as expressing *the race, the descendants of Abraham*, it cannot either, in this case, apply. Because, though thousands died in the seige, still the race outlived this terrible crisis, are living at present, and, according to God's ancient promise to Abraham, that they will not pass away.

* The question is not so much what "generation," but what γενεὰ means? i.e. the word employed by the Holy Ghost. Now the first signification exhibited by Scapula, who was of course an unbiassed and a competent witness is, "genus, progenies," which he supports by testimonies of ancient and Hellenistic Greek. Hence, Mr. Faber, who is opposed to our view of Matt. xxiv., acknowledges that the primary meaning of the word is a *race*, or *family*, or *nation*, and Beza translates it most frequently *natio*. So Chrysostom, who may be supposed to have understood Greek, designates Christians ἡ γενεὰ ζητούντων τὸν Κύριον. Mede elaborately defends this sense of the word in the passage commented on. Nevertheless, I agree with the writer that the moral sense is most suitable to the context here, and often elsewhere. Compare Ps. xii. 7, which the Lord may have had in His eye on the occasion in question.—Ed.]

We are then constrained to look for another meaning than either of these, for the word "generation." This, then, brings me to speak of the two weeks above-named—the past week of grace, and that of retributive judgment. The Jews, at the first coming of Christ, were "an evil and adulterous generation"—"a generation of vipers." Both John and the Lord each bore witness to this in his day. And so, in the end, during the future week of our prophecy, the Jews will, in principle, in character, and in action, be precisely the same; the evil, it is true, being far more fully developed, the sevenfold energy of Satan being, in that day, at work. (See Matt. xii. 45.) They will not only *allow*, but even *outdo*, the evil deeds of their fathers. The former slew their Messiah; the latter will receive, and bow down to the false Messiah, the beast. Now, though between them about two thousand years may elapse, still, in God's estimation, the generation is *one and the same;* not of course *individually* so, nor, in a sense, even *nationally*, (though this also, in another sense, is true,) but *characteristically* they are so, as much as though the Jews of that day had been raised from the dead, and were living and acting again on the earth. This, surely, is simple. The betrayers and murderers of Christ, and the adorers of Anti-Christ, have a sort of *moral identity*, though literally and personally they are not the same. This, then, again brings this twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew down, not to the times of Vespasian and Titus, but to those of "*the prince that shall come*"—to THIS LAST WEEK OF DANIEL. At the very same time that the past week of grace was annulled, that evil and perverse generation, in God's account, ceased to exist for a season. But with the revived week hereafter the generation will surely revive. Unregenerate Israel will continue unchanged; and, in the end, will, with their leader the Anti-Christ, perish for ever. But will the race therefore perish? No, the generation, in this sense, will outlive the judgment under the beast. A seed who, during the dark days of Israel's trials, will cling to the Lord, will be accounted to him for a generation; these will survive the apostates, and come into blessing. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you," said the Lord to the adulterous nation of his own day, "and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. xxi. 43.) A nation born again of the Spirit; not merely *the seed*, but the *children* of Abraham—the children *of promise*, like Isaac.

4thly.—And now, in connexion with what I have said as to "*the end of the age*," and the hopes of the disciples connected therewith, we may look at Acts i. 6, where we hear them saying to Jesus: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? As I have before said, they knew that "*the time was fulfilled*," that "*the end of the age*" had arrived; so that their hopes, which, while their beloved Master was lying dead in the grave, had given way for a season, (now that he had been raised from the dead and was amongst them again,) had gained additional strength, and hence this enquiry; in answer to which we hear the Lord saying to them: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." (Verse 7.) From which we gather distinctly that the kingdom, in due time, would come, but *not yet:* and that for the reason aforesaid, namely, that the last week of the seventy, at the termination of which the Lord had been slain, had been cancelled; the Father having set it aside, with the times and the seasons comprehended therein, designing henceforth to leave the course of time altogether unmarked and unmeasured, till his purpose as to the gathering out of his *elect Church* should be fully accomplished.

Such then, at present, are the dealings of God with his Church, which, being raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, has, in spirit, passed away into a sphere where the revolution of times and of seasons, of days and of months, as connected alone with this earth and its interests, is altogether unknown and unrecognized. So that the observance of such by the Church as fully indicates failure, as the neglect of these ordinances was the great mark of Jewish apostacy.

But, just as he is about to put all things under the feet of his Son, taking up the one week at the end, the Father again will number the times and the seasons, as of old, according to the Levitical law, showing that, though still under the yoke of their enemies, and still disobedient to him, they are his great object on earth—beloved for their father's sake; and that the time of their deliverance, at the end of the age, is in reality coming.

I have before shown that it was an act of *judgment* on the part of the Lord, as the Jehovah of Israel, to cancel the week; * but as *touching the world* it showed his *grace*, at the same time, being as much pre-ordained in his counsels, as that on which our hopes of salvation depend, even the cutting off of Messiah. This will be found to be true, when it is considered that though, in one sense, turning him aside from his purpose, in reality it made way for the revelation of that to the hearts of his saints, in which he will be especially honoured, I mean, *the calling out of his Church*. For had Israel been prepared to own Jesus as Lord, "the times of refreshing" would have immediately followed; and then, in this case, *where were the Church?* Where the Lamb's wife, the companion of Christ on the throne of his glory? The truth is, the very delay as to the time of Israel's blessing left room to the Father to act in grace to ourselves—to take out from among the Gentiles, "a people for his name," (Acts xv. 14,) a people in whom the riches of his grace will, at last, be far more fully displayed, than even in the elect seed of Abraham.

E. D.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

(Dan. i.-iv.)

There is much interest attaching to the person of this great Gentile. The place he occupies in the progress of the divine dispensations, the circumstances which connect him with the saints of God, and his own personal history—all contribute to give him a place in our recollections, and to read us some holy and important lessons.

He was the man in whom God set up the Gentiles. The house of David, the throne of Judah, had corrupted itself; the measure of the people's iniquity was full, and the term of the Divine long-suffering was spent in Nebuchadnezzar's day; and he is used by the Lord to be the rod of His indignation against Jerusalem, and the hand to take from Him the sword of rule and judgment in the earth.

The glory had departed. It had left the earth. The prophet had seen it in its gradual and reluctant, but sure and judicial, flight on the cherubim and the wheels, as far as the mountains on its way to heaven. But though "the glory is departed" might have been written on Jerusalem, "the glory is here" could not have been correspondingly written on any seat, or city of the nations.*

This Chaldean, however, this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon is set up by the Lord, and the sword is committed to him. Power in the earth, for the punishment of evil-doers and for the praise of them that do well, is put into his hand, formally put there, by God, on the glory forsaking the earth, or the Lord, for the present, refusing to take His place as King of Israel.

This is Nebuchadnezzar's connection with the dispensational purposes of God. He was glad, of course, to extend his dominions, and to let his conquests be known far and wide, and Jerusalem is welcome plunder to him; but all the while he was filling out the purposes of God. At length his sword is in its sheath, and we see him, not in connection with the *purposes*, but with the *saints*, of God; and then we get a more personal sight of him, and a subject of still holier interest and meaning. For then we see the *man* under Divine operation, and not merely the *power* under divine commission and appointment. And it is this sight which Daniel gives of him in these chapters.

The tumult of war being over, and the sword, as I said, in its sheath again, the king is seen in his place at Babylon. His royal estate he purposes to set off to all advantage. Elegancies and accomplishments, and provisions of all sorts, shall fill his court. Both his greatness and his pleasures shall be served by all that conquered lands can furnish, and the ancient land of the glory is now only one of them. Babylon, famed for its wisdom in its astrologers and soothsayers, shall be set off by some of the captive youths of Judah, distinguished for their understanding science, and skilfulness in knowledge. This is the first chapter.

As it often happens, the Lord comes to disturb him. His heart is moved, if not his estate and condition in the world. Ere he went to sleep, one much-to-be-remembered night, he is thinking on what was to be thereafter. He then sleeps and dreams, and the dream being all about what was to be thereafter, shews that the hand of God was in the whole scene. The king, however, does not understand any thing of all this. Even the dream itself goes from him. He has no remembrance of it. It leaves uneasiness behind it, but that is all. Often it is thus with the soul. There is a disturbance, but no intelligence. A restlessness has been awakened; but whence it came is not known, or whither it goes (what is its purpose) is not conjectured. And it is too high for man. It is the hand of *God*, and mere man cannot reach it. All the wisdom of Babylon is at fault. The dream, the departed dream, which had left only its shadow to scare the heart of the king, is beyond all Chaldean art. This is beautifully significant. We live amid these wonderful shakings, these hidden operations of God with the hearts of the children of men. And when it is with the elect, the work thus begun is conducted to a blessed issue. The man of God, however, gets into the secret. The saint is made to know the mind of God in this great operation of His hand. Daniel tells it all to the king.

Nebuchadnezzar is, naturally, moved to wondering admiration. The knowledge of the prophet is marvellous in his eyes, and all that he can do for him he is ready to do. The wisdom of the God of Daniel he also religiously acknowledges, and, under the excitement, even delights in it. This is the second chapter.

But with all this he is but Nebuchadnezzar still, a mere child of nature, the sport of human passions, and of the devil's wiles. Vanity seems to feed on the communications which the prophet of God had delivered. Wonderful, but natural! These communications had dealt with solemn truths—that an image was to be broken in pieces, and made like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. But this is all passed by the heart of the king, and that he himself is the head of this image, the golden head of it, is all that practically works on him. His pride can get food out of that; but the rest may remain for a future day, however awful it may be.

Accordingly, he sets up a golden image for all to worship. All orders and estates of men are summoned, by musical instruments of all sorts, to own the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had

* Should a clearer proof be required, than I have given, of the existence of "the cancelled week," I reply, that I believe this to be quite a question of *faith*, independent of *Chronological proof*. Yes, of faith I repeat, inasmuch as we are bound to believe Christ, when he said, "THE TIME IS FULFILLED." What time did he mean? *The sixty-nine weeks*, it may be said. Well, he was presented, it is true, as foretold, at the end of this period, namely, of seven and sixty-two weeks. But, be it remembered, that he, as "a minister of the circumcision," came seeking "to confirm the promises made to the fathers;" came offering the *kingdom* to Israel. And when was Israel taught to look for this kingdom? at the termination of the *sixty-ninth* week? Nay, but at the close of the *seventieth*. Then again, let us remember the words of Jesus, when he opened the book which speaks of him at the time when he will come in his glory: "*This day is the prophecy fulfilled in your ears.*" In the case referred to above, he spoke of "the time" that must pass before the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord; here he shows that this year had *actually arrived*; not the *shadow*, but the *substance*; not the *type*, but the *antitype*; at least so it would have been, had they received him. Yes, because he, the true kinsman redeemer, was there, in the midst of his people, offering them deliverance and blessing. But then the Lord stops in the midst of the prophecy, just at the point between "the acceptable year of the Lord" and "the day of vengeance of our God," (see Is. lxi. 1, 2; Luke iv, 19, 20,) and there *he closes the book*, thus intimating, if we understand his action aright, that, though the *year* of redemption was come, the *redemption itself*, though thus *offered*, would not then be *accepted*.

And here I may be told that I have added nothing to my original argument. Well, be it so; I rather seek to press on my reader what I believe to be the true process of reasoning, which Scripture demands on this subject, than to add any thing new; to show this to be a question, not for the *natural intellect*, but for the *spiritual mind*, yea, for *faith*, as I have said, to determine: not one, I am sure, to be settled by a reference either to *divine* or to *human* chronology.

To seek indeed in the Gospels for dates, and so on, in order to prove the existence of this week, I believe, is unconsciously seeking to make God inconsistent with himself. If he *purposely* leaves the whole period between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth unnamed and unmeasured, thereby, among other things, cancelling the week, when his grace was refused, why expect to find him afterwards taking notice of time which he had already obliterated? Some occasional slight references to time, I am aware, there are in the Gospels, none, however, which would help a chronologist to settle this point. Abundant, however, on the other hand, are the notices throughout the pages of prophecy, which, when compared with each other, and judged of in the light of the sanctuary, will lead to the conclusion to which I have come.

[Although I still feel the same difficulty in receiving our beloved brother's theory of "The Cancelled Week" as I did when reviewing the Charts, (vol. i. pp. 188-190,) yet am I quite happy in presenting his statements to the Church at large, trusting to the Lord in His own good time to cast further light upon the subject. Is it not strange that the important questions of the dates of the Lord's birth, baptism, ministry, or death, are not "to be settled by a reference either to *divine* or *human* chronology?" On what is faith, as to these things, to be exercised; if not on divine chronology? If there is no mention of them in Scripture, I should have supposed that it was no question of faith. If God has spoken, our business is to believe Him: if He has not, faith there cannot be.—Ed.]

* The silence of Scripture is at times holy and impressive. I observe this as to the ark. We are not told a word about its fate in the day of Jerusalem's sorrow. It is never mentioned: the theme was too sacred. The ark was the symbol of the divine presence; and the Spirit could not contemplate its captivity, if He could not do so in connection with glorious victory, as in 1 Sam. iv. Therefore, we will leave it untraced in the day of Jerusalem's downfall. When next it is seen, it is in heaven. (Rev. xi. xv.)

set up. Marvellous that our hearts can so deal with God's revelations! God had spoken of an image being broken to pieces, and scattered like the chaff before the wind. Nebuchadnezzar can set up an image to be honoured with divine honours by all the world! How falsely the heart traffics with divine truth! We turn to the present account of our own vanity what connects itself with the most solemn realities. Admiration of God's wisdom will not do. Nebuchadnezzar had that. But with that he was a self-worshipper, and to himself he can sacrifice every thing. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, the very instruments or vessels for awaking that admiration, shall burn in the fiery furnace if they consent not to fall down before this image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Wonderful infatuation! God, however, is but again displayed. If *wisdom* belong to Him, so does *power*. If He can reveal secrets and make known the thoughts of the head upon the bed of the children of men, He can quench the violence of fire and save every hair of the head from perishing, though in a burning fiery furnace. The king is again moved; and he does more than before. He had honoured the servants of the God of wisdom already; now he is for honouring the God of power Himself, establishing His name in the land, and making reverence of Him a part of the business of the state, a standing ordinance of the realm. This is the third chapter.

But what of this? He is as before, only Nebuchadnezzar still—the haughty, self-pleased, self-pleasing child of the dust—man, who, like Adam of old, would be as God. For, after these witnesses of divine wisdom and power, and after the motions which his heart and conscience had passed through, he was, as in earlier days, "at rest in his house and flourishing in his palace." (iv. 4.) He was the same self-pleased, self-pleasing, important king of Babylon.

Nature outlives a thousand checks and improvements. The new wine poured into the old bottle is but spilt. "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." The various melody of the dispensations of God is lost on the dull ear of man. But the Lord is not weary. He can still sit at the well and talk with the sinner. He shakes the heart of this king with another dream, and Daniel again interprets it. It is still, however, the new wine in the old bottle, and it is spilt as ever. Twelve months after this solemn visitation, the king walks in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and his poor proud heart, after all this, can say: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have builded for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (iv. 30.)

Here, surely, is *old* Nebuchadnezzar still, the "old man" of nature. The divine revelations are spent on him in vain. All the goodly emotions are but as the morning cloud and early dew. The new wine, to be preserved, must be put into new bottles.* And so, at last, it is. Nebuchadnezzar is made a new bottle. Deeply and solemnly is this process conducted, or this work accomplished. The sentence of death is lawfully laid on him. The case is one of great character; and it might well be so, because, as we have seen, the light of the wisdom of God, and the hand of the power of God, had already addressed this man; and the further care and diligence of the Lord had been in the recent dream, also bestowed upon him; but all to no real purpose. The new wine had been spilt again and again. Nebuchadnezzar is the same man still, and the old bottle is now to be cast away. The former vessel having been marred on the wheel, the lump is now taken into the potter's hand, to fashion it another vessel, a new vessel, as it pleases Him. The story of this operation, as I said, is solemn beyond expression. "Man that is in power and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." In honour indeed Nebuchadnezzar had been; but he had not understood, and now he becomes as a beast. "He was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." Thus is he made to know himself, and to learn the lesson that he was, in all his honour, as brutish as the cattle of the field, having no understanding. The occasion was special, and the display of the operation of God signal almost without a parallel. But if he learn that he "has destroyed himself," he shall learn also that there is One that lifts up even from dunghills; and under the further working of His gracious as well as mighty hand, Nebuchadnezzar revives; he becomes a risen man in due season. The field and the oxen are left, his understanding returns to him, his kingdom and its glory, his honour and its brightness, his nobles and his counsellors, all return to him, and even excellent majesty is added to him. And then, as one of understanding indeed, who had come to the knowledge of God and himself, he no longer thinks of honouring God by state decrees only, ordinances of his realm, but bows before Him as a sovereign Lord in heaven and on earth, and publishes His doings. He is no longer the *king*, but the *dependent*. The old thing has passed away, and all is become new.

J. G. B.

* The figure of the new wine and the old bottles is used by the Lord after He had been experiencing the resistance of the Pharisees in various ways. (See Mark ii.) He had been gracious to the man with the palsy, let down through the roof; but they said He spoke blasphemies. He sat at Levi's table, in company with Publicans and sinners; but they upbraided Him for want of common holiness, as they judged. His disciples were not fasting, as the disciples of John and the Pharisees were; but again this is complained of. All this was the witness that the new wine had been spilt, the good ways of Christ had been lost on them. They had not contained this new doctrine, the way of God and of grace. His miracles of delivering love and power—His ways with sinners to lead them to repentance—the liberty and joy of His Gospel, or the Bridegroom-mystery—all had been lost on them; and from all this (to speak after the manner of men) He learns that man was worth nothing for God; that he could never be a vessel for His praise or service; that he must, therefore, be made another vessel; that the old thing must pass away, and all become new.

THOUGHTS ON 1 SAMUEL I. II.

What is said of Elkanah, who had two wives, seems to us to present a type of Christ, and of the two dispensations. (Israel and the Church.) Hannah would represent the Jews taken up again in mercy; Peninnah, the Gentiles set aside. Such is what we may distinguish in the prophetic song of Hannah.

We also see the corruption of priesthood, and the judgment of God pronounced against the house of Eli. The priesthood of Aaron and of his sons was a type of the Church.

The circumstances of the Jewish people, under Samuel the prophet, Saul and David, until the elevation of Solomon to the throne, figure the preparatory events which introduce the reign of the Messiah; that is, they present in types the principal facts which shall transpire from the time when God recommences to act for His people until Jesus comes to seat Himself on the throne of David at Jerusalem.

The word of God pronounced to Eli, is the testimony that God raises up against this priesthood before the execution of His judgment. The Church, which has the intelligence of what is going to happen, ought also to bear testimony that God is about to judge and reject the Christianized Gentile body; the judgment of God is about to be accomplished in those who share in the corruption introduced into the Church. (Jude 15.)

It is under the priesthood of Eli and his sons that judgment begins to take place against this order of things. As priest, Eli had no more the discernment *required*: in such a state, the ear is no longer attentive, so that one can be corrected; also, what is very remarkable, the sign which is proposed to Eli *is the very judgment that God is about to apply*. (ii. 34.)

The judgment against Eli's house has its full accomplishment only at the time of Solomon's elevation to the throne. (1 Kings ii. 27, 35.) The priesthood established by Solomon is, according to the word of the Lord, pronounced to Eli by the man of God, "a faithful priest .... who shall walk before mine anointed for ever." (Verse 35.) The accomplishment of this type, presented under the royalty of Solomon, will have place when Christ shall be seated on the throne of His glory at Jerusalem; it is the priesthood which is mentioned in the description of the order of the temple. (Ezek. xliv. 15.)

Aaron and his sons represented the heavenly priesthood in the character and position which Jesus took by His resurrection; the position of the Church is that of Christ, the glorified man before God the Father. That which is indicated as replacing what is rejected is "before his anointed." It is a priesthood in another position. The first is heavenly; it is what was figured in the tabernacle, the pattern of heavenly things. (Heb. ix. 24.) The other is on earth for the temple at Jerusalem, in the days when the Messiah shall be seated on the throne of David. This priesthood shall not fall, any more than the restored Jewish people, because Christ will have taken the government in hand. That which was placed in the hands of man under responsibility has fallen in every dispensation; but God, according to His grace, maintained His election. Unto Him be all the glory.

An instruction of the highest importance for us Gentiles springs out of verses 27 and 28 of chap. ii. Before executing judgment on that which is corrupted, God ever recalls the nature of His calling according to His grace, as regards the blessing placed in the hands of the men who have been the objects of His goodness. God says to Eli: "Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy fathers, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?" &c. The house of Aaron had been the object of a very special grace in the midst of the tribes of Israel. But this grace they had forgotten.... Wherefore, having ceased to retain the memory of God's goodness toward them, they were fallen into a state of complete corruption, and accordingly judgment is the last remedy that God applies, whether to correct or to cut off irrevocably.

It is just the same as regards the Church; it also has forgotten the goodness of God, according to the calling of His grace; also this dispensation is about to be irrevocably cut off by the final judgment of Babylon. (Rev. xviii.) It is then of the highest importance for the Christian not to be forgetful of God's grace as regards his primitive calling: let us remember whence God has taken us, in order to avoid the application of this threat of Jesus to Laodicea: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. iii. 16.) —*Le Témoignage.*

THE CHURCH.

(Eph. i. ii.)

We have in these chapters three distinct points, viz. first, the purpose of God; secondly, the development of that purpose; and, thirdly, the result of that purpose.

It is a thought full of blessedness and comfort to the heart, that it is with God and His deep purposes of grace we have to do, and not with human circumstances. Faith apprehends this; it looks away from what the professing Church has made of herself, and only contemplates what the Church is as the body of Christ—beloved of God, washed in the blood, indwelt by the Holy Ghost. Faith travels backward to eternity, reposes upon the purpose of God, and thus gives the soul power to act amid the most depressing and humiliating circumstances. It was this truth that sustained the spirit of the apostle Paul, while he lay a prisoner at Rome, deserted and despised. He knew that nothing could shake the reality of the purpose of God. Hence he writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be *holy* and *without blame* before Him in love." Here was faith's resting-place. "All spiritual blessings *in the heavenlies*." There was nothing here—all was above. Looking at earth, all might present an aspect of hopeless ruin; but faith ever occupies itself with God's reality; it looks at the Church according to God's predestination, and acts accordingly. If this be not the habit of our souls, we shall have no power at all to get on. If we look at things around us, unbelief at once enters in, with all its reasonings, and renders us powerless; or, it may lead us, with uninstructed zeal, to build up the Church after a human model, or to lend our aid to such attempts, which must issue in thorough confusion.

Now, the ever blessed God purposed to have the Church "holy and without blame before Him in love." This was His purpose; and it is just as we are able to get up to God's point of view that we see the Church to be that holy, blameless, lovely thing which God has made her to be in Christ. One of old, who looked at Israel "*in the vision of the Almighty*," was constrained to say: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." This is truly precious for the soul. It is not that "iniquity and perverseness" are not there. No; but God does not see them, because He has set the cleansing efficacy of the blood of His own dear Son between Him and all the blots and stains that might trouble the conscience. In the vision of man, who looks only at the outward appearance, the camp of old, or the Church now, might exhibit but a poor spectacle; but in "the vision of the Almighty" it is totally different. The Church is "*all fair*" in the eye of God; and, surely, this is enough.

"Beholders many faults may find,
But they can guess at Jesus' mind,
Content if written in His book."

Yea, truly, content if written in His book; and are we not so? Yea, are we not engraved on His hands, and borne upon His heart continually? Thank God, it is even so. God views the Church as He views Jesus. She is "accepted in the Beloved." "As He is, so are we." "We are in Him that is true." "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." And all this was arranged in the infinite mind of God, before the foundation of the world, before the entrance of sin, before a single member of the Church had breathed the breath of life. "In thy book (as perhaps we may be allowed to apply a well-known Scripture,) were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." (Ps. cxxxix.) Thus should we view the Church—thus should we think of and act toward her. He must rise to the everlasting counsel of God concerning her, in order to receive power to serve her perseveringly. If we get off this high ground, we must fail altogether. It is impossible for any one to serve the Church who is not walking in communion with God's thoughts about her. We may make efforts after personal holiness; we may make progress in grace and knowledge; but if these things are not connected with the Church, they are merely selfish efforts. We should increase in holiness of character; we should make progress in grace and knowledge; but these things should ever be connected with the true interests of the Church of Christ; they would then be in harmony with the mind of Him who could say: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

Now, this purpose of God was developed in Christ, who is the risen Head of the Church: in Him, too, it finds its accomplishment. All that God purposed concerning the Church was actualized in Christ when He was raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, and the Holy Ghost was sent down to actualize it in reference to all the members, as it had already been in reference to the Head, to make that true of *them* which was already true of *Him*. This was the object of the mission of the third Person of the Trinity. The Son was the standard, the model to which the Church was to be, in process of time, conformed by the operation of the Spirit. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) We have therefore, first, the purpose of God—His own deep and precious thoughts about the Church. We have, then, the accomplishment of that which was to clear away every obstacle to the full application of that purpose to the Church, viz. the death of Christ, who, having taken the Church's place, and made Himself fully answerable for *all* her sins, paid the penalty *for her*, went down into the deepest depths of sorrow for her, cleared away every cloud from the prospect; and then, being raised from the dead, He took His seat at the right hand of God, and sent down the Holy Ghost to form the Church, to bring it into the unity which belonged to it as the body of Christ. Now, seeing that all that was needed, for the application of the purpose of God to the Church, was accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ, it is impossible that any thing can finally prevent its being actualized in reference to all the foreknown and predestined members of the Church. Neither Satan, nor the world, nor sin, nor death, nor aught else, can by any means countervail the purpose of God. Hence the apostle prays for the Ephesians, "that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power* which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." To have this prayer answered in our experience, is to be raised above the influence of every doubtful thought. It seems as if the Holy Ghost would provide a powerful remedy for any hesitating thought that might assault us, while viewing the wondrous counsel of God's will about the Church, and the high and holy destinies marked out for her in the ages to come. The very position which the prayer occupies is remarkable. The apostle had been dealing with the question of what the Church is in the purpose of God, and he was about to treat of the Church's condi-

tion by nature; and the distance between these two points was so vast, that we need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened in order to know "the exceeding greatness of the power" which could raise us from one to the other. For what is our condition by nature? "Dead in trespasses and sins"—"walking according to the course of this world"—"children of wrath." Such is our state by nature, and not of us Gentiles only, but of the favoured Jews too; and when we look from this state up to the wondrous height of glory which the counsel of God has fixed as the future portion of the Church, we may well pray to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened, that we may know the greatness of God's power to usward. Now, this power "to usward" is the very same power that was brought to bear on Christ when He lay in the grave, beneath the terrible weight of the Church's sin. Christ took the place of greatest distance from God, inasmuch as He was "*made sin*." He had a weight of sin upon Him which no mortal could bear. Hence, when we behold Him raised to the right hand of God, "far above all principality, and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," we see, at once, the measure of the Church's acceptance. The Church is the body of Christ, His fulness, and therefore can never be viewed apart from Him. Hence, if it be asked, How was Jesus raised up from beneath the weight of sin which He had taken upon Himself? the answer is, By the working of *God's mighty power*. What an expression! The mighty power of God! Who or what could resist it? There was nothing to resist it; it was exercised in most perfect harmony with wisdom, prudence, justice, and truth. The law of God had been magnified and made honourable by the spotless life of the Lord Jesus; all the claims of justice had been satisfied by His death as the spotless Lamb of God; hence "the working of God's mighty power" (*ἐνέργειαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος*) was brought to bear, and Christ was raised from the dead and set far above all the power of the enemy; and now He can set His foot upon every thing that could stand in the way of the Church's full blessedness. He entered into the strong man's house and took from him his armour wherein he trusted, and spoiled his house; and all this, be it observed, as Head of the Church, and on her behalf.

Now, all this truth about Christ and the Church was shadowed forth in Adam and Eve. In Gen. i. 26, we have the counsel of God respecting man, in the following words: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let *them* have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth," &c. Again: "God blessed *them*, and God said unto *them*," &c. It is important, in connection with our subject, to see that, in these verses, we have the counsel of God about Adam and Eve rather than the actual accomplishment of facts. This will appear from the following chapter, where we find the Lord God saying: "It is not good that the man should be *alone*." The purpose of God had not been actualized in reference to Eve when the divine benediction was pronounced on her in the person of Adam; she was blessed in him—in him, too, she got dominion; she had nothing of, in, nor through, herself; ALL WAS IN THE MAN. This is a sublime and glorious truth. The Church is *bound up* in the same "bundle of life" with the Lord Jesus; yea, and in the same bundle of glory likewise. The hand that would wrest from her her portion of life and glory, must wrest it from Him first, for she holds ALL IN HIM. Here is faith's divine resting-place; here, too, the standard by which it estimates the Church's place and character. Why should not the Church be pronounced "very good," when looked at in the person of Christ? Why should she not be blessed, when blessed in Him? When the Church shall shine in all the brightness of the glory of Christ, and share in the honours of His throne, what will it be but the accomplishment of God's blessed purpose about her? Eve was thought of and spoken of before she had been called into being; it was "*them*" (Gen. i.) while none but *the man* existed. And so surely as Eve was thought of, so surely would she be called into being—but how? "The Lord God caused *a deep sleep* to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took *one of his ribs*, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made (marg. *builded*) he a woman, and brought her unto the man." (Gen. ii. 21, 22.) *

* It is interesting to observe that the word used by the LXX. in verse 22 is substantially the same as that which occurs with a preposition referring to he union of Jewish and Gentile believers in Eph. ii. 22. In the former, it is *ᾠκοδόμησεν*; and, in the latter, it is *συνοικοδομεῖσθε*. Indeed, the analogy between Gen. i. and ii. and Eph. i. and ii., as bearing upon our immediate subject, can hardly fail to arrest the spiritual mind. Adam and Eve point to Christ and the Church; Adam's sleep, to Christ's death; and the building of the woman, to the building of the Church by the present operation of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Other minuter analogies might easily be added.

Thus it was that the purpose of God was applied to Eve. Adam had to sleep, and lose a rib, ere the woman could be formed according to the divine counsel. Just so is it as regards the antitype of all this. The second man, the Lord from heaven, had to descend into the lower parts of the earth, according to the eternal purpose of the Father, ere the Church could enter into the actual enjoyment of the glory and dominion of which we have been constituted joint-heirs with Christ; and it is the aim of the Holy Ghost, in His present work in the Church, to lead every foreknown and predestinated member of the body into the realization of the purpose of God concerning the whole. This attaches special importance to the preaching of the Gospel in all its completeness, "the mystery of the Gospel," as it is called in Eph. vi., it being the great instrument by which souls are brought into the Church. The intelligent evangelist will ever keep Christ and the Church in view; he does not preach to swell the ranks of a party, but to gather souls to Christ. In the unity of the body on earth, his object is not only the salvation of sinners, but this in order to have realized and expressed *here* in the believers what is already true and real above—that for which Christ died (John x. xi.) and the Spirit came down. (Acts i. ii. and 1 Cor. vi. xii.) Faith has to do with God's realities.

And now, as to the result of the purposes of God about the Church, what is it? The object which God had in view—simply that. The result *must* correspond with the divine purpose, for God cannot be frustrated. And what was that object? "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together *in one* all things in Christ." This is the purpose, and this too will be the result.* But there is a present result of which we read in the last verse of chapter ii. viz. "In whom *ye also are builded together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit." God dwells in the Church, not only in the Church (or the assembly of God) as a whole, but in each local assembly *which owns the name of Jesus as the only centre of union, and the Holy Ghost as the only source and power of ministry in the unity of the Church, Christ's body, on, earth.* Where these truths are held in power, there is a distinct expression of the present result of God's purpose about the Church. I pray the reader to pause here, and see if he understands this. It is of real moment that every Christian should prayerfully and solemnly consider the question of what the Church really is; and in doing so, the word of God must be our only guide. We cannot commit ourselves to man on this great question. The Lord alone can teach us to profit. Neither can we view it in the light of circumstances. What power of action can be had by looking at men or things? None whatever. We need what God has given us, a spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind. Led of the Holy Ghost, and subject to Scripture, we shall not long want a clear, calm and settled conviction of what the Church is, as presented in the New Testament, and learned in the secret of the Lord's own presence. When, through grace, my reader has gotten this, he will be no more "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, he will grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Let us learn from the Lord what His Church is, and then we shall be able, *as we shall feel ourselves bound*, to turn away from every thing which is not like it; for conduct should ever be according to conviction. So also we shall seek grace from day to day, to carry out in our respective spheres, and according to our measure of faith, understanding and power, the divine purpose about the Church. Let us take up, for instance, the epistle to the Ephesians, and study it with a teachable and impartial mind, and we shall soon see what the Church *is*: mark, not merely what the Church *is to be*, but what *the Church is now*.

Could one who was divinely taught the doctrine of the Church—could one who knew and valued the place of the Bride, the Lamb's

* [It is worthy of note that in Ephesians, which contemplates us as already seated in heavenly places in Christ, there is no direct reference to the Lord's coming. So in the kindred epistle to the Colossians, it is not His coming from heaven to them who were on earth; (which would involve the thought of distance and separateness, instead of the Head and His body;) it is not His coming for us, but our appearing with Him in glory. This is, to my mind, a singularly beautiful sample of the harmony of truth that pervades the Scriptures.—ED.]

wife, have a happy heart and a peaceful conscience in sanctioning the harlot which commits fornication with the kings of the earth, or with any human imitation of the Church, whereby the Holy Ghost is hindered, dishonoured, and grieved? A religious institution is not necessarily the Church of God; on the contrary, it may be hostile to the Church—a positive barrier to the expression of the unity of the Spirit. Hence, if we will be the upholders of Babylon, we must abandon the idea of holily serving the Church of God, for the two are incompatible. The reader would, therefore, do well to ponder the fearful consequences of occupying a position hostile to the true interests of Christ's body on earth. True, it will ever be difficult to flesh and blood to live for Christ and the Church; but then it is well worth encountering all the difficulty. The Lord has special joy and complacency in those who sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Church. It was what He did Himself, and all who are filled with His Spirit will follow His example. One who, perhaps, came nearer than any to His Master, could say: "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh." And again: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." Indeed, it was for the purpose of furthering the interests of the Church that Paul desired to remain on earth. "To abide in the flesh," he writes, "is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." To him the world presented one vast desert—the scene of his trial and conflict; but when he thought of the beloved Church, he could willingly sacrifice his own feelings to further its joy. Blessed servant! Would that we had more of his spirit. Wherever Paul went, the Church was his object; when he preached, he preached for the Church; when he made tents, it was for the Church likewise. *He lived for Christ and the Church;* and, oh! my reader, if you and I love the name of Jesus, ought we not to live for the same object? Do not say, What can *I* do for the Church? You can do much, very much for it; you can by precept, and, above all, by example, promote its unity; you can bear testimony against every thing that would hinder that unity. First, ascertain what the Church is, so that you may not be calling that the Church which is nothing more than a human arrangement, set up for the professed purpose of providing for the religious wants of men, whether Christians or not. Could such a thing be the Church? And if it be not the Church, it must be opposed to it, and subversive of its blessing and testimony on earth. For if we gather not with Christ, we can but scatter. Again, you should beware of upholding any thing which practically denies the unity of the Church by setting up any other centre of union than the name of Jesus.

The body of Christ on earth consists of all who, savingly believing in His name, are indwelt by the Holy Ghost. As such, they will endeavour to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called," and "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It may be well just to add a word here, as to the strict meaning of the term "the Church," Christ's body, as used in the epistle to the Ephesians, &c. And be it noted well, that the apostle here is not treating of an invisible unity in heaven, but of the Church on earth. Let any spiritual person read Eph. iv., and answer if the body, the members, the gifts there treated of, are in heaven or on earth? Compare also 1 Cor. xii. and Rom. xii. Are these apostles, prophets, teachers, healings for the Church in heaven? And, if not in heaven, where, if not in the Church here below? Unquestionably the Church will still enjoy a special place of nearness to the Lord as His body in heaven. But the Scriptures say little of a truth so obvious and almost self-evident, while they speak much and frequently of the Church as one body on earth. We learn from these and other portions of the Word of God, that the Church of God did not begin to be formed here below until the ascension of Christ to the right hand of God, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost. After these things had become accomplished facts, believers began to be brought into a position different from, and higher than, any thing that had yet been known. Believers, previously, did not form a part of this body, for it was *when the second Adam slept* that His Eve was formed. God, in His manifold wisdom, has various spheres of blessing, various departments of service and worship for His people. There are the heavenlies and the earthlies. The Spirit speaks of "every family" (πᾶσα πατριὰ) in heaven and on earth. These things are not to be confounded. "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

Is it, therefore, asked, What is the precise period to which the formation of the Church is confined? The answer is very simple, viz. From the time that Christ took His seat at the right hand of God, and sent the Holy Ghost from on high to baptize the believers into one body, until the time when He shall leave it to meet His Church in the air. (Compare Ps. cx. 1 and 1 Thess. iv. 14-17.) This, be it long or short, is, properly speaking, the Church period. It must be confined to this, for, before its commencement, and after its expiration, *the earthly family*, the seed of Abraham, must be regarded as the special object of the divine dealings on earth. This, then, makes the matter very simple. It requires no effort to understand the peculiarly unique and heavenly character of the Church of Christ. The time during which the Church of God is being formed is, just while Christ, the risen and glorified Head, is hidden in the heavens, and while the earth ceases to be the scene of God's manifested operations. Neither the earth nor any particular land is publicly owned of God now; it was once, before the Church period commenced, and it will be again after that period has ceased. But *now*, God is gathering out of earth the heavenly family to be the body of Christ, His Bride—to be conformed to Him in every thing—to be as separated from the world as He is—to have nothing on earth, either in the way of standing, hope, or calling.

But, it may be asked, Were not Abel, Abraham, Moses and David, members of the Church? The answer to this is fully involved in what has been already advanced. If the formation of the Church must be confined to the precise period above named, (and is it not?) then those who lived a thousand years, more or less, before that period commenced, cannot be regarded as part of it. They belonged to some of the families referred to in Eph. iii. 15, (which does not merge all in one family, but is rightly rendered "*every family* in heaven and on earth is named,") but they do not belong to the Church, properly so called. They were saved by faith in Christ, no doubt, and they will occupy, in the ages to come, a place suited to them in the manifold wisdom of God; but we must not unduly limit nor extend the actings of the blessed God; He will order the various departments of His happy house according to His own grace and wisdom, and not according to our foolish thoughts. Scripture applies the term the Church of God, of the first-born, &c., to the saints between Pentecost and the Lord's coming again, and to none others. If it do, nothing can be more easy of proof. Let a single text be produced which speaks of the saints before or after those termini as the Church of God or body of Christ. But there is none. And the only safe course is to give up our own thoughts and to follow the unerring Word. Nor is it merely the name which is peculiar; but there are special privileges and a special walk, which are connected, so far as Scripture speaks, with the believers who are found in the Church period, and with none else. And to me it is clear, that if you make the Church to be the aggregate of all saints from the beginning to the end of all things, you lose entirely the power of the truth of its union as a proper living body on earth, indwelt of the Holy Ghost, and made one spirit with the Lord in heaven.

The Lord give us to know more and more of His own mind concerning us, that we may serve Him more intelligently and devotedly!

C. H. M.

ΠΟΡΜΑΙΙ.

(Num. xiv. Deut. i.)

THE root of sin lies very deep indeed. It is nothing less than the will of man. Hence the great defect in any mere moral judgment as to sin. Such a judgment proceeds on grounds either of immutable principles of right and wrong, independently of the acknowledgment of God, or on the ground of conventional righteousness, as variable as the several states and conditions of men. Thus, the apostle concludes the detail of practical ungodliness with this sweeping principle: "There is no fear of God before their eyes;" (Rom. iii. 18;) and another principle equally broad is found in the words: "They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." It necessarily introduces an

element which no system of morals could provide for; namely, suitability of conduct under special circumstances, the right thing to be done at the right time. If we only allow that there is a supreme will to which every will ought to bow, obedience and disobedience cannot be defined by statutory laws. One alone stands forth in the singular place of obedience—the obedient One—He "whose ear was opened morning by morning to hear as the learned;" He of whom it was written: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" He who Himself said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." We, alas! have to say: "We have turned every one to his own way;" our will has not been subject to the will of God. Even since we have been quickened by His grace, and God has drawn us with cords of love as a man, so that we have come to Jesus, and received Him of God, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, we have practically had to "prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God," and, in many instances, *painfully* to learn submission to it. We are "sanctified unto obedience" of Jesus Christ, as well as unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. As servants of Christ, we are "servants of *obedience* unto righteousness." It is by the knowledge of this principle that we get so deep an insight into what sin really is in the sight of God. *It is our wilfulness.* This is the interpretation which the exercised soul is enabled to put on many of the dealings of God with his children. Men and Christians see the outside of one another, and judge accordingly; but God judgeth the heart, and searcheth the reins.—Is it right or allowable? is the question with man. Is it obedience? is the question with God.—There is nothing which so draws the line between spirituality and sentiment, and indeed prevents spirituality from degenerating into mystic refinement, as the realizing that the Holy Ghost, who, in quickening our souls, has created in us new feelings and desires, is the Spirit of truth, and, whilst presenting truth objectively to the soul, sanctifies by the means of it. "God hath chosen us unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The whole course of a Christian should be truthful. The very basis of Christianity is truth—the truth of what we are in ourselves and of what God is, as revealed to us in Christ. Our starting point is the recognition of our real position before God—sinners, helpless, ruined, and righteously exposed to the wrath of God. When, by the quickening power of the Spirit of God, we are brought to take this truthful place, the controversy is over between us and God; He justifies us freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Starting from this on our walk as Christians, if we sin, the truthful place is confession, and then again God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. A large measure of the needed discipline of God is, to bring us to this truthful place: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and *the truth* is not in us."

We may learn a solemn and profitable lesson from redeemed Israel; redeemed indeed only *outwardly*, but still answering the gracious end to us of *admonition*, by that which *happened* to them.

The distinguishing grace of God had been shewn to Israel in the blood of the paschal lamb in Egypt. They had seen the glorious triumph of the Lord on their behalf, in leading them through the Red sea as on dry land, and the utter destruction of their enemies in endeavouring to follow them. They had known the grace of God in sweetening the waters of Marah and in providing shade and refreshment in the wilderness. They had *murmured* also, but their murmurings had been answered in grace, in bread being given to them from heaven, and quails sent in abundance. They *tempted* the Lord; but he answered them by causing water to gush out of the flinty rock. They had fought against Amalek and prevailed, through the hands of Moses upheld in intercession. The grace of God had abounded over all their sin, up to the moment of their receiving the law by the disposition of angels. Moses is called up to the Lord in the mount, to receive from the Lord ordinances for them of divine service. They forget Moses, and set up gods for themselves to go before them. This sin is answered in the terrible judgment inflicted on their brethren by the children of Levi, and the plague of the Lord. They had seen the tabernacle reared and filled with the glory of the Lord. The cloud, the witness of the presence of Jehovah in the midst of them, now took its place as their guide through the wilderness. Their holy priesthood had been consecrated before them, and when the fire fell on the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord appeared, they had shouted and fallen on their faces. They had also witnessed the same "consuming fire" vindicating the holiness of the Lord in the destruction of Nadab and Abihu. The stoning of the sabbath-breaker and of the blasphemer, at the commandment of the Lord, proved that He was judge himself; and prophecy of judgment in case of disobedience, and mercy after humiliation and repentance, closes the eventful year of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt.

"In the fourteenth day of the first month, Israel kept the passover at the commandment of the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai." What a retrospect for Israel to look back through a year to the blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of their houses in Egypt—the angel of the Lord dealing destructive judgment all around, and they feasting peacefully within. May our souls know abidingly the blessed reality of this deeply interesting figure!

"On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, the cloud was taken from off the tabernacle of the testimony, and the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai: and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran." But they leave there the record of their sin and of the judgment of God in the names Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah, "the burning" of the fire of the Lord, and "the graves of lust." It is from Paran that the spies are sent to search the land, and bring also of the fruit of it. Israel had known the bondage of Egypt and deliverance from it by the outstretched arm of Jehovah, and that arm was not shortened, so that it could not bring them in to the land promised to their fathers. But how graciously does Jehovah condescend to their weakness in commissioning Moses to "send men, that they may search the land of Canaan, *which I give* unto the children of Israel." They searched it without any molestation for forty days, and "brought back word unto them and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land." But the report of the strength of the people and of walled cities was more readily received than the report of the goodness of the land, although they had such a sample of its goodness before their eyes. Vain are the remonstrances of Caleb and Joshua. The ten who had accompanied them in searching the land brought up a slander on the land; the congregation first murmur and then despise the pleasant land, and take counsel to "make themselves a captain and to return into Egypt." Caleb and Joshua again remonstrate; Moses intercedes; but the Lord sets himself against their rebellion, and makes their unbelief to be the punishment of their sin. "To-morrow, turn you and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea." Thus thwarted in their wilfulness in one way, they evince it in another. The same people who yesterday, with the presence of the Lord with them, and the fruit of the land before them, refused, *at the commandment of the Lord*, to go up and possess the land, become bold in disobedience, now that the Lord commands them to turn again the way of the Red sea. Their wilfulness would fain surmount all difficulties. The sons of Anak had lost their terror and walled cities their strength in their eyes, and they themselves had grown from grasshoppers to giants the moment the will of the Lord thwarted their will. Such ever is man's boasted freedom of will, miserable freedom indeed, to have a will always opposed to "the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God." It is freedom indeed; but, what a freedom! "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness."

"And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up to the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and *will go up to the land which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned.*" Only yesterday they had said: "Let us make a captain and return into Egypt," and the Lord had answered: "To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea." But now in very wilfulness they confess sin and plead the promise of the Lord; strange but faithful picture of the deceitfulness, as well as the desperate wickedness, of the heart! And Moses said: "*Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord?* but it shall not prosper." Their pleading the Lord's promise, and confession of sin, was in this instance only the prelude to presumptuous sin. The Lord is not with them, and their wilful boldness ends in discomfiture. They presumed to go up unto the hill top, "and the Amalekites came down .... and smote them and discomfited them, even unto Hormah."

Do we know any thing like this in the secret experience of our own souls? When Christians, through the grace of God, have attained to a measure of blessing, and then cease from following on to know the Lord; when the heart secretly turns back to the

world, out of which we have been rescued by Christ giving himself for our sins; when the difficulties of the way present themselves more prominently than the rest and glory which God himself has set before us—then we may be assured that the evil heart of unbelief is at work, and there has been departure from the living God. Declension has manifestly set in. Christ is dishonoured, and the pleasant land despised. The necessary consequence is discipline from the Father, discipline even to the scourge, because of his love. The stroke is felt, and intended to be felt. It may bring disgrace on us in our own eyes, and in the eyes of others also. It is hard for us to be turned back. We are just like wayward children. How well we can understand the reply of Israel, "Lo, we be here," to the announcement, "Turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea." They could not bear to lose, as it were, so much ground, and to traverse the wilderness afresh. They would go up from where they were, but it cannot prosper; it was neither the Lord's way, nor was he with them; their attempt failed, and ended in discomfiture and deeper disgrace. The Lord will bring us back to the cross, that we may start afresh with him. We must learn that, after all our progress, we are nothing better than sinners saved by grace. It is on this point that the controversy so frequently turns between the Lord and ourselves. We refuse to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We allow that we have sinned, but desire to go on as though we had not. This is not obedience, but presumption. We do not undo wrong, by doing what appears to us to be right, but by justifying God in confession, and taking the place which he assigns to us. The same God who, by his grace, has made us every thing, and given us every thing in Christ, the moment we cease to value, that by looking to our own attainments, will in very faithfulness make us feel our nothingness. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." He is ever able to come in when we are humble, and work for his own name sake. But he has no name to meet us while, in the pride of our hearts, we insist on maintaining a position. He can, in such case, only resist us. Are we indeed "cast down?" He can reveal himself as "God who comforteth those who are cast down." Are we in tribulation? He is able to come in as "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort." Let us get down as low as may be before God, he has ever in reserve some part of his own name to reveal and meet us. But, if "we walk contrary unto God, so that he walks contrary unto us;" till this be acknowledged, and "the punishment of our iniquity be accepted," God is still in the attitude of a resister. How pointedly does Moses, in narrating to "the generation to come" the ways of their fathers who had perished in the wilderness, present this principle. "Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the Lord; we will go up and fight according to all that the Lord our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. And the Lord said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight, for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. So I spake unto you, and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and went *presumptuously* up into the hill. And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah. And ye returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you." (Deut. i.)

"Ye were presumptuous,* and went up." Solemn admonition indeed. Well may we say: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults: keep back *thy servant* also from *presumptuous* sins." Israel presumed on the promise of the Lord, and on their own confession of sin; and at the same time "rebelled against the commandment of the Lord." Presumptuous sin appears specially the danger of God's own accredited people. It is doing that which makes for our own credit, rather than that which is for the honor of Christ. In this there may be no moral element which the natural conscience can discern. There may even be the apparent confession of sin, and boldness of action in pleading the promise of God, humility and dignity outwardly presented, and yet God not acknowledged at all. It is the exercised soul which cries: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sin." Caleb and Joshua, faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness, not only reported well of the land, but felt their strength to be in doing "the will of God." "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey: only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and *the Lord is with us:* fear them not; but all the congregation bade stone them with stones." The Lord was not with those who presumptuously went up the hill; but they who, like Caleb and Joshua, had known the presence of the Lord as their only strength and security, in going up when he commanded to go up, would equally find it to be their strength and security to turn back the way of the Red sea, when the Lord so commanded. The Lord was still with them. And what did Caleb and Joshua learn by their turning back with the others, but fresh lessons of the abounding of the grace of God over the sin of Israel? Disappointed of entering Canaan from Kadesh-barnea, it all turned to gain in entering by "a way they had not passed heretofore;" for when "the soles of the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rested on the waters of Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off from the waters that came down from above: and they stood on an heap: and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground." The Lord did not turn back his faithful servants, Caleb and Joshua, with their unfaithful brethren, to no profit. They witnessed indeed the fall in the wilderness of all their generation after less than forty years; but they had learnt the blessing of Aaron's rod which budded; they had witnessed the saving power of the wondrous ordinance of the brazen serpent; they had proved too that no enchantment could prevail against Israel: and thus richly freighted with the knowledge of the blessings of a present God even in the wilderness, an entrance was abundantly ministered unto them into Canaan, through the prevailing power of a present God manifested by the means of priestly service.

"Turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea." Does it seem hard to us to do so? If there has been failure and declension, only let us come back in simplicity of faith to our starting point, the cross of Christ, and then we too shall learn, as Caleb and Joshua, afresh and more deeply how the Lord hath triumphed gloriously. Humbled, if needs be, in the eyes of others, bowing submissively under their taunts, receiving all as a part of the discipline we need, and, oh! how light compared with our folly. God shews himself as an unupbraiding God. "He giveth grace to the humble." All the progress we have made in the knowledge of divine things, in which we may have complacently rested, is not to be compared with the deeper lesson of the grace of God, yet to be learnt in the cross and from the cross. It may seem to us to be only the shame of retracing our steps; but it is in reality to go on with God, learning fresh manifestations of his grace in Christ Jesus; it is to find a reality in the very truths which we had only superficially handled before; for real Christian progress is characterized by our estimate of great essential truths—truths connected with, and flowing from, the person of Christ. "That I may know Him." Is it a weariness to learn more experimentally the value of the ever-blossoming, fruit-bearing priestly ministry of our Jesus—a ministry so immediately flowing from his person? Starting indeed from the cross, and keeping near the cross, it is blessed to learn its value, as Israel knew the brazen serpent, the last resource of the grace of God in the wilderness; for, as surely as Jesus himself is the Alpha and Omega, so also is the cross to us the first and the last great doctrine of God. It is well too to learn when all can find fault, and the finger of scorn is held up at the failure of God's people, and they cry insultingly: "There, there, so would we have it," that the charge shall not lay against us, for it is God that justificth. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." These and other lessons are to be learnt in thus turning again the way of the Red sea—by humbling, instead of justifying, ourselves—by really confessing sin, instead of resolutely maintaining a position—by knowing rather the comfort of the Lord's presence, in being, as it were, turned back in apparent disgrace, than presenting a strong front, and going on without God. All effort to maintain a position to which even the grace of God has led, but the maintenance of which, instead of the maintenance of Christ's honor, has become the object, must end in discomfiture. It is presumptuous sin. And if Christians will refuse to turn back at the bidding of God, and to humble themselves under his mighty

* See margin.

hand, in order to drink more deeply into the riches of his grace, God will resist them; and what will the end be?

There is one lesson to be learnt under every failure and disappointment; namely, death and resurrection. The Lord Jesus himself might say as to Israel: "I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought, and in vain;" but let his own death and resurrection come in, and "he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." His servant Paul had to say, at the close of his ministry: "This thou knowest, that all they which be in Asia are turned away from me;" but, however he might feel disappointment even keenly, yet his labour in the Lord was not in vain, and still the foundation of the Lord standeth sure. And in our days, those who have laboured for the Lord, and been disappointed in the result, have they learnt nothing? Has not disappointment taught them death and resurrection? Has it not tended to carry back the soul in solemn review, and to see the need of death to be written on much of their service, which had not Christ simply for its object? Cannot they justify God for their disappointment? But their labour is not in vain in the Lord. Disappointment at Kadesh-barnea led to a triumphant entrance through Jordan.

Oh! that we all knew better how to get into the place of blessing: it must be a very low place indeed. Many a goodly pretension will have to be given up; no position of credit in the eyes of others must be sought to be maintained. We must justify God in all his righteous judgment. Then controversy is over, and we shall prove Israel's God to be our God, "who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever." And although death and disappointment have been written on our fondest expectations, it is only to teach us not "to trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead, who hath delivered, who doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver." The very sense of deep need will only open more clearly the inexhaustible fulness of Jesus, and we shall have learnt, by our own experience, to keep more close to the Spring-head of living waters, by finding the cisterns we had hewn out for ourselves broken and incapable of holding any water.

PRESBUTES.

THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF JEHOVAH'S OATH TO ABRAHAM.

(Gen. xxii. 16-18.)

[The present paper, like the one in vol. ii., page 89, is inserted with remarks following it on some points where it appears to depart from important distinctions laid down in Scripture.—ED.]

JEHOVAH'S oath is the great charter of human salvation. Of this wonderful instrument, written in the blood of the incarnate Jehovah, stamped with the broad seal of heaven, and bearing upon the past, the present, and the future, there is no danger of overrating the importance. Its value is not sufficiently felt even by those who are saved by its virtue. Abraham, the depositary of this oath—Abraham, the example and monument of free grace, the example, I say, illustrative of the preventing and effectual manner in which that free grace operates upon fallen and helpless man—Abraham, the heir of the world, the ancestor of Christ himself, the first individual of the human race to whom the Gospel was preached in all its plenitude, is pushed from his place. Other saints are thrown into such prominent, I may say such disproportionate, relief—representatively, typically, or dispensationally—as confuses the divine plan, and throws into the shade of obliteration those edifying peculiarities which Scripture evermore attaches to Abraham, and to none but him.

It has been assumed that the Gospel was preached to our first parents, and that they believed it. "It shall bruise thy head," are words assumed to have been understood by them in an evangelic sense. Whether our first parents so understood these words or not; whether they ever heard them or not; whether they knew of their having been spoken or not; whether or not they were intended, although evangelic in their import, to be so understood when they were first uttered to the serpent, (for it was *he* to whom they were spoken,) does not appear with any certainty.

Without however wishing to combat that opinion, which ascribes to our first parents faith in a revealed Saviour (through sacrifices or otherwise)—admitting this to have been the case with them—admitting (which is much less questionable) this to have been the case with Noah and others, before the time of Abraham—it is certain that none of these were on the level of that patriarch, or that they were the depositaries of Jehovah's oath. It is also certain that all the saints, as well before as after Abraham, were saved and blessed by virtue of the oath sworn unto that patriarch, unless we suppose them saved and blessed otherwise than by the Seed to whom the promises were exclusively made. (Gal. iii. 16.)

This oath, together with Him who sware it, the pledge and the Pledger, considered not irrespectively of each other, is the true source of spiritual consolation. As when we draw a glass of water from a crystal spring, we leave its deep resources unexhausted, but not untouched; even so the Holy Ghost administers evangelic truth from the calm, clear, unfathomable depths of that well of salvation, Jehovah's oath. The living waters of heavenly consolation spring from hence. Every evangelic promise uttered by the prophets is built upon the oath of Jehovah, sometimes expressed, always understood. Jehovah's words: "Behold . . . . . I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," (Jer. xxxi. 31,) may bear this kind of paraphrase: "Behold, I have evangelized Abraham; I have deposited with him my oath, the Gospel, (Gen. xxii. 16-18. Gal. iii. 8,) the great, the only charter of human salvation, which, operating first upon the houses of Judah and Israel as the first-fruits of a new terrestrial creation, (Rev. xiv. 4,) and afterwards upon all the families of the earth, shall bring in the restitution of all things; and in the meantime, by virtue of this same oath or Gospel, all who trust, or who have trusted, in my incarnation, death and righteousness, are saved, justified, and blessed."

Zacharias' song, as I have already observed, proves that the new covenant, operating in the restoration of Israel, is included in Jehovah's oath. And here it is to be remarked, that the term "new covenant," taken in a restricted sense, as in Jer. xxxi. 31, is *included* in the oath; while, taken in the widest sense, as in Heb. ix. 16, it is *identical* with the oath.

A distinction indeed is sometimes made between the oath and the promise. But there are no grounds for this distinction; nor are these things, the oath and the promise, as is sometimes supposed, the "two immutable things" spoken of in Heb. vi., which indeed are, text and context being considered, the διαθήκη and the διαθέμενος, the PLEDGE and the PLEDGER, the character and attributes of the latter, WHO CANNOT LIE, being taken into the account. The veracious character of God being well considered, the "two immutable things" rise upon our view; namely, the PLEDGE on the one hand; on the other hand, the VERACITY OF GOD, WHO GIVES THE PLEDGE. The Testator or διαθέμενος, that is, the Lord God of Israel, who sware unto Abraham, hung upon the cross on Mount Calvary in furtherance of his pledge. He who deposited with Abraham the charter of human salvation, interposed his own death in proof of his veracity. Not the veracity only, but also the comprehensiveness of the oath, is proved by the death of Him who sware it. Διαθήκη and διαθέμενος being relative terms, the death of the latter relates to the same gifts which were promised by the former, unless we suppose those gifts, or any of them, *extra-diathecal*, not contemplated by the διαθέμενος or testator. The connection between the testament and the death of the Testator is a thing which we should steadily keep in view.*

For, as the whole of the oak is contained in the acorn, so all the blessings, whether in heaven or in earth, promised to Adam's race, are secured by the death of the incarnate Jehovah; and if by his death, then by his testament, that is, by his oath, TESTAMENTARY IN ITS CHARACTER,† with which his death is indissolubly connected. (Heb. ix. 16.)

As the restoration of Israel is the effect of the oath which Jehovah sware unto Abraham, (Luke i. 72, 73,) so the effect, or that which follows in the train of that restoration, is life from the dead, (Rom. xi.) the swallowing up death in victory, (Is. xxv.) the planting of the heavens and earth: (Is. li.) all this, and more

* The word διαθεμένου, (Heb. ix. 16,) rightly rendered "testator," affords as illustrious a proof of the divinity of the incarnate Jehovah as is to be found in the whole Bible. The relation between the pledge and the Pledger, the gifts and the Giver, is preserved, I presume, in every language in which the Bible is translated. In the Spanish translation the passage is, *Porque donde hay* TESTAMENTO *necesario es que intervenga la muerte del* TESTADOR. In the French translation, the word is, *testateur;* in the Italian, *testatore.* A word equivalent to *testator* is what the context, to be intelligible, absolutely demands, seeing that the *death* of the Giver or Pledger is to be also expressed.

† So shewn in Gen. xxii. The DEATH, in preparation, of Isaac, the father's beloved son, typical of the death of the incarnate Jehovah, gives a testamentary character to the blessing pronounced on Abraham from Jehovah-Jireh.

than this—all that is to be inherited by the Church in glory, or by the nations of the earth in happier dispensations — all is included in the oath, pledge, promise, covenant, testament, or Gospel, call it which you please, which God preached to Abraham, unless a plurality of Gospels be supposed.

"The mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed," is certainly included in Jehovah's oath. Human recipients of heavenly glory cannot trace back their natural pedigree otherwise than from "the families of the earth;" and the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. i. 3) are assuredly not forgotten by the beneficent Testator, but are included in the blessing of Abraham. (Gal. iii. 14.) This "mystery" is: Christ the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, Jehovah our righteousness, the source, principle, and author of eternal life within the souls of believers, revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, as the preventing effect of divine grace.

Thus much of the "mystery of Christ" is common to the saints, both before and after the finished work of Christ on the cross. (unless we suppose them quickened otherwise than by the SECOND, and enlightened otherwise than by the THIRD, Person of the Trinity.) *But it is peculiar to times subsequent to this* finished work of Christ on the cross that the Holy Ghost, in addition to the vital subjects of testimony already mentioned, should bear witness to that work as FINISHED. The divine veracity is set forth to us, as we have seen, as a source of strong consolation. When Jehovah's submitted to incarnation and death in PROOF of his veracity, and in furtherance of his oath, the Holy Ghost's inward revelations became thenceforth necessarily more clear and vivid on those points,* and constitute the παράκλησις, (Heb. vi. 18. John xiv. 16,) the strong consolation of the latter times, that part of the "mystery of Christ" which was *not* known to the saints before the finished work on the cross.

Consequent upon this finished work, and upon the coincident rejection of Israel, is the admission of the Gentiles to a federal relation with Jehovah, (Deut. xxxii. 21,) never before vouchsafed to the nations of the earth as such; (Ps. cxlvii. 20;) by virtue of which relation they are cleansed (Acts x. 15) in an outward manner, for a temporary purpose, with reference to, and in abrogation of, former exclusiveness, as well Levitical as patriarchal.

If not in respect of the federal position already mentioned, yet certainly in respect of spiritual life and light enjoyed by all which be of faith, (Gal. iii. 9,) the Gentiles are now fellow-heirs and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel, (Eph. iii. 6,) but in an incipient manner. For it belongs to future ages to reveal and develop, in all its full plenitude of beneficent operation on Adam's race, the whole substance of Jehovah's evangelic, comprehensive and testamentary oath, abounding in grace, inclusive of his own incarnation and death, and restorative of that which he took not away.

II.

THE MYSTERY AND THE COVENANTS.

WHILE it is of the utmost moment to remember that the death of Christ is the only possible basis of divine blessing in a world ruined by sin, yet has it pleased God, for the display of His divers perfections, to make many spheres, the centre of which will ever be found to be His Son, Christ the Lord. Our wisdom will be to distinguish these things that differ, that so we may grow thereby in holy familiarity with all the ways in which the various glory of Christ is developed unto the praise of our God. So led, we shall be kept, through His mercy and unerring Word, from the many and opposing currents of human feeling, which strongly tend to distract us from the paths of His calm and happy guidance. *His glory* steadily kept in view solves all difficulties, and is the best answer to all questions of the exaltation of Enoch, Abraham, and other elders, as compared with the Church of the first-born. Our place of blessing is more and more to learn and adore the grace of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

The Christian can understand and sympathize with the jealousy which takes fire at the idea of preaching any other Gospel than that which an apostle preached, as if there could be salvation save by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. But if I heard one quoting Gal. i. to shew that the very same thing was meant by the Gospel there, by the Gospel of the kingdom, (Matt. xxiv. 14,) by what was preached to Zacharias, (Luke i. 19,) to Abraham, (Gal. iii. 8,) to Israel in the wilderness, (Heb. iv. 2,) to Paul, (1 Thess. iii. 6,) to God's servants, the prophets, (Rev. x. 7,) as well as by the everlasting Gospel in Rev. xiv. 6,—I should feel that εὐαγγέλιον and εὐαγγελίζω were unscripturally limited, through our conventional usage of the word "Gospel" in English; and so the profit was missed of the distinct force in each of these applications of the term in the perfect Word of God. The truth is, that the word "Gospel" is used there in a far wider manner than is usual with us, who confine it to the word of salvation, through the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. *In that sense*, there can be none other; and this is the meaning in Gal. i., where the apostle utterly denies another Gospel which was not another. There can be none, save that of the grace of Christ, who gave Himself for our sins. To insist even on so apparently slight a matter as the circumcision of a Gentile believer, as well as his faith of Christ, is in effect to frustrate the grace of God, and so Christ is dead in vain. Make circumcision, along with believing in Christ, to be the only means of the blessing, and Christ is become of no effect to you. You have slipped from the only tenure of the liberty wherewith Christ emancipates. You may have become far more religious. You may rival the Jews in observing days, and months, and times, and years. You may have fallen into no outward immorality; but you have done that which is infinitely worse, for you have fallen from the root both of real holiness and of salvation by Christ. "Ye are fallen *from grace*." But, that the word εὐαγγέλιον* and the corresponding verb are applied in Scripture to many other glad tidings beside those of salvation through the death and resurrection of the Saviour, is beyond a doubt to an unprejudiced mind. The Scriptures already referred to, set this at rest. It is true, on the other hand, that what is called the promise to Adam is really no such thing. (Gen. iii. 15.) It was part of the judgment on the serpent; and, so far as it can be said to be a promise, it was such to the Second, and not to the first, Adam. All the promises of God *in Him* are Yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. (2 Cor. i.) But the pre-evangelisation to Abram, that all the Gentiles should be blessed in him, is a very different message from that which the Lord, in the days of His flesh, commissioned the twelve to preach, when He said: "Go not in the way of the Gentiles." Nor can the Gospel of the *grace* of God, which now gathers Jew and Greek for heavenly glory, be rightly confounded with the everlasting Gospel which the angel is by-and-by to preach, saying: "Fear God and give glory to Him, *for the hour of His judgment is come*." In fine, as a question of salvation, there can be but one Gospel; while in another and in its place important sense, repeatedly enunciated in the Word of God, there are many glad tidings, whose several bearings must be admitted, if we would be wise in the dispensations of God.

These observations may suitably enough precede our more immediate subject. For though I admit the connection, but not strict identity, of the Abrahamic covenant with the new covenant, which is to be made with the houses of Israel and Judah, it is impossible to shew that the "mystery of Christ" (Eph. iii.) is included in the oath to Abraham. (Gen. xxii.) The difficulty arises from not seeing the proper distinctive position of the Church, body and spouse of Christ, as now being formed and gathered by the Holy Ghost (sent down from heaven) into union with Christ the Head in the heavenly places.

* This is shewn in John xvi. 7, 8, Acts iii. 5, &c., although these and many other passages *also* refer to the extraordinary miracles by which the Holy Ghost bare *public* witness to Jesus.

* Another word which has been unduly restricted, in modern thought at least, is the word "Church." The simple force of the Greek word ἐκκλησία is "assembly" or "congregation"—a word applied to many other assemblies beside the body of Christ. Thus, the confused meeting of the Ephesians in Acts xix. 32, 4, cannot mean the Church of God, yet is it called ἡ ἐκκλησία. So "the Church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38) ought rather to have been "the assembly" there. It means, unquestionably, not the Church of God, but the congregation of Israel, almost all of whose carcases fell in the wilderness, and to whom God sware that they should not enter His rest.—It may be well to press again that the Lord in Matt. xvi. treats of His Church as a thing yet future. "Upon this rock *I will build* my Church." So far from being built, the foundation was not even laid. He had to die, to rise and be exalted on high, in order to be the corner stone of this new and heavenly building. Further, I do not hesitate to say that the apostles, though designated to their office, were not yet in a position to be the foundation of the building, until the Lord had ascended. (Compare Ephes. ii. 20, iii. 5, and iv. 8, 11.) When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men . . . . and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, &c. In their relations with Israel, the apostles had their appointment before: as the foundation of the Church, they are the gifts of Jesus, already ascended on high.

To explain. There are, beside types, many statements in the Old Testament which leave room for the Church, and bear upon some of its circumstances and destiny, and thus are, or ought to be, full of light to us, now that its calling exists as a reality. On the other hand, the Holy Ghost is express in Eph. iii., not merely that the Church did not exist, but that it was not even made known in other ages to the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets. This mystery of Christ was, from the beginning of the world, hid in God. The Seed of the woman was no secret, neither was the Son of Abraham, nor the Son of David. As such, Christ had been plainly revealed and looked for by faith. The blessings of the new covenant were in no way hidden, and it was clearly made known throughout the Psalms and the prophets that the Messiah was to be forsaken of God, and all His waves to go over Him; that He was to be wounded for the transgressions and bruised for the iniquities of His people; that reconciliation was to be made, and everlasting righteousness brought in; that the sword was to awake against the man who is Jehovah's fellow; that He was to die, rise, and be seated at the right hand of Jehovah. Not all nor any of these things was the hidden mystery, wonderful and glorious truths as they are: they had every one of them been unambiguously declared in the oracles which were entrusted to God's ancient people. They knew that Messiah was to reign over a loved and loving people, judging the poor, saving the children of the needy, and breaking in pieces the oppressor. They knew that not only would there be every external blessing for the righteous under His beneficent sway, but that the Spirit of God was to be poured out upon all flesh. They knew that, not the Jews only, but the nations blessed through them, will then praise the Lord, and seek to Him who is alike the offspring and the root of David. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.) These truths are in no sense the mystery. From Moses to Malachi, there was an unbroken stream of testimony to the mercy in store for the Jews, and even the Gentiles, under the reign of the promised Messiah.

But, pursuing the same stream, it is equally evident that in all these arrangements of divine goodness connected with the earth, the Jews had secured to them, by the promise to Abraham, the first place. And that promise was irrevocable, inalienable. God would not repent of His gifts and calling, and certainly, in the promises to Abraham, it will scarcely be pretended that God gave no higher privileges to His friend, than to the outside stranger Gentiles. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed." The nations are to be blessed in the seed; but surely they are quite distinct from the seed, and the blessings of the latter superior to those of the former. But if they are, they are not fellow-heirs and of the same body and joint partakers of God's promise in Christ, whereof the Epistle to the Ephesians treats; that is, the privileges of the Abrahamic covenant are totally distinct from those involved in the mystery, the literal exact accomplishment of the one being incompatible with the terms of the other. For if you make the nations to be blessed with the same privileges in all respects as the Jews, the marked honour and boasted prerogative of Abraham's seed is at once swept away, and you reduce the standing of the favoured people down to that of the most distant Gentile. But, if it be still allowed that for the seed of Abraham is reserved by their faithful God the most exalted seat on earth, above though encircled by the nations blessed in them—all blessed by Him who condescended to take and secure these promises as the true Seed; then it is clear that the oft-repeated promise to Abraham, which distinguished and elevated his posterity above all nations, is entirely and manifestly different from the mystery hid in God, whose eternal purpose it was, but revealed only when the Holy Ghost came down, consequent upon the exaltation of Jesus in heaven. IN THIS MYSTERY *the distinctions disappear which the Abrahamic promises maintain.* Jew and Gentile are now made one and the same body, the body of Christ. For earthly blessing this could not be, because the oath to Abraham, it need scarcely be said, was inviolable. But this was *a new and heavenly mystery*, which in not the slightest degree interfered with the ancient pledges, and thus Gentile distance and Jewish nearness alike are now eclipsed by the glory of Christ exalted on high, and gathering out of Jews and Gentiles a body for Himself. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free." Faith, eternal life, and saintship, though of the operation of the Holy Ghost, are not His baptism: those had been from the beginning; this was not until Pentecost. The disciples of the Lord had as great, and even greater, privileges than any saints in previous ages; but they were not yet baptized of the Holy Ghost. Nay, even after His death and resurrection, they had not this blessing until the Lord had ascended on high. Risen from the dead, the Lord breathes upon the disciples, and says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" i.e. I suppose, as the power of that life more abundant, life in resurrection, which He could now impart as the quickening Spirit.* But it was not yet the baptism of the Spirit. For immediately before His ascension we find Him with them, and commanding them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me: for John truly baptized with water, but *ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* (Acts i. 4, 5.) They had long believed in the Son of God: they had eternal life, as well as whatever accession of vital energy may be supposed to be conveyed by His breathing on them when He was determined to be Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead; that is to say, they had already as great, and I think we may say greater, privileges than any Old Testament saints had ever enjoyed; but they had not yet the promise of the Father. Jesus had to ascend on high, to go away, in order to send down the Comforter. The second chapter of Acts records this; and it is of great consequence to bear in mind, that while on the day of Pentecost many gifts of external testimony were imparted, this was neither all the blessing, nor the best blessing, that was given on that occasion by the glorified Lord. No doubt, what the Jews saw and heard then was a witness to the reality of His presence who was given; but the powers of the world to come are not identical with the promise of the Father. The χαρίσματα,† and the δωρεὰ‡ of the Holy Ghost are not to be confounded: the former expression refers to those manifestations of the Spirit given to each for the profit of all, while the latter implies the Holy Ghost Himself as given to be in the disciples according to the Lord's promise in John xiv. 16, 17. On that day began the accomplishment of the words their Master had spoken to them before He was taken up: they were then baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Turning to 1 Cor. xii. 13, we see the consequence of this. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." It is not faith merely which introduces into this one body, the Church: it is the baptism of the Spirit. No soul was ever quickened otherwise than by the second, and enlightened otherwise than by the third, Person of the Trinity. But the Spirit, though He had from the beginning quickened souls and given faith, had not been sent down to baptize believers into one body before the day of Pentecost, and therefore this one body, the Church, did not, and could not exist, until the Spirit came personally to baptize. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, He was thus given, and not before; and, therefore, it is impossible, if we would adhere to Scripture facts and language, to date the Church, as a body actually existing here below, previous to that day.

We have exactly the same warrant for believing that the baptism of the Spirit began as a fact with Pentecost, (Acts i. ii.) as we have for believing that the body of Christ commenced as a fact at the same epoch. (1 Cor. xii.) The Word of God is precise as to both facts, treating the formation of the body as a thing contingent on this baptism, and therefore it is inconsistent, as well as incorrect, to admit the one and deny the other. "There is one body and one Spirit." And the Holy Ghost, although He had always acted, and will ever act, unto the end, was not yet given for this new and blessed work until Jesus was glorified. (John vii.) For Jesus is not the Lamb

* Mark here the incidental testimony, so harmonious with the Gospel of John generally, to the Godhead of Jesus. In Genesis, the Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; but the second man is, Himself, the Lord from heaven. Accordingly, while He is the last Adam, He is much more; He breathes on the disciples, as God had done with the first Adam.

† Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 7; xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31. 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Peter iv. 10.

‡ Acts ii. 38; x. 45.

of God only: the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (John i.) And it is expressly revealed in 1 Cor. xii. that, though there are diversities of gifts, of ministries, and of operations, and though the manifestations of the Spirit are given to profit withal to every man, (i.e. in the Church,) "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) Is it not plain from thence, and from the entire context, that we are upon ground totally new, which existed nowhere; yea, which could not exist until God made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ, and the Spirit was sent down as He was not until Jesus departed and sent Him? Where, before Pentecost, do we see a body composed of Jewish and Gentile believers wherein the word of wisdom was given by the Spirit to one; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues? Nowhere. But we can go further. We can say, not only that these characteristics, as they are here described, did not mark any previously traceable society, but that the "one body" was yet in the womb of the future, because the one Spirit had never baptized believers before the day of Pentecost. "For *by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles," &c. That is, it was by none of the ancient, and in this sense ordinary, operations of the Spirit that the one body was formed. From of old He had given faith and life, and all the holy and gracious paths of the elders were formed under His plastic hand. But the baptism of the Spirit was a new thing, and without His baptism this one body could not be. The baptism of the Spirit and the body of Christ are indissolubly bound together, for by Him it is that we are all *baptized into one body*. Will any one, who admits the foregoing, dispute in the face of the chapter, and especially of verses 12, 13, 18, 27, 28, that this body is the Church? If not, the entire question is ceded. The body of Christ is the blessed and peculiar privilege of saints, baptized of the Holy Ghost after the ascension of the Lord Jesus to heaven.

This truth is entirely confirmed by a comparison of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, which so peculiarly and richly dwell, the latter upon the glory of Christ the Head, and the former upon the blessedness of His body. But I would not at this time do more than refer to Ephes. iv. 7-16, and put the following questions: 1. Is it not beyond a doubt that the entire nature, framework calling, walk, &c., of the body of Christ here detailed are based upon the grand facts of accomplished redemption, of Christ's headship exercised from on high, and of the presence of the Holy Ghost here below? "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, *When He ascended up on high*, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts," &c. 2. Have we not inspired authority for counting upon the continuance of all those gifts which are needed for the perfecting of the saints, &c., *till we all come* in the unity of the faith, &c.? 3. Have we any scriptural warrant for supposing that this kind of ministry, viz. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, will be continued in millennial times? and if not, is it not a collateral proof that then the state of things is wholly changed, the body of Christ having been completed at the coming again of the Lord Jesus? In that day another work begins, and a different instrumentality, suitable to it, will be provided of God. So that though, doubtless, it belongs to future ages to realize in its fulness of blessing the oath of Jehovah to Abraham, yet is it evident, from the right scriptural answers to these questions, that the mystery of Christ is a glorious work of God, *sui generis*, into which none was brought before the ascension, and none can be brought after the return, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All can agree, therefore, that God's oath to Abraham will operate first upon the houses of Judah and Israel, and afterwards upon all the families of the earth, bringing in the restitution of all things. But that which is not generally seen, even by some spiritual persons, is, that between the rejection and the owning again of God's ancient people, an entirely novel edifice is being reared upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (of the New Testament) — a building of which Jesus Christ Himself, having reconciled to God Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross, Jesus risen and glorified in heaven, is the foundation corner-stone. Previously, there had been scattered children of God, hidden units among the Israelites and the nations; but their faith did not in any way break their Jewish or Gentile connections. They lived and died separately, though they might be believing Jews or Gentiles. But, now, Jesus had died, not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. (John xi. 51, 52.) The blessings resulting from His death for that nation await the times and seasons fixed of God, when the Jews, or at least a believing remnant of them, shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, and God shall send Jesus Christ, who was fore-appointed unto them. Meanwhile the heavens receive Him; and it is precisely during His session there that the gathering in one of God's scattered children goes on, founded as we have seen upon His death, and effected on earth by the Holy Ghost. This one body or assembly is the Church of God, of which Christ is the head and object, and of whose unity the presence of the Holy Ghost sent here below is the power. The life of the members of this body was and no doubt is *hid* with Christ in God; but those who possessed it were known as a *manifested* holy people, as separate, though in a different way, from both Jews and Gentiles, as the Jews themselves had been distinct from the Gentiles. This is the Church parenthesis; and evidently it turns upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, after Jesus had taken His seat as Head at God's right hand. Acts i. 5 is decisive that even the disciples themselves were not baptized of the Holy Ghost until Pentecost, while 1 Cor. xii. 13 is equally decisive that what Scripture calls the one body, (i.e. the Church,) could not begin till the baptism of the Holy Ghost began.

The Old Testament saints looked for a Saviour, and their faith was counted for righteousness, and God ordained Christ Jesus a mercy-seat through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the passing over of sins that are past in His forbearance. But it never had been propounded to their faith that there was to be a body of Christ on earth composed of Jew and Gentile, all distinction being blotted out, and both built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Not only did they experience nothing of the sort in their day, but it was a secret which we know, on divine warranty, was from the beginning of the world hid in God. It was for the first time revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and in a pre-eminent way to Paul.

God, by Isaiah, had predicted that upon the land of His people should come up thorns and briers, because all should be desolate until the Spirit be poured on them from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Christians may perhaps apply the spirit of this passage to the Pentecostal effusion, and for an indisputable application of a similar prophecy they may appeal to the authority of the apostle Peter, in Acts ii. But it will hardly be disputed by the readers of these remarks that both predictions are to have a far more minute and complete fulfilment, when judgment shall fall on the Gentiles, and the divine favour, no longer veiled from the seed of Abraham, shall, after long hours of thick darkness, shine out, and God will pour His Spirit upon all flesh, accompanied by literal wonders in the heavens and in the earth, and a mighty deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. So, from Ezekiel xxxvi., it is plain that when Israel are thus sprinkled with clean water and have God's Spirit put within them, they shall dwell in their land, the increase of the field shall be multiplied, the waste cities shall be filled with men, the land that was desolate shall become like the garden of Eden, and the heathen, or Gentiles, shall know that their God is Jehovah when He is sanctified in Israel before their eyes. Evidently, here are blessings which were not given at Pentecost nor since. But the apostle cites the prophet Joel, to vindicate the wonderful effects of the presence of the Spirit from Jewish cavil, proving that such an outpouring was no more than God had promised should come to pass in the last days.

On the other hand, there were blessings at Pentecost which will *not* characterize the future millennial outpouring of the Spirit, as there were other dealings common to His working in men's souls since the fall, such as producing repentance and faith. For instance, it is nowhere said in the Scriptures that the Holy Ghost will, in the new age, baptize Jew and Gentile into one

body. The Jews are to enjoy the most marked supremacy. "And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem..... In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." (Mic. iv. 2, 6-8.) "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 22, 23.) The Psalms like the prophets abundantly show that the distinctions of Jew and Gentile, which have no place in the intermediate period, or Church parenthesis, are to be renewed and owned of God once more here below. *Now*, IN THE CHURCH, they do not exist, because the Church, though on earth during the process of its formation, is characteristically a heavenly body. So that the Church of God, for such is the scriptural equivalent of the body of Christ, is not the common title of all saints from the commencement to the close of time, but the title proper to that special corporation begun at Pentecost, still perpetuated by the Holy Ghost who was promised to abide with us for ever, and completed at the coming of the Lord, when also all other saints who have slept in Christ shall rise, bearing the image of the heavenly man. For I see no reason to doubt that the Old Testament saints will be made perfect when we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air; but this in no way interferes with what was said immediately before, that God has provided some *better thing for us*. (Heb. xi.) It certainly does not exclude a difference of glory between us and them. Again, that we shall sit down (Matt. viii,) with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven is certain, but by no means inconsistent with the place of the Church as the body and Bride of Christ. For what is to hinder our enjoying other spheres of glory beside these which are specially our own? Retrospectively, as to our earthly course, it has been so. Heb. xi. descants on the faith, deeds, and sufferings of other saints, in days before ours, who were pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and Rom. xi. shows that we follow Israel, even as Israel again will follow us, as branches of the olive tree and the depository of God's witness and promises here below. Again, the blessings of the new covenant the Church enjoys, because we are one with Him who is the Mediator, and the cup which He gave us to drink in remembrance of Him is the new covenant in His blood. Millennial Israel will enjoy the new covenant in a still fuller and more literal way; but proper heavenly glory with Christ is not reserved even for converted Israel in that day. To the Church alone is Christ head over all things. It is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Thus all these privileges and responsibilities are clearly distinct from the place which, I fully believe, pertains emphatically to the saints now being called out of Jews and Gentiles—that of being baptized by one Spirit into one body, the body of Christ.

To me, I confess, it seems to evince an inadequate apprehension of the glorious person of Christ, to see nothing in Him more or higher than the mediation of the new covenant, and the accomplishment of promises, let them be ever so exalted. It is to leave out, not only what is properly adorable in Him, but also that which is most precious in His grace toward the Church. The entire gospel of John, for instance, though doubtless recognizing the various positions which He deigned to occupy, is devoted as a whole to the exhibition of what was infinitely greater—His personal dignity. So the epistles of Paul, (although, wherever the occasion required it, they vindicate the promises and covenants given to Abraham from the exclusively Israelitish limitation to which some in his day would have restricted them,) dwell as their main topic upon those treasures of grace in God's special dealings with the Church, which are far above and beyond the patriarchal covenant or promises, while, at the same time, the Church enjoys privileges in virtue of these also. Does this seem to disparage Israel, or to push from his place their great forefather Abraham, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came? My answer is, that the Church wears as her badge: "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Our connection is with a Christ who died for us and rose again. We are one with Christ in heaven. On earth, in the days of His flesh, Christ must have said, and did say, Go not into the way of the Gentiles. "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who were sometimes far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." It is the accomplishment of no promises spoken to Abraham to make in Christ of Jews and Gentiles *one new man*, and reconcile both unto God *in one body* by the cross. I doubt not that God promised it before the world began, (Eph. iii. 6, 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2,) but nothing of the sort was revealed in the Abrahamic promises, covenant or oath, which *expressed* no more than blessings here below. The proper blessings of the Church are rather the contrast, "in heavenly places," (Eph. i. 3,) though all, heavenly and earthly, be secured in Christ, around whom all the divine counsels revolve. So also it is clear that Christ, and not the oath to Abraham, is the channel of salvation. And if Christ were, as He surely was, the Seed, the true Isaac, He was much more. What shadows are there, what typical personages, whose rays did not converge on Him, from whom they derived all their brightness? It was a place He condescended to take, and not that which was His immediately and intrinsically. Even as regards the Church, it is the same: we are Abraham's seed as the consequence of being Christ's. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 29.) To be the seed of Abraham is a privilege of a far lower order than those elsewhere disclosed, e.g. in the epistle to the Ephesians, as characteristic of the Church.

All agree that the finished work of redemption was the ground of still clearer testimony from the Holy Ghost. (See Heb. x.) Yet let us not be mistaken. The work of Christ is finished for millennial Israel as much as for the Church of the first-born. But there is a vast difference indeed between their positions, though it be the same Jesus who died for both, and the same Spirit who appropriates the results of His death to each. Israel, like the Church, will be born of the Spirit, and yet one is for God's glory on earth, as the other is for His glory in heaven. The sovereign hand of God has so ordered, and who shall say Him, Nay? These considerations sufficiently prove the fallacy of the notion that the *accomplishment* of Christ's work was the hidden part of the mystery referred to in Eph. iii., although that was clearly necessary as a preparation for it. The truth is, as we have seen, that "the mystery of Christ" was unrevealed, not partially but as a whole, till the Spirit was sent down from heaven by the risen and ascended Lord, and that not merely to render an inward witness more clear and vivid than heretofore, but to be the vicar of Christ, the ever-abiding Paraclete. (John xiv. 16.) To confound Him with the "strong consolation" of Heb. vi., is virtually, though not intentionally, to reduce the person of the Holy Ghost to the effect which He produces. The Comforter is quite distinct from the consolation which He administers through enabling us to lay hold on the hope which entereth into that within the veil. And as Heb. vi. is referred to, it may be added, that the context is, to my mind, decisive, not only that the promise and the oath are distinguished by the Holy Ghost, but that they are the two immutable things whereon the "strong consolation" is based. "For when God *made promise*.... He *sware*.... Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it (or interposed) by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie," &c. Nor can I conceive with what propriety God Himself, the pledger, could be called an immutable thing, in which it was impossible for God to lie; while the phrase is perfectly applicable to the promise and the oath. Moreover, though this may not be so clearly determined, the context, both before and after Heb. ix. 15-18, requires that the word διαθήκη should be rendered "covenant," διαθέμενος, like ἐπὶ νεκροῖς, referring, I think, to the covenant sacrifice. But this is too difficult a question to be discussed in a sentence or two.

Lastly, the admission of the Gentiles to certain dispensational privileges (Rom. xi.) is most plain; but it likewise is so large and important a subject, that I would reserve it, if the Lord will, for a more extended inquiry than can be given at present.—ED.

CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES OF SCRIPTURE CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT WHICH THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD CASTS UPON THEM.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The following are merely outlines to be filled up by those who have spiritual discernment. They have appeared in a still more curtailed form in a recent little publication of some value. But, not expecting that they would be generally apprehended, he with whom they in some measure originated did not put them forth in print before now.

We may err, on one hand, from not knowing the Scriptures; and, on the other hand, they may, when known, be wrested to one's own destruction. Therefore, we pray all to weigh and consider, as in the Lord's presence, (looking to Him for guidance,) whatever may be said on the following subject, for we have to distinguish, in writings as in every thing else, between the precious and the vile.

To begin then. John Baptist and our Lord in the Gospels, and the apostles in "The Acts," follow each other in the same form and line of testimony towards Israel. The Lord Himself observing the very terms of His own law, that "one witness shall not rise against any man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." (Deut. xix. 15.) And thus our Lord asks: "Is it not written in your law that the testimony of two men is true?" &c. John bore witness of Him; He bore witness of Himself in the works which the Father gave Him to accomplish; and afterwards in the Acts, the apostles bore witness unto Him. As it is said: "Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

That their testimony was in a line one with the other, and in reference to the restoration and establishment of Israel according to Moses and the prophets, is plain from the following passages.

See also the prophecy of Zacharias. (Luke i. 67-80.)

1. In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 1.)

2. When John was cast into prison, we read that "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 17.)

3. Peter, following up the testimony in Acts, says: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive till the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 19-21.)

Thus, we see three great witnesses following each other in the same character and line of testimony towards Israel. Moreover, we see from the last passage, that the coming of Christ from heaven and the restitution of all things, which will thus set in, and which the year of jubilee typified, is dependant on the repentance of Israel. In the original, it appears yet more clear, the words being, "in order that the times of refreshing may come, and that he may send," &c.

"Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." (Rom. xv.) The Gospels and Acts of the Apostles mainly present him in that relation.

In looking at Zech. xiii. 8, 9, &c., we are warranted in saying, that had a third part of the people repented and believed the Gospel, the kingdom would have been restored to Israel, and the Lord's name have been great to the ends of the earth.

The words of the prophet would have come to pass: "And the Lord should have been king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.)

But the witnesses were rejected, though Israel for a season was willing to rejoice in their light.

John was beheaded. Our Lord says: "They have done to him whatsoever they listed; likewise also shall the Son of man suffer of them." Israel had closed their eyes, shut their ears, and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, and be converted and healed.

Our Lord eventually leaves their city and temple, and weeps over them, saying: "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes: behold, the days will come when thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee in on every side," &c.

And of the temple he says: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Afterwards Paul, in the last chapter of Acts, "concludes them all in unbelief," quotes against them the prophet Isaiah (chap. vi.) for the last time, and adds: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts xxviii. 25-28.)

Let us sketch for a moment the history, leaving it to those of understanding to fill up the outlines.

The prayer of our Lord for Israel on the cross serves to protract the day of their visitation. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he says. And again, the prayer of Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," lengthens and protracts their history still further.

The Acts of the Apostles gives us the protraction of this their history. The Holy Ghost lengthening the testimony through the apostles, and not closing them up finally till the very last page, as it were, when Paul at Rome quotes against them for the last time: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross," &c. "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts xxviii.)

The Acts, then, is the history of the testimony of the apostles to Messiah, the hope of Israel, as the Gospels are of those who went before, viz. John and our Lord. And the Acts hold the same relation to the Epistles of Paul, that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, do to the Gospel of John.

This greatly helps to clear away whatever difficulty exists in apprehending the structure and design of that blessed book.

But, as we look at it, we see that the twelve apostles entertained to the end the hope of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, concerning which they interrogated our Lord in the first chapter, as follows:

"And being assembled together with them, (as we read,) he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time (alluding to the time of the baptism of which he had spoken) restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 4-8.) The reply was affirmative of the fact of which they had asked, but not of the time. The times and seasons were hid in the Father's hand, and awaited the repentance of Israel and the reception of the testimony. They were now to go forth, call on Israel again to repent, and bear witness unto Jesus, to the ends of the earth. They were, as it were, to describe a circle unto the ends of the earth, Jerusalem being centre and the nations of the earth being radii.

And this was agreeable to the commission they received in the last chapter of St. Matthew, where our Lord says: "All power is given me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always until the end of the world." The purport here was clearly national testimony and national Christianity, and as such I doubt not that households, families and infants, were included.*

In Luke it is added: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold,

* I make no observation on this and other remarks of the writer, further than that he is responsible for the sentiments and the terms employed.—Ed.

I send the promise of my Father upon you: (that is, the Holy Ghost, of which John Baptist had spoken:) but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 47-49.)

The day of Pentecost fully come, the Holy Ghost descends, as He was spoken of by Joel the prophet. And the apostles give testimony. They are under the impression that those were "the last days:" the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains, and should be exalted above the hills; and all the nations flow unto it. When out of Zion would go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Is. ii.)

And as we go through the book, travelling in company with the light, step by step, we cannot fail to see that for a season things bid fair, and the prophet's words seemed actually about to be realized.

It might be said of the twelve as of John Baptist: "They were burning and shining lights, and Israel was willing for a season to rejoice in their light." We find whole households baptized, multitudes believed, and all worshipped in the temple, praising God and having favour with all the people, like Jesus in His minority. (See Luke ii. 46-52.) Even the scattering of the Church at Jerusalem, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, seemed only to lengthen its cords, extend its stakes, and enlarge the place of its tent, the Gospel thereby going to the Gentiles. Philip preaches in Samaria; Ethiopia seems about to stretch out her hands in the person of the eunuch of Candace, and the Romans in the person of Cornelius the centurion.

The Holy Ghost gives the most glowing picture of the conversions of these Gentiles.

Thus, the Gentiles seemed also as about to "rejoice with his people," and for a season all seemed to prosper in the hands of the twelve apostles, the checks they receive serving to brighten and increase, rather than stop, the testimony. Jerusalem was the source whence the living waters flowed, the metropolitan and holy city, the city of the great King. Hence, although the Church was scattered upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, the twelve apostles still remain in Jerusalem, the central city. As long as the twelve remain in the central city, Jewish hopes and modes are never abandoned; and in Acts, Jerusalem is always centre.

Hence, when certain men came down from Judea to Antioch, introducing circumcision amongst the Gentile converts, the whole question is referred up to Jerusalem to the apostles; it is referred from Antioch to Jerusalem, and the decrees go forth from Jerusalem in this form: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," &c. The metropolitan position is there fully assumed and maintained under the twelve.

As regards the subject which occupies this first council, touching the circumcision of Gentile converts, Peter shews how that God, in the instance of Cornelius, shed the Holy Ghost on him and on his house, without their being circumcised: this is the point of his argument. Then James answered, (after they had held their peace,) and said, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree (συμφωνοῦσιν) the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Acts xv. 14-17.)

This passage is usually understood to refer to the calling of the Gentiles during the present interval of Israel's unbelief and dispersion, similar to Rom. xi. But such is not at all the case; quite the contrary. The argument of the apostle, and the symphony or agreement of the prophets with his argument, and what he seeks to establish, is, that when the tabernacle of David is built up, (and which, according to their labours and expectations, seemed then as about to take place,) Gentiles or nations would be received as such, without becoming Jewish proselytes or submitting to the customs prescribed by Moses. In proof of this, the apostle produces the substance of three prophecies — I say the substance, not the exact words; he only says, "and to this agree," &c., and they will be found in Jer. xii. 15. Hos. iii. 5. Amos ix. 11, 12.

And that such a state of things is recognized by Moses and the prophets, is apparent to the most unlearned. The conclusion he then draws is quite in character and keeping with the expectations entertained, and the position taken; for he respects, to a certain extent, their differences, and says: "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them who from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. *For* Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day." (Verses 19-21.)

"The main purpose of this list (as Grotius observes) being to specify from what practices, besides heinous and flagrant sins, the Gentile Christians ought to abstain, in order to coalesce with Jewish Christians without offence, and there was the more occasion to give the information for many reasons, inasmuch as fornication and idolatry were inseparably connected in the minds of Jews. (See 1 Cor. x. 7, 8. Col. iii. 5. Rev. ii. 14-20. Exod. xxxiv. 13-16.) Every one knows that they formed part of heathen religion. Things strangled were also strictly forbidden by the law of Moses, and blood, and so there was ample reason to forbid them to the Gentiles, in order to avoid giving offence to their Jewish brethren. And this is the more incumbent, as Moses has in every city them who preach him. The γὰρ (for) v. 21, is intended to give a reason why the foregoing necessary things are required of them."

Now, it is quite clear that this took the Gentiles not on the ground of being Jewish proselytes, else James would not have admitted of their forsaking Moses and not walking according to the customs. See Acts xxi. 18-25, where he is most exact upon this head. Much less does it take them all on the ground of being one new man up in heaven in Christ, (days, and meats, and beggarly elements, all left behind for those who were living in the world, see Col. ii. 20,) such as the Holy Ghost presents the Church in the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, under St. Paul. But it takes both on ground recognized by the law and the prophets, in reference to the time when the Son of David is established on His throne over Israel, and when the Gentiles shall come to Him from the ends of the earth. The twelve were commissioned to disciple nations, baptizing them. But Israel not believing, a commission for another end was given Paul, who was sent, not to baptize, (or disciple nations,) but to preach the Gospel, in order to save them that believe. (See 1 Cor. i. 17-22.) In connection with this, we shall glance at the Pentecostal Church.

The Pentecostal is considered to represent the highest, best, and most spiritual state of the Church — its perfect estate, as it were. Such is not at all the case, but quite the reverse. The Pentecostal Church was in a Jewish state, worshipped in the temple; was in favour with all the people, and entertained Jewish, although divine, expectations, such as marked the twelve apostles in chap. i.

It is true that great grace was bestowed on them, and they sold their possessions, and parted them to all men as they had need.

But the expectation of the restitution of all things, (iii. 19, &c.) which the year of jubilee in old time typified, helped to this, in consequence of which their possessions diminished in their eyes. In effect, it produced the same result as the Lord's coming to take the Church up to Himself produced, or was at least calculated to produce afterwards; but it was not the same thing. For the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, the worshipping Gentiles or nations, and the renovated earth, are not the same thing as the Church's hope of being taken to Christ Himself, and being with Him for ever as His bride above. It produced similar results in a measure down here, such as the surrendering of present things.

But more than this. Had the epistle to the Ephesians been written to the Pentecostal Church, it would not have at all understood it. And for this simple reason: the epistle to the Ephesians addresses the Church as in heaven, set in Christ, (while on earth,) the holy and most holy place, one, and Jew and Gentile both made one, a new man, one new man in Christ up in heaven and on earth, the Holy Ghost carrying out the same, Jew and Gentile merging their national distinctions in the same, and understanding that there was but one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one new man before the Father. In heaven there could be no such thing as nationality; nothing is there recognized but Christ, and He was now risen and stood in new relations, such as He did not stand in when in the flesh, viz. the relations of a risen man, a man in a new condition, gathering in one the children of God to Himself, and placing them there with Himself in that condition, perfecting them eventually as He is perfected, and operating in them by the Spirit down here to that end. And it is to this

condition of things, in the interval of Israel's unbelief, that the epistles address themselves. Now, the Acts does not assume Israel's rejection till the end. Therefore, it could not address itself to the development of the great and marvellous purpose that St. Paul is raised up to show unto us, but mainly to Israel and the Gentiles, as such, glimpses of the Church appearing betimes under Paul, who is a vessel chosen for a great end. But Paul comes in at first by the way, one who had seen the Lord last of all as one born out of due time, the Acts not giving the history of this development. But there were last which should be first, and there were first which should be last: so was it with Paul and the twelve. For a time, it does not appear what he was chosen for, or that any thing was peculiarly committed to him above others. Stephen's death had found a secret crisis in Israel's history—I say secret crisis, for the dispensational and avowed open crisis had not come yet, till the last chapter. But from Stephen's death, glimpses of the heavenly Church betimes appear in the Acts. Yet, whilst it remains but a secret crisis, the operations of the twelve apostles and of those who go out from them, are what appear in the foreground, of which the synagogues and Areopagus are witness. And thus St. Paul, in Acts, is but an under-labourer working under them, and carrying their decrees around to the churches. At the bidding of James, he takes a vow on him, and goes to purify himself in the temple, and that in order to meet the prejudices of the Jews, becoming all things to all men; and so to the Jews he became a Jew, for the flocks might not be overdrawn, and to the Gentiles he preaches the Creator and the Judge. (See Acts xvii. ult. with Rev. xiv. 7.) Therefore, we find Paul, in the Acts, accompanying God, as it were, in His lingering visitation over Israel and the Gentiles, as such; and this accounts for the peculiarity of his course as then presented, which many call in question, because of the contrariety which his after-teaching presents in the epistles.

But, so far from contrariety, all is beautiful harmony, when we see that the dispensational purpose of God towards Israel is being presented, addressing itself to faith. But there was neither voice nor hearing in Israel; there was no response, and "if ye will not believe, neither shall ye be established;" so said the prophet to us before. The dispensational crisis is, therefore, not presented to us in the Acts, till the end of the book. Nevertheless, from the death of Stephen, secret crisis and another purpose had been in operation. Some of the history of it is given us in the epistle to the Galatians, chapter i., which, if we compare with the history of Paul, as given in the Acts of the Apostles, we shall find that they will not coincide.* The design of the Spirit in both being different, although the history extends over the same period. When, for instance, in the Acts does Paul go down to Arabia? When do we *there* see him go up by revelation to Jerusalem, and communicate privately *his Gospel* to them of reputation, that is, to Peter, James and John, who seemed to be pillars? (Gal. ii.) He goes as a communicator, and not as a receiver; so that we must tread very cautiously on holy ground such as this before drawing conclusions after the manner of men.

Thus there were two coincident testimonies given during the same period; the Acts of the Apostles placing one of these in the foreground whilst it contemplates the conversion of Israel. But, after all hope of Israel's repentance is given up, there appears in the epistles the development of a purpose of God touching the Church, which was from the beginning in the contemplation of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. While the Church was in her minority and Jewish promises in expectation and progress, the distinct purpose and calling of God touching the Church remains behind the scenes, waiting, as it were, when the curtain dropped, to appear in all its lustre and beauty before the eyes of angels and of men. It is true it was called "the Church" all along, and might have developed in Jewish form, had Israel believed, without any infraction of revelation, or men or angels being a bit the wiser; but that God had another object in view, though it lay hid in Himself, Paul's epistles bear witness. Of these epistles we may hereafter speak a little.

Clonmel, May 30, 1850. T. R.

* I feel quite clear, it is almost needless to say, that Acts and Galatians do, and must, exactly chime together. Room is left in the one for that which is stated in the other; so that we have no need whatever to force the two testimonies into a reluctant convergence upon the same point, however they may perfectly harmonize. I think that this is what the writer meant by saying that "they will not coincide," having stated before that all is "beautiful harmony." But I make this note to avoid the possibility of misconstruction.—Ed.

BABYLON,
WHERE IS IT? OR, WHAT IS IT?

The attentive reader of the Revelation (xiv.-xix.) must be led to inquire the meaning of a term such as "Babylon," used without any interpretation annexed, and yet so connected with the sense that, unless it be ascertained, there can be no understanding of the subject matter. To the Christian student, there is one simple rule in such inquiries, that the Scriptures can alone explain the difficulties of the Scriptures. This necessarily must be so, for by them a man can be "thoroughly furnished unto *all* good works," and consequently any thing from without is superfluous. Moreover, the attempt disparages the sufficiency of Scripture, and exposes the mind, guilty of such contempt, to be carried away by false unscriptural glosses of ancient or modern tradition.

To arrive, then, correctly at the ideas the word "Babylon" embodies, and to convey which it is used by the Holy Ghost, it will be necessary to gather from Scripture its characteristics, and how it first came to be the centre or symbol of principles which were to be so largely dominant. Constantly, in Scripture we find that either a person or place, which is about to occupy a prominent position in the development of God's purposes, is distinguished at its first notice with the traits and lines of the unmistakeable qualities which maturity will disclose, be they for good or evil; so that old age is only a return in a matured and concentrated form to the first and simplest efforts of childhood. Thus, in the first notice we have of David, we find the elements of the shepherd, who would "feed Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance." We see the same as to evil in Amalek. With the self-same spirit of envious opposition with which he encountered Israel in the arid plains of Rephidim, but only with increased bitterness and vindictiveness, did he in the person of Haman the Agagite, assail the remnant of the Jews in the palace of a king.

Accordingly, I think we are justified in looking for the embryo characteristics which Babylon embodies at its first introduction to us, or, as we might say, at its birth. In Gen. x. 10, we are told that the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babylon, (see margin, &c.*) and surely his cities were designed in the same spirit which actuated himself. He was "a mighty one in the earth," a man confident in his own resources, and daring in the presence of the Lord to pursue, in the proud eagerness of his own strength, wherever his pleasure or profit, as in the chase, might lead him. The irresistible excitement which bears the huntsman along in his course aptly depicts the spirit in which the world seeks the attainment of its desires. Both are intoxicated with their purpose, and doubtless a city with such a founder must only have been a wider sphere and fuller display of his principles and tastes, even as much as the materials for it were increased; and all still "before the Lord." This shews that there was religiousness assumed, together with the most open avowal of human selfishness and lust.

Still further are we instructed in the spirit and constitution of this city in chap. xi., where the name Babel, or Babylon, is given it in consequence of a full-blown manifestation of its founder's principles. Here we learn that man's confidence in himself had reached such a height, that they forgot even the expression of acknowledgment of God, and endeavour to establish themselves independently of Him. God then confounded their attempt, and hence arose the name Babel, (confusion,) which men have retained without remembering its etymology. The building is discontinued, not thrown down—the builders scattered, not destroyed; hence the seeds of its origin were disseminated in the dispersion, and consequently we should be prepared to find the fruit of them in every man in every nation. In a word, whenever a man seeks his own gratification, even though he combines with it an acknowledgment, a religious acknowledgment of God, there is the germ from which Babylon sprung, and from which will grow with proper culture the spirit which designed and built the tower. But let us trace through Scripture the varied features which the mention of this word, used ever so abruptly, conjures up before us, for unquestionably it is used in the Revelation as a word we should be familiar with, and consequently not needing an explanation there; so that he who needs one is ignorant of Scripture, and to it alone must apply for instruction.

From the first notice of Babylon in Gen. x. xi., we have no

* The word Babylon instead of Babel was adopted from the Septuagint, which, I believe, is borrowed from the Chaldaic dialect.

allusion to it, till Israel's apostacy and failure as God's witness on the earth. Consequent on the confounding at Babel was the call and election of Abram to be as God's witness, seeking "the city of God," in contra-distinction to the ripened purpose of the human heart, and accordingly we have no intimation of the revival of Babylon till the failure of the people, (the children of Abram,) who should have borne a testimony for God against its principles.

Until 2 Kings xvii., there is no direct record in Scripture of such a place, for the word translated "Babylonish," as designating the garment abstracted by Achan from the spoils of Jericho, is Shinar, not properly Babylon, though of the country in which the city stood; and even this is far from militating against what I have asserted, viz. that Babylon only appears as the apostacy of Israel appears. Therefore, as the leaven of it was working in Achan, it is not wonderful to find there the shade of the forthcoming evil. But, in 2 Kings xvii. 24-30, after a long interval and in connection with the captivity of the ten tribes, we hear of Babylon again, and as a place from whence colonists were supplied to replace the expatriated Israelites. From it sprung, at least in part, the progenitors of the Samaritans. Israel's supplanters in Samaria were Babylonian.

Let the star of Israel, let its testimony set, and that of Babylon will be in the ascendant, and Babylon is not without its religion. (Verse 30.) It has its god, Succothbenoth, though we do well to note the motives which influenced them to adopt and profess the worship of God. "The Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them." In superstitious awe they seek acquaintance with what we may call, for uniformity, true religion, not from a sincere interest in the will of God, but simply to propitiate Him, and thus uninterruptedly enjoy their own objects; and therefore we see, as is ever the case when God is only sought from fear and superstition, that though they are taught by priests "how they should fear the LORD," yet "every nation (and Babylon the leader) made gods of their own." Now, this is all instructive, as letting us into the very mind of Babylon, and in such plain characters, that if we read it here we cannot fail to trace its likeness wherever it is presented to us. Religion—yes, true religion—is adopted to subserve its interests; yet, it has gods of its own, professedly of God, positively idolatrous: Succothbenoth (or tents of daughters) is the real object of worship.

In Isaiah xiii. and xiv., we have a prophetic announcement of both the rise and fall of Babylon, and it precedes by a few years the occurrences I have alluded to in 2 Kings. We read, chap. xiv. 20: "In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden," that is, the burden of Babylon. Ahaz died in the third year of Hoshea, and the captivity of the ten tribes occurred in the ninth year of Hoshea's reign, and in the sixth of Hezekiah. Consequently, this precedes by six years the captivity of the ten tribes; but, even so, it is not a whit less interesting to us. We have, in 2 Kings, the initiative of Babylon on the apostacy of Israel, and here we have the prophetic utterance of Babylon's greatness and doom. The Lord is warning His people not to confide in, or fear the nations around them. That judgment on themselves is not a singular thing, but a much greater and an irretrievable one awaits the nations, however exalted and established they may appear. God alone can be trusted. Egypt is but a reed. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." It is not for us to enquire whether Babylon had attained this eminence among nations at the time Isaiah prophesied thus. God sees not as man sees; and the unmatured Babylon presented to the Spirit of God the manhood of its purposes and desires, and is thus shewn to the prophet, and thus appears to every spiritual vision. I become natural when I travel outside the demonstrations of the Spirit, or seek to do so, and must expect to be deceived. My blessing is to stand with the prophet, and see as he saw, and not as I with carnal eyes might see. One is spiritual, and so I can judge all things; the other is natural, and thus I am judging after the outer appearance, which is unrighteous judgment.

These chapters also disclose to us that there shall be a king of that city who shall aspire to be "like the most high"—who shall personify all the ambitious projects manifested at the first Babel; he "will (in his heart) ascend above the heights of the clouds," and yet at Jerusalem, and not Babylon, will he desire to be enthroned "upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north." Now, we read of no king of Babylon who considered the Mount of Olives of such eminent celebrity as to aim to set his throne there. In fact, in general, the kings of Babylon executed their purposes against Jerusalem through their generals. Nebuzaradan seems more the victor of Jerusalem than Nebuchadnezzar. The latter does not seem to deem it as worthy of his royal presence. Yet the prophecy is very plain, and (may we not say?) it shall be fulfilled: a king of Babylon will purpose, yea aim, to set his throne "on the mount of the congregation," to be king of Jerusalem; this has not come to pass; nor has the destruction here spoken of, to be consummated on the city of this king, been yet accomplished, for from Babylon is not yet "cut off the name and remnant, and son and nephew;" and, surely, the time is not yet when it can be said in truth that "the *whole* earth is at rest and quiet, they break forth into singing." On the whole, I think the attentive, unprejudiced reader, will rise up from these chapters impressed with awe at the terrific proportions this mystic place and its king will one day assume. None of the world will be exempt from the ordination of its rule, for this king shall "make the world as a wilderness," and all under the semblance of the Most High, as well as aim to set his throne on the Mount of Olives, monopolizing all religion in himself, and leading us to the conclusion that this king, this mighty one, is not an ordinary king of Babylon, but the impersonification of its principles, and, in keeping with this, aiming at the sides of the north, "the city of the great king," for his throne, and not as Nebuchadnezzar, who glorified merely in Babylon itself. If he were a real king of Babylon, then "the sides of the north" would not be such an object of ambition, for, as to external glory, the former surpassed; but, as to divine honour, the latter was alone distinguished.

We next hear of Babylon and its king, not prophetically, but historically, (Isaiah xxxix. 1,) when messengers are sent by Merodach-baladan, "with letters and a present to Hezekiah," and with delusion so unseen but yet successful and perhaps unintentional, as far as the instruments were concerned, that Hezekiah is "glad." He interprets not their real objects, namely, "to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land," (2 Chron. xxxii. 31,) but, self-satisfied, he receives honour from the court of Babylon. Israel is enslaved. "The days will come that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried unto Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord." (2 Kings xx. 17.) Great and terrible judgment this for merely, as man would say, accepting graciously the polite attentions of a foreign court! Surely, there was some mystic evil in Babylon; surely, the Spirit of God detected, in the principles of that city, some deep rooted enmity and malice against the counsels of God. He could see the direful effects and mourn over His people, who should suffer from them, as the prophet because of Hazael. He warned and denounced, when Israel's king (and he was a good one) consented to terms—to terms of intimacy with the king of Babylon! Israel forgot its election. The genius of Babylon was again dominant, and Israel is again in the Chaldee country.

Next, the book of Daniel gives us a view of Babylon and its king; the principles which govern it; how it uses them; how the people of God are circumstanced there, and what shall be the end of each. We shall therefore turn to it, and continue our examination, by noticing its general features.

The second of Daniel furnishes the dream of the great king Nebuchadnezzar, which was gone from him; and it is well for us, for a moment, to consider the position which this king now held in the earth. We know power is of God. We know that Israel had power directly from God. Whether we look at Joshua, or Judges, or the Kings, the drawn sword was with them, and God fought for them. No one could stand before them; but now matters are changed, and the goodliest of them, even their princes, are eunuchs in the court of Babylon, and to its king, Nebuchadnezzar, rule is delegated. "Wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." Such is the king who is instructed in a dream, but it goes from him; he has no retention of the purposes of God, yet he would know them, and makes many efforts in vain. God alone could reveal. Daniel, even in Babylon, is superior to its allurements; he is "separate" from them, and consequently rises by divine strength above all the power and earthly majesty of Nebuchadnezzar; he rehearses the dream, and interprets it. Now, it does appear to me of all import-

ance to ascertain the full accomplishment of this dream. We know, both from Isaiah and from the Revelation, that Babylon was to be an organized power, irresistible and wide-spreading in its domination; but from what centre, and where, and what it is, we should here get an outline to guide us. In the dream, there is but one image. Therefore, mean what it may in parts, it is still but one, and without the parts it would not be one; but then no preceding part can comprise the whole. This image, we know, exhibits the four great monarchies of the whole earth in one panoramic view; and though each successive one is deteriorated in quality, yet it embraces the same, or even more, territory and influence than the preceding one; and though all are here depictured in one image to the head of Gentile power, yet one alone, and that successively, occupies the place of rule, and the last is only removed by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and thus effectually and entirely. Though only one part of the image has a prominent and visible action at any given time, yet the spirit of each preceding part is not lost to the succeeding. The principles and motives which were fostered in the head of gold are still alive in the feet of iron; so that while the expression is a deteriorated one, as iron is of gold, yet the image is one; the identity as to mind and purpose is the same; *there is no return to a better expression which has yielded to an inferior one;* the head of gold never again appears characterizing the power in the world. When any one fails, it is not again restored. The Persian never was reformed again into the Babylonish, but again each continued till it was supplanted by another; so that if the successor is not manifested, then the predecessor still exists. We may, therefore, sum up that the fourth and last form of power, even the Roman, is still in exercise; that it is part of the image; that it is identical with it; that it has succeeded the other three forms of power, but still embraces all the principles and motives which were active in its predecessors; that it will continue till "a stone is cut out of the mountain without hands, and breaks in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold." This stone will become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. Surely, this stone has not as yet smote the image, for as yet there is Gentile power, and while there is, there must still exist some of this image; and if the image exist in any part, it is evident that its successor, viz. "the stone," has not performed its great work in supplanting it. Nor need we have a resuscitation of the king of Babylon to insure the development of its principles; for the image is but one, though it is variously expressed at different times, and consequently we cannot have a return to actual Babylon, though we have in Rome (as the feet have the life and action of the head) all the mind and spirit of Babylon. If the image was to be again *in full* exhibited, then it is evident that during the Babylonish kingdom there would be no Roman; nor actual Babylon, which some are so earnest in pressing, when we have the rest of the image; whereas, in the Roman, which now exists, and which appears to me very simple, we have all the principles and identity of the image, though in an inferior form. Scripture gives us no ground for supposing that Babylon will be revived as the head of gold. It tells us that Babylon is the head of the image, that all of the image will be destroyed together, but that consecutively the parts of the image were manifested, and that the fourth is the concentration of the preceding ones. All are represented in it, all are embraced in this the last; when it is destroyed, all are destroyed; but there is no return to a dynasty already expired, and, therefore, we may conclude that Babylon must emanate morally from the fourth kingdom. We shall more closely examine this point by turning to Daniel's vision of the same subject, though differently represented.

Daniel is shewn what carnal power is according to God's estimate. Four savage beasts represent to God's servant the four forms of power which were to arise upon the earth; and we must remember that this was to a Jew, who knew that power had departed from his nation, and he is now, in God's mercy, shewn the course it would take ere it would return into the channel of his nation again. Hence his great interest in it. Hence our interest in it, because Christ is the promised seed, the Bridegroom of our souls, a Prince and a Saviour of Israel His people. Now, we can gather from no allusion here the idea that the fourth beast was to assume the appearance of the first, even Babylon. We cannot doubt but that the fourth had all the ferocity and evil purpose of the first, but it is not said to bear any resemblance to any natural animal: it is diverse from all the rest, and is a strange heterogeneous animal. It combines the spirit of the lion, but is something more than the lion; and this leads me again to conclude that we must look for the development of Babylon outside of the precincts of the first Babylon, though in principle it will be found to exist very distinctly somewhere.

I now turn to Jer. l. li. Jeremiah remained with the remnant in Jerusalem, but sent with Isaiah the prophecy respecting Babylon to Babylon. I do not think we can glean much from this as to the locality and nature of the future Babylon. It cannot be questioned that this prophecy had a prior fulfilment at the taking of that city by Cyrus, but yet it is evident that it takes a wider range than this, and instructs us as to that happy condition of Israel consequent on the downfall of Babylon, which has not as yet been accomplished. Surely, they have not made "a perpetual covenant with the Lord which shall not be forgotten." Nor again (verse 45) could the prophet advise them, save in prophetic language, to go out of the midst of her, when in chapter xxix. he had directed them to seek the peace of it, and in its peace they should have peace. So that I conclude from these chapters that another Babylon was in the eye of the prophet; and if it was not in *the first* form of power, it could not mean the material Babylon of the Chaldees, but its principles developed in another. As one of the remnant, he expresses in prophetic language their hopes.

In Ezekiel, we have no distinct prophecy with reference to Babylon; nor am I sufficiently instructed to say the reason of it. I merely mention the fact, as it may suggest inquiry. The prophet's eye is Godward. I pass on now to Haggai and Zechariah, in connection with Ezra and Nehemiah. In these books, we have Judah after the captivity returned from Babylon, their leader bearing the name Zerubbabel, (i.e. deliverer from Babylon,) but yet not with the power or in the high position which they owned prior to the captivity. Power still remained in the hands of the Gentiles. An intelligent Israelite could not have been insensible to their lost glory. A Gentile wielded the sword of power once committed by God to Israel. They reoccupy Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, thus shorn of a once unrivalled greatness. Though they might not *there* actually feel the oppressing arm of the Gentile, yet humiliation brooded over their souls. Another had wrested and retained the headship which once belonged to them. Consequently, we find in Zechariah (whose prophecy embraces more the internal, as Haggai does the external) a distinct allusion to the destination of lawlessness or wickedness. (Chap. v.) Israel's power ceased when it became lawlessness. The Gentiles *then* became the fit instruments for exercising it, but, as we perceive, its limit is announced in the chapter referred to. There wickedness is seen, in a concentrated form, borne along till it takes a final stand and establishment in the land of Shinar, a re-embodiment of the principles which were first developed there, and which Gentile power will embrace ere it arrives at its full maturity. The reference to the land of Shinar seems to be figurative, as all the other features in the vision unquestionably are.

Now, bearing in mind this hasty glance at the ideas which the word Babylon in Scripture evokes, let us turn to the Revelation, and see whether it corroborates what has been seen. In Rev. xiv. we are told that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," as if the fate of it was pregnant with great and untold advantages to a harassed and suffering people; the Jewish remnant, doubtless, because we must ever keep Israel and Babylon in antagonistic position, the glory of one depending on the downfall of the other. And in this chapter we have the hundred and forty-four thousand catching up the heavenly anthem, and consequently the doom of the earthly usurper is announced contemporaneously; for when the earthly family are in unison with the heavenly, then the hostile power must be judged and condemned. In chapters xvii. and xviii., we are still further instructed as to the course of evil which will eventuate in the direful form which Babylon represents. The relations of the ecclesiastical and civil forms of power are described in these chapters,—Christendom's declension, to its ultimate immersion in the principles of Babylon. And what is Babylon here? She is arrayed in purple and scarlet, she is bedizened with gold and precious stones, far, far different from the modest apparel which becomes the bride of Christ in this world. But what is all this to her abominations and the filthiness of her fornication? Her judgment is that of the great whore, "with whom the kings of the earth

have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." She was the mother of the harlots and abominations (or idols) of the earth, drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. This is God's characteristic of Babylon, written on her forehead. All else is subsidiary. Idolatry is the grand evil: not merely ecclesiastical corruption, but an idolatrous virus. Long had she ridden the beast, but at length it and the ten horns desolate and devour her with implacable hatred. Babylon shall be burnt with fire. The beast may thereby aggrandize his power. But true and righteous are God's judgments, for He will judge the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and will avenge the blood of His servants at her hand.

Of this let Christians, let men, rest assured, that the judgment of great Babylon has not yet taken effect. Checks have been given to Rome, the centre and advocate of this evil harlotry. But be sure that until Babylon the great is fallen, that symbol of corruption will neither be reformed in its character, nor be lessened in its malignant influence. The great moral Babel in gigantic proportions, as having rejected every light of God in Israel and the Church as well as the latter day testimony, and following out the principles of its birth and growth, viz., pride and idolatry, will thus bestride the world for a season. Alas! it is to this all merely human efforts at amelioration—"Peace" and "Temperance Societies," "world-wide trade and commerce," "education movements," "progressive improvements," are now tributary. And what shall be said of the attempt to enlist all nations in a joint effort which tends directly to the glory of man? May the saints be saved from the delusions which are abroad! No one will be carried down the stream which will yet swell into a mighty flood, and subvert all acknowledgment of God, but in part as he is carried must imbibe indifference to the ways and thoughts of God now. The evil is working; "the mystery of iniquity" or lawlessness doth already work. If Satan aids the ecclesiastical systems, (even though men say we care not from whence the aid comes, and we can use it beneficially,) it must be borne in mind that Satan has an ulterior object, even the subversion of all Christianity, and the establishment of lawlessness on its own base. Let us be warned, and walk separate from the evil principles which are everywhere afloat!

J. B. S.

STUDIES ON THE REVELATION.

Second Part.—"The things which are."

GENERAL GLANCE AT THE SEVEN EPISTLES.

The Revelation contains a testimony, necessary both to the Church and to the world, until the return of the Lord. That which concerns the Church is found in the second and third chapters, in the form of epistles.

Jesus dictates; John writes to each angel what the Spirit says to the Churches. The more I read these epistles, the more I see that the angels represent the intelligent and responsible part of the redeemed, during our dispensation. What each assembly does is attributed to its angel; what is said to an angel is said to his whole Church; and I think it is necessary to take clearly into account the common bond (*solidarité*) which exists for the whole seven churches, from beginning to end.

First, there is a candlestick, which represents the collection of the whole class of the redeemed to whom an epistle is addressed; then one single person, an angel, represents this collection morally. Thus, the assembly in question is typified by a candlestick, and identified with an angel, and the whole is judged as one single thing.

As to the common bond of the seven churches, it is seen in this: what is said to each angel is said to "the Churches." That which happens in the midst of one assembly takes place in order that all the churches "may know that Jesus is He who tries the reins and the hearts." Moreover, there is a chain of events which shews a *successive, continual*, prolonged, and gradual state of progress in evil, and diminution in good. Finally, the common bond of the seven churches is proved, as the unity of the seven candlesticks, by the completeness of the number seven, applied to the stars, the angels, the candlesticks and the churches, Jesus being the centre and Lord of all.

The seven-fold warning: "Let him who has ears hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches!" leads us to resolve, in the first place, the following question: Who are they who are to hearken to this?

The seven churches of Asia, mentioned in the eleventh verse, were doubtless first in the order of heaven, so long as they existed. But this first point of view has no further application from the time these churches disappeared, * and if any of them did now exist, they would be included in the following class.

A second point of view is the whole local assembly, wheresoever or whensoever it may exist, whether in times past, present, or future, from the year A.D. 96 till the return of Jesus for the Church.

The third point of view is altogether individual and precious, particularly in that it applies to the era of the greatest dispersion of the children of God; as, for example, to our own.

No one will doubt that all the faithful who composed the seven churches of Asia were responsible for the manner in which they heard and observed the things that the Spirit said to these churches. It is no less evident that every individual, in every time, is bound to hear, provided he have ears to hear. Whatever be the state of the body of Christ on earth, even though there might be nothing here below that should correspond to the seven candlesticks seen by John, each believer will find in these epistles the light necessary for him to learn his way and guide his steps amid the chaos of the numberless sects which now scatter the redeemed of Jesus.

It will be the same, in rather a different sense, for every faithful soul that shall keep the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus, after the present dispensation.

Fourthly and lastly, the things which the Spirit says to the Churches being a prophecy, which looks at the life of the Church as at that of a single individual, the various periods of vicissitudes thereof are presented from the commencement of the narration to the end of its earthly career. We will confine ours to this last point of view, because it touches on all that can affect our conscience, whether as individual members of the body of Christ, or as being in relation with one or more local assemblies, or as being interested in the move of every institution containing redeemed ones of Jesus.

The Lord cannot have attested the things contained in the second and third chapters, merely as referring to the seven churches of Asia. It is impossible not to recognize, in these chapters, the prophetical character of this Book, which itself is purely prophetical; and it is also impossible that the prophecy should be confined to the seven churches of Asia Minor, which so speedily disappeared.

The coming of the Lord is presented to us in a manner always nearer and more pressing in the seven epistles; now, the promise of His return does not specially pertain to the seven churches of Asia, but to the complete body of the redeemed living on the earth, from the moment the narrative begins.

The fourth point of view that we have adopted for this study, can only be rejected by persons who do not consider the Church as one body living on earth, responsible and bonded together from the beginning to the end, as regards its walk and its testimony, as was Israel, for example. I believe that I ought, on account of their souls, to say some words on the *Church*.

The Church has been defined to be "an assembly of the faithful in one body, by the presence of the Holy Spirit here below, come down from heaven, in union with the Head who is in heaven." Indeed the Word ever presents to us the Church as one body on earth during the time of its formation and trial, but united on high to Him who accomplishes all things and in all: in a word, as the fulness of Christ. ‡

* Besides, we have but little positive information as to their history, though a crowd of commentators have made it the object of their researches. Added to this, it is plain, that in what concerned them, the prophecy must have been literally accomplished.

† We might further quote more than one thing predicted to the seven churches of Asia, and which, most probably has not yet occurred. This would prove that, if what really concerns these churches is to be accomplished literally, nevertheless prophecy in itself goes beyond. But the results of this research might be subject to controversy, and I will confine myself to citing chap. iii. 9, 10.

‡ In order that the Church should possibly be in glory, the first resurrection and the change must have taken place; all the redeemed who make up the Church must be reunited in the same condition. We are, in our turn, what those have been *on earth* who have gone before us. But the *Church* is almost always considered, in the Word, as existing on the earth. The Church of God is, on earth, the "house of the living God."

The Church is in the kingdom, or rather is of the kingdom, as joint-heir, one with the king her Bridegroom. She is, on the earth, the first-fruits and the earnest of the kingdom which has not yet begun.

This only united body has but one Governor, who is the Lord, whose Spirit continually carries the desires, thoughts, and affections of the Bride, towards her Bridegroom in heaven. The Spirit of Christ alone directs and conducts her, and He never does this outside the ways traced by the word of Christ. Such a notion of the Church and its government is quite opposed to the carnal pretension that the *Church* has the right to give herself rules or constitutions, more or less ingenious, as she conceives, according to circumstances and her own thoughts.

That is pure idolatry which puts man in the place of Christ, human thoughts in the place of God's thoughts, human strength in the place of the might of the Holy Ghost.

Finally, the understanding of the general point of view to which we cling is a matter of spiritual discernment. What the Church ought to be in the world must be understood, in order to see aright what she has become there. One must needs possess, in communion with the faithful and true Witness, the love of God's glory, and the spirit of intercession, in order to speak of the Church before God, as Daniel spake of his city and people in his supplications. *

GEOGRAPHY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

The seven cities, named in verse 11, existed in preconsular Asia, or Asia Minor.

These seven cities form on the map an irregular enclosure, in following their scriptural order. Ephesus was the most neighbouring town to Patmos. Pergamos is at the northern extremity of the enclosure which closes up at Laodicea. The distance from Ephesus to Laodicea, is about seventy-two leagues, or seven days.

Ephesus,† Sardis, ‡ Thyatira, § Laodicea, are either totally destroyed, or reduced to the state of miserable villages.

Pergamos, ‖ Philadelphia, ‖‖ are small towns; Smyrna only is rich and flourishing.

But in none of these localities should we find any thing resembling a scriptural assembly.

The Church of Ephesus is the only one of those here mentioned, to which Paul has written an epistle. The Church of Laodicea, very near to that of Colosse, kept up an intimate connection with this latter.

I do not pretend to know all the motives for which the Lord chose these seven Churches; it would be pretending to an almost perfect knowledge of so deep a subject. But sure I am, that every assembly, even of two or three believers gathered around Jesus, is as dear to Him as each of these seven Churches here named. If the Lord had had respect to appearances, would He not have chosen for the purpose of addressing these epistles, Rome, Corinth, or Antioch which for a moment was as a centre of light for the Gentiles, or so many other Churches of Greece and Asia mentioned in the Scriptures, not to speak of the no less important unmentioned ones? I think that the geographical position of these Churches may have been one motive for which they were chosen, both as occupying passage-country and a link between the east and the west, and also as presenting a significant picture of unity, union and reunion around Jesus. The names of these Churches, which we will consider in their place, appear to me all-important, as depicting the external and general circumstances, which most frequently are not indicated but by this name, and which must be in harmony with the moral state, whether of the Church named or of the general period represented by it.

Again, I suppose that the moral and varied state of each of these Churches must have been then in harmony with a great part of the things that Jesus had to say to His Bride during the whole time of her education upon earth.

These various considerations are very well suited to engage us to study the seven epistles, under the eye and in communion with Him who dictated them. The subject is concerning the glory of God, the witness of Jesus Christ, and the fidelity of His Bride.

EXAMINATION OF THE WALK OF THE CHURCHES AS A WHOLE.

Only two Churches have no works, Smyrna and Pergamos.*

Smyrna is already too far fallen for the Lord to seek fruit there, but He places it in the furnace to reanimate and purify it. †

In Pergamos, the Lord sees only evil, save a remnant of faith. There is there no direct walk but that of pride, which draws down the sword of judgment.

The word *works*, in these epistles, has not the meaning of particular actions, but is taken in sense of the word *ways*, indicating the general walk of the witness. This is what we see in the second chapter, verse 26, where the Lord recompenses him who keepeth *His works* to the end, that is to say, who remains faithful in the ways, or in the pure and separate walk of the faithful Witness, whose feet are like fine brass.

The examination of the whole will at the same time present to us the picture of the progression of evil and the diminution of good. It offers a movement similar to the oscillation of the flame of a lamp, which falls, rises, casts forth fresh glimmerings, then dies, leaving behind but a noxious smoke.

DIMINUTION OF GOOD.

1.—*Ephesus.* Labour, perseverance, discernment, and discipline.
2.—*Smyrna.* In God are riches; they must be sought there; but the angel knows not how to enjoy. Jesus knows that.
3.—*Pergamos.* There is no more than faith.
4.—*Thyatira.* The crucible has produced new fruits: love, service, perseverance. But the crucible was needful.
5.—*Sardis.* A little remnant is preserved from the general defilement. It is scarcely an active and positive good.
6.—*Philadelphia.* A residue of faith. A little light by a great display of the power of Jesus. The waiting for Jesus.
7.—*Laodicea.* Nothing real. Jesus searches or raises up new witnesses.

PROGRESS OF EVIL.

1.—*Ephesus.* Abandonment of first love. State of fall. It is the point of departure.
2.—*Smyrna.* Without the life of Jesus, without the grace which distinguishes the good coming from God, one could only see immense evil in the absence of good fruits.
3.—*Pergamos.* They dwell where Satan's throne and dwelling are. Want of the fear of God. A seeking after high things. Traffic of the gifts of God, and consequently fall of the sheep. Discipline has failed.
4.—*Thyatira.* Seducing doctrines of confusion. Prostitution favoured from high places. Intimacy with Satan.
5.—*Sardis.* Death; bad walk.
6.—*Philadelphia.* Excessively feeble. But God has designs of love and deliverance.
7.—*Laodicea.* Abominable by its lukewarmness; recovery of pretensions to warmth. Cold smoke. Forms. Pride. Death. They say, All goes on well! Spiritual pride of blind professors. It is the end. Spued out!

Finally, we may still remark, that the principle of the evil exists, as well as the fallen state, from the beginning, and that the prophecy of Jesus, and His testimony in that respect, agree with the history of the Church till our days, since every unbiassed reader will only find in this last the history of the declension of the Church, in spite of all the efforts of authors and their evident intention to justify their delusive expectations in favour of a pretended reign of the Gospel and of grace.

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1 JOHN V. 2, 3.

How many questions are resolved by rightly understanding *the object of the Holy Ghost now on earth!* What cause of misapprehension and diversity of judgment lies here! Some seem to make conversion the entire work of the Spirit, and they labour for it with great zeal. Others go a step further, and consider that converts should be edified and nourished in "the school of God." Now, both hold truth, but neither in the large and glorious purpose of God. The prayer of Christ, when He surveyed the full accomplishment by Himself of all the Father's will, was, "that they all may be one," even "those also who shall believe on me through their word." This would be the most glorious expression of divine power, that as the Father and the Son were one, so all

* Dan. ix.

† A wretched Turkish village, called *Ayasalouk*, at this day occupies a part of the site of the celebrated Ephesus, in the midst of considerable ruins.

‡ This second Rome, so called by Florus, the richest city of Asia Minor, is now only a wretched village called *Sart*, inhabited by some Turks, and surrounded by magnificent ruins.

§ At this day, *Akhissar*, or the *white castle*.

‖ Now, *Pergamo*, or *Bergamah*. It contains important ruins.

‖‖ Now, *Allah-Schyer*, or *city of God*.

* II. 9, 15, according to Tregelles and Tischendorf.

† The same weakness is found again in Philadelphia. This last is, for the same reason, the only one with Smyrna that does not receive direct reproaches.

believing in the Son should also be one. And the Spirit in the apostle, in spite of all the apparent frustration (on earth) of this desire of Christ, lays it as a grand injunction on the saints to "*endeavour* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," for there is oneness in all the highest blessings of the Church.

Here, then, we have the object of the Spirit in the manifestation of unity, as members of one body. It is the witness on earth that the Father sent the Son. Natural selfishness and singular interests are lost in one common joy and glory; not as under the law, every man standing on his own rights, but "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." And I believe it is here that "love one another," the new commandment, has its force and place. This commandment, like all commandments, is given for an object, and that object is, that "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." The observance of the commandment would produce this effect; but we should remember that there is a mode for obeying. We are to love one another, not according to our sentimentality, but "*as I have loved you*"—with all the truth, and holiness, and self-devotion of Christ. Christ could denounce Peter as Satan. The loving, sympathizing Jesus, could remain two days in the place where He was when His friend Lazarus was nigh unto death. He could allow His disciples to pass into the dark gloom of despondency on the stormy sea, ere He appeared for their rescue. But I need not multiply instances of a like nature, where the blessing of His people is secured, though every former link be severed or forgotten. Christ had but one object, the glory of the Father, and He accomplished it. The Holy Ghost has but one object, the glory of Christ, and He will accomplish it. To be a member of Christ, for the body is Christ, is my glory; and the Spirit cares for me, and makes intercession for me, as "baptized by Him into one body." He desires to glorify Christ.

It is not at all a question of conversion. Thus the evildoer in 1 Cor. v. was a converted person, as is evident from 2 Cor. ii.; but he would not suit the Spirit in His work and in His manifestation of Christ, constructing an habitation of God through Himself. Hence, the company whom the Holy Spirit *could acknowledge and use*, should come together, expressing unity of purpose, and formally disown any further union with one acting wickedly. It did not touch the question whether he was a believer or not, or whether he would be saved in the day of the Lord. He was not fit, in his present condition, for the Spirit's service in glorifying Christ, and he must be removed, unless his soul were restored by a godly repentance. Thence I learn the principle, that it is not persons, but Christ and His glory, I am to consider, and, following this rule, I arrive at the truth, that the course of the Spirit, however in appearance harsh and repulsive, is the surest way to remove obstacles and promote the love which is of God. Have no company with the disorderly one. Why? To shew your superiority? No: but "that he may be ashamed." Following the guidance of the Spirit, who is faithful to Christ, and of course to all who are of Christ, is ever the divine way to clear away offences; because, as one member is strengthened, all the members are strengthened, even though strength be obtained in the judicial treatment of one or more. The very member judged is receiving strength, it may be imperceptibly yet surely, by the faithfulness of his brethren towards the Lord and himself. For there is one body and one Spirit, and therefore it is seeking the mind of the Spirit, which is our blessing, *as it* is what God regards, helping us in our infirmities. This, therefore, and not persons, should be paramount to us. And so our service should be, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; but ready to part company with any persons, no matter how honoured and loved, if "they cause offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned;" yea, even "avoid them," and simply because "they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus." Who so honoured as Peter? Yet, when truth was at stake, he is sacrificed to it. (Gal. ii.)

The trial, the difficulty, the heart-breaking of cutting through the longest and most cherished friendships, if need be, for Christ's sake, is admitted and felt. It was so when first we left all at the Master's call, and the same principle holds good the entire journey through. Following Christ never made, and was never meant to make, a smooth course through this world. If it be said, Can a movement be of God which is attended by so much sorrow, shame, disappointment in its train? I can only reply, that such was the experience of him who was in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles. (Phil. ii. 20, 21. 2 Tim. i. 15; iv. 14-18.) He has warned us, that there must be also heresies in the Church, *that they which are approved may be made manifest*. In this, as in all else, the only blessed place is to "walk by faith, not by sight." The Lord, when He comes, will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God. Our bodies should be a living sacrifice to Christ, and this is especially the Spirit's work. There is reciprocity: Christ gave Himself for us; the Spirit in us aims at nothing but that we should be the Lord's. Every consideration outside this, individually and corporately, is repugnant to Him. Not persons, I repeat, but power in the Holy Ghost can strengthen the saints. One saint, glorifying Christ in the energy of His Spirit and truth, would do more than thousands lukewarm to cheer the hearts of *all* saints, because it is but one Spirit after all, and one body. Sectarianism is ever looking at persons, which are every thing in its eyes. Love for the Church looks to Christ, and labours to present every man perfect in Him, but only associating with those who *aim* to serve not their own bellies, but the Lord, in truth and holiness. Here it is well to remark, that fellowship with one another is only in the light, the summit of Christ's service for us; and he that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling (either himself or others) in him. His love is in the light, holy and radiant with the presence of God. He learns to add to godliness brotherly kindness.

But, practically, am I to warn my child to avoid the society of a person whose conversation is pernicious, and does that child, if I love him, demand no reproof, no discipline, because, though he frequents the company I deprecate, *he* assumes that he has imbibed none of the evil? Who can touch pitch and not be defiled? But the temple of God is holy.

J. B. S.

THE HEART OF CHRIST ABOUT HIS OWN, POURED FORTH INTO THE HEART OF THE FATHER.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE ON JOHN XVII.

There is no chapter in the Bible which traces more, as a whole, the position of the Christian, and what Christ is for him. I do not say that it states such or such circumstances in which the Christian may be found, but all he is himself in the presence of God, and how He has introduced us into that position.

You know that Christ Himself says: "I am no more of the world." (Verse 11.) He views His position in the face of God and in the face of the world; He sets the Christian in the same position where He is in the face of God and in the face of the world, and He lays the foundation of all that. I do not explain at this time all that might be said on this chapter, because it contains a very great number of important truths. I will confine myself to developing some of them, which will make us understand how Christ presents Himself to us, and presents us to God.

There is this grand thought, that *Jesus is the source of every thing for us.*

He takes it up from the Father. We may consider Jesus in two ways: either as accomplishing certain promises, for example, those made to Abraham, or, moreover, as Son of David; but He is, on the other hand, a Source of life, coming from the Father; (accomplishing the promise made in Him before the world was;) and it is thus that the Lord Jesus is presented in this Gospel.

It is not only as accomplishing certain promises, which besides is very precious, but which is far from being all He is for us. He is the Son of the Father, the Word in whom is life, according to that which is said in the first chapter of this Gospel. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth .... And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." There is what He is. John says: "This is the Word that has been made flesh, and we have received of his fulness, and grace for grace." The Gospel of John, having developed his history here below under this relationship, presents Him to us in this chapter at the close of his life; and He, being grace and truth, come forth from the bosom of the Father, and ready to return to Him, gives the Father an account of all He has done.

There is something very special in this chapter. It is the only

one which admits us to these wondrous conversations. It relates to us, not only what the Lord says to men, but what He says to His Father, while we hearken to Him. It is not trust merely, but confidence. We are here hearkening to Jesus, who is giving account of all to the Father.

"I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." He gives account of all. He pours forth His heart about His own into the heart of the Father. It is the most intimate relation in which one could be, and wherein He has placed us. Christ the Son has satisfied the Father. He gives account to the Father of all that work of grace, whereof Himself is the representative.

We find, in this chapter, the most intimate relationship between Him and his Father, and through Him with the Father between us and Himself. We find therein the basis on which to found our hope. In the preceding chapters He had spoken to His disciples of various circumstances; but now, the time is come when all which would bring immediate relations between God and us was about to have its course. As regards men, His work was finished. All that the SECOND Adam had to accomplish is accomplished in His person. All the evil introduced from the creation by the fall of the FIRST Adam, has been but the occasion of what the Second came to accomplish. He was from heaven, and He is come, from His Father, to establish all the relations between God and us; and He places Himself before Him according to the basis established for what the Second Adam had to do. God does His own work. He would have a man for Himself in the place of the first Adam, and Christ perfectly fulfilled this end. It is the Second Adam who acts in the very circumstances into which the first Adam had plunged us; and it is not on what we have done, but on what God has done, that this basis is established. It is well to understand that our relations are based on what has been accomplished by God's *man*. So far, there had been on our side but sin and folly: what Christ did was the perfection of wisdom, purity, and obedience.

The hour was come for proving if *man* could present himself before God, if this *new man* Jesus could stand before God. And He can do so. He can lift up his eyes to heaven. And, instead of beholding the cherubim, who barred the entrance of Eden, in a terrestrial paradise wherein he had failed, and whence he had been cast out, (Gen. iii. 24,) He can look on high and return whence He had come in grace, saying: "*I have glorified thee on earth.*" (Verse 4.) He could lift His eyes to that heaven whence He had descended, and the print of which He had borne all His life. "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. [Behold, I take place before Thee, in glory, to glorify Thee on high, as I have already done on the earth.] (Verses 1, 2.) We see that He always speaks in complete humiliation. I speak of the place that He not only has acquired, but that He has made for Himself. If *man* had been innocent, he would have had his place in Eden: but that a *man* should make his place in heaven, before God, as Christ did, and did it for us, such a thing existed not yet, save in the mind of God. A *man* who has the life of God, and has made his place by the work that he has accomplished,—there is a new existence. And this is what is remarkable, that He takes the glory as a given glory, keeping his place as *man*, though Son; He places Himself with His own while He is their Head, on the same level with them,—as receiving all from the Father. He takes His place in the glory with the Father for ever. As God has given Him authority over all flesh, He takes His place as Head, to give life to all those whom the Father has given Him; Himself thus receiving all from the Father. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

The righteousness of man is no longer the question: *here* it is eternal life.

When the young man came to Jesus, (Luke x.) and asked Him: "Master, what must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus answered him: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Christ's hour was not yet come; as to the ways of God, the door was not yet shut; the Christ was not yet rejected. Jesus said to him: "Do that and thou shalt live." The young man had not asked, What must I do to be saved? but, *to have eternal life?* Had a man fulfilled the law, (though we know that man was incapable of it,) he would have had eternal life. But now, if there is not the knowledge of the Father and the Son, there is no eternal life; and if any one thinks that God gives eternal life, and that he so thinks according to his own thoughts and not according to what is revealed to us, that is not eternal life. If a man makes to himself a Bible of his own heart, how will he know what is life eternal? Will it be in his heart? O, no: God alone can say, This is life eternal. And if you cannot have it from Jesus, there is no eternal life for you. Nothing is needful in us in order to have it. It is entirely a new thought. It is no more sought in man here below, but only in Christ, who has established relations between God and man; and then, when a man knows the Father and the Son, he *has* eternal life. There are those who cannot say: "*I know* the Father, and the Son whom He hath sent." But if, through grace, we can say, I know the Father and the Son; we may say, I have life eternal; and what a happiness that the thing is so simply said! To bear fruit, we must have life; and what happiness! a whole life need not be spent in order to know this. If you know the Father and the Son, you have life; and he who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself, and precious is the knowledge that the Lord can lay down a thing with such certainty. A soul may say to itself, I have not eternal life, for I do not glorify God.—Dear friends, lay yourselves a little aside; it is the Son who speaks to the Father, and it does not become you to place yourself between Them with your wretched thoughts. In what the Son says to the Father: "I have glorified Thee on the earth," and there is nothing that Thou canst require, but that I have performed. Where did He find His glory? God could not rest in man; but He could rest in Jesus. Before Jesus, it was with God as with the dove sent forth by Noah, (Gen. viii. 8,) there was nowhere for God to rest; but when the Son comes, He could say: "I have glorified Thee;" and on Him the eye of God can rest. He is daily His delight. Jesus can say, at the close of His life here below, (that Satan may hear, that His own may rejoice in it, that the world may know, that angels may marvel at it,) "I have glorified thee." Behold this accepted *man* given from God; *the man* who has perfectly fulfilled all that the Father could desire! His glory had not been entire, if one single point had failed; but He can say: "I have finished the work which Thou hast given me to do." (I have nothing more to do, and Thou hast nothing more to exact.) "I have glorified Thee on the earth; and now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." There is the basis of all, and of our salvation.

It is most interesting to observe how the Son, though God equal with the Father, and having right to this glory, asks it, because as *man* He is worthy of it. And He takes this glory in the position of *man*. Thus we understand how Christ has taken our place as man; as the responsible man in our position as sinners, (though Himself without sin,) and thereby even because He has perfectly glorified the Father, He has acquired the right to this glory. And in order that, in this position as man, He may be glorified with the Father, having acquired the right to this glory, He asks it, that it may be for us as for Himself. He humbled Himself unto death; wherefore God has highly exalted Him. (Phil. ii. 5-11.)

There is the basis of the whole thing: the Son glorifies the Father on the earth, and the Father must glorify the Son in heaven. He has taken His place, because all is accomplished. The Father has nothing more to require—all is done.

Now, what does He as to us? "I have manifested Thy name to the men Thou hast given me out of the world: Thine they were and Thou hast given them to me, and they have kept Thy word." (I place them in my own position, and there it is that they become cognizant of their own.) There was nothing left to be done, and Christ manifests the *name of the Father* to those that God has given Him.

About to ascend to His Father, (chap. xx. 17,) He says, *My* Father and *your* Father. He manifests the Father's name such as He has known it Himself. He lays us on His Father's heart, as He Himself is laid there; weaker doubtless, just as a little child is weaker and knows much less than a bigger one, but not less therefore children of their father, no less the objects of care and tenderness. We do not understand all the love God witnesses to us. But Christ says to us: "I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me." (Verse 23.)

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words that Thou hast given me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine. And all mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." (Verses 7-13.) Thus are we set in intelligence and in truth, whatever the degree in which we realize this position. But, observe this: "*He was not of the world.*" Man, the first Adam, had no place before God, because of his sin in Eden. Having failed, he was going to be cast out into hell; Christ, the second Adam, places Himself in the position of sinful man, to fulfil God's purposes; but He was not of the world, and consequently there was no place for Him in this world. The men that God gave Him are taken out from the world, and He says of them, as of Himself: "They are not of the world." (Verses 14-16.) He sets them in the position which He has made for Himself, and this position is not in the world. He will take the world for His inheritance; but the world is neither *His place* nor *ours*.

In the twenty-fifth verse, Jesus says: "Righteous Father, the world has not known Thee." He says: "Righteous Father," not "*holy* Father," because it was all over with the world. He appeals to righteousness against the world: the world has not known the Father, although He was fully manifested in flesh.

The hour was come for deciding the merits of Jesus and those of the world. God had to pronounce for one of the two, for they could no longer walk together. God could no longer love this world, where His Son had been dishonoured and contemned; and when Judas went out, and the measure of sin was thus filled up, the judgment of this world takes place, though as yet it be not executed. The prince of this world was cast out, and those to be withdrawn from his power given to Jesus. "I have given them Thy word," added the Lord, "and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (Verses 14, 15.)

Thus He describes these persons: "They were Thine;" and "they have kept Thy word." Observe, when Jesus says: "They have kept Thy word;" and how have they kept it? There is much consolation in considering this word of Jesus. His disciples, of whom He was speaking to the Father, understood it but little. Their walk, the details of their connection with Jesus were most sorrowful; but they had (except Judas) persevered in weakness perhaps; yet they had persevered. Well, that was all. There were many things they did not understand, but they had kept the Father's word which spake of Jesus. When, one day, Jesus asked them, "Will ye also go away," Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe, and are sure, that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John vi. 68.) They had persevered, they had kept the Father's word: as soon as the word of the Father has our confidence, because Jesus has spoken it, we are His.

The most advanced Christians need this interpretation of the judgment borne by the Lord on their lives. We may be very wretched, and we find that we all are so, if we compare our state with what we might be. These same disciples, a little after Jesus had been telling about the last circumstances of His life, were disputing between themselves who should be the greatest. Well, for all that, they had kept the word. The eye of God sees the smallest spark of grace. He blows on it and makes it become resplendent; and, notwithstanding all the wretchedness, the weaknesses and the failures, it suffices that they have kept the word that Jesus has given from his Father. If confidence is there, Jesus says: "They are Thine, and I am glorified in them."

They might have said, We have not kept thy word as we ought to have done; but what they had kept was precious in the sight of Jesus and of God. Jesus always speaks according to the principle that is there. The great matter is that Jesus was the Sent One of the Father, and as to all that belongs to Jesus, to this poor carpenter's son, it is the Father, who gave it to Him. The disciples had understood that the Son of God had received every thing from the Father, that He was Heir of all things. Well, when Jesus takes this place in the heart, we are happy. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; (Is. liii.) but He is the beloved of the Father. This poor Jesus is but too often practically despised and set aside for thousands of frivolous things, even in the heart of the Christian; but we have understood what Jesus is, insulted, despised and rejected though He be. The eye has penetrated by faith through all this contempt, and has seen in Him the Son of God, the Beloved of the Father; and that cheers, because we have understood that therein is life eternal. We have the same thoughts as God. Our desire has Christ for its object, and we find our delight in Him. We say: "Yes, He is right; all comes from the Father." They have believed that Thou hast sent me, and that I came forth from Thee.

Such is the extent of the privileges of the Christian of whom Jesus speaks: we have seen how and why He can claim the glory. The Father owed it Him, and He gives it us. But, moreover, all the words that Jesus received from the Father; all the plans and secret counsels of the Father, whereof Jesus (taking the place of prophet on the part of God) as man has received the communication; all the testimonies of the favour and ways of God which comforted His soul: these all He has communicated to us. The glory that He has acquired, (verse 22,) the words that He has received, (verse 8,) He has given them to us. It is His will that we should have the same communion of thoughts with the Father, that we should have part intelligently in all His love and all His graces, having communicated to us all that the Father has said to Him. See what a position is ours as to communion, and what support for practice has been granted to our souls! And if the intelligence, by means of which the Father's love is poured into the heart of the Son, be given to us, we may say that we have known that Jesus is come forth from the Father, and that we have believed that He has been sent from Him. This love of the Father to the Son is also poured into our heart to strengthen us, and to make us justly appreciate (which, after all, we never can) our identification with the Son in His relations with the Father, and in the position that He has acquired for us, having fully glorified His Father upon the earth. It is thus to see all that the Father is to the Son; this is to know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Jesus was the depositary of the outpourings of the Father's heart, and that is the place that He has willed that we should have. He wills also that we should know the glory that belongs to Him, being with Him where He is, we who have known Him in His humiliation, or who have shared in principle this humiliation. "Father, I will," says He, "that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;" the glory of Him who, though the world despised Him, had been loved by Thee before the world was.

I have given them *Thy word*, [He does not say Thy words, but Thy word. When He speaks of our privileges, He says, Thy *words;* but, when He speaks of our position in the world, He says, I have given them *Thy word*, that is to say, the position of testimony by the word which has reached us through Jesus, the word of the Father,] and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. And to whatever degree we enjoy the position of Jesus in heaven, we must also share His position here below, to be hated: it is the practical position of the Christian.

We have seen how God makes a Christian, by separating him from the world in the death of Jesus. At the moment in which Jesus speaks, God had tried all, and He had given up all his trials. It was quite another question now. God would have nothing more to do with *the old man:* God set up new relations for Himself in Jesus. Are they firm? they are immutable. He has glorified Jesus as MAN. God has received his Son; and He having entered in as MAN with the Father, He makes Christians, according to the principle after which this NEW MAN is entered into the presence of God His Father. The Christian understands the activity of the love of the Father. He is based on this hope; all his joy is in the life which results from it. He no longer knows the old man but as a sinner, and the new man as having immutable rela-

tions with God. He knows Jesus Himself as the Beloved of the Father. The word that the Father has given to the Son he keeps, and recognizes this Son as the object of his love.

And what can we say? Is our happiness on the side of truth? Can you say that you have received these words that Jesus gives us from the Father, and Jesus Himself as the only thing that God can recognize?

It was the hour of the judgment of the world, as it was the hour of the reception of the Son. It is well worth our while to consider whether we receive this word of eternal life. Are you placed on this new basis? What a basis! What a position! A position to which Satan cannot reach; an immutable position, beyond all that Satan has been able to do, and whither he cannot enter. What largeness of grace! May our ears be opened to hear all that the Son says to the Father when He pours forth His heart before Him concerning His own! And what a happy position is that into which He has brought us! How ashamed ought we not to be that we know so little of these things, and that we make so poor a use of them! What have we learnt of that which the Father says to the Son and the Son to the Father? If you were asked, What have you learnt of this love of the Father, what would you answer? But, on the other hand, remember that when Jesus says, They have kept thy word, He declares to us that His grace has placed us there. Look at His disciples: they were very ignorant, and what I have quoted is not to make you satisfied with remaining in ignorance and indifference; it should rather humble us, if we are in the same case. Rather should we be encouraged to profit by this position, in recognizing it as ours. "They are Thine." "They have kept Thy word." What grace! How precious is this grace! How should it urge us to seek the realization of all these things, so much the more precious as they manifest our gratitude; and if we are led in truth, we shall make account of it to glorify Him, who through His grace has so much loved us!

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST AS TO PROPHECY.

(See "Prospect," vol. ii. pp. 43-45.)

VII.—RUIN OF THE DISPENSATION.

ROMANS xi. teaches that the Gentile dispensation* was liable to failure, as the Jewish had failed before it. But the doctrine of Scripture goes much farther and declares that there would be a ruin or apostacy; nay, that the object to be at last judged was already in existence. But, before citing the direct and abundant testimony of the Word of God, it is to be premised that we must distinguish between the people of God in a dispensation, and the dispensation itself. There were many saints among the Jews, but the dispensation has been cut off. In every dispensation, man has failed, and the dispensation has been set aside, which will happen also to the present dispensation. God has never said that He will confirm to the end the Gentile dispensation. Nay, are going to see the reverse. God's faithfulness to the Church consists in preserving the faithful, not the dispensation of the Church. The existence of the dispensation depends on the faithfulness of man; the existence of the faithful depends on the faithfulness of God. The evil which has happened in our economy will increase by man's infidelity until this economy is cut off.

The greatest part of the difficulty, as to this subject, ordinarily felt by believers, is, that they confound the intentions of God as to the dispensation, with His counsels concerning the believers who are found in it. These counsels cannot fail to have their effect, but the dispensation may pass and terminate, (though having been to the glory of God, inasmuch as it has displayed His ways,) because the unfaithfulness of men rendered it unsuitable to be the means of manifesting His glory any longer. Then God, who knows beforehand what He will do, replaces it by another dispensation, in which man is set under another set of trials, and thus all the ways of God are manifested, and His manifold wisdom, in every manner, has its true display, even to the heavenly places.

Thus we see how distinct is the responsibility of man in any given economy, from the salvation of souls in that same economy. To confound these two things is to lose sight either of the grace of God on the one hand, or the responsibility of man on the other. Adam and Eve, formed in innocence, were tried in Eden; and they transgressed, but this hindered not the resource of divine goodness in the woman's Seed. Noah, again, was entrusted by God with the sword of government. The entire fall of this holy trust is quite another thing from his individual salvation, which, as to him and every saved soul, rested not upon his faithfulness to God, but upon God's faithfulness to him. So, on a larger scale, although the conduct of believers in Israel was necessarily modified and regulated by the Levitical Law, yet their personal deliverance, so far from depending upon the law, flowed from a totally opposite principle,—from the grace of God which bringeth salvation. The dispensation, as a whole, is judged, condemned, and displaced, because of its unfaithfulness to the trust which God committed to the charge of man; but the security of individuals, all through, is made good by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation, through that blood, existed before this economy, even as there will be saints in the time of Anti-Christ, but this hinders not the existence of the apostacy, for the Word of God affirms that the presence of Anti-Christ will be the sign that it is already arrived. (2 Thess. ii.)

Be it so, that this great apostacy is not yet consummated. Nevertheless, we are taught that the mystery of iniquity, which was already working from the apostolic time, was to continue, and that, on the removal of a hindrance, the wicked one was to be revealed whom the Lord should destroy by the epiphany of His presence, and that, before this, the apostacy should come. And what means all this if it be not the revelation of the ruin of the dispensation,—the revelation of an apostacy whose principles were already at work from the days of the apostle, and which only awaited the removal of the hindrance to be manifested in the grand, crowning agent of this wickedness, viz. the wicked one?

We see in the Word of God two great mysteries, which are developed during the present economy: the mystery of Christ, and the mystery of iniquity.

The counsels which are found engaged in the first have their accomplishment in heaven. The union of Christ's body with Him in glory is evidently to have its accomplishment on high. But, by the power of the Holy Ghost, there should have been on earth, during this economy, a manifestation of the union of the body of Christ. Here, however, the responsibility of man enters into this manifestation here below, though at the end all be to the glory of God. Wherefore, the dispensation may be in ruin, though the counsels of God never fail: on the contrary, our lie shall turn to His glory, while He judges us justly.

In this sphere of human responsibility, Satan may introduce himself from the moment that man rests not absolutely upon God. We know it by the experience of every day.

It is, then, revealed that the mystery of iniquity shall have its course. Here the question is not of counsels, but of an evil done in time. It is a question here of the mystery of iniquity: the apostacy, or revolt, is no mystery. There is no need of a revelation to tell us that a man who denies Jesus Christ is no Christian: he says so. But here there is an evil put in train within the bosom of Christendom in relation with Christianity, of which the wicked one is to be the full manifestation, as the glory of Christ and the Church will be the full accomplishment of the mystery of Jesus Christ. The word "iniquity" and the word "wicked one" are the same in the original, save that one indicates the thing; the other, the person; it is pre-eminently "the lawlessness" and the "lawless one." This mystery of iniquity, then, was put in train from the time of the apostle: later on, the veil would be taken away, the apostacy would be there, and, lastly, the wicked one find his end by the manifestation of Christ's coming. There was a principle of lawlessness actually at work, though in mystery, which was to continue and grow up, and, when the letter was removed, was to issue in the complete revelation of the man of sin, whose presence is after the energy of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, God Himself sending the lost an energy of error that they should believe a lie. That is, we have here described, not a mere secular power under which the world groaned, but a religious, though blasphemous, evil, intimately connected with, and resulting from, corrupted Christianity, as one of its chief sources. Thus is the economy to close. Such is the revelation of this passage. Also, as is to be seen elsewhere, this is to be in order to

* The word is used here, as it is ordinarily, to denote a certain state of things established by the authority of God, during a certain period of time.

introduce the glory and reign of Christ, that all the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

The Lord tells us that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man;" and "likewise also as it was in the days of Lot," &c. Yet there were saints there whom God preserved; but for all that, the world of their days was in a ruin-state. Even thus shall it be when the Son of man is revealed. The predicted state of the present economy at its close is to be analogous to the awful state of things which was then judged of the Lord—a state of apostacy. Compare 1 Tim. iv. 1-7. 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. In the one, a departure or apostacy from the faith chiefly in practical points; in the other, the return of Christendom to an awful condition, resembling heathenism in its moral evils, maintaining withal the form of godliness while its power is denied. In Rom. i., the Holy Ghost had spoken of the reprobate state of the Gentiles: these terrible characteristics were already true of the heathen. But in 2 Tim., we find that the same thing would be true, in the last days, of those who were professing Christians. They were to lapse into the worst moral evils of heathenism. The outwardly grossest are to be replaced by others of a subtler and worse character, from the rejection of a fuller light from God. From such the faithful were to turn away. Evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Is not that a state of ruin, when the description of Christendom is that men shall be such as the Gentiles, whom God gave up to a mind devoid of all judgment? (Compare Rom. i. ii. and 2 Tim. iii. in the Greek.) It is the general character of these perilous times, which demanded extraordinary warnings.

So in 1 John ii. 18, 19. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." The coming of the antichrist was a subject of warning even to the babes in Christ. "Even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time." Finally, the apostle directs the attention of the babes to the coming of the Saviour. The presence of antichrist is a sign of the ruin, not of the faithful, but of the economy as a whole, and of its speedy cutting off. The passage confirms the testimony, that the evil which was to be the occasion of excision was introduced from the beginning, and was to continue till God struck the blow of judgment, which should destroy the wicked one. This evil is here marked, not as infidelity, but as apostacy from Christianity. "They went out from us." It had set in even at that time. Antichristian evil was found to have its worst spring from the profession of Christ. The Word of God teaches us that the evil, which is the object of the judgment of the Lord Jesus at His return, had crept within the Church, even in apostolic days; that it should continue, and, in spite of God's patience and goodness, draw down judgment. See the entire epistle of Jude. Certain men had crept in unawares, foreordained to this condemnation. Although, at that moment, these persons might not have been yet so manifested, the apostle gives them, by the prophetic Spirit, these three characters: the natural hatred of the heart alienated from God, such as Cain's; the teaching of error for reward, like Balaam; and open rebellion against the priesthood and royalty of Christ, like that of Core. In this last state they perish. He says that *these* were they of whom Enoch prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh, &c. What was there already in the Church, was the direct mark for the judgment of Christ when He comes, and so predicted from the first. *Enoch prophesied of these.* The presence of saints does not hinder that. The evil which is to terminate by open revolt and to be judged at Christ's advent, was found in the Church. What impression does this epistle produce, if it be not a warning to a faithful remnant against a terrible evil which was to bring on judgment—an evil found within the bosom of the Church, of which the state of Sodom and Gomorrah and the fallen angels presented the frightful, but just, picture? Was it not a state of fall and ruin, which might be only in the bud, it is true, at that time, but whose traits and doom were not hidden from the Spirit of prophecy in the apostle? If there is obscurity in all that, there is at least in this obscurity a terrible shade, which God has put there, and which should induce us not to glide so easily by; above all, when the subject in question is one so grave as the destiny of the Church. And here I have an important remark to make. This epistle of Jude, which treats especially of the ruin, like that of St. John, which puts believers on their guard against antichrist, is not addressed to a Church, but to the faithful in general, as having a common interest, a common destiny. As much may be said of 2 Peter, which also speaks of it, though having a character more in connection with Christians from among the Jews.

VIII.—THE OLIVE TREE.—Rom. xi.

The apostle had concluded all under sin without difference, the Jew having only added transgressions under the law: and he had closed the account of the privileges of the saints in the eighth chapter. Not, it is true, on the ground of the elevation of Christ to be head of the body, (that is the subject of the Ephesians,) but on a principle of a headship of Christ going beyond Abraham and David, and extending to a position which answered to that of Adam, the figure of Him that was to come—the new resurrection Man. This blotted out the idea of Israel as to distinctive *position before God.* Lifted up from the earth, He was to draw all men in a new way. God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews. The free gift had all men for its object. The consequent blessings are then enquired into; the presence of the Holy Ghost,—they were called, justified, and glorified, and never to be separated from God's love in Christ Jesus. This closes the eighth chapter.

But then naturally arises the question: If Jews and Gentiles are indiscriminately admitted by faith, what comes of the promises made to Israel as God's people? This question the apostle answers in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters, shewing that God had foretold that they would be a disobedient and gainsaying people, as they had in fact stumbled at the stumbling stone. The question then, here discussed, is not Church privileges, but how to reconcile their being indiscriminate with the distinctive promises to Israel. And, therefore, (chap. xi.) the apostle asks, Has God cast away His people? And here he comes entirely on earthly ground: for Israel never were, and never will be, and were never promised to be, a heavenly people; whereas, the Church, in its higher and distinctive and proper privileges, was a heavenly people, and had Christ's suffering portion for them upon earth. They were sitting in heavenly places in Him; but they were to have a place *actually* on earth; and here they replaced for a time Israel. But that did not at all set aside the promises to Israel as such—there was no blending of them. A Jew, or circumcision, was nothing now. One displaced the other on earth. In heaven the distinction was unknown. Christ was the head of the body in heaven, but He was no Messiah of the Gentiles upon earth, though the Gentiles were to trust in Him, so that the apostle could justify himself by the Old Testament.

But then, how reconcile these things? God had not cast away His people. First, He had reserved an elect remnant. Secondly. it was to provoke, as He had declared He would, to jealousy, His ancient people; therefore, not to cast them off. Thirdly, Israel would be saved as a whole by Christ's coming again and going forth from Zion. But this last, instead of blending, was preceded by the threat of utterly cutting off the Gentile branches. Now, it is quite clear that this cannot refer to the heavenly body of Christ, (for it cannot be so cut off,) but to God's dealings with them on earth. And this is yet more evident, because the Israelites are said to be grafted into their *own* olive tree, which clearly has nothing to do with the Church as a heavenly body: because that is not their olive tree any more than a Gentile's. All were alike here, children of wrath. There was no difference. It was one God, and one Mediator between God and *man*, the man Christ Jesus. But there was an administration of promises, and immutable promises, which did *naturally* belong to them. The Gentiles came in here, inasmuch as, being united to Christ the true seed of Abraham, they come into the promises and blessing of Abraham. But on repentance, Israel down here on earth will be grafted into their own olive tree, where we are now contrary to nature. But all this "naturally," and "contrary to nature," has no place in our proper church position: all is beyond nature, and contrary to nature there. Yea, though we had known Christ after the flesh, (and He was seed of David according to the flesh, and Abraham was the Jew's father after the flesh)—but, though we had known Christ after the flesh, we were now to know Him no more, though we recognize His title. The glory of the Mes-

siah of Israel will be established, but not on the principles, though both be received by grace, on which the Church is set in heaven; because there can be no Israel known there. They have their *own* olive tree down here, and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. But in Christ, as known to the Church, there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all. The Church of heavenly places has put on Christ, and knows nothing else.

And it is because the Church at Jerusalem did yet, as to earth, refer to this special place of Jews, according to the mind of God Himself, (and not as if it did not itself enter into the full heavenly privileges,) according to the sermon of Acts iii., where the unbelieving Jews are still treated as the children of the covenant which God made with Abraham—that the Pentecostal Church has been spoken of as having a Jewish character. It is not that those who composed it did not form part of the heavenly Church and body of Christ; but that God, till Jerusalem had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost about a glorified Christ, as she had rejected a humble Christ, did not finally cast her off as having no more hope. She had deserved it, indeed, but God answered the intercession of Christ *for that nation* upon the cross, by the Spirit in the mouth of Peter, in Acts iii., (as indeed as a nation He will hereafter, only in a remnant saved by grace) telling them that now, if they repented, He would send Jesus, and the times of refreshing would come. But when He called, there was still "*none to answer*," and judgment, though with long patience, took its course. And Paul appears (Col. i.) as minister of the Church, to fulfil the word of God, and of the Gospel, to every creature under heaven; and the full heavenly indiscriminate character of the one body is brought out. Nobody ever dreamt that the Jewish saints were not of it; but they justly discerned the blessed patient dealings of God with His ancient and beloved people—the nation for which Christ died, and for which He interceded—and the full bringing out of the doctrine of that heavenly body which knew no difference of Jew within itself at all, nor Christ Himself after the flesh, while it recognized the truth of all the rest.*

IX.—DIFFERENCE OF POSITION IN GLORY.

Difference there is. The Saviour recognizes the setting on His right hand and on His left; and many other passages prove it. Now, if this depend on the blood of Christ, this would attribute a various value to it: make it uncertain and imperfect in the extent of its efficacy. The blood of the Lamb gives to all their sole title to be in the glory, and gives to all an equal and perfect justification from sin; and therefore, in its effect, there can be no difference: to suppose a difference is to call in question the completeness of its efficacy. But there is a difference: and this, while the title to be in the glory is for all in the blood, depends therefore on something else. It is, in the accomplishment of the counsels of God the Father, given to those for whom it is prepared; and given, (though man is not in the least the judge of that labour, and there are first that shall be last, and last first,) according to the working and energy of the Spirit of God, and faithfulness through grace in service. God does what He will with His own. Still we know that, in doing so, He displays what He is, and is consistent with Himself; and position and reward answer to the sovereignty of God, which has given us a position, and the operation of the Spirit, by which we have walked in it. It is the sovereignty of God, we know from the Lord's answer to the sons of Zebedee, and the parable in Matt. xx. It is the fruit of labour, as we know from 1 Cor. iii. 8; the parables, Luke xix. and Matt. xxv.; 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20, 2 John iii. I suppose it will not be questioned that this work is through the efficacious operation of the Spirit of God.

X.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

The question is not whether the Church can take these directions, and use them by the Spirit, for her guidance. If they are *addressed* to others than the Church, then a condition is found to have existed to which the testimony of Christ applies, but which is not the Church. If it is solely and exclusively the Church, then there is no example (here at least) of disciples other than the Church; and we are to take the disciples as being, during the lifetime of Jesus, the Church; and the proper and peculiar blessedness of that body, in the unity of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, becomes a mere casual difference.

I say, then, that the disciples were not then the Church, though they afterwards became the first nucleus of it, and that the sermon on the mount is not addressed to the Church, nor could be; though the Church now has it for its guide in its walk. If I say to one who has never been at court, You cannot join the king's court but in a court dress. It is clear that he will have to wear the court dress when there; for what I say means that that is the dress that suits the court; but the man, as yet, does not form part of the king's court. But farther, the kingdom of heaven is not the Church; and while *we* enter into it in the way of being the Church, others may enter into it in another way, as the Jews and others during the millennium; and this dress prescribed in the sermon on the mount may be as needed for those who are to enter in *in that way*, as for those who, by this new form of the manifold wisdom of God, become the Church of God in earth. Thus, when it is said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," this may be true of those who shall inherit the earth in a millennial way, and I believe will be true, and more literally and immediately true than it is of the Church, and that to confine it to the Church as exclusively true of it, is only ignorance. This shews the bearing of the question. Then, as to the fact, I say that the disciples were not then the Church, and could not be addressed as the Church; Christ being not yet dead and risen again, and the Spirit not given. They were addressed in their then condition. And is there any great wonder in that?

But farther. Could one in the Church, a Christian now, as it has been put by one opposed to my view, have sat on the mount with the disciples, and listened with the disciples to this sermon, as addressed to himself as well as to them? I answer at once, No. He would have said, How blessed to my soul are these instructions; what a guide to my feet in this dark world; how my soul delights in them, and in Him who gave them! But he would have felt that they were *addressed* to them, and not to him. He was in the kingdom, he had the secret of the Lord, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. And this one word, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," would at once make him feel, "This is for them, addressed exclusively to them." It is impossible that such language as, "Ye shall in no case enter," can be addressed to those who are already within, who are in and of the kingdom. It gives the immediate consciousness that the address is to others, though it may at the same time give the consciousness that the principles addressed belong to those that are within. That they got new instructions, belonging to the remnant, is most true—such as would not have suited any others. That this remnant became the nucleus of the Church, and carried these instructions along with them into it, is equally true. But they were not then addressed as the Church, nor even as being in the kingdom; nor could they be, for neither were set up. And this sermon is in prospect of the setting up *of the kingdom*, and shews the qualities and persons suited to it before it was so set up, and in no case even alludes to the Church.

For my own part, though a practical direction in principle, I have no doubt that verse 25 applies to the then position of Christ with the nation, and that the nation is now suffering the consequences of not acting on the principle there stated. I add, that while all the teaching here remains eternally true for every one, yet that, as it stands here, it could be addressed now neither to saint nor sinner. Not to a saint; for it is a question of entering into the kingdom of heaven. Not to sinners; for it is not an address of grace to them at all, nor is redemption once mentioned at all, but doing Christ's sayings *as the ground of entry*. (See vii. 21.) To say that it will be true as regards heaven for us, is avoiding the question. It is running an analogy, and a just one; but it is not what is said or treated in the sermon on the mount. I affirm, then, that the sermon on the mount was addressed to the disciples in their then state; and I should think it very natural that it should be so. But their then state was not that of the Church, but very far indeed from it.

* And I am fully persuaded that the more spiritual discernment there is, the more it will be perceived that, while there was the same life, and grace, and salvation, for all believers, and all were in the Church, St. Paul held a place in ministry proper to himself; a dispensation or administration of the grace of God committed unto him, in which he was quite alone, and none at all like him. He recognized all the rest; but he stood, called independently, into an independent place, for a special and distinct service, and peculiar and distinctive sufferings. None other speaks the least like him in his relationship to the saints and Churches; while, there is no doubt, he preached the same Gospel of salvation. None were the head of a system entrusted to them *in the same manner*. The special doctrine was, Christ among the Gentiles, the hope of glory; and the unity of the body, the Church, with the gathering of all things into one in Christ, and the glory and principles connected with this. It was *his* Gospel.

REVIEWS.

THE TABERNACLE OF ISRAEL: ITS HOLY FURNITURE AND VESSELS. Drawn on a uniform scale: with Coloured Metallic Illuminations of Gold, Silver, Brass, &c., to represent as nearly as possible the costly materials of the original.

London: Samuel Bagster & Sons.

THIS beautiful series of plates will consist, we are told, of twelve engravings of the holy vessels and their coverings. The drawings of the tabernacle itself, with its coverings, it is proposed to make a second series of seven or eight illuminated plates, drawn on a uniform scale, with full explanations. A third series, exhibiting the garments of the priesthood, is in preparation.

Four parts of the first series lie before us, containing each two admirably executed engravings. They are: "the ark, with its coverings;" "the brazen altar;" "the altar partly covered;" "the laver;" "the table of shew bread, with its coverings;" "the altar of incense;" "the coverings of the incense altar;" and "the candlestick."

The author begins with the ark and mercy-seat. "The first holy vessel described, and commanded by the Lord to be made, was the ark, with its cover—the mercy-seat. It ranked the highest of all the vessels of the tabernacle, was alone placed in the holy of holies, and was the one vessel in reference to which all the ministrations and ritual of the tabernacle service were conducted. Before this vessel the holy perfume yielded its perpetual fragrance; the incense altar was placed also with direct reference to it; the blood of the sin-offering of atonements was annually sprinkled on it and before it; and the costly vail was its covering. Indeed, without it, all the other vessels of the sanctuary, and all the service of the priests, would have been comparatively useless and powerless; because it was over the mercy-seat that Jehovah dwelt, and manifested his glory; and all worship, and every act of devotion, must be conducted alone with reference to Him, and derives its blessing alone from the sanction and power of his presence.

"It might have been expected that the ark, being the most holy and important vessel of the sanctuary, would have been described last in order, and would have been deposited last in the tabernacle itself, after the court around had been reared up, and the other vessels had been arranged in their places. Such, however, is not the order of God. His way is to lead first and at once, direct to the highest and holiest thing, and into the highest and holiest place. To make Himself known, and to bring into His own presence and glory, has ever been his purpose; and faith has ever had no lower object, has expected no lower end." (Page 1.)

The unchanging holiness of God, and His essential hatred against sin, ever was and ever will be true. And the ark was His throne, whereon He sat in relationship with His people, the mercy-seat being its basis and the cherubim its supporters. Within that ark was laid the law, or testimony of His requirements, and over this was the mercy-seat covering it in, the blood being sprinkled upon it and before it. (i.e. the double aspect of that which was needed by the Sovereign, and done for His people.) This was within the vail, where God communed with Moses of all the things which He gave him in commandment unto the children of Israel.

The following is the view here taken of the cherubim. "Some have thought these figures betokened angels, and that their bending posture towards the mercy-seat is explained by that text, 'which things the angels desire to look into.' (1 Peter i. 12.) And in many pictorial representations of the mercy-seat, we see them represented in a kneeling posture, as if in adoration. Others have thought that the cherubim here symbolize the Church. But the construction itself, as well as uses, of the mercy-seat, seem to preclude either of these interpretations of the type. The cherubim are distinctly stated to be 'OF the mercy-seat' and 'OUT OF the mercy-seat.' (Exod. xxv. 19; xxxvii. 8.) And this is still more apparent in the Hebrew, where the preposition used in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses of chapter xxv., and the seventh and eighth verses of chapter xxxvii., and translated '*on* the mercy-seat' and '*on* the two ends,' &c., should properly be translated '*from*.' Also, as to the word translated in Exod. xxv. 10, 'beaten work,' and Exod. xxxvii. 7, 'beaten out of one piece,' the meaning seems to be, that the cherubim were not cast or moulded separately from the mercy-seat, and then attached to it, but were beaten out of the solid mass of gold which formed the mercy-seat, the one being beaten from out of the one end, and the other from the other. Angels cannot, then, be typified here by the cherubim; for, if they were, it would imply that they form part of the seat of God's mercy, and would thus stand very much in the place in which popery has set them, as the agents for procuring or exhibiting the mercy of God, derogating thereby from the person and work of the Lord Jesus Himself, who is the only way of approach to God, and the one through whom alone God can shew his grace and mercy to us; for 'there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' (Acts iv. 12.) The same argument would equally apply, if the Church were symbolized by the cherubim on the mercy-seat. The Church would thus become what, indeed, false systems have made it,—the platform from whence God dispenses his grace,—instead of the body which has received his grace. The mercy-seat and cherubim, being all of one piece, represents, it is believed, Christ as the one who holds all the glorious power of God, associated with mercy, and in and through whom God is able to display his power and righteousness, ever inseparably linked on with mercy and grace." (Pages 5, 6.)

Other opportunities may be afforded, if the Lord will, for stating what we believe to be the true bearing of these types, when allusion may perhaps be made more particularly to the details of this work.

EDWIN SMITH'S MODEL OF ANCIENT JERUSALEM.

EDWIN SMITH'S MODEL OF JERUSALEM, AS IT NOW IS.

THE former of these neat and accurate models will be found very helpful to the Biblical student. As regards the latter, it has a melancholy interest; and as in spirit we sit and muse upon its desolations, as it has been trodden down of the Gentiles, who may describe what Jerusalem shall be? But, as we look on her in bondage with her children, it is sweet to remember that the time is short, and the Lord will say to Zion: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me .... All flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."

It may be added, that many well known travellers have attested the extreme accuracy of the model of Jerusalem and the adjacent country.

EDWIN SMITH'S PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATION OF JERUSALEM, entitled PICTURATÆ HIEROSOLYMÆ TRANSPOSITIONES; in which Jerusalem is represented as it was, and as it is.

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EDWIN SMITH'S PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE TABERNACLE, entitled PICTURATÆ TABERNACULI TRANSPOSITIONES; by which the Tabernacle is presented in a series of Eight Changes.

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THE PROSPECT.

"THE DAYS ARE AT HAND, AND THE EFFECT OF EVERY VISION."—EZEKIEL, XII. 23.

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MOSES IN EGYPT; OR, PROVIDENCE AND FAITH.

(Exod. ii. Acts vii. Heb. xi.)

THE same principles which accompany the moral deadness of the unbeliever, may be found in the believer, weakening and hindering his simplicity in following Christ. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It is true, the believer is not in the flesh, (Rom. viii. 8,) and through grace he can please God; yet the flesh is in him, and, so far as it is unjudged, it will prove a sure and sad obstacle in the path of faith. Hence, there is not an evil in the unregenerate heart of man which the regenerate can afford to despise. The tendency, nay, the root of all, is in his own heart, although, as a believer baptized into Christ's death, he is entitled to say that he is crucified with Christ—the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts. This is his strength. He *has* died, and he that is dead is freed, is justified from sin. And if dead, how shall we live any longer therein? But then, although in God's estimate this is a fact, and He has identified the believer with the death and resurrection of Christ, yet is it a fact which faith alone realizes. The experience of the believer is the constant, painful witness that the flesh is within, ever seeking to display its enmity to God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Practically, he finds that the flesh is alive and actively energetic toward evil, and that struggling with it is not the way to gain the victory, because it is not God's remedy for it, and therefore not the resource of faith. Such is not the way in which the Spirit, by the apostle, instructs us to deal with sin. For, after having said, "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," he also adds, "let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." The faith that would reckon us dead to sin in Christ's death, wherein the sentence of God was executed upon it, is the power which gives us practically the victory over its efforts in each day's experience. But if the believer, ignorant of this blessed weapon which the divine armoury supplies him, attempts to face the enemy with some puny instrument of his own, is it wonderful that he fails in the encounter? If, after being justified by faith, he puts himself under law as regards the daily train of Christian conversation, is it strange that the offence again abounds, that the perverseness of the flesh is afresh stirred into activity, that the law is once more proved to be a ministry of condemnation? No! it is the sense of grace, it is the sense of what God's grace has done in uniting us to One who is raised from the dead, far above the claims of law and the effects of sin, into His own holy and blessed acceptance in the presence of God; it is this, kept bright and fresh before and in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which enables us to bring forth fruit unto God. "For sin," says the apostle, "shall not have dominion over you: *for* ye are NOT *under the law, but* UNDER GRACE." The unconverted man, if he thinks at all about God and his soul, naturally and necessarily puts himself under law, and proves it to be a ministry of death. The tendency of the converted man is to do the same as regards his walk, if not as regards his salvation; and, so far as he slips aside into legalism, he is powerless for God, and certain to be immersed in worldliness. Let us then, dear brethren, hold fast *grace*, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire. Granted that the flesh would say, let us continue in sin that grace may abound; still, the cure is not to throw away that which is the alone spring of holiness as well as of salvation. The grace of God not only brings us salvation, but teaches us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus ii. 12.)

But it is far more ensnaring to the believer when there is a partial recognition of God in *His actings*, which Satan turns to account by making him indifferent to the question of *God's will*. A familiar instance of this, and one that is corrected by the Word of God, appears in the too prevalent habit, which some Christians would even justify, of looking to providences; in other words, walking by sight rather than by faith. But the believer is called to walk as seeing Him who is invisible. "We serve the Lord Christ." It is a comparatively easy thing to act as circumstances seem to prompt, and if these circumstances become a supposed divine rule of action to me, this is precisely to abandon the march of faith for providences. Alas! into how many ditches will this blind guide lead the unwary, or the unfaithful Christian? Even the wretched, unbelieving world likes to talk of "Providence" in the abstract. It demands no faith; nay, it is a shutting outside of a present, acting God, who condescends to lead His children with His eye; of a God whom we have known in Jesus—who has brought Himself nigh to us, and us nigh to Himself. They prefer to have an abstraction of their minds to discuss, rather than to be brought so close to the living God. "Providence" is a familiar and palatable word, where "God manifest in the flesh" would sound strange and unwelcome. So, practically, it needs little spirituality to see the hand of God in circumstances; but it requires much power of the Spirit to understand their bearing, and to discern the path of Christ in their midst. What is unseen, not what is seen, ought alone to guide the faithful. And hence the necessity of an undivided heart, of a single eye. Only thus is the body full of light. If the circumstances fill my eye, instead of Christ, I am sure to go astray. It is not that one would deny the providential dealings of God, or that a Christian can overlook them without loss. What is affirmed is, that no circumstances can rightly be the guide for Christian action, and that all circumstances ought to be judged in the light of the perfect Word of God. Nay, I believe that while God, on the one hand, frequently overrules circumstances in default of our faith; on the other, He often orders circumstances so as to be a test of fidelity or of its absence. In other words, a Christian may find himself in a position not of his own seeking, but of God's superintendence, which nevertheless faith has to relinquish, and not to abide in, though divine providence may have placed one there. Of this the scriptural history of Moses furnishes a striking example. I do not speak now of the faith which marked the parents of Moses, for faith it was, and not parental affection merely, which led them for three months to hide their child; "they were not afraid of the king's commandment." (Heb. xi. 23.) Nor do I allude to the overruling hand of God, who met their faith, and so arranged events as to accomplish His future purposes respecting Moses and His people. It is the conduct of Moses himself, which is so full of instruction to the man of God who would learn the true place of faith in relation to providential circumstances.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Now, here we learn that assurely as providence carried him into the house of Pharaoh, faith led him out. Never was a providential dealing more strongly imprinted with the finger of God than the one before us. In spite of the royal ordinance, Pharaoh's daughter took up the outcast Moses and nourished him for her own son. The providence of God had placed him in an illustrious position, unsought, unexpected. Educated too as became it, he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Why not use his ability and his wisdom—why not use the influence which his exalted rank gave him, and his nearness to the most princely personages in the realm—why not wisely and thankfully turn such evident gifts of providence to the service of God's people? What a blessing it would be to see Pharaoh the tyrant transformed into Pharaoh the patron of Israel! And what enterprize more worthy of one who, without a wish or effort of his own, had been so strangely brought into the

circle of the throne of this world? What return would he make to that august person who had lavished such kindness upon him? And for what end had God wrought so wonderfully, if not that Moses should employ Egypt's sceptre for the emancipation and advancement of God's people? But, no! faith at once disposes of all such reasonings founded on providences. "*By faith* Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." The simple question to him was, *Will it please God?* Where are God's affections? Are they not *with His people?* The people may be suffering, wretched, and discreditable. They may little understand and ill requite the love and faith that could renounce all. They might greatly prefer the patronage of the son of Pharaoh's daughter to a self-sacrificing Moses, who refused such a place, choosing rather to suffer with them; but it was enough for Moses that the poor captives were *God's people.* It was *not* enough that his heart was with them and himself far away in the splendid court of Egypt. His single eye judged all that Pharaoh's daughter could offer to be the pleasures of sin. He deliberately resigned the glittering honours and the worldly influence which providence had strewn around him, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. With whom was God identified? With Pharaoh's palace, or with Israel in the iron furnace? Had he followed *providences,* he would have sought to succour and relieve, and perhaps ultimately to deliver, Israel, through the advantages which his position furnished; but it was faith which led him to estrange himself from the world and identify himself with the people of God. The world hates God's people, and may be permitted to enslave them; but can the world bless God's people? Surely, not. And Moses would have shrunk, as a man of faith, from the thought of yielding to the world such a place. It would be to assert that the world is greater; for, beyond all question, the less is blessed of the greater. Therefore it was that Moses gives all up, and rests only upon God. His desire was not to save himself loss, suffering, reproach: he chose it rather, because God was there; and Moses desired to be where God was, and with those whom God loved. How the actings of Moses only reflected the feelings of God for His people, may be gathered by reading Exodus iii. 7, 8, 9.

Thus, we see that providence may place in a position which God would have us not use, but leave. It may seem the most favorable possible in outward things; but faith judges the contrary, because faith looks not to our honor, but to God's; not to our ease, but to His deliverances. Faith rests on the promises of God to His people, and has respect to the recompence of the reward.

SIMPLE OUTLINES OF PROPHETIC TRUTH.

No. 4.—THE REST THAT REMAINETH FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

(Heb. iv.*)

By "the rest that remaineth for the people of God," I venture to submit, is meant *God's rest in the finished new creation*—the rest upon which God will enter when he shall have accomplished fully his wonderful announcement: "Behold, I make all things new."

To participate with Him in that rest, is to "enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God." The people of God shall enter into that, *His* rest, and then God shall be all in all." Then shall have come THE END, in very deed. Beyond that there can be nothing. God's purposes and counsels shall then have all wrought out their latest and most wonderful results, and *God's rest,* the sabbath-keeping that remaineth for the people of God, when God shall be all in all, shall be their perfect and eternal consummation.

Any idea of the rest, then, that comes short of that rest, is an idea that, to some extent at least, comes short of the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Not until that period will the people of God, in the full and proper sense of the expression, have entered into His rest.

It is quite true, indeed, that "we which have believed *do enter* into rest;" that is, *we are even now entering* into it. Yet our entrance shall not be completed until we enter, after the final judgment, into the new heavens and new earth, into the post-millennial and eternal state. We *are entering* indeed already; that is, we have entered therein partly in some blessed and true respect even now, and shortly we shall enter in a far higher sense; but in the full and proper sense, we repeat it, our entrance will not take place till the remote period we have pointed out.

For there are stages, so to speak, by which we enter into that rest, and there are, it may be said, *day's works* in the accomplishing of the new creation. Just as at the first, in the accomplishment of the first and now ruined creation, there were successive day's works done, and consequent rests, or stages of rest, reached as the result of each day's work—for as God looked upon the work of each, "he saw that it was good"—so in the new creation there may be said to be successive acts done, and successive stages of rest arrived at. Yet, properly and fully, "God rested" only "on the seventh day;" not until that day, and the completion of the first creation. Nor, in like manner, will He rest again the second time, nor consequently shall we enter into His rest, in the full and proper sense of that expression, till the last day's work of the new creation shall be finished. Then, and not till then, will God again and indeed "rest upon the seventh day," or rather, upon *the eighth day,* the last great day of all.

I.—Let us endeavour to look a little at some of the further details of this stupendous work, and then, II., at the rest that shall ensue. May we be guided rightly, and profited, and humbled greatly in the research!

And, first, as to the meaning of the term "rest," when applied to, and spoken of, God. It was not, certainly, because God was *fatigued* that He "rested the seventh day." The Most High, assuredly, fainteth not, neither is wearied. In what sense, then, was He said *to rest?* Was it not, we may consequently ask, in this sense that He then entered upon, as it were, a season of very high delight, of very full and holy satisfaction? He beheld the works that He had made, He beheld them all, He surveyed them all searchingly, and throughout all their "fearfully and wonderfully made parts and proportions; and He said: "Behold, they are very good." Was not this the expression of the next, wherewith He rested on the seventh day? "Behold, it is very good!" Meet and comprehensive setting forth of holy and exalted rest, of full delight and perfect approbation!

2. But man's sin almost immediately broke in upon and interrupted this rest. The creation thereupon fell into a state of ruin. Could the eye of the Creator rest upon it any longer? Could He behold it still, and still say: "Behold, it is very good?" Indeed, He could not. His rest was thenceforth at an end. What would be the result? What, in fact, did ensue?

3. God began to unfold His purpose, then, that there should be a new creation; and He at once commenced, as it were, the requisite preparatory labours. He began creation work afresh. He began to work anew. Is there not something like this thought conveyed to us in those words, which were spoken by our Lord unto the Jews—words called forth by their mistaken notions as to that first rest—the seventh-day rest, "*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work?*" They were quite in the dark as to the true position of that question. With the mind and thoughts of God respecting it, consequently, they had no sympathy. Moses only was read by them, and the veil was upon their heart. That God's eye looked (not backward to the completion of an old creation that sin had subsequently ruined and despoiled, but) forward to a new creation, and to a *future sabbath,* when none of the evils that had come upon the first creation should any longer have existence—that this was truly how the question now stood, was a thing quite unthought of as yet by them. But, so it was: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." God was working, rather than resting, now. A Jew, under the law of bondage, that schoolmaster to him, teaching him chiefly the story of ruin and condemnation, might fitly and

* The argument of Heb. iv. is, that, for the believer, there is no rest in the wilderness. *God* cannot rest in the corrupt and sorrowful world that now is, and so He is introducing the new man into a new world, where we are to share His own rest. Meanwhile, all around is evil, and therefore there can be no rest in it for God or His people. *There remaineth, therefore,* a rest. The allusion is not to the rest which faith appropriates in regard to justification from sin through the blood of Christ. We should not be told to labour to enter into *that* rest. *Christ* has laboured, He has suffered, and those who have had no share therein enjoy the blessed fruit of His toil. But the object of this chapter is to point out the analogy of our present circumstances to those of Israel in the desert, labouring to enter into rest. The sabbath was not that rest; neither was Canaan; for after both David spoke of another and future rest. There remained, therefore, a sabbatism to God's people, to whom there would have been a cessation from labour, if they had entered into rest. But such is not the case. God at the beginning rested, but that was spoilt by sin. He will not—cannot rest till all His counsels are accomplished, and all is gathered under Christ. Then will be *His* rest; not before. Neither should *we* rest before. Let us *labour,* therefore, to enter into that rest.—I am not certain that the writer coincides with this exposition, but I believe it to be the true one, and add it to avoid mistake, as some sentences here and there seem to lack distinctness of thought as to what rest is really meant.—Ed.

properly enough keep Jewish sabbaths, for with the ruined, old creation he had most to do; but the Father and the Son were now occupied with other thoughts, and in other ways. They were *working* in order to bring about a new creation, and neither of them could *keep a sabbath* till that wondrous work should be accomplished. There might indeed be some rest attained to; assuredly: there would be a measure of true satisfaction experienced, as "each successive act of new-creating work was done—but *the rest* would commence, properly and fully speaking, only when the whole should be accomplished. Till that consummation it should still be said: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

4. Hence, let us remark here, the changing of the day of worship and of rest from *the seventh day* to *the Lord's day*. Christ was risen. He was risen as the Head of a new creation. The primitive Church knew this, and knew its union with Him, thus risen. Nothing but the thought of a new creation could lead it to observe a day of rest. The Church's rest-day (so far as it knew one at all) commemorated new creation. *Resurrection* pointed to *an eighth-day rest*; to a future, not a by-gone, rest; to "the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

5. As to the *order of events* in this work of new creation, might not one remark as to it, that, viewed in contrast with the order of events of the first creation, it is on the whole *an inverted order? The man*, in the first instance, was not created until the sixth and last of the days of creation-labour. His creation was the last and crowning act of the creation. But in the new creation, the work *begins with man*. And how fitting that it should! For where began the awful progress of the work of ruin? *In the soul of man*. The Almighty had, last of all, breathed into him the breath of life, and then man became a living soul. The ruin began just there. Man's soul was lifted up with proud desires, and fell away from intercourse with God: *man's soul morally died*. Just here then commences, and most rightly so, the work of restoration of palingenesis. The work, however, shall be extended to man's body, and ultimately to the whole creation—to the world itself. But the creating a new heavens and new earth will, in this case, be the last and crowning act. And thus, as we have said, *the order* of the new world is the inverse of the old.

II.—Let us now glance at some of the successive stages of this new creation, by which the rest that remaineth for the people of God will be ushered in.

And, first, surely we may say that one grand act towards it was done when "God gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." By this act was provided the person who was to be the HEAD of the new creation. His birth was on this wise: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, [the virgin,] and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Behold this Holy One! It is the Lord from heaven, in the body which had been prepared for Him. And though all that could be said of the first man was, that he was a *living soul*, it is declared of this Holy One that *He is a quickening and life-giving Spirit*. In such hands, the new creation will be secured from the possibility of any such catastrophe as that which befell the old one. The Lord from heaven is found in fashion as a man, and *an indissoluble link* will thus bind the new creation in the full and eternal security of its great Creator. What a *day's work* this! A man without sin! yea more, God manifested in flesh! Twice did the Father speak from heaven directly, and express the complacency wherewith He rested in Jesus. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," was the testimony when the Lord had been baptized. (Matt. iii. 17.) And again: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him," was the testimony when He was transfigured. (Matt. xvii. 5.)

2. *The resurrection of Jesus* seems to come in as properly the next step towards a new creation. It had behoved Him to suffer death. There was a hindrance in the way of any deliverance of fallen, ruined man, and an equal hindrance to any deliverance of the fallen and ruined creation. There must be death by grace, for there had been sin. There must be the shedding of blood, or there could be no remission of the penalty of sin, i.e. subjection to vanity and ruin. The resurrection follows, as God's answer to the value of His blood and death, as a thing most certain: "For it was not possible that He should be holden of death." See, then, the risen Head of the new creation! There can now be no further hindrance to the wondrous work. There may be suspense. Even the purposes of mercy and longsuffering may require delay; but THE NEW CREATION may be regarded as even finished thenceforth. "Before God," whom we have believed, it was so, for He "calleth things that are not," seeing that such things certainly shall be, "as though they were." Yet, as to actual fact, they are done only by successive operations, or courses of operation. But here, in the resurrection of Jesus, we see a proof and pledge that, not man's soul only shall be quickened in the new creation, but man's vile and mortal body also. For Jesus rose, "*the first-fruits* of them that slept." There will, therefore, be *after-fruits*; there will follow *a harvest* of resurrection, or new creation, bodies. Jesus arose the "*first-begotten from the dead*," the "first-born" from the dead "of every creature," the "first-born among many brethren," the bodies of all of whom, (as well as *their* souls) shall ultimately be thus born again in resurrection, and created anew, and "fashioned like unto his glorious body." Doubtless, the Father rested, with increased reality of actual accomplishment, when Jesus had thus risen and ascended, and sat down at His own right hand. Now too, doubtless, in a very full and proper sense, did the Lord Jesus Himself enter into His Father's rest. For in a true and very important sense He had finished the work which had *been given Him to do*. And having finished his work, He entered into His rest. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own work as God did from his." So Jesus, having suffered, "entered into His rest," "*entered into His glory*," His "glorious rest." Stupendous *day's work* this! Let us seek *rest* even in the simple contemplation of it. Let us meditate upon this "exceeding greatness of his (God's) mighty power," this "working of his mighty power, *which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead*, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" when he "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 19-23.)

3. We may now see how it is that "we who have believed *do enter*," or *are entering*, "into rest." Jesus hath entered into rest, as we have seen; let us now see *how we are made to participate* in new creation and new creation rest. Let us see too how the word is even yet true: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Behold the labour of the blessed Jesus, as seen in Matt. xi. 28, 29: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." To learn of Jesus, then, and to become meek and lowly in heart, is to *find rest* unto our souls. To all who come unto Jesus will He *give rest*, yea, the true commencement of the rest that remaineth for the people of God. For the rest here offered is rest *in Christ Jesus*. "And if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is *a new creature*;" he is the subject of a new creation. The root and foundation of the "meekness and lowliness of heart," which accompany the taking on us Christ's yoke, are found only in one that is thus a new creature. There must be, in order to such rest, *a new nature, a new heart*. Here, then, we see how *fallen man* is first brought into participation, incipient participation, of the rest that remaineth for the people of God. He is made partaker of the *new life* of the future period; "he tastes" at least this one "of the powers of the world to come," if we may so apply a phrase which relates to external things. His soul is created anew already. He is already risen from the dead, as to his spirit. Thus it was declared by Jesus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (John v. 25.) Here, then, is seen another wondrous stage in the progress of making all things new. The living Head we have beheld already. Here we see the living members. There was *life* in the risen Head indeed for any upon whom death had past; but the multitude "would not come unto Him, that they might have life." But *to all who should believe in Him*, that life, which was in Him for all, would be actually imparted. And, assuredly, this portion of the work of new creation would bring with it, and to all the subjects of it, a true degree of blessed rest. Yea, "the Lord of peace" would give to such "peace always by all means." And the Lord Jesus would impart His

peace to them. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (John xiv. 27.) Yea, the more they should "learn of Jesus," the more deep and true should be their rest. The more they become "meek and lowly in heart," the more sweet and perpetual would be their enjoyment of peace. True indeed it is, then, that "we which have believed *are entering* into rest." We have entered, we are entering, we shall ultimately enter, into His rest.*

4. There is a further step towards *the rest*, which must not be overlooked, but which is, or will be, nevertheless limited to a portion only of the people of God: namely, "to die in the Lord, and to rest from their labours," to "*sleep in Jesus.*" The next grand prominent step consequent on the new creation of souls is the *new creation, or resurrection* of bodies. But, in the interval, the saints, whose warfare is accomplished, do "depart to be with Christ." And the day's work of their life being ended, each one, as he becomes "absent from the body and present with the Lord," enters into rest. There had been previously rest to their consciences in the precious blood of Christ, rest from condemnation and fear that hath torment. They had had also found rest unto their souls through the "meek and lowly mind" imparted from their Head. But now they "rest from their labours" too. Yea, the burden of the earthly house of their tabernacle weighs them down no more, for the earthly house of that tabernacle is dissolved. Above all, they are "*present with the Lord,*" where there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore. And blessed indeed, truly blessed, are *all those* "dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." And as to all these the word is surely fulfilled: "He that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

But yet this is by no means fully and properly "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." It may be termed indeed rather a resting-place for a season, on the way to that ultimate and eternal rest. There will be truly the nature of the future rest, and inconceivable enjoyment. But yet the rest itself is not perfected and consummated. The place of the ultimate rest is not yet created, for it will be the new heavens and new earth. *Heaven*, the heaven where the Lord Jesus now is, *is not the permanent abode of the people of God.* The new heavens and new earth will, after the final judgment, receive the people of God. Of this, however, more further on.

5. *The first resurrection* is the next stage of new creation that demands our notice. *And this is indeed a day's work!* When the Lord had greatly surprised the Jews, by his declaration as to the hour of raising souls from death in sin, he added: "Marvel not at this: *for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth:* they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." They need not marvel at the thought of the quickening of dead souls, for the hour should come in which all the dead bodies that were mouldering in the dust, or that ever should lie mouldering there, should be quickened too. Both those *hours*, however, are evidently *dispensations.* In the latter hour, or dispensation, there should be two resurrections, which, it is elsewhere declared, shall be one thousand years apart. The first one, we further learn from several most plain scriptures, shall take place at the coming of the Lord. Blessed result this of the resurrection of the new creation's glorious Head! The Lord had risen as Head previously; now the members also are raised—raised in power, in glory, in honour, immortal, spiritual, incorruptible. Let us read the passage, some of the words of which we have now repeated: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 42-58.) This is new creation indeed!

And let us also read a single sentence from the Epistle to the Philippians: (chap. iii. 20, 21:) "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue even all things unto himself."

Amazing work of new creation this! There will surely be additional *rest* attained to, as the result of it. "Seeing," says the apostle Paul, "it is a righteous thing with God to recompense .... *to you who are troubled rest with us*, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven .... when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 6, 7, 10.)

But will the new creation, even then, be still incomplete, and the rest that remaineth for the people of God still be, even after that resurrection, a thing future, and only attained in part? We must again reply, that there must be a new heavens and new earth made. Until then the new creation, therefore, cannot be complete.

6. But a period of delay must now be contemplated. The new heavens and new earth, we have seen already, will not be formed till after the final judgment. The final judgment cannot yet take place. The purposes of God's love, and the results of the Redeemer's work, are not by any means exhausted yet. There must still ensue such *a work of quickening souls, of creating souls anew*, as never yet had been accomplished. There must be a whole millennium of world-wide salvation. The Lord Jesus must see of the travail of His soul, *so as to be satisfied.* Think of this marvellous prediction. The Saviour himself shall be *satisfied.* By the knowledge of Himself, *so many shall be justified* that He Himself shall be "*satisfied.*" Blessed, glorious thought! But all this multitude must enter, with us, into *the rest.*

Meantime, where shall the Lord, and those who rose to meet Him at His coming, have their abode? and what shall be their occupation? They shall administer the righteous government of those happy nations which, in universal peace, shall cover the face of the whole earth. And their place of residence, specially, shall be the "Father's house,"—the "house," perhaps we may be allowed to say "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

May we not, then, regard the "millennium," the reign of Jesus, and the "kingdom of heaven" or "of God," *when considered with reference to the rest,*—somewhat in the following point of view? The whole is, as it were, a special intervention, made during time, on God's part, through His Son, our Lord and Saviour, in order to the most complete and rapid, and successful preparation of a multitude of saved, new-created people; a people destined for the new heavens and new earth, throughout eternity; a multitude so vast that even the Redeemer Himself shall be satisfied as to the travail of His soul? The millennium thus will be a state of the earth and of government for its population, specially devised to secure and maintain the universal prevalence of that knowledge of Jehovah and His glory, which is eternal life to all those who attain it. The millennium, therefore, is itself a momentous period of the new-creating work. The Head of the new creation indeed, though still working, will *rest gloriously** then; and His Bride shall rest gloriously with Him. But, down upon the earth, behold the unexampled progress of the work! For thus saith the prophet:

* As regards this section more particularly, see note at the beginning.—Ed.

* Is. xi. 10.

"*The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*.... And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and *His rest shall be glorious*."

The earth itself, in order to its increased fitness as a theatre for the display of the blessedness and righteousness of Messiah's sway, will undergo a mighty change; a change so great, that it is even called "a new creation." We believe indeed (and yet as to this we desire not to speak too positively) that a distinction should ever be remembered between this change, wrought upon the earth at the commencement of the millennium, which is called (we believe, by a strong but apt and expressive figure) a "creating of new heavens and new earth," * and that far greater change, which will take place only after the end of the millennium, at the period of the final judgment, and which will be *truly and literally* the "creating of new heavens and a new earth." † The premillennial change will be truly great and blessed. The earth shall yield her increase then. All feeding of animals upon animals shall be caused of God to cease. Human life also shall be greatly extended to its prediluvial length, it would seem, at least. In a word, the earth shall be so far altered, that even its mortal inhabitants shall dwell in great enjoyment and blessedness upon it.‡ But yet *the grand rest of God* is not even then fully attained to. Death, though slow and infrequent in its approach, still is undestroyed. Man is still born in sin; and many things still tell the tale of a creation that has been, and even yet is, partially under vanity. The new earth, and the new earth alone, will know nothing of all these former things.

Yet, even the millennial earth shall know what rest is. There shall be *a seventh-day rest*, as well as *an eighth-day rest;* though the eighth and last is *the great day*, the greatest of the whole.

The millennium, then, we may repeat it, is itself *a vast* PREPARATION DAY for the last, great and eternal sabbath, or rest that remaineth for the people of God.

7. And now, let us look directly on to the consummation, to the last act of new-creating work. Behold the place of the saints' everlasting rest!

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xxi. 1-5, 9-27; xxii. 1-5.)

We have now come to the contemplation of the great scene of all. Let us pray for some gracious measure of ability to gaze thereon for good. Oh! may we be lifted up above our worldly and grovelling desires and inclinations by it; and may our weary souls *find rest*, in looking forward to that future rest!

But, where shall we begin our poor endeavours to survey the sphere of such a rest? O Christian, bethink thee! What most attracts thee! *Seest thou that light?* "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for *the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*." Dear brethren, is not this the prominent, absorbing feature of the revelation now before us? We have said that the rest that remaineth for the people of God consists in *the joy, the delight, the satisfaction* that then shall be their portion. It is true, indeed, that there will be rest in their perfect exemption from death, from sorrow, from crying, from pain, and from all those "former things" which shall have passed away. And all this will be sweet indeed. But the positive joy, delight, and satisfaction of being in His presence, "with whom there is fulness of joy," and at His right hand "where there are pleasures for evermore;" this is, after all, the substance of that endless rest.

And how astonishingly is the glory of God and of the Lamb set forth in this place? All else seems nearly lost, and swallowed up by the bright shining of that glory. Other things are indeed described. There was seen a new heaven and a new earth. Into that new earth, the holy city, new Jerusalem, was seen descending out of heaven from God. The dimensions of the city, and its walls, its foundations, its gates, its streets, and its glorious river, with the surrounding scenery, are all described. But still there is a representation, diffused throughout the whole, which shews the city, and even the new heaven and new earth themselves, as nearly lost, and swallowed up, and as shorn, as it were, of all their own distinctive glories, by reason of the glory that excelleth. The whole scene is one universal blaze of the excelling glory. Let us look at some of the details of this representation.

And, first: "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This glorious light is set forth as *like unto jasper*. The *jasper stone* has been said to be of all hues and shades of bright and beautiful colours; of all the colours of the rainbow. Yet the whole was *clear as crystal*. "Having the glory of God: and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." (Verse 11.) This was the character of the light of the city. But the Lord God and the Lamb *were* that light. And thus (chap. iv. 3) we are expressly told, "He that sat upon the throne was to look upon *like a jasper*." Then, secondly, we are told, (verse 18,) "The building of the wall *was of jasper*." This

* Is. lxv. 17-25. † Rev. xxi. 1-8. ‡ Is. lxv. 20-25,&c.

wall was great and high, and encompassed the city round about; yet it was *of jasper*. The light from the face of the Lord God Almighty and of the Lamb not only pervaded the atmosphere of the city, but fell upon its vast and towering walls, and they were transformed, and became *of jasper*. And, thirdly, in verse 24, we find that this jasper light was instead of, as it were, both sun and moon, to the nations of the whole new earth: "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it." And again: "They need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." Gaze on this scene of light and glory.

"By faith we already behold
That heavenly Jerusalem near;
Her walls are of jasper and gold,
As crystal her buildings are clear.
Immoveably founded by grace,
She stands as she ever hath stood,
And brightly her Builder displays,
And flames with the glory of God.

No need of the sun in that day,
That never is followed by night,
Where Jesus' beauties display
A pure and a permanent light.
The Lamb is their light and their sun,
And, lo, by reflection they shine;
With Jesus ineffably one,
And bright in effulgence divine."

Let it be remembered that this glory was that of "*the Lord God Almighty* and *the Lamb*." It was the glory of all the attributes and perfections of God. His *almighty power* was specially seen in the new creation, now fully completed; and his *Lordship* over it absolutely, universally, and perfectly recognized. But there was a glory even yet more glorious, the glory of HIS GRACE, as seen in His only-begotten Son, who is presented all through this scene, emphatically and distinctively, as "*the Lamb*;" yea, in one case, as "*the Lamb* that is slain."* The atonement is still brightly seen. The victim is present—as having been such—still. The thought of His precious blood will enter into the very essence of God's endless rest. Oh! blessed theme! Let us hearken to its celebration.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 11-14.)

But we may descend to some other particulars connected with this glorious rest.

And we would first remark, that the holy city, new Jerusalem, is represented to us here as taking its *postmillennial* and eternal position. At least, we venture to submit that such is the case. We know that a difference of thought exists as to it.

The city is manifestly *the Church, not the place in which the Church dwells*, but the Church itself. "Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from God, out of heaven." But whither was the city then descending? Does it not seem pretty clear that the descent then seen was precisely the same that had been mentioned briefly in one of the previous verses of the same chapter? In verses one to four, we have a new earth, and the holy city mentioned as seen descending thereinto. The writer then passes on, and fills up the account of the general scope of the vision, which is closed by the expressive declaration, "It is done." Some brief invitation and warning follows, and then the important matter of the city and its relationships is taken up afresh, and displayed more in detail, in a supplementary vision, given for the purpose. (Compare verses 2 and 10.)

* I think that "the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. v.) belongs to a totally different scene. The vision there refers to facts which shall be accomplished not only before the millennium, but before a seal is opened or a trumpet is blown, though the Spirit uses the occasion to celebrate what may be only full in the new heavens and earth. I also dissent from the view of Rev. xxi. 9 and seq., and from the idea that the Father's house terminates with the thousand years.—ED.

This holy city, we venture to suggest, had its position *during the millennium* in heaven. But now, it descends into the new earth. It is seen (verse 2) "coming down from God out of heaven." And again in verse 10, it is seen "descending out of heaven from God." Till the creation of this postmillennial earth, it had been, as would thus appear, "*in heaven*." And does not John xiv. 2, 3, confirm this thought much? "IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." *The Father's house* would then seem plainly to be the place of abode of the Lord and the Church—of the bride and the Bridegroom—during the millennium. After that season shall have closed, the new earth receives them.

It may be readily admitted, indeed, that there is much elsewhere spoken of the millennial state of the present earth, which resembles some portions of this account of the final one. And doubtless there will be a blessed and glorious connection between the heavenly places and the earthly places, and between the heavenly people (the Bridegroom and the bride—the reigning Lord and His reigning Church) and the earthly people, (the nations reigned over,) during that happy period. The description here given of the glory of the city, too, will be true of it even during its millennial state. But we do believe somewhat confidently, that, not only what we have in verses one to five of this twenty-first chapter of the Revelation belongs to the postmillennial period, but that the whole of the succeeding vision, also commencing with verse nine of this same chapter, is to be referred to the same period. "The nations of them which are saved," we think, are to be regarded as being the nations saved during the millennium, and who shall walk, during eternity, in the new earth, in the light of the even then excelling glory of *the Lamb* and the *Lamb's wife*. In which case, (we may remark in passing,) it would seem almost certain that, even throughout eternity, the elected, and yet suffering, sorrowing Church of the present dispensation, will have granted to it, as its portion in union with its Head and Husband, a distinctive and excelling glory. This, however, we shall know hereafter.

It need perhaps scarcely be pointed out, that in the new heaven and earth here spoken of, (verses 1-4,) "there shall be no more death." But let us add, that there seems the very same intimation given as to both the city and the nations in the succeeding vision. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which had twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse." (Chap. xxii. 2, 3.) We suggest on this, that the presence of the *tree of life*, and that for *the nations*, must prove the vision of which this verse is a descriptive portion, to be a vision, not of the millennial, but of the postmillennial state. The *tree of life* given to the nations would seem clearly to intimate that those nations are immortal. The expression, "for the healing of the nations," has been regarded, however, as favouring an opposite conclusion. Yet, when it is known that the original word in that case, θεραπείαν,* properly signifies *a state of health*, rather than a state of transition from disease to health, the apparent objection is at once removed. For the meaning may consequently be "for the preservation of the health of the nations;" that is, for the preserving and securing of their immortality.

On the whole, then, I regard the whole of these two visions, occupying as they do the concluding portion of the book, and forming the conclusion of the Scriptures too, as descriptive of the final and eternal state, and as setting forth very amply "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." The millennium is seen in the previous chapter. These succeeding and concluding chapters are devoted, I believe, to the everlasting period. And indeed there is no question by any one, so far as I know, as to the application of the first portion of these chapters. Verses 1 to 8 of the twenty-first chapter are generally referred to the final period. And as to the succeeding vision, commencing, as we have seen, with verse 9 of the same chapter, I hope to be allowed that expression of opinion which has been now given.

Let us now glance at the scene as a whole. The final judgment has taken place. All the dead have been raised, and death itself,

* This criticism appears to want any just foundation. Ὑγίειαν might fairly express a state of health, rather than a transition from disease to health, which latter is just the force that attaches to θεραπείαν in Scripture as in ordinary Greek, save when applied to *service* generally, and so to *a body of attendants*.—ED.

and even *hades* (the place of disembodied spirits) exists no longer. The first heaven and the first earth have passed away; and that so truly, that "there is found no more place for them." But a new heaven and a new earth have been created, and the thing next presented in the vision, is the descent into them of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife. The apostle then hastens to tell us of a loud voice that he heard from heaven. This arrests the course of his description of what he saw. There is a voice speaking from heaven, and he must at once listen to what is said, and record it. This record occupies to the end of verse 8. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Let us ponder well this announcement, the great features of it specially. "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." This is indeed a scene of rest. But immediately that the voice from heaven has ceased, an angel (one of the seven which had the seven vials, and of whom one had come previously, see chap. xvii. 1, to shew and describe the great whore) comes to afford a closer and fuller view of the holy city, which the apostle already saw descending from God out of heaven. He is then carried away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain. We have already partially considered what he saw. The sight was utterly beyond all human conception. The dimensions of the city should not be overlooked. Of course the city seen is but a type. But, what a type! The size is mentioned, doubtless, that we may learn something of its magnificence and vast extent. It was twelve thousand furlongs square; that is, fifteen hundred miles square. This was a spectacle larger in extent than the whole area of Great Britain. We repeat it, that, of course, this measurement relates only to the symbolic city which the prophet saw. But, how grand such a conception! And how truly marvellous then that glorious church which this amazing type set forth! Imagine, if you can, such a vision from the lofty top of an exceeding great mountain, remembering that the whole scene was resplendent with dazzling and transparent jasper light! We must not delay to notice further the foundations, nor the gates, nor the streets, nor the river, nor the ever-green and ever-fruitful trees. The throne of God and of the Lamb was in the midst of all. The Church of the first-born surrounded it, and reflected far and wide the light and glory of Him that sat thereon. And, far as the limits of that finished new creation stretched, the nations of them that were saved walked, and rejoiced, and *rested* in its brightness.

Let us add the words of Paul respecting the same period and state: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.) This completes the picture of the rest that remaineth for the people of God: *God is all in all.* Perfect and endless rest is summed up in these short words. Grace, and truth, and glory, are consummated therein. The Father, and the only-begotten of the Father, and the people of God of all the dispensations, dwell together in a new created universe, in common, untold, unimaginable, never-ending joy: GOD IS ALL IN ALL.

Into this rest we which have believed are entering. We *have* found rest to our souls already in Christ Jesus; and ever as each one, during this period of delay as to His return, finishes his day's work here, and departs to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, does he "rest from his labours, and his works do follow him." Meanwhile, all those who understand the Scriptures, do look for and hasten the coming of the day when these vile bodies, which even when returned to dust may themselves be said to "*rest in hope*," shall be created anew, and, fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, shall share in His glorious millennial rest. Then after that cometh the end. And then the last stage of our journey towards our rest being completed, and the new creation finished, we shall, in the full, proper import of the expression, "enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God."

Let us, in conclusion, turn to the exhortation given us, with special reference to this rest, by Paul, in Hebrews iv.

Here the truth, that there does remain such a rest, is proved, and urged as a motive to obedience and godly fear. It is proved thus. There was *a rest* promised to Israel in the wilderness. The rest then promised could not but be future. It was not the rest spoken of in a certain place—the seventh-day rest—for that was past. For, "though the works were finished from the foundation of the world," and the rest, spoken of as the result of that finishing of those works, took place immediately thereupon; yet, "in this place again," so long afterwards, we find a rest preached, as yet to come. And yet again, long after even this, "He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, (in the ninety-fifth Psalm of David,) To-day, after so long a time, as it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The rest was still future even in David's day. It was not, therefore, the earthly rest in Canaan either. "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would not he (the Holy Ghost, by David) have spoken of another day." No! the rest alluded to was neither the resting on the seventh day, nor yet the earthly rest in the earthly Canaan. It was future—it was a "*remaining rest*," even in David's day. Plainly, then, it was still future. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." This was the grand conclusion. May we have grace to hearken to the solemn and seasonable exhortation: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

And now, unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy, unto Him be glory in the Church, throughout eternal ages!

T. S.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

IN the history of Job, the Lord teaches us particularly these three things:

I.—To what point man may arrive by his own efforts, relatively to piety; in other words, *man's righteousness founded on the strength of man.*

II.—What becomes of this righteousness, when it is *subject to the scrutiny* of a holy and perfect God.

III.—Grace, the *only means* of being in true and permanent fellowship with God.

I. God himself bears witness to the faithfulness of his servant Job. And after this testimony, it is not admissible to think that Job's faithfulness was not real.* Only here God says nothing yet of the principle whence it flows; that will be shewn later; but evidently it is legal, as may be drawn from the words of Job him-

* Unquestionably, Job had not attained this degree of approval from the Lord, without the power of the grace of God; but it is seen evidently that he had the feeling, not of God's grace or of what is in God, but of the grace produced in himself. He looked at the manna which had been put in his hands; he kept it till the morrow, and it became corrupt, and brought forth worms. God, before Job, had seen all this, and sent him trials gradually till they manifested the sin, and till from his heart they laid it on his conscience. Turned toward his own heart, and from that time the flesh becoming possessed of the effects of grace, poor Job became pleased with himself. His conscience and heart became less impressed with the full goodness and the perfect holiness of God. For his own goodness occupied him, and that of God was proportionally effaced. His own holiness rose before him, and God's holiness had less hold on his conscience. But God, who loved him, sent him trials enough to shew him what was in his heart, and to bring him back to the contemplation of the goodness and perfection of the Lord alone.

self, "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (Chap. xxvii. 5, 6.) "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame." (Chap. xxix. 14, 15.) "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." (Chap. xxxi. 6.) See chapters xxix. xxx. and xxxi. "And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." (Chap. xxix. 17.)

Nevertheless, we see that, relatively to himself, he was not a stranger to the existence of sin. He confesses himself a sinner on two occasions; (chaps. ix. 1-4 and 20, and xiv. 4;) but the way in which he speaks of himself in what follows, freely leaves us to think that his ideas of God's holiness were very limited, and that he did not believe himself to be destitute of all strength for satisfying the requirements of a *holy* God.

In him, then, we have the completest image of a pious Jew: faithful, not according to grace, but according to the terms of a conditional state. * His expectation of the resurrection strongly resembles that to which the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hoped to come. (Acts xxvi. 6-8; xiii. 32; xxiv. 15.) For, *after* that he *could* not convince his friends of his integrity, he speaks *of* his hope; and that as appealing to a superior justice, just in the sense in which Paul said: "I appeal unto Cesar." (Chap. xix. 22-29.) The word *Redeemer*, employed in this citation, has undoubtedly the sense of *Rewarder;* for, if Job had known the Redeemer according to His grace, he would not have spoken as he has done, and as we see him do in the remainder of the tale. Thus, if he were just, it was after the pattern of Paul, before he understood that the law is *spiritual*, according to what is said in Phil. iii. 6: "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

II. That being laid down as to the nature of the righteousness of Job, let us see up to what point it can sustain the scrutiny of God.—First, it is maintained during prosperity. Without bending, it also endures the first trials. Job bears with exemplary resignation (James v. 11) the loss of his numerous flocks, of his house, of his servants, and of all his children. Himself afflicted with a cruel sickness, and stirred up by his wife, who urges him to suicide; (chap. ii. 9,) he abides in his faithfulness; he attributes nothing foolish to God. In all this, it is said, did not Job sin with his lips. (James iii. 2.)—A few days, however, pass over; the trial, far from diminishing, becomes more severe, and this crucible, which at first shewed forth *only gold*, finally throws up *all its scum*. Job frets himself, and, forgetting the days of his prosperity, curses his existence.

The moral failure, or rather the ruin of Job, appears still more evident, on comparing him with the true righteous One, subject like him, to the trial and inspection of God.

We have observed, that after several days' endurance, he abounds in cursing; *the circumstances* in which he finds himself are *above* his strength, he cannot contain himself. But Jesus, enduring privations, weariness, and grief, *forgets Himself*, and is taken up only by the glory of his Father and the interests of sinners. This was, for Him who came down *from heaven*, a trial fully as hard as the loss of temporal goods and the sufferings of the body could be for the *earthly* Job. In the midst of these things Jesus never manifests any complaints, any bitterness. It is true that He had not, as Job, to repress inward feelings, but therein it is that He shews Himself perfect.

Job is visited by *his friends*, who came round him to share his grief and comfort him. They weep over him and sit with him in the dust. But, not understanding, as far as we can see, the *subject* of his trial, they offer him but meagre consolations. Job fills with indignation against them, and says to them: "For now ye are nothing .... Ye dig a pit for your friend." (Chap. vi. 21—27.) "Your remembrances are like unto ashes; your bodies, to bodies of clay. Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will." (Chap. xiii. 12, 13.) "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." (Chap. xvi. 11.)—Jesus, in the midst of *men* whose malice, in every possible shape, spent itself on Him, manifested only sentiments of mercy, and gave proofs of a love always above their attacks. If they accuse Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub, and if on this occasion He speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, He adds, that all sin against *the Son of man* shall be forgiven. In the presence of Caiaphas, when they spat on His face and struck Him on the cheek, and He might have called to His help twelve legions of angels, He only says: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" His pains on the cross and the injuries He then receives from the lowest of men, could in no wise change His feelings toward sinners. He cries out, Forgive them! Thus resembling the leaf of a fragrant shrub, which, the more it is crushed, yields more of its sweet scent.

When Job lifts himself up *to God*, it is to say, "Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me." (Chap. xxx. 21.) Before that he had said already, "He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me. They have gaped on me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground. He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant. I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure." (Chap. xvi. 9-17.) "He breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause." (Chap. ix. 17-23.) If, out of His trials, Jesus addresses Himself *to His Father*, it is to give Him thanks because it seemed good to Him to reveal His salvation to the sinful and ignorant: (Matt. xi. 25, 26:) a purpose which, notwithstanding, was the cause of all His sufferings, yea, even to say: "Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause I came unto this hour."—"If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Under the burden of grief Job had said, "How long wilt thou not depart from me?" (Chap. vii. 16, 19.) But Jesus cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ....

We see then in Job irritation and protestations of his own righteousness, which increase in proportion as the trial grows heavy; whilst in Jesus, the more severe is the trial, the more is the submission shown to be perfect. In Job there was leaven: only a little heat was necessary to display it: in Jesus there was none, and therefore, though He was exposed to the hottest fire of trial, it never rose.

As to the three friends of Job, they are, in truth, miserable comforters. (Chap. xvi. 2.) Their intention is good, but they in no wise comprehend the nature of the trial of their friend. Thew know not the intention of God toward him. They judge him according to their wisdom, and in a manner altogether legal. They suppose that it is by some particular unfaithfulness that he has drawn this trial upon him, and pretend that there will be no relief until he has returned to his duty. "Is not thy wickedness great?" they say, "and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing." (Chap. xxii. 5, 6.) "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." (Chap. xxii. 23.) Such false accusations, (chap. i. 8,) very far from consoling Job, always irritate him the more, and one understands how, in the depth of his grief, he cries out: "Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning. O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" (Chap. xxiii. 2, 3.) Thence are two instructive points: first, an evident proof of the impotence of *human wisdom* to prostrate the pretensions of the flesh, and to demonstrate in an effectual way the ruin of one's own righteousness. Next, an example of *the wisdom of God*, who makes every kind of instruments serve his purposes. Even those who came to comfort Job are just those who seem to keep up the fire under the crucible. In their ignorance of the truth, they provoke their friend to such a degree that he cannot contain himself, and all his dross boils over. Then his corruption is so clearly manifested that he can no longer say: "I am clean." By and by he will put his hands on his mouth, quite ashamed to have

* For my part, I do not question the reality of Job's faith; but he needed to learn more deeply the grace wherein we stand. I object, therefore, to the language of this paragraph as too strong, and would refer to the last note.—Ed.

so spoken. But this success will be the fruit of another ministration.

III. In chapter xxxii., the scene undergoes a change which it is important to remark. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, ceased from answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Elihu who had said nothing yet, is announced, but with a claim far superior to that of his predecessors. The inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding; (verse 8;) he knows the mind of God respecting Job, and if he opens his lips, it is to speak as the oracle of God. He proceeds then to show Job his fault, not according to suppositions, as had been done by those who had spoken before him, but according to the words uttered by Job's own mouth. He could have reminded him that he had cursed his day, and that he had several times been irritated with respect to his friends; but *he says nothing about it to him*, because he has in view less the *acts* than the *source* itself whence these acts flow. He recalls two things only: first, what Job had said of himself; (chap. xxxiii. 8-13;) and, secondly, what he had said of God. (Chap. xxxiv. xxxv.)

1. "Surely thou hast spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent, neither is there iniquity found in me. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy," &c.

Elihu makes his first answer to show Job that, even though he knew not yet the cause of his trial, it is always an injustice to have dared to plead against the Almighty; for God will ever be greater than man, and He giveth not account of any of His actions. (Chap. xxxiii. 12, 13.)

Next, he stops and lays down a principle relating to the ways, often mysterious, by which God conducts the sinner, in order to put him in true communion with Him. (Chap. xxxiii. 14-30.) In this principle we may distinguish three things: first, divers means to overcome the obstacles of the flesh, namely, appeals, threats, and if needful, chastenings; (verses 14-22;) secondly, mediation (verses 23, 24) here indicated in an abstract way; and thirdly, communion founded on mediation, (verses 25-30,) and of which the fruits are: new birth, liberty, righteousness, or faithfulness, humility, and light.

2. That done, Elihu resumes his proofs. "Job hath said, I am righteous; and God hath taken away my judgment. Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression... It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God." (Chap. xxxiv. 5-9.) From all these quotations, Elihu brings into court the fault of Job. His reasoning amounts to this: "Job hath said, I am clean! How should he be clean after having spoken of God as he had done. For he has said that God is not righteous; now, if God loves not to execute righteousness, how should He judge the world? (Chap. xxxiv. 17.) Evidently, Job has spoken evil of God; he has not preserved his integrity." (Compare chapter xxxiv. 5, with i. 22.)

Such is the detail of his reasoning; but, if we consider it as a whole, it is obvious that Elihu has always the grand object of shewing God according to His true character. The better he presents the perfections of God, the less strength has Job to sustain the contest, for one's own righteousness has no strength save *in the ignorance of God.*—The character of God that Elihu displays, is that of the Almighty; that is to say, the same under which Abraham had known Him. (Exod. vi. 3,) He does not present Him either as Jehovah, or as Father, which are the characters God has taken, the former with Israel, and the latter with the Church. (Exod. vi. 3, and 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) It appears that at that time Israel had not yet departed from Egypt, and that God was only known to *believers* as the Almighty.

In chapter xxxvi., Elihu applies to Job the principles he had laid down. (Chap. xxxiii. 14-30.) "Surely God is wroth. Beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." (Verse 18.) Next, he closes in chapter xxxvii. with a discourse on the sovereignty and omnipotence of God.—God Himself continues the same process, and gives (chapters xxxviii.-xli.) the richest and most complete description that there is in all revelation of *His character as the Almighty.* And this fact,—that God Himself builds upon the foundation laid by His servant,—is the evident proof that the latter acted *as the instrument of God, well instructed in the intentions of His Master.* Finally, there is one of the characteristics of *true ministry*, the condition without which it could not be effective.

Here Job is overcome. He had dared to ask God to debate His rights with him; (chap. xxiii. 3-7;) but, when God presents Himself, He is afraid and utterly overwhelmed. He humbles himself, and far from saying, as formerly, "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live," (Chapter xxvii. 6,) he cries: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." (Chap. xl. 4, 5,) "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Chap. xlii. 5, 6.)

Ah! if Job had always thought thus of himself, what evils he would have avoided. What a struggle was needed to crush his pretensions, to draw him out of the *mire* of his works, and set him on the firm ground of grace! God was faithful and feared not to employ even the severest measures to withdraw him from a state whose eternal consequences might be so terrible. Job is now in feelings which would make him afraid of treating with God on a footing of EQUALITY, and which drew him to accept of *mediation.* "His soul draweth man unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." But "one among a thousand" has cried out, DELIVER HIM!... And God is favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy. (Chap xxxiii. 22-26.) That is, he is in true fellowship with God. And though one may not see in him a faith which distinguishes the Messiah, yet he no more looks to God as the Judge who will render him according to the righteousness of his hands, but as He who justifieth the ungodly. Thus was David justified. (Rom. iv. 5, 6.) So was it likewise with all the faithful who lived before Christ.

After that God was favourable to Job, His wrath was kindled against Eliphaz and his two companions, because they had not spoken of Him the thing that is right, like their friend. If Job spoke well of God, it was not when he complained, but assuredly when he was humbled. Now, that reconciliation is really established; God passes over what Job might have said of Him in the bitterness of his soul, *and only takes account of his new feelings.* He knows him no more according to his works, but according to grace. But Eliphaz and his two companions remained in their own thoughts *as to the efficacy of the strength of man.* Not having themselves borne the trial by which God overturned the pretensions of Job, and made him know His mercy, they could only speak of the Almighty in a way altogether legal. If, before this, they were found on the level of Job, as regards the knowlege of Job; now, they are behind: they know neither of God nor of themselves what Job knows; and also, long after they are convinced of their utter ruin, they are incapable of speaking of God the thing that is right. And because they had not said like their friend: "Thereupon have I uttered that I understood not," God is indignant with them. It is to Job, now enlightened and in true fellowship with God, that it will be given to intercede for them, and his prayer will be ineffectual, because he will ask of God to deal with them, not according to their righteousness, but according to His mercy.

THOUGHT ON WORSHIP AND CONFLICT.

1 Thess. v. 21.

THE life of Christians is summed up in these two things: worship and conflict, which, though they may be looked at separately, are nevertheless intimately connected. We have a very decided example of this in the taking possession of the land of Canaan, under the guidance of Joshua. The people realized the presence of God at Gilgal in the camp, and then sallied forth to meet its enemies. There you get worship and conflict in the unity of the people of God.

In the book of Judges, which is the history of Israel's failure, worship and conflict are no more found in the same unity. We see God's actings in favour of His people after another manner: it is no longer God realizing His blessings in the unity and by the unity of His people, although all may be the partakers. Those, then, raised up of God, have not the thought of acting on this principle. God directs them differently according to the ways of His wisdom towards a fallen people. It is impossible, in unbelief, to realize worship and good conflict; in such a case, God fights with us, *but against us.* In the wilderness, God acts by

all manner of chastening, to teach a carnal people, and thus to bring them into the position of worship and good conflict. This is also true of the Church in its fallen state, or of an individual soul. The Church would have been in a magnificent position here below, had she not failed in her dependance on the Holy Spirit: worship and conflict would then have been in the unity of the body, and thus a full blessing. Instead of this, all is in misery, and will be more and more so, until God accomplishes His purpose in bringing in perfection for the Church, by the coming of the Lord Jesus.

We have to distinguish between worship which is the soul's rest in God, and service which is essentially conflict. In the service of God we meet the power of the adversary; in worship, we joy in the rest of God, sheltered from our enemies. Worship is never individual, even though it were realized but by one single worshipper on earth; worship identifies us with Jesus in the presence of the Father, and with the whole priestly family; there we realize the communion of the saints, because we are, in the communion of Jesus and of the Father, one with them all. If but one Christian were in a state to realize the worship, (for all are so in their Head,) that would be the Christian whom God would use for conflict in favour of His people, of His Church in her wretchedness, under the power of her enemies. Although the state of God's people might be such, that only one should be used of God for conflict, it would be none the less for unity that he would be so. For God acts in sight of all His own, for the blessing of all. He does not change in his purpose though our sin necessitates His different actings. The greater the evil, the more is God obliged to confound strong things by weak, in order that man may not be in a position to glorify himself before Him.

In a faithful walk there is, then, the repose of the soul in God; in unfaithfulness, God fights against us, destroys the flesh, and that, to bring us into the blessing of which we deprive ourselves by the activity of the carnal mind, which, being unjudged, drags into the things of this world and distances us from the Father's love.

When the people of Israel, under the guidance of Joshua, took possession of Canaan, God made Himself to be admired in the midst of His people, terrible and formidable toward all His enemies. Such will also be the case when Jesus shall exercise judgment against His enemies. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 10.)

God should have been glorified in His people Israel by the presentation of His righteousness, and His holiness according to this law, in the midst of His people, and through His people, before the nations. Now, this is what has completely failed. Israel have dishonoured God by their conduct. (Rom. ii. 24.) The Church should be the expression of the Father's love according to the riches of His grace. She also has failed in her testimony as a body. (Rev. ii., iii.)

The consequence of these things (in those who are near enough to God to judge the evil that is introduced, and to be humbled in the thought of God when all is in misery, and when His glory is trampled under foot,) is identification with the sufferings of Christ. This is essentially the position of faithfulness wherever it actually exists. If the truth in this particular be but a little understood, somewhat also of the immense difference will be felt (as to worship and the conflict resulting from it) of being in the unity and fidelity of the body, or of remaining in a fallen state of things. If Christians can gather together in the true sense of what now is, they will deeply feel the evil, they will suffer from it as identified with Christ, and the Lord will proportionately comfort and strengthen them.

The knowledge of God is needed for a little strength in our actual condition, in order that we may submit to God in the midst of so many miseries, that we may judge and feel; a soul, which in worship fails of intelligence as to the consequences of our fall before God, such a soul will not be prepared to suffer and to endure, as a just thing, the lack of this worship, the failure of response to its wants according to God. This is the case with the greater part of Christians—indeed, people generally content themselves in a state of spiritual sleep, with that which suits the dead and not the living.

When all is fallen and in misery, the faith which recognizes God and His rights, accepts the chastening which results from the infidelity of the people of God, with whom it identifies us in this position: we see this in the prophet. (Dan. ix.; Jer. x. 19; Neh. ix. 32, 37.) The refusal to submit in this case proves that one has not accepted for one's self the consequences of the infidelity of God's people. If not humbled and submissive, there is no intelligence, the heart is not touched, the flesh is alive, and God cannot, in this state of soul, comfort and bless.

When there is a fall, (and that is our case,) worship can no longer be realized in the same blessing; let us not forget it: there will be many things that will be painfully felt by those who are but ever so little spiritual. In the realization of suffering for evils to which the Spirit of God has made us alive, and which have been manifested to us in the body, let us remember the greatness of the grace which makes us sensible of what Jesus Himself deeply felt, and according to all the perfectness of God. And as He has borne the weight of it, and thus destroyed the consequences as to His own, those who feel the effects of the evil are chosen of God to realize the sufferings of Christ, to feel with Christ something of His sufferings in this sense, and bear the weight of it before Him, to claim the efficacy of His grace in victory over this evil, this power that the adversary exercises against the saints, because of their infidelities. It is in the point of view of responsibility that I speak here, and I repeat it, a single Christian may be chosen of God as the instrument of blessing to the Church in many cases. I believe this to be a principle of the actings of Christ in mercy and blessing for the Church.

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The consequence of the unfaithfulness of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, in his league with Ahab, king of Israel, was the occasion of introducing faithfulness into suffering. The faithful Micaiah was called to a testimony which led him to prison. (1 Kings xxii. 26-28.) There is again a consequence of the bond that unites the people of God. The unfaithfulness of Jehoshaphat, on this occasion, made him incur the risk of losing his life. Jehoshaphat was humbled for having failed in his duty: Micaiah was humbled for having been faithful to his God; so that the sufferings which he had to endure shall turn to him for honour and glory in the day of Christ.

When God shall have no more testimony by means of His saints, He will then bear witness to Himself by judgments. At the time of the taking of the ark by the Philistines, we see the judgment of God on Israel by means of their enemies, as well as on their enemies who had not been afraid of making themselves masters of the ark, the visible sign of the presence of the God of Israel. They should have been taught by this fact the value for them of the presence of the holy God. When God takes cognizance of the inhabitants of the earth, it will be in judgment; but as long as there shall be here below a worship owned of God, whatever be the feeble estate of His children, God will act in grace toward the inhabitants of the earth, but also in judgment toward His house. These are the circumstances to remind us of the words of Jesus: "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." (Matt. v. 13.) The ark had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, because of the complete corruption of the priesthood, which was the principle whereby worship took place.

Worship is not regulated in the New Testament as to the form, and we understand that it neither could nor ought to be so; it depends entirely on the spiritual state of those who offer it; and if there were a form whereby to fix it, this form might exist without life. This may be the case as to doctrine, but not as to worship. In the old dispensation all was regulated as to worship, and there was an attachment to form which stood instead of all to the children of Israel, and which gave them a blind confidence, notwithstanding their state of entire corruption. It is the same in Christianity for those who do not distinguish between the form and the substance of religion. But here the blindness is still greater, because, for the most part, the forms which have arisen in Christianity, cannot be legitimized by Scripture.

Satan was conquered by Christ; but he has not accepted his defeat: he has hidden himself behind the curtain in the forms which has introduced into Christianity; he has seduced Christians in causing the wisdom of men to prevail over the wisdom of God. Thus has man put himself in the place of the Holy Spirit in the Church, where he has displayed his intellectual faculties, taking revelation for the sphere of their activity. Such a religion may

well accommodate itself to the taste of men; for they can profess it while resting in all their pretensions, and even while giving them increased extension. The world has poured in a great flood into the Church.

In measure as true piety declines, form takes place of spirituality, and if great vigilance be not exercised, we find ourselves on an easy slope which draws Christians down this road without their ever doubting that they are on the verge of it. Moreover, as to what concerns spiritual worship, the spiritual alone can understand it; Christians who are less advanced remain in ignorance on this subject, and even take occasion, from the fact that the Word does not determine it, to oppose themselves to those who are more initiated in the intelligence of the blessing of worship.

In the call of Gideon we have very precious instruction concerning the ways of God, acting in favour of His people in failure. (Judges vi.) He says to him: (verse 12:) "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." In his answer, (verse 13,) Gideon objects to God his lack of intelligence; this answer shews, in fact, Gideon's ignorance as to the ways of God; he understood not wherefore all these things came to pass. God does not stay to instruct him, but He will act, and answers him: "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" Here Gideon objects his personal weakness and that of his house. (Verse 15.) And the Lord says to him: "SURELY I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." After this, again the weakness of Gideon is manifested; he asks a sign; God condescends to his infirmity and does all that Gideon asks Him. But after that Gideon manifests his fear afresh; and the Lord reassures. (Verse 23.) Then he builds an altar to the LORD and called it JEHOVAH-SHALOM. (The *Lord* send *peace*.) Here we get an important principle; first of all peace must be established; that was the needed thing, for there had been failure and distance from God. The people were guilty; peace must be found with God: this was the first altar to be raised as the witness of accomplished peace. The call of the sinner is not the question here, but the ways of God towards His fallen people. It is as when the Lord said to the Churches: "I have somewhat against thee." Afterwards, God commands him to pull down the altar of Baal which belongs to his father. God will do nothing in those in whom He chooses to act, until idolatry disappears from before Him. "And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the *second* bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down." (Verse 26.)

We see here that the first act of obedience, required by God after peace is concluded, is worship, and it is important to observe that this act of worship was a testimony from God by Gideon against the idolatrous condition of His people. The result also of this act of obedience, *such as God required*, is the intervention of Joash to deliver Gideon from his enemies, and that of the Spirit of God, who clothes with power for the accomplishment of the deliverance that God would work in favour of His people. We have evidently here: first, worship, then conflict; but both accomplished by the call of one single man, chosen of God, established and sent according to His grace, in favour of a fallen people.

The priesthood, or principle of God's unity with His people, is not brought out in the history of the Judges; a striking proof that God does not act by this principle when His people is fallen.* I think this contains much instruction for us, as to the state of the Church. Those who act to realize this unity when it is broken, and who will act on this principle, are not in the thoughts of God; it is one thing to be led of the Lord and according to His thoughts, and quite another thing to will to accomplish certain truths, as it seems good in our own eyes.

Under Samuel, the ark and the priesthood are in the scene, but it is for judgment. God would have done with this altogether corrupt order of things, and introduce another principle of government in the midst of Israel; that is, government by means of the prophet. But Jehovah is rejected also in this; the people ask a king. Under the government of royalty, priesthood remained the principle for offering worship; but there was a change as to the persons who performed the service of the temple. Later on, when Jerusalem has become the final object of the judgment of God, all is rejected, which may furnish us with a new proof of this truth,—that when there is no further possibility of accomplishing worship, God comes in to make an end by judgment; there is no more remedy. Then God rejects what He had instituted for His glory and for the blessing of His people, and He establishes something else. When God shall judge and reject what is called the Church here below, He will introduce the glory of His Son, and the worship at Jerusalem will be in far higher perfection than under Solomon.

Worship is always the principle whereby God can be approached; we see it from Abel's time to the end. It is the principle of the relations of God with man through Christ: therefore, if worship ceases, there remains nothing but the judgments of God to expect.

The worship of Christians surpasses by far, both in position and elevation of character, all that was presented in types and symbols in the Old Testament; Jesus, who was the substance of the shadows, can make us understand it; and although we can distinguish in His life between worship and service, in Him these things are not the less intimately united and dependant on one another; of Him one may say that His whole life was a perfect worship; (John xv. 10; xvii. 4;) a truth which has its application for the Christian, placed in the position of Jesus, one with Him. If we consider worship in its perfection in Jesus, and our position in Him, whether in our acceptance before God the Father, or in our mission upon earth, it will only contribute to our better judgment of the importance attached thereto for us before Him who has given us a value so great and so perfect. In this case, if we confound the collective enjoyment of the divine joys of the family of God, with the service, the complete offering of ourselves to God, that would suppose that the joy of the service of God is become as great as the joy which is to be found in the calm of the soul in His presence, (which I do not admit, as will further on be shewn.) But to suppose a perfect state in this respect, spiritual intelligence must do the part of each of these two things.

I can understand that, looking at the extent of the favour of God, in placing us in the position of realising the service wherein Jesus found Himself, this thought, by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, may make us walk in the accomplishment of the Lord's will, with a spirit of adoration towards Him who has designed to honour us to such a high degree, by placing us in every way in the same relation as His beloved Son. In fact, a Christian preserving the remembrance of his former state, and being truly humbled before God, will adore for all that God condescends to accomplish by him; it is a happy position, true and very desirable for all; all should run toward this end of perfection, and all will attain to it; for these worshippers whom the Father sought, Jesus has found and formed them for God His Father; and this will be accomplished in them when He shall have set them near God in resurrection. But, in the meantime, those called to this grace and glory begin to be developed for these things before perfection is come.

The fact that Jesus "loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests to God and His Father," is something infinitely great; He reveals in a way as admirable as it is deep, the love of God, and His grace so perfect, to those who are the objects of it, and who will be able to measure this love when they shall have attained to perfection. This perfection of God will place them in the realization of worship in Spirit and in truth, and that for all eternity. Even from here below, this knowledge is also the principle of all true worship and true service, of all true adoration of God.

In the perfection of adoration, individuality is lost, being merged in the thought and enjoyment of God who fills us with Himself. In the perfection of service, one no longer sees one's self, one reckons ones' self as belonging to God, one sees only Jesus fulfilling His good pleasure for His body and through His body, which is the Church. Such is the point of view we ought always to aim at; as it is the work of God in His own, viz. in all those who have the Son.

A crown of life is promised to him that endureth temptation, (James i. 12,) that is, who is faithful in service. He who abides in Jesus and meets with trials, manifests the powerful efficacy of the life of Jesus, who has won the victory over him who had the power of death. Therefore, I think, it is said: "He shall receive a crown of life."

A crown of righteousness is reserved for all those who shall have loved the appearing of Jesus. (Tim. iv. 8.)

The expectation of Jesus is a demonstration of the love of the

* Does not this statement need to be more guarded?—ED.

Bride who expects the Bridegroom; it is this which causes those who realize such a hope to walk in the principle of heavenly righteousness, which is quite a different thing from the righteousness that pertains to the earth; therefore, the crown of righteousness is a glory that relates to the expectation of Jesus, the fruit of the faithful love of the Bride.

The crown of glory which fadeth not away is promised to those who shepherd the flock of God from a principle of love. (1 Peter v. 1-4.)

Jesus had said to Peter: "Lovest thou me more than these?" "Feed my lambs." "Feed my sheep." These words shew us the principle required by the Lord, that a man be occupied with His flock as caring for it. The capability for this depends on a love much beyond what can generally exist in this respect. This crown is one of glory, because those who work out of love to Christ in the care for His body, care for the interests of their Master's glory.

The crowns of gold, wherewith the elders seen by John (Rev.) are crowned, have no relation with the crowns that may be acquired by fidelity in the Christian course. Gold is the symbol of holiness and of perfect purity before God. These crowns present us, I think, with the perfect holiness of God, wherewith He has clothed those who are placed on thrones before Him; thus their adoration is in the capacity of the most exalted holiness. What they present to God in their worship is the very purity of God. God has thus placed them before Him, clothed with the perfection of the Lamb in the most exalted degree, in the fulness of the Lamb. And they also worship the Lamb; their adoration has relation to this fulness.

It is only on this principle that worship can be offered to God; that is, that the worshippers present to God what God has clothed them with by grace; what Christ has acquired for them;—in no wise what they might have produced as fruits agreeable to God by Jesus Christ.

The heavenly High Priest may present the fruits that He recognizes of His own, and God accepts them at the hand of Jesus, but in their place.

The redeemed neither can nor ought to accomplish this worship, save in presenting themselves to God with the things which Jesus, His Beloved, has acquired for them, and wherewith He has clothed them. We can only enjoy God in our souls, we can only have a perfect peace in the realization of worship, so far as no trace is found in our hearts of what can proceed from ourselves, even as fruits of the Spirit of Christ; but only of what, in grace, we have from God, of the perfections of Christ wherewith we have been clothed. To present one's self before God with any thought whatsoever, save the sole thought of the perfections of Jesus, establishes an insurmountable separation between the soul and the holiness of God. But the one only thought of the perfection of Jesus establishes us in full assurance before Him, in full confidence, in full enjoyment of His perfect love in ourselves, in the communion of Jesus and of the Father.

It is the thought of what God has made us to be in Christ, realized by the faith which seizes and appropriates to itself what God has given to us, that places the soul in peace and in the enjoyment of God.

God, our kind Father, well knew that thus it must be, that we might be perfectly happy in Him; therefore also His perfect grace and love have fulfilled it on our behalf! Why then are His blessed children always wandering from the love of their Father, seeking anything except in the bosom of Jesus, where this grace so perfect and so sweet to the sinner's heart always abides? this grace which renders him infinitely more happy in the bosom of God than if he could have attained it in any other way?

What folly that our hearts should wander but ever so little from the perfection with which God has clothed us! "For all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," according as it is written (Isaiah lxiv. 6.) And as to the fruit that Christ may produce in us, we should only stop at them to consider Him who bears the iniquity of our holy things, (Exod. xxviii. 58,) and thus see a fresh motive for adoring Jesus. Therefore, however humbling it may be to see the iniquity which cleaves to our good works and defiles them, *that* even may be for us the subject of perfect joy, shewing to us that we cannot look one moment at ourselves, but can contemplate Jesus only, which keeps us in the perfection of God, and in true happiness. And if it is said: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my door;" (Prov. viii. 34;) what must be the happiness of those who can enter into the holy of holies!.... Having been clothed with His own holiness!.... This is what the understanding needs perfectly to penetrate, this is what the soul needs to be filled with, in order to be filled with the peace of the sanctuary. Therefore Jesus says: "I have preached thy righteousness in the great congregation." (Ps. xl. 9.) And again: "My tongue shall speak continually of thy righteousness." (Ps. xxxv. 28.)

When Jesus comes out of heaven with His armies, the righteousnesses of the saints are made mention of; the Lord comes to glorify Himself in His saints. This relates to the service of the faithful in battle.

In worship, the saints enter into God, and all is eclipsed; His righteousness and His glory are alone manifest. This relates to the happiness of the saints in worship: it is our glory in God, or His glory in us. And when the time shall have come in which God shall be all in all, there will be eternity of joy, and peace, for all, in God: ETERNAL WORSHIP!

A CHRISTIAN.

There are two marks common to all Christians; yea, so inseparable from them, that he who, in the eye of God, is without them, is not a Christian at all. Every Christian is, first, washed in the blood of the Lamb of God; and, secondly, (having been thus, through faith in the blood, quickened by the Spirit,) is subject to the care and direction of the Holy Ghost. These are two very important matters. The soul which is not subject to them is not saved; for the only man that is saved is he whose trust is in the blood of Jesus through the Spirit's grace. And all such are looked upon by God as having been washed in the blood of Jesus, and as being cared for by the Spirit.

In the day of glory, all such (and none others) shall shine in the glory of God and the Lamb; even all who, through the Spirit's teaching, shall have known the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

The courage, patience, firmness, and zeal of a Christian, are a perfectly distinct *order of character* from the courage, firmness, patience, and zeal of a natural man. Self-confidence, self-glory, self-preservation, self-exaltation, are the essential principles of one; confidence in God, self-renunciation, subjection to God, glory to God, abasement of self, being essential principles of the other. So that the essential principles that formed the character of Paul as a natural man, were destroyed through the cross, in order that his soul should imbibe the life of Christ, which was the principle that formed his character as a Christian. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Though Christ was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. In any instance that we give up our own will, without sacrificing conscience, we are gainers. If but my dog exercises my patience and makes me yield my will, he is a blessing to me. Christ never willed any thing but what was good and holy; yet how often was His will thwarted—how often hindered in designs of good!

CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

Connect your service with nothing but God—not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship, and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on any one whatever; for if you do, you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith, and one's *own communion with God.* Saul even may be a prophet when he gets amongst the prophets; but David was always the same—in the cave or any where. Whilst the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet a man's service must flow from himself, else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. It is: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." But also: "Let every one prove his own

work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." There is no single place grace brings us into, but is a place of temptation, and that we cannot escape, though we shall be helped through. In every age, the blessing has been from individual agency; and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world. 'Tis humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.

Where there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of this inherent blessing which "tarrieth not for the sons of men." I don't tarry for man if I have faith in God. I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man.

All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the *individual*. Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii.) were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the Church at Antioch, but they had no communication with it till they returned, and then there was the joyful concurring of love in the service that had been performed. He that had talents went and traded. Paul says: "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act, accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk; but if he cannot do this, the energy is not there; and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness.

Love for souls sets one to work. I know no other way.

THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN EXPECTATION OF CHRIST BRIEFLY CONTRASTED.

I AM not without hopes that, under the gracious teaching of the Spirit, the simple statement of the distinction we are going briefly to examine may be blessed to souls. Happy is it when we are brought to ponder on the riches of grace which God has lavished on us, and that in the spirit of children, not desiring to prove our own notions, but to learn the thoughts, purposes and ways of God; happier still when, in the communion of Him who dwells in us, our delight is to be shewn, and to adore the various glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His various glory, I repeat; for this the natural mind relishes not, but it is exactly what the Spirit loves and leads into. (John xvi. 13-15.) Hence it is that to unbelief the Scripture is a blank without heights, without depths. The purity of its sentiments, and the simple grandeur of its style, may be allowed and admired. But there are no land-marks, no chart, no star of Bethlehem to direct and cheer the unbeliever's way. His conscience is not in the presence of God, and therefore there is no true Christ in his heart. The Bible to him may be a very wonderful book, but that is all: if it seem to be owned practically as that which reveals the divine way of salvation, almost every thing in it is made to bear on this one point. Warnings, threatenings, exhortations, invitations, instructions, commands, prayers, ordinances—nearly all that Old and New Testaments utter is made to converge on what, to the flesh, really amounts to this—God helping us by His Son and Spirit to save ourselves. From this quagmire God has mercifully extricated all His people; He has taught all His children with more or less intelligence to rest upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it is that the vast field of the written word opens apace; the different displays which God has made of His character; and the effect of these dealings upon believers and unbelievers in the several dispensations: summed up in the person of Christ, whether viewed once here below, now in heaven, or by and by returning again. Thus the child, led of the Spirit, grows in knowledge, and begins to see the revealed, past, present and future, in their just proportions, because he begins to learn all in Christ, whose mind he has. (2 Cor. ii.) In few words, he is learning to prove the things which differ.

Now, it may be a narrow, but certainly it is an important part of the things which differ that is suggested by the title to this paper. Nor would I pretend to sketch minutely the ways in which the estimate formed by a godly Jew respecting Christ's advent is distinguishable from the hope set before the Church in His future presence. Let us content ourselves with certain broad essential differences, which are nevertheless often confounded by Christians to the obscuring of their proper portion, and so far to the detriment of their souls. The testimony of Scripture is so full and distinct, that little reasoning is necessary; still, its importance may well demand ample quotations.

The advent of a glorious Messiah *to the earth* was characteristically a Jewish hope. I speak not of traditional fables, but of the truths which the Jews saw and held fast in their Scriptures. To such believing Jews, Messiah was the centre and security of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; He was the accomplisher of all righteousness, blessing and peace in their land, Immanuel's land. By Him they expected to be saved from their enemies and from the hand of all that hated them, that so they might serve the Lord without fear all the days of their life. He was to cut off all the horns of the wicked, and to exalt the righteous; to save Zion and build the cities of Judah, that they might dwell there and have it in possession, and thus the seed of His servants should inherit it, and they that love His name dwell therein. This, as is plain in the Psalms, is the character of the deliverance pleaded by the Jewish remnant—not a rapture *out of the earth*, but a destruction of their enemies *in it*; a divine vengeance upon their enemies on earth, not a gathering to the Lord in heaven. They looked, and will look, for the Lord to go forth and fight against the nations He will gather at the latter end against Jerusalem; they will look for His feet to stand upon the Mount of Olives, and the Lord shall be King over all the earth. There, with David their king over Israel, restored, as it were, from the grave, and Ephraim and Judah united perfectly and for ever under the rule of the true Beloved, they expect to dwell in their land, and the heathen shall know that God the Lord sanctifies Israel when His sanctuary shall be in their midst for evermore. They might read of a Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, but their hope was the presence and reign of the Messiah here below, in special connection with the Jewish nation and land. The following texts will still more plainly shew the truth we have been stating:

"Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt *break them with a rod of iron*; thou shalt *dash them in pieces* like a potter's vessel." (Ps. ii. 6-9.) "For the Lord most High is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet." (Ps. xlvii. 2, 3.) "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. is mount Zion; on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge." (Ps. xlviii. 1-3; lxv. lxvii. lxviii.) "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen." (Ps. lxxii. 4-19.) I need not go more minutely through the Psalms, beyond directing attention to Ps. cxxviii., as evidently in accordance with the remarks already made. So also Ps. cxxxii. 13-18. The inspired praises of Psalms cxlvi.-cl.

will then have their literal fulfilment. It is earthly joy under Messiah's dominion, and all is in unison with the thoughts, feelings, associations, hopes and triumphs of His people Israel.

The prophets are equally explicit. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." (Is. iv. 2-6.) "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (ix. 6, 7.) "But with *righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for* the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." (xi. 4-16.) "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." (xxiv. 21-23.) "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill." (xxv. 6-10.) "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." (xxvii. 6, 12, 13.) "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers? Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, *the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king: he will save us.*" (xxxiii. 17-22.) "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (xxxv. 1-10.) The whole of chapters lx. lxi. lxii. are closely in point, but can only be referred to now. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." (lxv. 17-25.) "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord,

Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." (lxvi. 10-16.)

"And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." (Jer. iii. 16-18.) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (xxiii. 5-8.) To this we may add as most express, chapters xxxi. xxxii. xxxiii.

In Ezekiel, the reader may consult chapters xvi. xx. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxix. xl.-xlviii.; also Dan. vii. viii. ix. xii.; Hosea i. ii. iii.; Joel ii. iii.; Amos ix.; Obadiah.; Micah iv. v.; Hab. iii.; Zeph. iii.; Hag. ii.; Zech. ii. viii. ix. x. xii. xiv., and Mal. iii. iv.

Another distinction which may be briefly noticed is, that the Jews had the revelation of outward circumstances and ordered dates whereby to regulate their expectations. We need do little more than refer to the communications of God made to Abraham in Gen. xv., as well as others subsequently, for illustrations of this. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them *four hundred years*. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and, *afterwards*, shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) Now it will not be disputed that the father of the faithful rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it and was glad, (John ix. 56,) but it was through, and at the end of, a long course of years and trying vicissitudes as regarded his seed. Abraham was in no way waiting for that day as if it might happen in his own life or shortly after. He was perfectly certain that the day of Christ could not come for some centuries at least. Full well he counted upon that day bringing in deliverance to his family, and hence his joy. (See Gen. xlix. 10.) Again, passing over intermediate predictions, the word sent by Gabriel to Daniel is even more detailed, and with chronological points of a very defined character. "Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." (Dan. ix. 25, 26.) Hence it is plain that, if we suppose a godly Jew of that age to have understood the prophecy of the seventy weeks, he *could not expect* Messiah to come and be cut off till the expiry of nearly five hundred years. Ignorance might seek the living among the dead, but no believer with intelligence of this divine prediction could possibly look for the arrival and cutting off of the Christ previously to the revealed epoch. It would have been faith in him to have said, "I expect the Messiah after so many years, not before; for so hath the mouth of the Lord spoken."

With the Church, on the contrary, the case is wholly different. Her hope is not the times of restitution of all things, but to be with the Lord in heaven as His bride; and as her hope is unearthly, so is it wholly unconnected with the times and seasons which characterized the expectations of Israel. Not that we are ignorant of these dates and epochs; but we know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night—a day of destruction whence there is no escape. But we are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief. We are already children of that day, and when the day arrives, we shall come with the Sun of righteousness who ushers it in. We shall have been with Him before the day breaks, for we know him as the bright, the Morning Star, and the morning star He will give to him that overcometh. Certain times and seasons, we are quite aware, must precede the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. (Acts i.) Thus we know that one week remains out of the seventy of Dan. ix., when the prince that shall come—a Roman prince—shall confirm covenant with the mass of the Jews for seven years. But, like another traitor and son of perdition, he shall put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he shall break his covenant. (Ps. lv. 20.) The covenant with death shall be disannulled. (Isaiah xxviii.) "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." This is followed by the abomination of desolation for its allowed term, "even until the consummation." (Compare with Dan. ix., chap. vii. 19-26.) "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. xxiv. 21.) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah xxx. 7.) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and *at that time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Dan. xii. 1.) The Church knows these revealed periods, but knows them as connected, not with herself, but with Jerusalem and the Jewish people, Daniel's people.

The Church does not wait to be gathered under a Messiah on earth, but to be caught up to meet Him *in the air*, and be ever with the Lord; (1 Thess. iv;) with Him in His Father's house; with Him when the successive judgments (symbolized by the seals, trumpets and vials) are falling on the earth; with Him when the marriage-supper of the Lamb is celebrated above; with Him when He wars with the beast and the false prophet; with Him, when we reign together for a thousand years; and with Him in the subsequent eternal state. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Surely, it is a blessed hope that the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ is to set to rights all things here below which are now out of course. Creation shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, and Israel no longer blinded but seeing. All Israel shall be saved, when the Redeemer comes out of Zion, and turns away ungodliness from Jacob. And if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? Yes, and if we look above, the long usurped possession of the air (Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12) shall be rescued from Satan and his angels: no longer shall he be permitted there to accuse the brethren of Christ in the presence of God; (Rev. xii.;) no longer will there be conflict with wicked spirits there. That old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, before the last vain struggle when he is cast into the lake of fire. But not any nor all these things are our proper hope, which is to be raptured, and meet the Lord Himself in heaven. As it is said in John xiv.: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and *receive you unto myself*, that where I am there ye may be also." Is this on earth, or in heaven? Is it merely the honours of a displayed kingdom? or is it not the nearer, higher intimacy of the Son of God in the home of the Father on high? The disciples did not ask, nor did the Lord indicate, when *these* things should be. But in Matt. xxiv. He does give the sign of His coming and of the

consummation of the age. That is, meeting the inquiries of the disciples from their own Jewish point of view, He enters into full particulars respecting Jerusalem, Judea, the temple, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, &c., which were but the beginning of sorrows; the end was not yet, which should not come before the Gospel of *the kingdom* was preached in all the habitable earth for a witness to all nations. Then He describes minutely the particular marks of the closing crisis up to His manifestation to all the tribes of the earth, and the complete ingathering of His elect (Jews) from the four winds. Of His elect *earthly* people this gathering must be because when Christ, our life, appears, *then* shall we also appear with Him in glory—the Church and Christ are manifested at the same time in glory; whereas, the elect described in Matt. xxiv. are only gathered *after* the Son of man's appearing, and cannot therefore be the Church. All the context, the more it is examined, proclaims them to be Jewish disciples, who, at the signal of the setting up of the abomination, flee, and so escape the unparalleled tribulation of these days and scenes of the end, for their simple trust is in the man of God's right hand, "the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." (Compare Ps. lxxix. lxxx.) But the passage in John's Gospel has nothing to do with Jerusalem, nor the earth, nor earthly circumstances. John never speaks of a special tribulation for Jewish disciples at a particular time and place, but of the constant tribulation we should count upon in the world, at all times. (John xvi. 33.) So the coming is not merely deliverance to a persecuted Jewish remnant on earth, but to receive us to Himself in heaven, without one hint of time, place, or circumstances.

Doubtless, the Church is to reign over the earth; the bright witness of the Father's love; for the world shall then know that He loved her as He loved His Son, both being displayed in the same glory. And how blessed the ministry of the Church in that day, serving the gladsome earth according to the grace which has called, kept, and glorified herself on high, the Bride, the Lamb's wife! We shall inherit the earth; we shall judge the world and angels too in that administration of the fulness of times, when all things shall be gathered together in one in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance. Joint heirs with Him, we share all that He will rule as the exalted Man. And God hath put *all things* under His feet. Though we do not yet *see* all things put under Him, we do see Himself exalted; and when the day arrives for Him to take the dominion, it will be manifested that He is head over all things *to* the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The Old Testament prophecies are full of the earthly glory. In the New Testament, we have the mystery of God's will made known to us, involving the inheritance of things in heaven as well as things on earth, and the Church co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, as His body. (Eph. i. 9-14.) No prophets of ancient times had ever uttered such thoughts. It is not merely that such a portion was not understood, but it was not revealed. It was kept hid in God, and *now* revealed, we are told, unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The old prophets had spoken of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when Israel, or at least a Jewish remnant, repent and are converted; they had largely depicted the times of the restitution of all things, when Messiah comes from the heavens which now receive Him. (Acts iii.) No doubt they foretold the rule of the heavens, (Dan. iv.) and anticipated the joy and peace of the world under that kingdom. But they never predicted, much less did they know, that Christ will have a heavenly body and spouse associated with Him, and enjoying all His love and glory in the heavenly places; though they did celebrate the time when the land shall be married, and Jehovah shall make Jerusalem a praise *in the earth*. The bride they sing of, in the Canticles and the Psalms, is an earthly bride. Very different is the Church of which Paul speaks in Ephes. v. Very different the marriage of the Lamb, of which John tells in Rev. xix., as far above the espoused one of the Old Testament as the heavenly glory of Christ exceeds His earthly, though all be perfect in its place.

Further, be it noted that, whether it be deliverance in mount Zion and Jerusalem, (Joel ii.) whether it be judgment of the Gentiles in the valley of Jehoshaphat, (Joel iii.) with both we find wonders displayed in the heavens, and in the earth blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke; the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. Nothing of the kind is ever connected in Scripture with the catching up of the Church, whose only sign is the descent of the Lord Jesus to summon her into His presence in the air. This descent, and the consequent rapture, are nowhere described as events which the world is to behold. *To them that look for Him*, Christ appears, but to none else, so far as Scripture shews, until He is revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His public revelation, in order to judge, is called "the day of the Lord," "the appearing," &c.; and it is certain that many signs will precede that day, and manifestation to every eye. The apostacy must be ripe, and the Lawless One manifested without hindrance; and the great tribulation out of which comes the innumerable Gentile multitude of Rev. vii., as well as the future unparalleled tribulation in Judea. But this is not all. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 29-31.) But I would not dwell further upon these points of contrast, only praying that we may remember, day by day, that our place, the Church's only right and befitting place, is to wait for Christ from heaven. It is not judgments that we expect to be in; it is not the hour of temptation we have to await and dread. (Rev. iii. 10.) Our business is to wait, as a heavenly Bride, for our heavenly Bridegroom. Those who link the Church with earthly circumstances will be miserably disappointed: not so the hearts which the Spirit directs, animates and sustains in the longing cry, Come, Lord Jesus. May it be so with us, beloved, increasingly as the moment, unknown to us, draws nearer! Amen.

GOD'S PRINCIPLE OF UNITY.

It will be at once admitted that God Himself must be the spring and centre of unity, and that He alone *can* be in power or title. Any centre of unity, outside God, must be, so far, a denial of His Godhead and glory, an independent centre of influence and power. And God is one—the just, true and only centre of all true unity. Whatever is not dependent on this is rebellion. But this so simple, and, to the Christian, necessary, truth clears our way at once. Man's fall is the reverse of this. He was a subordinate creature; (an image too of Him that was to come;) he would become an independent one, and he is, in sin and rebellion, the slave of a mightier rebel than himself, whether in the dispersion of several self-will, or its concentration in the dominion of the man of the earth. But then we must, in consequence of this, go a step further. God must be a centre in blessing as well as power, when He surrounds Himself with united and morally intelligent hosts. We may know that He will punish rebellion with everlasting destruction from His presence into the hopelessness of uncentred and selfish individual misery and hatred; but He Himself must be a centre of blessing and holiness, for He is a holy God, and He is love. Indeed, holiness in us, while it is by its nature separation from evil, is just having God, (the holy One, who is love too,) the object, centre, and spring of our affections. He makes us partakers of His holiness; for He is essentially separate from all evil which He knows as God, though as His contrary. But in us, holiness must consist in our affections, thoughts, and conduct, being centred in, and derived from, Him: a place maintained in entire dependence upon Him. Of the establishment and power of this unity in the Son and Spirit I will speak presently. It is the great and glorious truth itself on which I now insist. This great principle is true, even in creation. It was formed in unity, and God its only possible centre. It shall be brought into it yet again, and centred in Christ as its head, even in the Son, by whom, and for whom, all things were created. (Col. i. 16.) It is man's glory (though his ruin as fallen) to be made, thus, a centre in his place—the image of Him that is to come; * but, alas! his imitation in

* See Eph. i. He hath made known to us the mystery of His will; that is, gathering together in one all things in Christ, in whom we have received an inheritance.

a state of rebellion in this same place, when fallen. I know not (I would venture to say no more) that angels were ever made the centre of any system. But man was. It was his glory to be the lord and centre of this lower world; an associate but dependent Eve, his companion and help in his presence. He was the image and glory of God. His dependence made him look up; and this is true glory and blessedness to all but God. Dependence looks up, and is exalted above itself. Independence must look down, (for it cannot be filled with itself in a creature,) and is degraded. Dependence is true exaltation in a creature, when the object of it is right. This primeval state of man was not holiness, in the proper sense of it, because evil was not known. It was not a divine, but it was a blessed creation state; it was innocence. But this was lost in the assertion of independence. If man became as God, knowing good and evil, it was with a guilty conscience, the slave of the evil he knew, and in an independence he could not sustain himself in, while he had morally lost God to depend on.

With this state, (for we must now descend to the present actual question of unity,) with man in this state, God has to deal, if true real unity, such as He can own, is to be attained. Now, He must be still the centre. It is not, therefore, in mere creative power. Evil exists, the world is lying in wickedness, and the God of unity is the holy God. Separation therefore, separation from evil, becomes the necessary and sole basis and principle of unity. For God must be the centre and power of that unity, and evil exists; and from that corruption they must be separate who are to be in God's unity, for He can have no union with evil. Hence, I repeat, we have this great fundamental principle, that separation from evil is the basis of all true unity. Without this, it is more or less attaching God's authority to evil, and rebellion against His authority, as is all unity independent of Him. It is a sect in its lightest and fullest forms: in its fullest it is the great apostacy, of which one of the characteristics, as ecclesiastical or secular power, is unity,—but unity by subjection of man to what is independent really or openly of God, because it is of His word: not established by subjection to the Holy one, according to His word,* and by the power of the Spirit working in them that are united, and by His presence, which is the personal power of union in the body. But this separation is not yet by judicial power, which separates (not the good from the evil, the precious from the vile, but) the vile from the precious, banishing it from His presence: in judgment binding up the tares in bundles, and casting them into the furnace of fire;—gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend; Satan (and his angels) being himself cast down, and all things thereupon being gathered together in one in Christ, in heaven and in earth. Then the world, not the conscience, will be cleared from evil, by the judgment which will not allow it, but early cut off all the wicked; not by the power and testimony of the Spirit of God.

It is not now the time of this judicial separation of the evil from the good in the world as the field of Christ, by the cutting off and destruction of the wicked. But unity is not therefore given up out of the thoughts of God, nor can He have recognized union with evil. There is one Spirit and one body. He gathers together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.

And now as to the principle in general. God is working in the midst of evil to produce a unity of which He is the centre and the spring, and which owns dependently His authority. He does it not yet by judicial clearing away of the wicked; He cannot unite with the wicked, nor have a union which serves them. How can it be then, this union? He separates the called from the evil. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. As it is written, I will walk in them and dwell in them," &c. Now here we have it distinctly set forth. This was God's way of gathering. It was by saying "Come out from among them." He could not have true gathered unity around Him otherwise. Since evil exists, yea, is our natural condition, there cannot be union of which the Holy God is the centre and power, but by separation from it. Separation is the first element of unity and union.

We may now enquire a little further into the manner in which this unity is effectuated,—on what it is based. There must be an intrinsic power of union holding it together to a centre, as well as a power separating from evil to form it; and, this centre found, it denies all others. The centre of unity must be a sole and unrivalled centre. The Christian has not long to enquire here. It is Christ: the object of the divine counsel—the manifestation of God Himself—the one only vessel of mediatorial power, entitled to unite creation as He by whom and for whom all things were made; and the Church as its Redeemer, its Head, its Glory, and its Life. And there is this double headship; He is head *over* all things *to* the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. This will be accomplished in its day. For the present, we take up the intermediate period, the unity of the Church itself, and its unity in the midst of evil. Now, there can be no moral power which can unite away from evil, but Christ. He alone, as perfect grace and truth, detects all the evil which separates from God, and from which God separates. He alone can, of God, be the attractive centre which draws together to Himself all on whom God so acts. God will own no other. There is no other to whom the testimony could be borne, who is morally adequate to concentrate every affection which is of God and towards God. Redemption itself too makes this necessary and evident; there can be but one Redeemer, one to whom a ransomed heart can be given, as well as where a divinely quickened heart can give all its affections, the centre and revelation of the Father's love. He, too, is the centre of power to do it. In Him all the fulness dwells. Love (and God is love) is known in Him. He is the wisdom of God and the power of God. And yet more than this, He is the separating power of attraction, because He is the manifestation of all this and the fulfiller of it in the midst of evil; and that is what we poor miserable ones want who are in it, and it is what, if we may so speak, God wants for His separating glory in the midst of evil. Christ sacrificed Himself to set up God in separating love in the midst of evil.—There was more than this, a wider scope in this work, but I speak in reference to my present subject now. Thus Christ becomes, not only the centre of unity to the universe in His glorious title of power, but as the manifester of God, the one owned and set up of the Father, and attracter of man; He becomes a peculiar and special centre of divine affections in man; round which they are gathered as the sole divine centre of unity. For indeed, as the centre, necessarily the sole centre, "he that gathereth not with Me scattereth." And such as to this point was the object even and power of His death, "I, if I be lifted, will draw all men unto me." And more specially, He gave Himself "not for that nation only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad." But here again we find this separation of a peculiar people: "He gave Himself for us, that He might purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He was the very pattern of the divine life in man, separate from the evil by which it was universally surrounded. He was the friend of publicans and sinners, piping in grace to men by familiar and tender love; but He was ever the separate man. And so He is, as the centre and high-priest of the Church. "Such a high-priest *became us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate from sinners*"—and, it is added, "made higher than the heavens." Here, in passing, we may remark that the centre and subject of this unity then is heavenly. A living Christ still became the instrument of maintaining the enmity, being Himself subject to the law of commandments contained in ordinances. Hence,—though the divine glory of His person necessarily reached over this wall as a fruitful bough of grace to poor passing Gentiles without, and it could not be otherwise, for where faith was He could not deny Himself to be God, nor what God was, even love—yet, in His regular course, as a man made of a woman, He was made under the law. But by His death He broke down the middle wall of partition, and made both one, and reconciled both in one body unto God—making peace. Hence it is as lifted up, and finally as made higher than the heavens, that He becomes the centre and sole object of unity.

Let us remark, in passing, that hence worldliness always destroys unity. The flesh cannot rise up to heaven, nor descend in love to every need. It walks in the separative comparison of self-

* This is a characteristic of the independent unity. I believe that it will be in an openly infidel state, and a manifestation of the power of Satan. But when not open, it is clear that subjection to God is shewn in subjection to His word. Now, the authority of the Church is confessedly antecedent to the authority of the word in Romanism, and the saints are not all of them allowed to be the immediate objects of God's own word, nor to act upon it, that is, be subject to it. They are to be subject to the Church. Let the Church allow it or not, that makes no difference. He who allows can hinder; that is, hinder God's addressing the saints. For this is the true question of Protestantism; not man's title to the Bible merely, but, God's title to address man directly by His word; more particularly, to address each of his own servants, or them professedly such.

importance. "I am of Paul," &c. "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" Paul had not been crucified for them, nor had they been baptized in the name of Paul. They had got down to earth in their minds, and unity was gone. But the glorious heavenly Christ, in one word, embraced all: "Why persecutest thou *me?*" This separation from all else was more slow among the Jews, as having been outwardly themselves the separated people of God; but, having fully shewn what they were, the word to the disciples was, "Let us go forth *to Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach." The Lord, when, as the great result, He would have one flock and one shepherd, *put forth* His own sheep and went before them. Indeed, we have only to show that unity is God's mind, and separation from evil is the necessary consequence; for it exists as a principle in the calling of God before unity itself. Unity is purpose, and as He is the only rightful centre, it must be the result of holy power; but separation from evil is His very nature. Hence, when He publicly calls Abraham, the words: "get thee out of thy country, and out of thy kindred, and from thy father's house."

But to continue. From what we have seen, it is evident that the Lord Jesus Christ on high is the object round which the Church clusters in unity. He is its head and centre. This is the character of their unity, and of their separation from evil, from sinners. Yet they were not to be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil, and sanctified through the truth; Jesus having set Himself thus apart to this end. Hence, as well as for the public display of the power and glory of the Son of man, the Holy Ghost was sent down to identify the called ones with their heavenly Head, and to separate them from the world in which they were to remain; and the Holy Spirit became thus the centre and power down here of the unity of the Church in Christ's name—Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition, reconciling both in one body by the cross. The saints, thus gathered in one, became the habitation of God through the Spirit. The Holy Ghost Himself became the power and centre of unity, but in the name of Jesus, of a people separated alike from Jew and Gentile, and delivered out of this present evil world into union with their glorious Head. By Peter, God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name, and of the Jews there was a remnant according to the election of grace; as St. Paul, one of them, was separated himself from Israel, and from the Gentiles to whom he was sent. And so was the constant testimony. He that saith he hath fellowship with Him and walketh in darkness, lieth, and doeth not the truth. Separation from evil is the necessary first principle of communion with Him. Whoever calls it in question is a liar; he is, so far, of the wicked one; he belies the character of God. If unity depends on God, it must be separation from darkness. So with one another. If we walk in the light, as *God is in the light*, we have fellowship one with another. And mark here, there is no limit. It is as *God is in the light*. There the blessed Lord has placed us by His precious redemption; and hence, by that, the whole manner of our walk and union must be formed. We can have no union (as of God) out of it; the Jew could, because his union, though separation, and hence the same in principle, yet was only outward in the flesh; and the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest,—no, not even for the saints, though in God's counsels doubtless they were to be there through the sacrifice about to be offered.

So again one with the other. What fellowship hath light with darkness? Christ with Belial? What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? And then, addressing the saints, the Holy Ghost adds, "for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate." Otherwise we provoke the Lord to jealousy, as if we were stronger than He. Of this unity and fellowship, I may add, the Lord's supper is the symbol and expression. "For we, being many, are all one bread, (loaf,) one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

We find, then, most distinctly, that as the unity of Israel of old was founded on deliverance, and calling from the midst of, and maintained separation amongst, the heathen which surrounded them, so the Church's unity was based on the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, separating a peculiar people out of the world to Christ, and dwelling amongst them: God Himself thus dwelling and walking amongst them. For "there is one Spirit, and one body, as we are called in one hope of our calling." Indeed, the very name of Holy Spirit implies it, for holiness is separation from evil. Whatever failure, moreover, there may be in attainment, the principle and measure of this separation is necessarily the light as God is in the light; the way into the holiest being made manifest, and the Holy Ghost come down thence to dwell in the Church below, and so, in power of heavenly separation, because the indwelling centre and power of unity (put as the Shekinah in Israel.) He establishes its holiness, and its unity, in its separation to God, according to His own nature, and the power of that presence. Such is the Church, and such is true unity. Nor can the saint recognize, intelligently, any other, though he may own desires and efforts after good in that which is short of it.

Here I might close my remarks; having developed the great, though simple principle, flowing from the very nature of God, that separation from evil is His principle of unity. But a difficulty collateral to my main object and subject presents itself. Supposing evil introduces itself into this one body, so formed actually on earth, does the principle still hold good? How then can separation from evil maintain unity? And here we touch on the mystery of iniquity. But this principle, flowing from the very nature of God, that He is holy, cannot be set aside. Separation from evil is the necessary consequence of the presence of the Spirit of God under all circumstances, as to conduct and fellowship. But here there is a certain modification of it. The revealed presence of God is always judicial when it exists; because power against evil is connected with the holiness which rejects it. Thus, in Israel, God's presence was judicial; His government was there, which did not allow of evil. So, though in another manner, it is in the Church: God's presence is judicial there, (not of the world, save in testimony, because God is not revealed yet in the world; and hence it plucks up no tares out of that field.) But it judges them that are within. Hence the Church is to put out from itself the wicked person, and thus maintains its separation from evil. And unity is maintained in the power of the Holy Ghost and a good conscience. And indeed, that the Spirit may not be grieved, and the practical blessing lost, saints are exhorted to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. And how sweet and blessed is this garden of the Lord, when it is thus maintained and blooms in the fragrance of Christ's grace! But, alas! we know worldliness creeps in and spiritual power declines; the taste for this blessing is enfeebled, because it is not enjoyed in the power of the Spirit; the spiritual fellowship with Christ, the heavenly head, decays, and the power which banishes evil out of the Church is no longer in living exercise.

The body is not sufficiently animated by the Holy Ghost to answer the mind of God. But God will never leave Himself without witness. He brings home the evil to the body by some testimony or other,—by the word, or by judgments, or both in succession, to recall it to its spiritual energy, and lead it to maintain His glory and its place. If it refuse to answer to the very nature and character of God, and the incompatibility of that nature with evil, so that it becomes really a false witness for God, then the first and immutable principle recurs: the evil must be separated from. Further, the unity which is maintained after such separation becomes a testimony to the compatibility of the Holy Ghost and evil: that is, it is in its nature apostacy; it maintains the name and authority of God in His Church, and associates it with evil. It is not the professed open apostacy of avowed infidelity, but it is denying God according to the true power of the Holy Ghost, while using His name. This unity is the great power of evil pointed out in the New Testament, connected with the professing Church and the form of piety. From such we are to turn away. This power of evil in the Church may be discerned spiritually and left, when there is the consciousness of inability to effect any remedy; or if there be an open, public testimony, it is then open condemnation to it. Thus, previous to the Reformation, God gave light to many who maintained a witness to this very evil in the professing Church, apart from it; some bore testimony and still remained. When the Reformation came, it was openly and publicly given, and the professing body, or Romanism, became openly and avowedly apostate, so far as a professing Christian body can, in the Council of Trent. But wherever the body declines the putting away of evil, it becomes

in its unity a denier of God's character of holiness, and then separation from the evil is the path of the saint; and the unity he has left is the very greatest evil that can exist where the name of Christ is named. Saints may remain, as they have in Romanism, where there is not power to gather all saints together; but the duty of the saint as to it is plain, in the first principles of Christianity, though doubtless his faith may be exercised by it. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." It is possible that "he that departs from evil may make himself a prey:" but this, of course, makes no difference; it is a question of faith. He is in the true power of God's unity.

Thus, then, the Word of God affords us the true nature, object, and power of unity; and in so doing, it gives us the measure of it, by which we judge of what pretends to it, and the manner of it; and moreover, the means of maintaining its fundamental principles, according to the nature and power of God, by the Holy Ghost in the conscience, where it may not be realized together in power. Its nature flows from God's; for of true unity He must be the centre, and He is holy; and He brings us into it by separating us from evil. Its object is Christ; He is the sole centre of the Church's unity, objectively as its head. Its power is the presence of the Holy Ghost down here; sent as the Spirit of Truth withal from the Father, by Jesus. Its measure is walking in the light, as God is in the light; fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus, and, we may add, through the testimony of the written word,—the apostolic and prophetic word of the New Testament especially. It is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (of the New Testament,) Jesus Christ Himself being the corner stone. The means of maintaining it, is putting away evil, (judicially, if needed,) so as to maintain, through the Spirit, fellowship with the Father and the Son. If evil be not put away, then separation from that which does not becomes a matter of conscience. I return, if alone, into the essential and infallible unity of the body, in its everlasting principles of union with the head in a holy nature by the Spirit. The path of the saints thus becomes clear. God will secure by eternal power the vindication —not here, perhaps, but before His angels—of them who have rightly owned His nature and truth in Christ Jesus.

I believe these fundamental principles are deeply needed in this day, for the saint who seeks to walk truly and thoroughly with God. Latitudinarian unity it may be painful and trying to keep aloof from; it has an amiable form in general; is, in a measure, respectable in the religious world; tries nobody's conscience, and allows of everybody's will. It is the more difficult to be decided about, because it is often connected with a true desire of good, and is associated with amiable nature. And it seems rigid, and narrow, and sectarianism to decline so to walk. But the saint, when he has the light of God, must walk clearly in that. God will vindicate his ways in due time. Love to every saint is a clear duty; walking in their ways is not. And he that gathers not with Christ, scatters. There can be but one unity—Confederacy, even for good, is not it; even if it has its form. Unity professed to be of the Church of God, while evil exists, and is not put away, is a yet more serious matter.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—No. 2.

(For No. 1, see pages 79-82, Vol. ii., Part 2.)

In resuming the consideration of this subject, especially now in the light shed upon it by the New Testament, there are several facts and principles of God's ways which need to be borne in mind by us.

In the first place, it was in the counsels of God that Messiah should suffer ere He reigned. Nor was this a truth which had been hid in God, as one of the secret things which belong to Him alone. On the contrary, the sufferings of Messiah form the subject of many a distinct prediction, and the theme of many a holy strain of lamentation; besides being prefigured by a great part of the Mosaic sacrifices and ritual. Thus had the law, the psalms, and the prophets, borne witness to the sufferings of Messiah: so largely indeed, that for any who, like my readers, are accustomed to view them in this light, it is needless to bring forward particular passages in proof of it. But to Jewish minds, prior to the accomplishment of the event, this was the deepest mystery. It was, besides, a subject most unwelcome to the pride of the natural heart in them, just as it is still in us. Sufferings, which the holiness of God makes requisite on account of our sin, cannot but prove an unwelcome subject to hearts which have not been humbled under the sense of sin. Thus it was with the Jews—yea, even with the disciples of our Lord themselves. Notwithstanding the plainest declarations on His part that He must suffer and rise from the dead, they seem not to have entertained a thought of it, until the event came upon them, and found them, notwithstanding all previous warnings, unprepared.

Then, further, it was foreseen of God, that the human instruments in effecting Messiah's sufferings and death, would be his own people, the Jews. It was foreseen, *yea, and foretold*, that instead of receiving their Messiah with open arms, they would reject and crucify (Ps. xxii. 16, compared with Zech. xii. 10) their long-promised and long-expected King. It was also foretold that on account of this, instead of the kingdom being immediately introduced, their heaviest sufferings and longest dispersion should ensue on the rejection of Messiah. (See Ps. lxix. 19-28. Is. v. 5; vi. 9-12; viii. 14-17; xxviii. 16-22.) Other passages there are too numerous to be quoted.

Again, notwithstanding the rejection of Messiah by Israel, and the judgments which were to come on them in consequence, it was distinctly and largely foretold in the Old Testament, that eventually Israel shall repent; (see Hos. v. 15; vi. 1, 2. Ps. cx. 2, 3. Ezek. xx. 43, 44. Joel ii. 15, 18. Zech. xii. 10-14, &c.) that, confessing and bewailing their sins, they shall anxiously look for Him whom they once rejected, and that then He shall return, forgive their iniquity, deliver them from their Gentile oppressors, on whom judgments the most solemn and terrific shall be executed, and that then the long-foretold and long-expected kingdom of Christ shall be actually set up; His government openly and visibly extending over all the earth. These events form the great burden of prophetic testimony; as the apostle expresses it, summing up the whole in a few words, they "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow."

Thus far, all is plain and clear enough. But then the question arises, How is the interval between the rejection of Israel's Messiah and His return in glory to be filled up? "Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." If Christ be rejected by the earth, a place had been prepared for Him in heaven. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The sovereignty which is hereafter to be openly and publicly exercised *on earth*, but which could not be thus exercised then, because of Israel's unbelief and sin, was to be exercised by Jesus risen, and ascended, and seated at God's right hand *in heaven*.* He had, while on earth, manifested the name of His Father to those who had been given Him, and after His ascension the Holy Ghost was to descend to enable them to bear witness to the name of their rejected Lord, and to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations. The effect of this word which began to be spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirmed by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, was, that then, and ever since, there have been those on earth who own the name, and title, and authority of that Christ who has been rejected by the earth, and is now actually at the right hand of God in heaven. As a matter of fact, historically, whole kingdoms have thus owned, and do own, the name and sovereignty of Christ. It may be, and as to the mass undoubtedly is, true, that it is only in word, in profession, that Christ is owned. Still, the fact is there, that, as the effect of Christ's first coming, whole masses of men profess to be Christians, i.e. to be subjects of Christ, recognizing His authority and governed by His laws. It is also true that amidst the mass there are many who do really know Him by the Holy Ghost; and it is of the utmost importance to see, as to all such, that there was a far deeper purpose of God than any which has yet been noticed—a purpose which He purposed in Christ before the foundation of the world, even that those who do thus really know Him during the present

* Hence, as it would appear, the expression "kingdom of heaven," a phrase generally interchangeable with the other, "kingdom of God," but not always so. The former is used in Matthew only; but in chapter xii. 28, when the kingdom is spoken of as actually there, it is "the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God was there, for the King was there. It could hardly have been said that "the kingdom of heaven" was there, for Christ had not yet ascended to heaven, and was not exercising *in* and *from* heaven the power of His kingdom. So in chapter xxi. 43, it could not have been well said, "the kingdom of heaven" is taken from you, for it was not what properly belonged to them. The kingdom of God was their proper, definite hope; and hence it is said: "The kingdom of God is taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

interval * should be fellow-heirs and of the same body with Him—His bride—His body—united to Him now by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and to be manifested with Him in glory when He returns. This subject has already been very fully treated of in "The Prospect." But, important as it is, it is not the subject of our present inquiry, though intimately connected with it. I refer to it thus explicitly here, lest any should suppose it was overlooked, or that, in distinguishing between it and the kingdom of God, its importance was in any way undervalued.

The fact is, that the kingdom of God, which will exist *manifestly* in the millennial reign of Christ, (treated of in No. 1,) exists now *in mystery*, and is found wherever there is the acknowledgment, real or in profession only, of the name and authority of Christ, while He Himself is hid in God on high. It is within this kingdom, of course, that the Church has its existence at present. Nay, more; it is at present the only thing in the kingdom which is really precious to Christ, and we shall have to look at passages which, on this account, speak of the Church, or rather, of those who compose the Church, as the kingdom. Still, it is not *as the Church* that these passages contemplate it, and the kingdom itself is a much wider thing. For *full instruction* as to the special, distinct place and blessedness of "the Church," we look in vain, except in the Ephesians and other epistles of St. Paul. The kingdom of God, I would repeat, exists now in mystery, and comprises the whole sphere in which the name and authority of Christ are recognized, whether nominally or really, during the period of Christ's session at the right hand of God. There is, of course, a wide difference between a sovereignty exercised openly and visibly in the form and character of royalty on the earth, Jerusalem its centre, and the whole earth its sphere, and a sovereignty exercised from heaven by invisible agency and moral means, such as Christianity is now. This latter is the kingdom of God in mystery; the former is the kingdom of God as the Jews were taught by ancient prophecy to expect it, and as it will yet surely exist in the millennial age. Modified, however, even then by the introduction and co-heirship with Christ of the heavenly saints, for which room was made by Israel's rejection of their Messiah on the earth. When He takes the kingdom, it will be as the glorified Son of man; and the heavenly body, the Church, now forming by the Holy Ghost, will be united with its Head in the administration of that kingdom, so that even then it will have the character of the kingdom of heaven.

As the open establishment of the kingdom is inseparably connected with the repentance of Israel and their reception of the Messiah, it pleased God, by the proclamation that his kingdom was at hand, solemnly to put to the test whether Israel was in a condition, morally and spiritually, to receive it. Accordingly, the preaching of John the Baptist, and the earlier preaching of our Lord Himself and His disciples, was simply this, the announcing that the kingdom was at hand, and calling upon Israel to repent and believe the good tidings. God knew, of course, that they would reject the kingdom thus preached to them, and he had arranged every thing accordingly. The kingdom they hoped for was to be put off on account of their unbelief, and the kingdom which was actually at hand was the kingdom in mystery, as it has existed from that time until the present. But, though God knew well that they would reject the kingdom, both in the rejection of its royal Heir and in the rejection of His forerunner—though God knew this, I say—the responsibility of Israel was not thereby diminished in the least. All was ready on God's part; "the Child was born to Israel, the Son given," whose name was to be called Wonderful, on whose shoulders the government was to be, and who was to sit on the throne of His father David, executing judgment and justice for ever. He gave full proof that to Him belonged these dignities and glories; and had they received Him, His reign would doubtless have commenced. But God knew they would not receive Him. He knew they would crucify and slay Him, and He delivered Him into their hands to be thus crucified. But did that make them less guilty? Not in the least. The foreknowledge of God is one thing; man's responsibility is another. God knew men would break the law; yet He gave it, that what was in man's heart might be manifest. God knew that Israel would, by their sins, forfeit the land of Canaan, and have to be scattered, as at present. He told them that He knew this before He brought them in. (See Deut. xxxi. 16-21.) Still, He brought them in. He knew that they would reject the prophets and messengers by whom He spake to them, and offered them forgiveness and mercy, if they would but repent. (See Ezek. iii. 7-9.) Nevertheless, He sent them, rising up betimes and sending. Was their responsibility diminished by God's foreknowledge of the manner in which they would treat these messengers of His mercy? Surely not. So when, last of all, He sent His Son, sent Him as the One born to be King of the Jews, He knew all that they would do unto Him. From the slaughter of the innocents by Herod, to the last taunt that was addressed to the holy Sufferer on the cross, God foreknew all. But why should this hinder Him from presenting the kingdom to them, and offering them its felicities and its glories on condition of their repentance, any more than the foresight of their failure under any former test should have hindered Him from applying it? God would make manifest what man, what Israel was, and so appealed to them in the most affecting way, through the medium of the hopes which, for so many generations, had been indulged by them as a nation—hopes based on the prophecies considered in our last. And they understood that Jesus claimed to be the one whose coming was the object and centre of their national hopes. The superscription in Latin, and Greek, and Hebrew, placed over the cross by Pilate, told plainly enough that it was as King of the Jews He was rejected by the nation. Thank God, He did foreknow what they in the hatred of their hearts would do. Their sin has thus been overruled to our salvation; their fall has become our riches; and in due time, when the Church has been formed and perfected, and caught up to meet its Head in the air, when all the "mysteries of the kingdom" have had their accomplishment, Israel, as we have seen, humbled and broken-hearted, shall say: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, and the kingdom shall be established manifestly and in power. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Let us look now at some of the passages in the New Testament which relate to this subject. We shall find them ranging themselves under one or other of these classes. 1. The passages which announce the kingdom in such a manner and in such connections as necessarily to awaken in the heart the thought of that kingdom of Christ, which we saw in No. 1 to be the great subject of Old Testament prophecy. 2. The passages which speak of the kingdom as it now exists, in mystery, including all on earth that owns, whether truly or in mere profession, the sovereignty of Jesus in heaven. 3. The passages in which the expression is limited to that which really and truly owns the name and authority of Jesus; the kernel, so to speak, which alone gives value to the shell. There may be a few others giving the general characteristics of the reign of God apart from circumstances altogether.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matt. iii. 1-3.) It is by no means certain that the phrase "kingdom of heaven" here would suggest to the mind of John the Baptist himself any other thought than that of Messiah's reign—the kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up. The passage quoted by the evangelist respecting him is one which clearly has not yet received its full accomplishment; nor will it, till "the times of restitution of all things." "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed; and all flesh shall see it together." (Is. xl. 4, 5.) There can be no mistake as to what kingdom it is that is depicted here. It ensues on the accomplishment of the whole warfare, and travail, and chastisement of Jerusalem; (verses 1, 2;) and in it Zion and Jerusalem have the office of bringing good tidings, and crying to the cities of Judah: "Behold your God." (Verse 9.) The kingdom of heaven was really to exist in a very different form before the arrival of this blessed period; but it was Israel's sin which afforded the opportunity, so to speak, for its existence in its present manner; and before it actually took this form, it was to be seen whether there was in them the heart to respond to these joyful tidings; and hence this mission of the Baptist.

After recording the baptism and temptation of our blessed Lord,

* By this is meant here the interval between the death of Christ and His return to take His saints to Himself, as in 1 Thess. iv. The interval as to the earth is of longer duration, and does not close till Christ returns with all His saints to execute judgment on his enemies, and set up His kingdom in power.

the evangelist tells us that Jesus, having "heard that John was cast into prison, departed into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 12-17.) There is enough in the quotation here, from Is. ix., to remind any one of the kingdom to which Christ was born the heir; the well-known passage, "unto us a child is born," &c., being closely connected with the verses here quoted. It was the announcement to Israel that it was with Him now that they had to do. Still, in the imprisonment of His forerunner there was a dark intimation of Israel's unpreparedness to receive Him; and accordingly He, not unwittingly, as it may be John had done, but in full intelligence of the meaning of the words, calls on them to repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand. Not simply the kingdom of David's royal Son, seated on David's throne, but the kingdom of heaven — the sovereignty of that same blessed Person in the form it was to take, consequent on his rejection by Israel, and exercised first after its present mode, while He Himself, rejected by the earth, is exalted to the right hand of power in heaven, and then by and by exercised openly over all the earth, but even then with a heavenly character and heavenly associations not naturally belonging to the kingdom of the Son of David. It is a kingdom, too, which has to be preached; instead of being at once set up by power, it is proclaimed by preaching. Still, the preaching of the kingdom was accompanied by every demonstration of power. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt. iv. 23.) The result was, that His fame went throughout all Syria, and there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

In the presence of the multitudes thus attracted to Him by His preaching and the fame of His miracles, He addresses to His disciples the sermon on the mount. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" and again, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," would apply equally to those who shall enter into and inherit the kingdom in manifestation, (see Zeph. iii. 12; Is. lxvi. 2, also 5, with the rest of the chapter,) and those who are true members of it now that it exists in mystery. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth," would only apply to the former class. Verses 19, 20 (of Matt. v.) shew what the righteousness is that entitles to either. They do not shew us how the righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees is to be obtained, but they declare such a righteousness indispensable for those who would enter the kingdom. In chapter vi. 10, the disciples are instructed to pray for the coming of God's kingdom; and in verse 33, to seek it in preference to all else. Chapter vii. 21 distinguishes between profession and reality, and declares that to say, Lord, Lord, is not enough. The whole discourse is a most solemn exhibition of the righteousness requisite for any to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The law of Moses described the righteousness which entitled to the land of Canaan; the sermon on the mount bears the same relation to the kingdom of heaven. Of course, it is in Christ only that *either* righteousness has been accomplished; and the righteousness He has accomplished in Himself is the gift of grace to poor sinners, who have no righteousness whatever to plead. Such will the poor afflicted remnant of Israel acknowledge themselves to be by and by, and they will enter into the kingdom as it shall exist, in open manifestation; the righteousness of Him who died for them, that the whole nation should not perish, being their title thus to enter. Meanwhile, individuals have been taught by grace to see in themselves the entire contrast to all that the sermon on the mount presents, and have found in Christ the righteousness without which none can enter, even while the kingdom is in mystery; that is to say, viewing the kingdom as consisting of those who really know and own the supremacy of Jesus, and call him Lord by the Holy Ghost.

In chapter viii. 11, the faith of the centurion, commended by Jesus as greater than any he had found in Israel, draws from his lips the announcement "that many (such as he) shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This must have been a solemn and startling announcement to Jewish ears. It distinctly foretells the admission of Gentiles to the privileges of the kingdom, while the natural heirs are excluded. And while this passage evidently refers to the yet future millennial kingdom, (there being a place in it for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,) we have to bear in mind that the kingdom has its heavenly as well as its earthly department. Of this we find scarcely any thing in the Old Testament; and it was, in fact, the rejection of Christ by Israel that made way for the development of this purpose of God. It is now, while the kingdom of heaven exists in mystery, that these Gentile strangers are being brought from the east and from the west; and by and by, when the great purpose of God is accomplished, and all things both in heaven and earth are gathered together in one, even in Christ, these strangers will be seen sitting down with the patriarchs in the heavenly department of that glorious kingdom; while Israel, pardoned and restored, shall, with the spared nations, occupy the earth. The children of the kingdom who are cast out are, of course, those generations of Israel who have lived during the whole period of their rejection of Jesus.

In chapter ix. 35, we find Jesus still continuing His blessed labour of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. In chapter x., He associates the twelve apostles with Himself in this work, charging them to go not into the way of the Gentiles, or any city of the Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Verse 7.) But while this ministry of grace is thus continued, and even extended, the twelve are distinctly forewarned that they need not expect their testimony to be received. Fearful was to be the responsibility of the rejecters. It was to be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for them. Still, the apostles were to calculate on rejection. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." (Verses 24, 25.) It was to be their comfort amid all this, that whosoever confessed Jesus before men, should be confessed by Him before His Father in heaven. "He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it. He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (Verses 39, 40.) And none such were to lose their reward.

I could not doubt that this preaching of the kingdom of heaven by the twelve, interrupted by the definite and utter rejection of Christ on the part of Israel, will be resumed in days yet to come, and that it is to this resumed testimony that much of Matt. x. has its most definite application. See particularly verses 18, 22, 23, compared with Matt. xxiv. 13, 14; verses 35, 36, compared with Mic. vii. 6, which evidently speaks of the final sins and sorrows of the house of Jacob. The rejection of Christ by Israel has not only made way for the existence of the kingdom of heaven in mystery, but also for a far deeper mystery, viz. the Church and its union with its Head in glory. When this is completed by the rapture of the saints, in order to the marriage of the Lamb *in heaven*, God will resume His dealings with His earthly people Israel and with the Gentiles, as such. Witnesses will be raised up to proclaim this Gospel of the kingdom to both Jews and Gentiles, and scarcely will they have finished their testimony ere the Son of man shall come. (See Rev. xi.; also xiv. 6, 7.) Any who wish to pursue this subject, I would refer to the papers already published in "The Prospect," entitled "The Testimony of the End," and "On the Gospel by St. Matthew," (particularly the remarks at the close,) which throw much light on this deeply interesting inquiry.

In chapter xi. 11, John the Baptist is declared by our Lord to be as great as any that had been born of women. The Saviour affirms, nevertheless, that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. He had but announced its approach. The least of those who actually enjoy the blessedness of that reign of heaven, is in a position more blessed than John's. Our Lord then adds: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

Instead of its being an ordered, established system, into which men had been introduced at their birth, and in which all that was required of them was to walk obediently to the laws and ordinances then existing, it was a kingdom preached as at hand, and the question was of entering into it. Such too was the total failure of man under the old system, and the rancorous opposition of his heart to the new kingdom and its accompaniments, that it was only at the risk, or even cost, of every thing that any one could enter in. It was only by bursting asunder every tie, doing violence to all the dictates and interests of nature, that any one could enter in. It was grace, undoubtedly, that supplied the energy and fortitude thus to hate father, mother, brother, sister, houses, lands, yea, and a man's own life, for Christ's sake; still, that was the way in which grace led a man to act. And those who did not thus value Christ and the kingdom He proclaimed above every thing besides, so as to abide the loss of all things for His sake, proved themselves unworthy of it, and failed to enter in.

Matt. xii. 28 has been noticed already.

Matt. xiii. having been the subject of distinct consideration in a paper proceeding from the pen of one so much better able to expound it, (see "The Prospect," vol. i., page 121,) it requires the less notice here. It is, however, as any one may see, a chapter of the deepest importance in connection with our present subject. Israel's rejection of Messiah being fully manifested in chapter xii., where we find that His brightest miracles were attributed by the Pharisees to Satanic power, our Lord pronounces on them the solemn sentence which closes His statements respecting the unclean spirit gone out of a man and walking in dry places, who in the end returns with seven others worse than himself, so that the last state of such a man is worse than the first. "Even so," says our Lord, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." He further disowns all His natural links of relationship with the Jewish people, all the ties of kindred which, as the seed of David according to the flesh, united Him to them. "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" he inquires. "And he stretched forth his hands toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother, and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." It is immediately after this that he speaks the seven parables, which we find in chapter xiii.; the whole affording to us full instruction in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

The first parable is not a representation of the kingdom, but of the work by which the kingdom is formed. It is the basis on which all the other parables in the chapter are founded. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." Israel had been the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant. (See Is. v.) But now that all His care in planting and cultivating it was repaid with nothing but wild grapes, He was about to execute the long threatened judgment, and give it up to the destroyer. Hence, it is not now the care of a vineyard, but an entirely new beginning. "A sower went forth to sow." The details of the parable are well known. The seed falls on four descriptions of ground; in one only does it bring forth fruit. Striking picture of what the various results of the preaching of the word have been! How futile the hope, that because the Gospel testimony was to be every where proclaimed, universal blessing would be the result! It is true that the sower *went forth* to sow; he was not confined within the limits, nor was he occupied with the culture, of the Jewish vineyard. Gentiles as well as Jews were to hear the word of the kingdom. Yea, it was to be preached every where. But with what varying results! And how small, when compared with the aggregate, the result in blessing! May we hearken to the admonition: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The disciples inquire of our Lord His reason for speaking to the multitudes in parables. His answer is most important: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." He thus declares the period to have arrived which had been long foretold by the prophet Isaiah. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." (Is. viii. 13-17.) Surely, Jehovah of hosts was now beginning, in the most definite sense, to hide His face from the house of Jacob, when to the disciples it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, which were hidden from the multitude. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Our Lord quotes another prophecy of Isaiah, which was now receiving its accomplishment. "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." These words, quoted from Is. vi. 9, 10, are connected there with what follows. The prophet says: "Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." The Saviour's quotation from this passage is significant; it decides that this predicted period of Israel's desolation is the period during which the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven have their existence and development.

To the disciples our blessed Lord explains the parable of the sower, and speaks another—that of the wheat and tares. This He gives as a representation of the kingdom of heaven. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field." I need not quote the parable at length. The Saviour explains it also (after speaking two others in the presence of the people) to His disciples. The field, He says, is the world. He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. The tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age. The reapers are the angels. Let us consider these things for a moment. We have seen in the first parable that though the sowing is universal, the fruit—the result in blessing—is partial and limited. Here, in this second parable, Satan himself turns sower. The field is indeed the world; but the scene of Satan's operations is not here so much the world at large, where the seed has been sown, but that part of it where the seed has got root and is growing up. It is the introduction, by Satan, of positive evil, where the Son of man had wrought blessing. The good seed here is not the word. It is explained to be "the children of the kingdom." The tares also are not false doctrines, (though it may be by these that Satan works,) but evil persons. "The tares are the children of the wicked one." In a word, what we have here is the corruption of Christianity. And we are assured most definitely that when this effect of Satan's enmity and man's supineness ("while men slept the enemy sowed tares") has once been accomplished, it will not be set aside till the harvest at the end of the age. Then the tares are to be gathered together first in bundles to be burnt, and the wheat gathered into the barn. This gathering into the barn I should not myself judge to be the rapture of the saints. Entirely can I concur in what has been taught by another. (See "The Prospect," vol. i., page 190.) "The Church, I feel fully assured, will be caught up to the Lord before the week opens, before the Anti-christ rises.* How is this? it will be said. Are not the saints in this dispensation 'the children of the kingdom,' and has it not just been stated that they will be on earth to the end? Yes; the member's of Christ's mystical body, the Church, are surely the children of the kingdom; but this is no reason that they *exclusively are such*. The children of the kingdom I take to be a phrase of very general meaning, embracing all the people of God between the Lord's first coming in grace, and His second coming in judgment—between the cross and the glory. What the Lord means to say is, I believe, that the wicked one and the righteous (the latter meaning the *Church of God* in the first place, and then after they are caught up, the *Jewish remnant*, who will then be raised up,) shall continue together on earth till the end..... Then there is another point. When the Lord speaks of the tares and the wheat, as thus growing together, as they are doing at present we must view this as representing the condition of things, *as a whole*, between his first and last coming, without taking into account the fact that, during that

* The esteemed writer from whom this is quoted, regards the "end of the age" in Matt. xiii., as identical with the unfulfilled or reserved week of Dan. ix. It is this of which he thus speaks.

time, generation after generation, both of the righteous and wicked, die off—that there is constant succession—incessant fluctuation, altogether different from that from whence the image is borrowed; seeing that, in the natural world, the very same seed that is sown in one month springs up and is reaped in another. But, on the other hand, when we actually come to the time of harvest, then we must lose sight of the past generations, rising and dying one after another, in constant succession, and look alone at the generation alive at the time. And these only will be dealt with in that day of Christ's coming. *These only*, I say, seeing that the wicked of former generations will not then be raised from their graves, but will be reserved for judgment after the thousand years are expired; (Rev. xx. 7-15;) while the Church of God, on the other hand, will have been caught up to heaven before the week opens. 1 Thess. iv. 16- 18.) This then, I believe, quite determines who the wheat are at the time of the harvest, namely, the Jewish remnant—the righteous ones on the earth at that time."

In this parable, and the explanation of it, the term "kingdom of heaven" is evidently used in its widest sense, as including all who nominally own the supremacy of Christ during his absence from the earth, whether they be wheat or tares, false professors or true subjects of Christ. At the time of the end, when the kingdom passes from its present mysterious state to that of open manifestation, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, shall be gathered out of it. After that, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, the heavenly department of that glorious kingdom as it shall exist after the return of Jesus, when all things shall be gathered together in one, (even in Him,) both which are in heaven and which are on earth. Blessed prospect! May the brightness of it cast a cloud upon all earthly glory in our eyes, beloved; and may we look for and haste unto the coming of that day of God, in which this heavenly lustre shall crown all those who have been the companions and followers of Jesus in his tribulations.

The two parables of the mustard seed and leaven would seem to represent the kingdom of heaven in the same large and outward aspect as that in which it is viewed in the parable of the wheat and tares. There is no doubt that, to an intelligent, instructed Christian, it must appear *evil* that Christianity, which, in its earliest and purest days, was the object of universal obloquy and scorn, should come to bear a character and occupy a position *in the world* represented by the emblem of a great tree,—the symbol in prophecy of worldly magnificence and power. (See Dan. iv. Ezek. xxxi., &c.) Still, it does not seem as though it was *the evil of this* which the parable of the mustard seed sets forth, so much as the great external fact that what was at its beginning so small and so despised should eventually become great in the earth, and afford shelter to those who were originally its opposers. (Compare v. 32 with v. 4.) The parable of the leaven appears to be our Lord's answer to the enquiry which may well arise in the mind: By what sudden convulsion, by what unlooked for event, is this change to be accomplished? The answer is, that it is not by any mighty convulsion or sudden change, but by a process thus represented: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." This wondrous transformation of what was, at its outset, the weakest and most despised thing on earth, to the state in which Christianity now exists around us, associated with everything of earthly power and glory, was to be effected by a slow, gradual, imperceptible process like the working of leaven in meal! These four parables, be it remembered, were spoken to the multitudes. They all describe great public facts which, *as such*, the natural mind can recognize. The preaching of the word, with its varied results—the corruption of Christianity and the continuance, to the end, of the evil when once introduced, as well as the judgment by which, at the end of the age, it will be purged out—the growth of Christianity from its once despised and feeble condition as respects the earth, to a state of earthly splendour, power, and glory—the silent, gentle, gradual character of the process by which this last result has been brought about—all these are historical facts which are not only capable of being recognized, but which, as far as they have gone, have been recognized by mere natural men. The explanation of the two first parables, and the three last parables themselves, were spoken to the disciples apart from the multitude; thus indicating, as another has taught, that there were secrets in them which it required a spiritual mind — the intelligence and affection of a disciple—to appreciate. How blessedly perfect is God's precious word!

The two unexplained parables—that of the treasure hid in the field—and that of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls—would seem to teach us, that within the external sphere to which the four parables already considered apply themselves, there was something hid which was at once so precious in Christ's estimation and so beautiful in His eyes, that for the joy of possessing Himself of this treasure, this pearl, He could gladly forego for the present all his Messiah rights and glories, and go down into the very dust of death, *selling all that He had* to buy it. Can we fail to be reminded by this of that wonderful word: "Christ also loved the Church, *and gave Himself for it . . . . that He might present it to Himself!*" It is true that in the work by which He accomplished the purchase of this jewel of His heart, He also laid the foundation, and the only foundation, for the future glories of His kingdom, when He shall reign in peace over all the earth. He bought the field which contained the treasure; and thus the field is His for all the display of His glory and the accomplishment of all the purposes of God *as to it*. But His *motive*—that for the joy of which He, for the present, could forego the assertion of His titles and the revealing of His glory—was the possession of this hidden treasure, this goodly pearl! Oh! what intensity of love, what devotedness and unsparingness of service, become those who are taught of the Holy Ghost that Christ has *thus loved* and *thus given himself* for them! May our hearts better know the overwhelming power of the love of Christ thus displayed!

The parable of the net presents us with the discrimination, at the close, between all this which has really been the object of Christ's heart and of God's purposes throughout, and that which has been throughout this mysterious period outwardly associated with it. The thought of the beloved brother whose paper on Matt. xiii. has been more than once referred to already, commends itself greatly to my own soul: viz. that this discrimination is of two kinds. First, as on the part of the fishermen who gather the good into vessels and cast the bad away. Secondly, as on the part of the angels who do not concern themselves about the good here at all, but sever the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. Might we not gather from this that, in the intention of God, there was to be a separation, first, morally by His Spirit, and those in and by whom He acts — and there the object is to gather the good into vessels: it is separation to God, and according to His mind and heart. Then, finally, there is a process of judgment in which the angels are the executioners, and the wicked the objects, who are "cast into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

This closes the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. From the era of this judicial separation, whether viewed as in the parable of the wheat and tares, or as in this closing parable of the net, all is in open manifestation. The righteous shining forth as the sun in the heavenly kingdom of their Father; the Son of man openly exercising His royal power in His kingdom below, out of which all that offends and them which do iniquity have been gathered.

"Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The Lord grant that, by the Spirit, these things may occupy our souls; and above all, that He, Himself, whose grace and glory are so touchingly displayed in every aspect of them, may become more and more the One object of our hearts.

The next mention of the kingdom of heaven is in chapter xvi. 19, where our Lord says to Peter: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." There are three remarks which may be made as to the connection in which "kingdom of heaven" here occurs. First, it was clearly what had not then commenced. The kingdom had been preached by all the apostles *as at hand*, as well as by our Lord and His forerunner. But Peter was to *open* the kingdom, as we know he did, at Pentecost, to the Jews, and in the house of Cornelius to the Gentiles. Secondly, the kingdom, the administration of which was thus entrusted to Peter, is clearly not the millennial kingdom treated of in No. 1, and which is still future. Thirdly, it is distinguished

from the Church, by our Lord himself, in the passage before us. He says: "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. *And* I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," &c. No doubt those who entered in when the kingdom was opened, whether to Jews or Gentiles, were members of the Church of God; but "the kingdom of heaven," as we have seen in chapter xiii., includes tares as well as wheat; and is likened to the mustard tree, the leaven, and the net, as well as to the treasure and the pearl.

"Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom." (Verse 28.) This is plainly another thing. This is the kingdom in which the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and reward every man according to his works. A specimen, a sample, a foreshadowing of the glory of *this* kingdom, Peter, James, and John were privileged to behold a few days after these words were spoken. A comparison of the passage with 2 Peter i. 16-18, will shew that this was the sense in which they saw the Son of man coming in His kingdom. It was a type or pledge, a revelation even to their senses of what the glory of that kingdom will be; not the kingdom as it exists now in mystery, but as it will exist in open display by and by.

Instead of taking the kingdom thus and introducing it at once, we have in the close of chapter xvii. an affecting display of the depths of humiliation to which Jesus stooped. In chapter xviii., we find this to be the rule for disciples in the kingdom as it now exists in mystery. The disciples ask: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus answers by calling a little child and setting him in the midst of them, and saying: "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Wondrous, blessed lesson! That he who willingly becomes the least, is really the greatest in the kingdom of heaven! None so great as the holy One whose words we are listening to! And who can stoop so low as He did? As for us, in taking the low place, we do but take our own. *He* thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and yet made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Oh! that the mind which was in Him might also be in us.

One lesson as to the spirit and conduct befitting this kingdom of heaven we have had already in chapter xviii. The close of it presents us with another. Humility at the beginning; grace and forgiveness of trespasses at the end. For another view of the parable at the close of this chapter, see the paper before referred to, page 130, vol. i. of "The Prospect."

Matt. xix. 12 speaks of an extraordinary measure of separation to God, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, on the part of some. It is, I suppose, the carrying out, through grace, of the principle of Matt. xi. 12 to the utmost possible limits, in certain special cases where there was not grace only, but special gift and power for this end. (See 1 Cor. vii. 26; also verse 17 of the same chapter.)

Matt. xix. 14 would connect itself with the passage already touched upon in chapter xviii. 3. Verses 23 and 24 would shew the need of that violence, through grace, which is the subject of chapter xi. 12. It was a question of forsaking all and following Christ—a Christ who was not about at once to ascend the throne and wield the sceptre of His father David, but who was first to be rejected and crucified. The riches and honours of this world were such an hindrance to any one who had them, in thus following a rejected Christ, that nothing could overcome it, or enable any one to overcome it, but the almighty power of God. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

It is upon this that Peter asks a question, to which our Lord gives a twofold reply: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?" What Peter states is a fact. He and his fellow-apostles had really forsaken all to follow Christ; and this our Lord in His first answer owns. But evidently there was something of self-importance and self-gratulation at the bottom of Peter's question: "What shall WE have *therefore?*" It was something of the same spirit as had suggested the inquiry in chapter xviii., "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Peter's question would intimate that none could ever evince the self-devotion which they had evinced, or have the claim on Christ which they had. It is as though he would make Christ debtor to himself and his fellow-disciples. "What shall *we* have *therefore?*" This our Lord meets in the parable which follows. First, however, let us look at His promise to Peter and the rest. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Peter asks, What shall *we* have *therefore?* and our Lord replies, that is what you shall have. But is it not as though he added, Do not suppose that you are the only persons who have forsaken, or who will have forsaken, all for my name's sake, and who shall be rewarded in the kingdom. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Peter was not to suppose that to sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, was the only reward that the glorified Son of man will distribute at His coming. The fact is, that Peter himself, and the other apostles, as members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones, co-heirs with Him and with all who are His members thus, will inherit a higher place of glory than the sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Peter would, as it were, have made a compact with our Lord; and had he been excluded from all that is not comprised in the promise here made to him, there are glories in which he would not have shared, which fall to the lot of us poor sinners of the Gentiles. Peter was to understand that there would be others to be rewarded besides the apostles; yea, and he was not to suppose that because the apostles were first in order of time, their reward would necessarily be greater than that of those who came after them. "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder," &c. (xx. 1-16.) If we seek to make the Lord our debtor, we must not complain if we find that He gives us barely what we agree with Him for, and gives quite as much to others who enter the vineyard almost at the close of the day. The "kingdom of heaven" is clearly distinguished here from "the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory." It is in the kingdom of heaven that the service is rendered—the labour accomplished—which meets its reward in "the regeneration," when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory.

The request preferred by the mother of Zebedee's children, in verses 20, 21 of this chapter, is another expression of the same spirit which our Lord had been correcting in the parable of the labourers. The blessed Saviour assures them that they shall drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism, but the place they shall fill in His kingdom He leaves to His Father's will; taking occasion from the whole to put in contrast the ways of the Gentiles, of which these disciples so much savoured, and the ways of His kingdom in its present mysterious state. He, the King, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many; and what but to tread in His steps can become those who are the subjects, during His rejection, of the kingdom of heaven?

The beginning of chapter xxi. presents us with a little pledge of that future kingdom which awaits our Lord, when the whole nation shall say, what the multitude of the disciples then said: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest!" Full proof was given at once, however, that the nation was not ready for that kingdom then. The very cries of the children in the temple who said Hosanna, awoke the indignation of the chief priests and scribes: "they were sore displeased." The kingdom could not therefore be then set up in power, and the glory of it be introduced. Nevertheless, a kingdom had come nigh to them; and our Lord, by the parable of the two sons, to whom the father said, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard," presses on His hearers the solemn truth that the publicans and harlots were more ready to go into the kingdom of God than the most religious people of that day.

In the next parable, verses 33-44, Jesus takes a review of all God's dealings with that nation. He had let out His vineyard to husbandmen, and sent, time after time, to receive the fruits; but of His servants they beat one, and kill another, and are now about to slay the Son and Heir whom the owner of the vineyard had last of all sent, saying: "They will reverence my Son." What can be done to these husbandmen by the Lord of the vineyard? Even they themselves answer: "He will miserably destroy those wicked

men, and will let out His vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render Him the fruits in their seasons." How solemn the reply of Jesus! "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

All hope of Israel's present reception of the kingdom, as promised to them of old time, being thus cut off, our Lord goes on in chapter xxii. to present another likeness, or comparison, of that "kingdom of heaven" which was to intervene between that crisis and the one yet future, when the Son of man shall be revealed, and sit upon the throne of His glory. A marriage feast made ready by the king in honour of His son, and His servants sent out to invite the guests, is a different thing from a vineyard let out to husbandmen, and the servants sent to require the fruit. But, alas! the heart of man has no worthier answer to the grace and goodness of the one than to the just and righteous claims of the other. They make light of the invitation, and spitefully entreat and slay the servants who are the bearers of it. This fills up the measure of their iniquity, and the king sends forth His armies (the Romans) and destroys those murderers, and burns up their city. But is His grace to be disappointed, and His table unfurnished with guests? No: the servants are sent out into the highways to gather together all, as many as they find, good and bad, and in the end the wedding is furnished with guests. Precious testimony of the grace which now gathers us, irrespective of what we are, to share the feast and enjoy the blessedness which God, of His own grace, and for the honour of His Son, has prepared for us! One solemn word there is at the close of this parable, (may our hearts deeply and fully learn it!) that, even as the freeness of the invitation is all the warrant we need to enter, so surely, if that has reached our hearts and wrought effectually there, the wedding garment will be worn by us as our only title to sit at the table. *Christ will be all our confidence, all our hope.* It is this that distinguishes between the real and the fictitious, the true and the false, in the kingdom of heaven.

In chapter xxiii. 13, the Lord denounces a fearful woe upon the scribes and Pharisees, because they will not enter this kingdom of heaven themselves, and because they do what they can to hinder others from entering in besides.

The remaining notices of the kingdom, and parables respecting it in chapters xxiv. xxv. and xxvi. of this Gospel, have been already so fully discussed in the paper on the Gospel according to Matthew, page 121, vol. i. of "The Prospect," that I would simply refer the reader to its contents, and here, for the present, close my remarks. It may be that, if the Lord should tarry, opportunity may be afforded of going through the other Gospels also, noticing any points of difference in the light in which they present the kingdom, as compared with this Gospel of Matthew; and touching upon the passages in the Acts and Epistles too. But this is in our Father's hands. May He, of his grace, make all our inquiries into His precious Word effectual to the sanctification of our souls, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

W. T.

LETTERS ON THE GENERAL SCOPE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

My dear Friend,

I send you a few thoughts suggested by a paper in the first number of the Quarterly Journal of Prophecy. It is the fifth article of the series, and the subject is the general scope of the Apocalypse. While the writer has evinced a measure of penetration in detecting the mistakes of others, he appears to me mistaken himself in reference to the general subject of the book of Revelation, the character of the Church, and the way in which the Gentiles have succeeded to the Jews. I would first observe, that I have no sympathy with the expositors of what I may call the extreme Futurist school. One at least has, I consider, presented a caricature rather than a fair picture of the sound theory of interpretation, and thus afforded the writer of Art. V. an obvious advantage. But, passing over points of less importance, I would hasten to expose what I conceive is a defective view of the very principle of prophetic revelation, into which principle a species of Futurism necessarily enters. What would an infidel wish more as a comment on, "I come quickly," "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and other parallel expressions, than the following passage? (See bottom of page 39:) "It is the unhappy distinction of the Futurist system, that it compels us to regard the prophecy hitherto as an *ignis fatuus*, and not a beacon light, which has served only to delude the Church with a perpetual series of false hopes, unreal fulfilments, and expositions as utterly baseless and untrue as the oracles of the heathen." Is not this the very echo of the reasonings employed against the second advent as the hope of the Church? Are we not told that it is capable of mathematical demonstration, that an event which God has Himself delayed eighteen hundred years He could not have designed without intentional deception of the minds of His people, to be the next object of their continuous hope from generation to generation? Yet, such is the principle on which the Futurist scheme has been condemned. That there may be good reasons for rejecting it, we may, for the sake of argument, allow. I only contend that this is a bad one.

As the advocate of a limited Futurism, I am not so committed to the opinions of Mr. J. K. as that my theory must stand or fall with his. He is, I believe, seriously in error — in error in confounding "the things that are" with "the things that are to be hereafter" — in error as to his interpretation of κυριακὴ ἡμέρα; and having thus erred with regard to the past, in error as to the application of the Apocalypse to the present time.

I confess nothing has simplified the Revelation, to my own mind, so much as the conviction that it is an earthly, rather than a heavenly, book. This is not said in disparagement of it. I am aware that whatever is inspired is divine, and in that sense the Apocalypse is as much heavenly as any other portion of the Word of God. But the subject is, with few exceptions, earthly, even on Mr. Elliott's scheme, whose error, if I understand him aright, consists rather in denying the heavenly dignity of the Church than in unduly exalting the parties who figure in the scenes of the Apocalypse.

The question comes practically to this: Is the Church a heavenly or an earthly body? What is the nature of the heavenly calling? I may present my own view in the following words. In Eccles. v. 2, we read: "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth." In the days of our Lord's flesh, He taught His disciples to say: "Our Father which art in heaven." Though they were to say, "Our Father," the Spirit of adoption was not yet given; the relation was a filial one, but the distance was preserved. God was in heaven; they upon earth. But their Saviour and Teacher has now gone within the veil. They have gone in Him — they are one with Him. God is indeed their Father; but He is not their heavenly Father in *that sense* that they should feel themselves worshippers at the footstool rather than round about the throne. He is now their Father, and has taught them to say Abba in the Spirit of adoption. *Spiritually*, they are now what they will be *manifestly* hereafter, *the children of God being the children of the resurrection.* And blessedly do God's children keep their birth-day, when not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, on the first day of the week, they meet round the table of the Lord, looking back to the time when the *risen* Jesus said: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father." I know well the saints, as regards their bodies, buried alive in a prison of sinful flesh, are on earth;—none but a madman could deny it; yet are they spiritually and mystically within the veil. And this, I conceive, supplies the reason why, in the apostolic epistles, we never find the writers either praying themselves, or directing others to pray, to "their Father which is in heaven." This would be to bring them, in a measure, down to earth again. Now, it is remarkable that union with Christ, sonship, and the Spirit of adoption, do not appear in the Revelation. But especially the place of the Holy Ghost is different. In the epistles, the benedictions come from the Father and the Son, never from the Spirit; but at the commencement of the Apocalypse, we read: "Grace be unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before His throne." That is, the Spirit here is not contemplated as in the Church, the body of Christ, but simply in His place before the throne.*

The churches are represented as on earth amenable to the judg-

* Just so in the history of our Lord Himself: while the truth of His Godhead and His manhood is preserved throughout, there are some Scriptures that present Him more in the aspect of His humanity, and others in that of His Sonship and His Deity.

ment of the Son of man, liable to failure, (in several cases as having actually failed,) and reminded of the individual responsibility of the members. "*He* that hath ears to ear, let him hear." I am aware the question may be asked, If there is such a thing in Scripture as the earthly aspect of the Church, why may not Mr. E.'s scheme be, after all, the right one? May we not see the Church on earth, in the Apocalypse, without disturbing the doctrine maintained in other places of its higher privileges and heavenly calling? And to this, we must admit, no sound *à priori* objection can be raised; the *principle* is found in Scripture, nay, in the first chapters of this very book, and therefore will not, as a matter of course, be excluded from the other parts. And I must confess, had this been the *only* question under discussion, I should have felt little inclined to notice, at least for the present, what has been said on either side. But, as is often the case, a subject of greater importance than the matter immediately in debate is introduced by the way, and, under cover of some well sustained attacks on the weak points of Mr. J. K.'s theory, an attempt has been made to lower the Church to the level, or nearly to the level, of the Jewish nation. The ground of the controversy is now shifted from Revelation to Deuteronomy, Matthew and Romans, and the eleventh chapter of that precious epistle is claimed by the advocates of this system as the pillar and ground of their own theory. It is quite true that the Gentiles, in some respects, have come into the place of the Jews. Jew and Gentile are the two letters with which God would spell out His own character *on earth*. To prove each in turn worthless, to provoke to jealousy with them who were no people, those who had provoked God with their vanities, this was worthy of God, either as regards His justice, His mercy, or the sovereignty of His will. But the Church is not the whole of the olive tree, neither does the olive tree contain the whole of the Church. It is a low and beggarly view of the Church of God, the highest expression of God's wisdom and love, to represent it as simply coincident with the engrafted branches, or even with the olive tree itself. The engrafted branches are the fulness of the Gentiles, (at least in one sense of that expression, Rom. xi. 25,) but the Church is the fulness of Christ, the πλήρωμα, or complement of Him that filleth all in all.* (Eph. i. 23.)

The writer of the article in question appears to me to see no difference between the olive tree of Rom. xi. and the "new man" of Eph. ii. 15. *In the olive tree*, the distinction between the old and the new branches is preserved, that the new may provoke the old to jealousy. Though the Spirit of God cannot "lust to envy," and cannot lead a repentant Jew to wish evil to a Gentile, yet a kind of holy rivalry is so far permitted, that the very happiness of the Gentile is intended to provoke the Jew. *In the new man*, the distinction of Jew and Gentile, male and female, is obliterated, never to be resumed. The breaking off of an olive branch, as the nature of the parable obviously requires, has occurred, may occur, and will occur again. To break off a member of the "new man," where there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, is a monstrous thought, and unknown to the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Again, the writer has confounded two very different things. The grand object of hope to believing Israel of old was Messiah's first coming, but it was not the *proximate* object. To interpose an event between the present time and the Lord's second advent, is to say, "My Lord delayeth His coming;" but for a Jew to say, "Messias delays His (first) coming," was not the language of unbelief. If the central chapters of Revelation were to be received as a history certainly unrolling the fortunes of the Roman world before Christ came, what harm would there have been in saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming?" Would it not have been reasonable and just, on this hypothesis, to say, My Lord delayeth His coming, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled?

A grand effort of the enemy, from the first, has been to establish that poisonous, soul-lulling doctrine, "the Lord is *not* at hand." First, by interposing a fixed period of one thousand years; (and hence the importance of shewing that the advent was premillennial;) secondly, by teaching, through the instrumentality even of many premillennialists, that the whole series of seals, trumpets, woes and vials, must run its course before the promised event could take place. Between the advocates of the two views, respectively, there may be a wide difference as regards their measure of spiritual intelligence, but in both cases there is one and the same danger, that of secularizing the Church by depriving it of its proper hope.

Yours sincerely,

* * *

* Which I would paraphrase thus. God, as God, is infinite, filling all in all, and admits of no complement. But Christ, as the God-man, is Head of the body, the Church, and (wonderful as the condescension is) the Head, *as such*, cannot say to the meanest member: "I have no need of thee."

My dear Friend,

I am glad of your remarks on the paper which defends the protracted application of the Apocalypse, and thrusts so fiercely at the excessive and exclusive Futurism of Mr. J. K. We are quite agreed that the arguments drawn by the latter, from the title in Rev. i. 1, compared with Gal. i. 12-17, from the supposed motto—Rev. i. 7—from the meaning attributed to διὰ τὸν λ. in Rev. i. 9, and to "the Lord's day" in Rev. i. 10, as well as the criticisms on Luke ii. 32, Ephes. iii. 5, &c., and 1 Peter i. 11, are fallacious, and would be rejected by many even of the ultra-futurist school. In this respect, I cannot regard the article on the General Scope of the Apocalypse as strictly fair, unless it be considered *merely* as a rejoinder to a particular pamphlet which attacked Mr. Elliott's book. By some it was understood to be a blow aimed at many Christians in our day, who agree in looking for a future accomplishment of the Apocalyptic prophecy; whereas, in fact, the greater part of it affects only Mr. J. K., and the very few who share similar ideas. More than one half, so far from striking, is in substance the echo of sentiments which, for instance, you and I hold; indeed, what is equivalent to much of the paper has been already propounded, though not reasoned out, in "The Prospect." (See vol. i., pages 2, 5, 16, 71, 184-186.) But the earlier part (for example, the heads I. and III.) appears to me to contain misstatements of facts, contradictions of the known opinions of the writer, unsound reasoning, and an entire oversight, if not denial, of the scriptural doctrine of the Church, which latter is a far more momentous thing than ignorance of the scope of the Apocalypse, though this be its invariable accompaniment. The proofs are subjoined as demanding larger limits than those of an ordinary letter.

Believe me to be, faithfully yours in the Lord,

† † †

THE SCOPE OF PROPHECY,
AND PARTICULARLY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Prophecy is the revelation of the thoughts of God as regards the future, and His glory in Christ is the one blessed end of the prophetic Word, as well as of all the divine actings. Make man, make self the end, and singleness of eye is gone; darkness ensues by the just judgment of God—a result as sure in the domain of the spiritual understanding as in that of the spiritual conscience. It is true, we may say of the prophetic part what the Holy Ghost says about the whole written Word, that it is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. Still, the revealed acts are the expression of the principles of God's government of the world, and therefore the accomplishment pourtrayed in His Word is the place where we learn these principles fully. This is surely what we have to ascertain. Otherwise, we form our own notions of that which God has given us prophecy whereby to know His thoughts. Our business is to gather of what God speaks; and though all Scripture is given for our profit, it is in no way necessary that all should be about *ourselves*. The glory of God in dealing with Jews is, in its place, as much the object of our faith as His dealings with Christians. And the apprehension of the distinctions in His ways, that is, real understanding of His Word, depends on our knowing to whom it applies.

Is not this taking away Scripture from the Church? Quite the reverse. There is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel, as revealed in the Bible, which is not *for* the Church, but it is not *about* the Church. That such passages are so written as to bear an analogous application to the Gentile body, now grafted into the olive tree of earthly testimony, I do not deny: an application which calls for the utmost caution and a right division of the word of truth, because each dispensation has its own peculiarities, and in some cases there may be, and are, points of decided and intended contrast. Still, the Church is not the subject treated of under the names of Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem; and

the effect of the unrestricted accommodation of such passages, to which we have been all accustomed, has been not only to rob the Jews of their promises, but to lower and obscure incalculably the privileges of the Church, so far as present realization is concerned.

There is now, however, a considerable class of persons who admit that the only complete fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy is occupied with the restoration of the literal Israel to their own land, and their national blessing and peace there, according to the new covenant, in the presence and personal reign of the Messiah. Hence, as a whole, they rightly refer the prophecies of future glory to the same people whose sins and judgments are therein detailed. They acknowledge that the reign of Christ over the converted Jewish people in the millennium is a very different thing from the secret counsels of grace which, through faith, have saved souls from the beginning. So far, there is a step, and an important step, in the true direction. But here is a stopping short. It is not seen that the rejection of Christ by Jew and Gentile on the cross, and His consequent exaltation at the right hand of God, and the intermediate mission of the Holy Ghost here below till the Lord returns again, have made way for the accomplishment and revelation of an unique work of God, which had been kept secret from previous ages and generations. This work is the Church, Christ's body.

It is not merely an increase of light as to the counsels of salvation, on which the entire line of the faithful, from Abel downward, had reposed, but there was a hitherto unknown and hidden mystery respecting a body destined to be the consort of Christ in heavenly glory at His coming, and meanwhile called into manifestation and enjoyment of its privileges, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who was to commence, sustain, and guide it here below, while waiting for the Bridegroom. The Holy Ghost had acted, He had given faith, He had quickened, He had wrought efficaciously and savingly from the first; but there was no baptism of the Spirit till Pentecost. He was not (i.e. in this new way) till Jesus was glorified. (John vii.) So the Lord teaches us in Acts i. "*Ye shall be baptized of the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*" When just about to ascend, He said this to the already believing, regenerate disciples. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost did baptize them. He imparted many miraculous gifts, "the powers of the world to come;" but beside this, He baptized them on that day, never before. Now, it is certain that the formation of the body, the Church, hinges upon the baptism of the Spirit, for "by *one Spirit* (as we are told in 1 Cor. xii. 13) *are we all baptized into one body.*" You cannot, therefore, have the body of Christ before the baptism of the Spirit; they are simultaneous and inseparable things. Accordingly, we there find, for the first time, "the Church" spoken of as an existing corporation. (Acts ii. 47.) The Lord Jesus, it is true, (Matt. xvi. 18,) had already said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church;" but these words themselves prove that His Church did not yet exist, save in the purpose of God. "Upon this rock *I* WILL *build* my Church."* It was not yet building. The foundation had to be laid: in death and resurrection alone could it be begun. It was essential, as a condition of the existence of the Church, that in the cross the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and Jew and Gentile be made *one new man*: in the next place, Gentile and Jewish believers were builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. ii.) For the Comforter was now come, the promise of the Father, to be in and with them for ever—that Comforter for whom it was expedient that Christ Himself should go away. The old Judaic order was nothing now before God. There was another and better temple, where God's presence was. There was one body, wherein Jewish and Gentile distinctions were absolutely gone, the Church on earth, and one Spirit who resided there. It is not a mere continuation of a believing people who looked to promise; but, established on accomplished redemption, an entirely new body appears, brought into union with Christ in His heavenly honours, between the first and second advent, while He is absent above. The latter terminus is admitted now by many who would dispute the former. It is confessed that the Church is the Bride, the Eve of the second Adam, and that the millennial saved people, though just as much saints and redeemed by the blood of Christ as we are, nevertheless answer to the type of Adam's children, and not of his wife. That is, it is an acknowledged principle that saintship, as in those who succeed the second advent, does not necessarily constitute membership of Christ's body. But as to the former terminus, even a far plainer proof has been here produced as regards the saints who preceded the first advent. Whatever may have been their many and precious promises, they are never in Scripture called the Church of God; nay, it has been shewn that they could not consistently be so termed, because they were not baptized of the Holy Ghost into the one body, and there is no other introduction therein than by that baptism, which did not then exist. The true, the scriptural limits of the Church are the cross and the coming of the Lord Jesus: founded upon the one, and waiting for the other, is that body, one with its Head on high, in which God dwells by the Holy Ghost; a new and unearthly body, having a path here below traced out for it, in many and important respects, quite distinct from what characterized the Old Testament saints, or what will characterize the millennial saints.

If these principles be admitted, their bearing on the faith, affections, worship, walk and service of the children of God, will soon be felt and seen. But of such consequences this is not the place to speak, though I would here advert briefly to the way in which they affect our apprehension of the prophetic word.

The disciples, though subsequently forming part of the Church when it began, were nevertheless not of it during our Lord's ministry on earth. They believed in Christ, they followed Him in His temptations, they were instructed by Him, but were not yet of the Church, nor could they be till Jesus was glorified on high and the Holy Spirit baptized them here below. Their position was thus a peculiar one during that transitional order of things which began with John Baptist and terminated with the Cross, the proclamation going out meanwhile that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. If Matt. x. be examined, it will be seen that the Lord gave them directions, some of which suited them only in their then state, as in verses 5, 6, some of which might well apply when the Spirit was given, as verses 16, 20, 24, 42, and others, which evidently look on to a future resumption of the testimony among the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes. Compare especially verse 23. Throughout this chapter, and it is not the only one of the kind, the disciples are addressed as having a peculiar connection with Israel, and in no way as being the Church, or as representing it. No one denies that much of the chapter was fulfilled after the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the Church. It was then, and in Judea, that persecution fell upon them. Still, the chapter does not contemplate them as the Church, but as Jewish disciples carrying out a Jewish mission, and awaiting, in the difficulties and sorrows of their testimony in that land, the coming of the Son of man. In Matt. xvii., we find Peter, James and John, the evident types of the spared and converted Jews in the millennium, and in the same scene Moses and Elias, the types of the glorified saints.

It is upon similar Jewish ground that our Lord speaks in Matt. xxiv. His disciples had heard Him pronounce desolation in the preceding chapter. But it was a judgment mingled with mercy; for He distinctly intimated that, if the Jews should not see Him henceforth, it was not unlimited: it was *till* ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Vengeance must fall upon the unbelieving generation, such as the mass then were and are. But the time is coming when the nation, or at least a remnant of it, shall bless and curse not; wise ones who understand, shall at length with joy welcome Him whom they crucified on the tree. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Verses 1-3.) Now, it is not doubted that the Church may have used, and

* Bishop Pearson, whatever may have been unsound elsewhere, has justly remarked, that "*the only way to attain unto the knowledge of the true notion* of the Church is, to search into the New Testament, and from the places there which mention it, to conclude what is the nature of it. To which purpose it will be necessary to take notice that our Saviour, first speaking of it, mentioneth it as that which then was not, but afterwards was to be; as when He speaks unto the great apostle, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church;" but when he ascended into heaven, and the Holy Ghost came down, when Peter had converted three thousand souls which were added to the hundred and twenty disciples, then was there a church . . . . . for after that we read, 'the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.' (Acts ii. 47.) A church then our Saviour promised should be built, and by a promise made before His death; after His ascension, and upon the preaching of St. Peter, we find a church built or constituted, and that of a nature capable of a daily increase. We cannot then take a better occasion to search into the true notion of the Church of Christ, than by looking into the origination and increase thereof; without which it is impossible to have a right conception of it."—*Art. IX. The Holy Catholic Church.*

may still use, the general principles of this chapter. All belongs to the Church, for profit, instruction, reproof, or comfort; but, most decidedly, Matt. xxiv. is occupied not with the Church, as such, but with Jerusalem and the temple, the consummation of the age, the clash of nations and kingdoms, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions and trials, similar to Matt. x., and a preaching of the gospel *of the kingdom* to all the Gentiles throughout the habitable world. Such is the general picture to the fourteenth verse. After that, the scene becomes more specific, both as to time, place, and circumstances. Precise interpretation must confine verses 15-31 to a period still future, though Jerusalem is still the foreground. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains. (Verses 15, 16.) Now, what has this to do with the Church, as the Church? What has she to do with that holy place? (Compare Acts vi. 13; xxi. 28.) And how could the setting up of the abomination in the Jewish temple be a sign to the Church to flee? But, no! the passage refutes the idea. "Then let *them which be in Judæa* flee into the mountains." Accordingly, they are directed to pray that their flight be not on the sabbath day, nor in the winter, for either might impede their flight and expose them to imminent peril. It is to be a brief, though terrible, trial: "except *those days should be shortened*, there should no flesh be saved." That these elect are Jewish elect, (see Is. lxv. 9, 15, 22,) is confirmed by the Lord's warning the disciples about false Christs who shall arise. *Could the Church*, who knows that she is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air;—*could she*, I say, be in danger from the cries, Lo! here is Christ, or there; behold, He is in the desert, or in the secret chambers? But a perplexed Jewish remnant, whose hope is a *Messiah on earth*, might well need such monitions as the Lord here supplies. The coming of *the Son of man*, (for it is Christ coming judicially which the chapter contemplates,) shall not be secret, but as the lightning shining from east to west. They were not to be enticed by a "Lo, here or there." Other unmistakeable signs should be granted. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." (Verse 29.) Here again it is manifest that the Lord is not describing the translation of the elect Church, but the gathering of His elect Israel, and for a plain reason: "When Christ our life shall appear," says the apostle, addressing the heavenly saints, "then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Christ will not be manifested first, and the Church be caught up subsequently: *both are to appear together and at the same time in glory.* But with the elect Jews, the case widely differs. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Verses 30, 31.) They are delivered, and gathered *after* the Son of man has already appeared. The Church had not only been caught up before, but had come out of heaven along with Christ preparatory to His appearing. (Rev. xix. 11-14.) This prophecy then, in any full sense, for I do not deny a partial historic accomplishment, looks to a future state of things, and directly concerns a believing Jewish remnant quite distinct from the Church.

Is it in Matthew, and other gospels only, where we read of such a converted remnant? By no means. Matt. xxiv. 15, 21 evidently refers us to Daniel for other particulars of the same scenes and times. If, therefore, it be clear that Matt. xxiv. 15-31 concerns a future converted body of Jews, and not the Church, have we not here also a divine canon for interpreting Dan. ix. 27; xi. 31; xii. 1, 7, 11, and the connected parts of the same? That is, the saints spoken of in Daniel are Jewish saints, and not the Church, properly so called. Daniel's people, or at least the understanding ones (compare Matt. xxiv. 15) of that prophet, are those whom the Lord further instructs in the prophetic discourse of our evangelist. Again, it is admitted very generally that Daniel and the Revelation are so linked, that, when you have determined the bearing of the one, you necessarily therein involve the general interpretation of the other. The beast of Dan. vii. is the beast of Rev. xi. xiii. xvii., and the time, times and an half in that same chapter answer to the same period in Rev. xii. Compare the image in Rev. xiii. with the abomination of desolation in the Gospel. Plainly, therefore, while the Apocalypse has many subjects besides those treated of in Daniel or Matt. xxiv., while it admits of a far closer application than either to the providential history of the empire, &c., since the days of John, the grand final accomplishment of the book cannot be dissociated from the prophecies of Daniel and of the Lord Jesus Himself, which, we have seen, specially regard Jerusalem and the Jews at the end of the age.

Turning to the Psalms, we find this truth confirmed. Let us, first, take Psalm lxxix, and assume what to many readers appears self-evident, that it tells in its full import of a day not yet come. The Holy Ghost there provides an utterance for a suffering people. But for what people? Clearly they are, and speak of themselves to God as, His servants, *His* saints. (verse 2.) Now, is there a single sentiment which is characteristic of the Church of God? Or, is there one which does not breathe of Jewish affections and hopes? If the heathen invade Judea; if they defile God's holy temple in Jerusalem, and lay the city in heaps, we can understand how these things will, and may deeply effect, the heart of an Israelite. If the Gentiles shed the blood of God's saints like water round about Jerusalem, and gave their flesh to the beasts of the earth, rightly might he pray: "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place." But is this the language of the heavenly Bride? * Is it suitable to her standing to say, "We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed." (Verses 4, 5, 10.) Is it for us to pray that God may be known among the heathen in our sight, by revenging the shed blood of his servants? "O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low." (Verse 8.) Is there not another body of saints of whom these words will be far more emphatically true? Not that the Church may not blessedly use such a Psalm; not that she may not discern what is essentially applicable to herself; but, plainly, the circumstances, the experience, the cries, are all characteristic of Jewish saints passing through the fire, and not of the Church of God. That they are owned servants of God, who suffer in and near Jerusalem before the Lord appears for their deliverance; that, in the next Psalm, they call on Him that dwelleth between the cherubim, to shine forth; that they acknowledge their sins, and the righteous retributive dealings of Jehovah therein; that they deprecate His anger and jealousy, crying: "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved; O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?" that they appeal in faith to the God of hosts, cleaving to the link which binds Him to His people, howsoever failing, and entreat His hand to be upon the man of His right hand, "the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself:" that they are saints is plain, but it is equally evident that the whole current of their prayers, sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, and answered by the Lord in person, is quite inconsistent with the calling of the Church. Forgiven all trespasses, (Col. ii. 13,) I admit that it becomes us, individually conscious of sins, to confess them in the assurance that God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But this goes upon the ground that *we are forgiven*, (1 John ii. 12,) that we are already accepted in the beloved, (Eph. i. 6,) and that

* The following, from the Dublin Review, (October, 1847,) may illustrate the danger of applying the language of the Psalms to the Church, regardless of their proper bearing. "Turn them (the terrible imprecations in the Psalms) how you will, call them prophecies, or what not, evade the plain and natural use of the optative forms in Hebrew as you please, still there is an evident exultation in the destruction of the wicked, which sorts ill with that theory of Christianity which makes benevolence the sum and substance of it, as much as atheists have made it the sum and substance, so to say, of God's character. Yet, somehow or other, the Psalms have been used in the Church in all ages more than any one part of Holy Writ. They are more quoted in the New Testament than even Isaiah is, and more in the Fathers than any part of the Old Testament. A Church which believes herself gifted with infallibility in thus acting, acts naturally. It is natural for her to anathematize heresy, (and heretics, too, if obstinate,) and therefore natural to mould her spirit upon a book, which, while it is replete with all that is tender in devotion, yet savours of the king as well as the penitent, and nerves the heart against bearing the sword entrusted to her in vain. If David was a penitent, so was Peter: if David was a king, Cephas also had not a priesthood only, but a *royal* priesthood. The anathemas of the *Church*, then, are a counterpart to the imprecations in the Psalms, the spiritual sword to the material sword of David and heretics to the crafty enemies."

as He is, so are we in this world; (1 John iv. 7;) whereas in the Psalms it is plain that the believing remnant have still to cry: "Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation," &c. Full, known acceptance, is evidently not enjoyed until Jesus appears. (Compare Zech. xii. 10-14; xiii. 1. Joel ii. iii., &c.)

As to Ps. lxxxi., it needs little proof that a joyful noise to the God of Jacob, the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery, the blowing up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on the solemn feast-day, that all this is no statute for the Church, though it is for Israel; nor are we ever told to look for the finest of the wheat and honey out of the rock. Again, what relation to Christianity have the earthly tabernacles and glory in the land, beautiful as Ps. lxxxiv. and lxxxv. may be? So also the fitting supplication for those who hate *us*, is certainly not the language of Ps. lxxxiii. 9-18; but it is the utterance of faith in Jewish saints, who are looking to God to arise and judge the earth. "Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna: who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame and perish: that men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth."

While *the Church* is being called, God is interfering in no such way. He is proclaiming salvation to the world that rejected and murdered His Son, who is still, so far as man is concerned, the outcast One, though crowned with glory and honour upon the throne of His Father. Hence the Church's calling is governed by the present patience of God toward an ungodly world. Suffering, therefore, is her portion meanwhile, and grace, not judgment, her cry to God about her enemies. But the time is fast coming when God's dispensational displays will change, and, instead of making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust alike, "it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come out, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Zech. xiv. 17, 18, 19.) When that time comes, there will be another and a suited witness here below; not the Church, (whose calling was during the time when the riches of His grace knew no measure, viz. between the cross and the return of the Lord Jesus,) but His people Israel, the righteous remnant become a strong nation on earth. "The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan: I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same." (Ps. lxviii. 6. See all Ps. xciv.) "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." (cxxxvii. 7-9.) "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord." (cxlix. 5-9.) * I might thus comment on all the Psalms, save the few which describe the atoning sufferings of Christ personally. In all of them it is the Spirit of Christ in special sympathy with Israel, though the Holy Ghost applies to the Church in the New Testament many truths which are equally true of us and of them. (Compare Ps. xliv. 22, with Rom. viii. 36.) But this in no way sets aside their proper and prophetic bearings any more than Hosea xi. 1 is denied to contemplate specifically the literal Israel, because in Matt. ii. 15 it is referred to Christ.

If then the Psalms are the outpouring of the souls of Jewish saints, if the Spirit of prophecy breathes in them from one end to the other, is it wonderful that the prophet, who especially presents us with the times of the Gentiles, should speak of the trials of the same saints in the last terrible crisis of suffering? Other prophets dwell much upon their ultimate triumphs, in a state totally different from that in which the Jews are now, viz. under Messiah at His coming, and the new covenant. Daniel describes the four great beasts, and more particularly the last with its little horn, before whom three of the first ten horns, or kings, were subdued. "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. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii. 25-27.) If Daniel in chapter vii. is occupied with these future, Jewish saints, and not with the Church of God, who does not see that this goes far to decide the just and complete realization of Rev. xii. xiii., and of the prophetic portion generally? For it is confessed by most that the Apocalypse is, to a great extent, an expansion of those parts of Daniel's visions which were still unfulfilled; and those who trace as the grand lesson of the former the corruptions, persecutions, and judgment of the papacy, are sure to bend a considerable portion of the latter to the same point. On the other hand, if it be clear that Daniel bears decidedly, in the most literal and important aspect of the book, upon the Jewish remnant during "the time of the end" or closing scenes of Gentile supremacy, the Apocalypse is necessarily fixed as having, I do not say its exclusive, but its main application in the same eventful epoch.

It is in the final results that God *proves* His judgment. Morally, I admit, we should say that even now there are many Anti-Christs. One might think to hear some reason that this showed that the Anti-Christ should *not* come. But this is not what we have heard in Scripture. Neither is it that I deny local events to which many Old Testament prophecies apply. Only, it is quite certain, if the Word of God is to be listened to, that the vast body of the results of prophecy of Old and New Testaments will have their accomplishment in a state altogether different from that which exists at present; when the Church will be no longer represented as seven candlesticks on earth, but under the symbol of twenty-four enthroned elders in heaven, and God begins to resume His old associations with the Jews, chastening them in a special way, and judging their proud and blaspheming Gentile oppressors. To leave the Jewish part out, to slight it, as is commonly done, is folly and presumption. It is presumption, for God will finally prove by judgment what He really is, and the truth of all He has said of man, His hatred of sin, and His faithful mercy enduring for ever. He will demonstrate publicly and irrefragably that there is a reward for the righteous, and a God *that judgeth the earth.* To prefer the protracted period, is to prefer the moral judgment of man to the perfect manifestation of the almighty judgment of God.

* That the saints at present are characteristically called to *suffer with Christ*, and in no way to resist evil or avenge their own cause, but rather to plead for mercy in behalf of those who thus wrong them, is plain from many Scriptures. (Matt. v. 38-41. Acts vii. 60. Rom. xii. 19-21. 1 Cor. xv. 19. 1 Thess. iii. 4. 2 Tim. i. 8; ii. 3 12; iii. 12. 1 Peter ii. 20, &c.) The servants, in Jewish righteousness, would have plucked up the tares out of the corn field; they little understood the grace of the kingdom of heaven, which seeks to convert, not to exterminate. "Nay," said the Master, "let both grow together until the harvest," &c. The end of the age will be a period of judgment, and not, as now, of grace. The tares are to be gathered and burnt then. and the language and prayers of the saints, as we have observed, will then be modified accordingly. Hence, such prayers as those in Rev. vi. 10; viii. 3-5, and such manifestations of divine power as those recorded in Rev. xi. 5, 6, as well as the entire current of the book, which is full of special divine judgments. It is painful to see such a confusion of principles which in God's Word are distinct and contrasted, as is contained in the following extracts from a recent work, which forces Rev. vii. ix. to a minute fulfilment in times now past. "At first these prayers may be the pure breathings of grace and love, uttering themselves in desires for the conversion of sinners, and the repentance of an unbelieving world. But, as the malice of the world increases, and persecution begins to rage fiercely, these tones of mercy and forbearance are mingled with deeper accents of sorrowful anger and righteous indignation. 'How long shall the enemy blaspheme thy name? for ever? Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.' 'Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.'"—*Mystery of Providence*, page 13. See also page 28.

It is folly, because the peace and rest which follow God's judgment in power cannot follow our detection of the moral character of what leads to it. The consequences are spiritual vagueness—a condition of soul, in this respect, hardly beyond that of many a pious Israelite who fully acknowledged God's providence, foreknowledge, and wisdom in controlling earthly events. Nay, the judgment and full manifestation of God therein are even less seen in this scheme than a godly Jew might have known before the first advent of Christ.

Dan. ix. may briefly illustrate what I have been seeking to explain. It is clear that this prophecy directly contemplates the Jews and Jerusalem only. "Seventy weeks are determined upon *thy people*, (Daniel's people, the Jews,) and upon *thy holy city*, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." (Verse 24.) I do not doubt that this entire period brings us up to the end of the age. The terminus à quo is equally clear, and, in my opinion, furnished by Neh. ii. From the command to build the city "unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks," the briefer period being occupied probably with the building of the street and wall, and the longer period, added to it, carrying on to *the cutting off of the Messiah*: "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah (not be born, or enter on His ministry merely, but) *be cut off*, but not for Himself." He is rejected; His own received Him not. He died for that nation, though not for that nation only. Now, this is most important to note. The death of the Messiah is after the sixty-nine weeks expire, and has nothing whatever to do, so far as the text informs us, with the seventieth week. Between that death and the last week an evident gap appears, not measured by dates, but simply filled up by the revelation of disasters upon the city, sanctuary, &c. In this interval we hear of another prince, not the prince who had already come to bless the city, and who was Himself cut off, but "*the prince that shall come*." It was not foretold that this coming prince was to destroy the city and sanctuary, but that *his people* should. What people are they? Unquestionably, the Romans; and they did thus destroy. Then follows a general picture of woe to the last. "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." But what becomes of the last week? It remains entirely apart, and the particulars are given in the closing verse. "And he shall confirm covenant (not *the* covenant) with many (or the mass) for one week." It is the history of the seventieth week. We have seen Messiah already cut off after the sixty-nine weeks; we have heard of another prince coming, whose people, not himself, destroyed the city and the sanctuary. It is of this future Roman prince we are now to learn. He covenants for one week, for seven years, with the mass of the Jews. (Compare Is. xxix. 14, 15, 18, 22.) The covenant of Christ is an everlasting covenant, and never marred. But this is an evil covenant, and it is by and by broken. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the 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." Now it is, I have no doubt, these two halves of the seventieth week, which are taken up in the Apocalypse, viewed in its future application; the first of them being a period of 1260 days, during which the witnesses testify, (Rev. xi.) and the last being a time of vengeance, during which the beast has power given, which he uses in warring with the saints and overcoming them. (Rev. xii. xiii. Dan. vii.) These saints, as we have seen before, are not the Church, which is nowhere seen on earth from the end of Rev. iii. Its earthly pilgrimage and testimony had closed before this week began: from Rev. iv. to xix. the Church is seen symbolically in heaven, and in heaven only.

Thus is shewn the peculiarity of our position, upon whom the ends of the ages are met. It is a novel, unprecedented and heavenly place, in no way interfering with the vast scheme of God's earthly government: on the contrary, in this latter, room is purposely left for another field, which was entirely hidden of old; namely, for the development of the glory of Christ as the exalted Man. It is with a Christ on high the Church is associated. Of course, I do not speak of His incommunicable divinity, as the Son, but of a peculiar, heavenly glory shared with His Bride, and unknown to the Old Testament writers, who dwell so largely upon His Messianic rights. The Church, then, began *after* the cutting off of Messiah, and goes up to meet the Lord in the air *before* the seventieth week commences with the Roman prince and his covenant. With the Cross, the earthly people fell under judgment, how long soever it might linger, while God was gathering a remnant to the Saviour. That same cross becomes the foundation of Christ's heavenly body, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. When that work is concluded, the Church will be borne away to join the Lord in the air, and renewed dealings will begin with the earthly people once more. The Church has, no doubt, committed to her the more complete revelation of these judgments on the Gentiles which precede the good things in store for Israel, but the strictly prophetic part of the Apocalypse is not therefore about herself. On the contrary, it reveals throughout the chief contents of it, the Church worshipping in heaven, and the blows of divine judgment falling with a deepening intensity, till Christ and the Church come out of heaven and appear together for the destruction of the beast and the false prophet and their armies.

Let us now consider objections which have been urged of late, without waiting to discuss the low utilitarian tone which pervades them, though we may well distrust it in the things of God.

On the Futurist view, it is said that "no part of the Apocalypse has hitherto been of any use as fulfilled prophecy, to strengthen the faith of Christians in the ceaseless providence of God. On the contrary, it has been a fruitful nursery of mere delusions, destitute of one particle of real truth. Next, the whole must have been useless, for seventeen centuries, as a prophecy of events near at hand, of practical interest and concern to those successive generations; since no such events are contained in the prediction. Thirdly, it has been of no real use, in all its earlier visions, as a warning of events to happen at the close of two thousand years, since no Christian, for so many ages, ever applied it to such events as the Futurist scheme supposes, occurring at that distance of time. Hence, even as unfulfilled prophecy, on this view of its meaning, it has bred nothing but false expectations, either of events which are not predicted at all, or which have been anticipated more than a thousand years out of their true place. It has been wholly useless as *fulfilled* prophecy, and just as useless, for seventeen centuries, as prophecy *unfulfilled*; while its benefit will have been confined to six or seven writers of our own days, and the small minority of Christians, who have faith in their novel principle of interpretation."

It is true that some have exposed themselves to such a representation of their views, whether desirous of palliating Rome, or carried away by a too rigorous literalism, which is contradicted as well by the principle laid down in 2 Peter i. 20, as by the habitual mode of applying prophecy in the New Testament, e.g. Matt. ii. 15, 17, 18, 23, &c. But these objections, if applied generally, are, to say the least, wholly baseless. It is notorious that many who believe that the Apocalypse will receive a more complete fulfilment in the grand future crisis, do not doubt that it has received a partial accomplishment; in other words, they allow to a certain extent the truth of what is called the "Protestant interpretation." The reasoning they employed against the use of prophecy after its accomplishment, was against this use exclusively. No one doubts, for instance, that certain prophecies were accomplished in Christ. Their accomplishment and previous utterances form a part of the faith of all. But people used to say, as some do still, that prophecy was mainly, if not only, useful as a proof. This was false ground. "The design of God was" (to cite a much vaunted sentence of Sir Isaac Newton) "when He gave this book and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities, by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event." Alas! the self-deception of the wise. The vast mass of prophecy warns of God's closing judgments as ushering in the reign of the Lord. The event will interpret them no doubt; but it will be in the destruction of those who have not foreknown the warning. Thus the antediluvians may have reasoned, and perished in their unbelief. Not so Noah. *By faith* he, being warned of God of *things not seen as yet*, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Not so did the Lord deal when He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And if he was the friend of God, what are we? and

why has Jesus called us his friends? "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Did this include the apostles only? or has not one of these "friends" of Jesus, when treating expressly of the coming of the Lord, the destruction of the world that now is, and the new heavens and earth, said to us: "Ye therefore, beloved, *seeing ye know these things before*, beware?".... The men of those days who had precious faith did *not* wait for the events; they did *not* use prophecy as a mere attestation of the truth of Christianity; they read, they understood, and they profited by its warning voice. The Spirit of truth, according to the Lord's promise, showed them *things to come*, and they found the blessing and power of that sure word which *shineth as a light in a dark place*. Sir Isaac Newton was not the least sagacious of the Protestant interpreters; but he asks us to abandon the gracious use for which *God* gave prophecy to His children for the lowest application to which *man* has turned it. Unquestionably, prophecy is a glorious weapon to confound and convince the unbeliever, (though I never heard of that result from the Protestant interpretation of Daniel, or the Apocalypse,) but I repeat that it is the humblest of its offices; whereas man makes it the all-absorbing one. May we not humbly say, looking at the effects of philosophizing on divine things, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. i. 20.)

Again, when we find Tertullian applying the fifth seal to martyrs, then in course of slaughter under pagan Rome, surely we may think that he did not understand the whole meaning of the prophecy without going the length of saying that his interpretation, if such it can be called, was destitute of one particle of real truth? Nor would one question that God used and honoured the great German Reformer's testimony against Babylon, founded on his application of a later portion of the Apocalypse. Does this prove that Luther knew, or that we ought not to learn, that there is a final and fuller development of the great whore, for which no room is left in the ordinary scheme of interpretation?

But the remarkable thing is, that the objector himself elsewhere concedes the principle for which we have throughout contended. Speaking of Isaiah ii.,* he "thinks it certain that the Spirit of God intended one reference of the prophecy as well as the other, and that the words were designed to have, first an incomplete and figurative, then a complete and literal fulfilment." Why then himself repeat, though in an opposite direction, the error of the extreme Futurists? Why imitate their straitened style of interpreting *the Apocalypse?* The soundness of the principle is admitted on both sides. Apply it to the Apocalypse, and not only are moderate Futurists thereby justified by the lips of their antagonist, but the mere Protestant interpretation is condemned by the very reasoning which was meant to establish it on the ruins of the Futurist view.

Even this is not the only inconsistency; for if the principal use of prophecy, in all cases, is, as the objector insists, the manifestation of the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God,† whether before or after the fulfilment, clearly his arguments against the future bearing of the Apocalypse are refuted by himself. The reasoning is null upon the face of it; because, if the principal use be the display of God's glory, whether before or after fulfilment, and if the use either of warning before or evidence after is always secondary or subordinate, it is plain that the grand object of prophecy, on his own showing, has been as much attained during the seventeen hundred years it did not apply (if that ground be taken) as if it did.‡ So that the reasoning destroys itself.—Another thing which may be observed here is, that such texts as John xiv. 29; xii. 16, do not set aside the statement that the immediate value of prophecy, as regards man, is warning before fulfilment. They show that, in certain cases, as in that of disciples just emerging from the Jewish system, weak faith was confirmed by the seen accomplishment of promise, and by a better view of the application of the Old Testament prophecy. Other passages, it is true, speak of sorrows and difficulties; but it was the intelligence and faith in them beforehand, which made them of use at the time. That prophecy may serve as evidence nobody denies, but was it the special design with which God gave it? It is *an* use to which it may be turned, as all agree, in the case of *sceptics*. But God gave prophecy in the first instance to *His people*. Do *they* need it as a proof that God speaks the truth, or that the Bible is His book? And what is the object of quoting texts to prove what is confessed on all sides? Texts which show the use of prophecy as an evidence, neither disprove its importance as warning, nor prove its principal purpose as manifesting the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God. The divine glory is the end of all God's Word and ways, and hence of prophecy which displays the result of all: the overthrow of Satan, the irremediableness of the flesh, the truth of the promises to Israel, the grace of God in the Church, the righteousness and glory of God in the exaltation of His Son, must be learnt there to be truly learnt.

Further, that no Christian, for so many ages, ever applied its earlier visions to such events as the Futurist scheme supposes, *occurring at the close of so many centuries*, may be readily allowed. Was this surprising? They did not know the times and seasons which the Father kept in His own authority. But it is manifest that if they had regarded the thousand two hundred and sixty days, &c., as so many *years*, according to the Protestant interpretation, they must have expected such a protraction of the dispensation, which it is certain they did not. Does this fact, so far as it goes, tell in favour of the historic or future scheme? Confessedly, the great mass of the early writers did look for literal prophet witnesses, for a personal Anti-Christ, for an infidel domination and fiery persecution of at least three and a half years, and that in Jerusalem, at the end of the world, or age, whenever that might be. The value of such interpretations may be questionable, but it is absurd to argue as some do, that in these points wherein more than any others they agree, the Fathers substantially approximate the protracted view of the prophecy.*

* It is well known that a main stronghold of Popish controversialists (as in Milner's *End of Controversy*,) in claiming earthly exaltation, and universal homage for their Church, is the misapplication of Isaiah ii. to the present time. The picture in verse 4 is as opposite as possible to the terms with which the Lord characterized the age in Matt. xxiv. 6, 7. So that to apply such a Scripture to the present is only conceivable by means of a mystical process of no ordinary violence.

† This is partially true. Only it is somewhat singular that righteousness, grace and government, are left out on such a question. And yet the reason is evident. These would suppose contrast in principle, and intervention in power.

‡ If the distance of 1700 past years makes a difficulty in the moral use of the display of God's glory, all the historic part of the Old Testament becomes of no use: if it makes no difficulty, the principle proves that the Futurist view is equally useful as the historic view.

* The only clear instance in which good men and Christendom generally rested on a supposed application of the Apocalypse before the event transpired, is far from a satisfactory proof that much valuable and seasonable truth was mingled with their errors, and their hopes and fears guided rightly by warnings of the future. From the fourth century through the middle ages there was a panic, particularly at the approach of A.D. 1000. The fallacy of the idea, proved by the event itself, was even then not easily dissipated. Among the advocates of this notion were Augustine, Primasius, Bede, and Ambrose Ansbert, the first and most distinguished of these fathers maintaining the carnal idea that the millennium and first resurrection had begun with the first advent of Christ. "As to Anti-Christ himself," (says Elliott, iv., page 329,) "like other earlier fathers, he viewed him as one that would arise and reign three years and an half at the end of the world." It may be noted also, that in his day (notwithstanding Tertullian's opinion) the martyrdom spoken of in Rev. vi. was not supposed to have been fulfilled, but was referred to a future company of sufferers under Anti-Christ. Lactantius did not, like Augustine, date the millennium from a past starting point, but conjectured that it would begin two hundred years from his time. Still here, as elsewhere, his views are rather Futurist, than historical.

Mr. Elliott candidly acknowledges (Horae, iv., page 326,) that "a revolution, by which Christianity should be established in the prophetically denounced Roman empire, was an event, the contingency of which had never occurred to the previous exponents of Christian prophecy." How could this be, if the complete accomplishment of a prophecy so marked as the sixth seal, is found in an event which most gravely affected the course of the world? How comes it, if the prophecy announced to every age events really near at hand, that no believer, so far as we know, of that or of any preceding age, was warned of such imminent and signal change? But it is argued, that "Mr. E.'s remark on the total contrast between the expectation and the reality must be limited to the first flush of Christian triumph under Constantine, or else it would be refuted by the plainest evidence in the works of the fourth and following centuries." First, it is clear that the remark is quite unaffected by the saving clause of the advocate: the former refers to those who wrote before the Constantinian revolution; the latter, to those who witnessed or succeeded it. Next, some readers will be astonished to hear that the advocate wholly rejects Mr. Elliott's application of the sixth seal, as well as of the sealing and palm-bearing visions which follow! Why, by silence, lead persons to suppose an unity of interpretation where the divergence is so great that, as to this seal, Mr. Elliott is a praeterist, and his friend looks to the future? And what is found in the works of those centuries which followed the establishment of Christianity in the empire? Any thing to shew that the faith of Christians was strengthened in their review of the past? Do the applications of Isaiah's latter-day promises, and of Rev. xxi. to that revolution and its results, commend themselves to a spiritual mind? The reader may judge how far Eusebius and Jerome are to be regarded as sound interpreters of prophecy, even by Mr. Elliott's supplementary history of Apocalyptic interpretation; and certainly *his* object was not to set in an unfavorable light the writers who began to pave the way toward a vague application of the book to the events of their own day, by eliminating the literal Israel from the chart of God's future purposes, and substituting the present Gentile body in their stead. About the latter part of the fourth century Tichonius, if we can rely upon the genuineness of relics which are allowed to be full of interpolations, applied the book, more than any of his predecessors, to the Church in its present state. Even under the trumpets, he sees evil men, heretics, &c., in the Church, and, like Eusebius, makes Rev. xxi. and vii. to be fulfilled in the then triumphs of the Gospel. Are these the crudities which a good man chides us for not receiving and admiring? Is it sought to replunge us in the darkness out of which God's Word and Spirit have delivered us? delivered us, may we not add, in spite of a protracted system which would still have kept us enslaved by tradition and the influence of men's names. The only predecessors of the protracted Church application of the Apocalypse, known to me during the first few centuries, are those already given in this note.

The earlier and central chapters, not to speak of the closing part of the book, they in general applied as the Futurists do. Even if we confine ourselves to the future literal view, I do not admit the deduction that it has been of no real use. The apostle Paul put before the Philippians the blessed hope that "the Lord is at hand." Was that of no real use, because it has been even longer in reserve? Did the Christians then expect it to occur after so long an interval of time? Has it been wholly useless?

On the other hand, to argue as the objector does, in defence of the Protestant view, is to indulge the fancy in the face of established facts. "On the wider view of its meaning, the prophecy has announced, to every age of the Church, and each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand. In every later age, it also contains many predictions already fulfilled, and of which the fulfilment has been more or less already discerned by thoughtful Christians." It is well known that the great bulk of the early Christian writers applied the prophecy to a brief and terrible tribulation *at the end.* Afterward, all Christendom fell into a death-like and only not universal slumber. In the dark ages, when the Apocalypse was used, it was never an intelligent use of early or middle parts of the book, (which ought to have been discerned, if any part of the book was,) but an imaginative apprehension prevailed that the Anti-Christ was there and the end near. It was the idea of being at the consummation which appalled men. At any rate, till the Reformation the Church was not in a condition to use the Apocalypse in general. That the Church used it suitably, if that be the argument, as the prophecy was developed in history, is a chimera. If the meaning is merely that the Church *ought to have so used it*, it is rather an impotent conclusion after so bold a beginning.

"It has been at least possible, and indeed highly probable, that many believers, in every age, should have been warned by it of imminent changes, and have had their faith in God's Word confirmed by many glimpses of its actual fulfilment." * Now, let us test this by a portion of the book which, according to the historic view, should have been clearly and unquestionably fulfilled long ago, as the predictions in the Old Testament about Ishmael or Israel, Nineveh or Tyre. Is there a tittle of evidence that the vision of the opened seals announced to *any* age of the Church events which were realized? Where is the proof that even *a single individual* correctly interpreted the meaning of *a single seal* beforehand? Even to this day the utmost variety of sentiment prevails, not only as to the details of the seals, but as to their general bearing. What view are we to receive? It has been remarked by one whom the writer may not altogether despise, that the oracles of old were dark and obscure, unintelligible, enigmatical, capable of being applied to any event that may occur, from their studiously indefinite meaning but not such is the character of Bible prophecy; *it* is a "sure word," a light that shineth in a dark place; so sure that none can gainsay the prophecy when the event comes to pass, none can complain of walking in darkness, of being obliged to grope their way through thick darkness, for bright is the light cast on the future from every prophetic word. Is this really applicable to the seals? *Can none gainsay* the interpretations of Mede, of Elliott, or of Vitringa? of Keith, of Faber, or of Cuninghame? Can it be replied that these authors, with their conflicting schemes, were captious inquirers, who rejected an evidence real and sufficient, if not of that sort which compels assent? Are they not notoriously among the most celebrated of the Protestant interpreters, and as notoriously discordant in their views at the threshold of the prophecy? If none can gainsay the prophecy when the event comes to pass, what are we to infer respecting Rev. vi.?

For my own part, I am not at all disposed to deny the idea that in the four first seals we have the divine history of the empire from the prophet's time—victory, peace taken from the earth, famine and God's four plagues; then in the fifth seal the gracious recognition of those who suffered in the pagan persecutions, followed by the sixth seal which, on this scheme, would shadow the subversion of the heathen empire with its governing powers, and the terror produced on the enemies of the Lamb. The parenthetical chap. vii. shews that in spite of persecutions of the saints and convulsions in the world, a certain number of elect Jews, and a countless multitude of Gentiles, were secured each in their place. The seventh seal follows at the beginning of Rev. viii., opening a series of fresh judgments which we need not particularize.* This view differs little from that which is adopted in the Horæ Apocalypticæ. Strange to say, the objector entirely repudiates not this view merely, but the theory maintained in the Horæ, which he is ostensibly defending! Mr. Elliott and his advocate join issue throughout all the seals and more than half the trumpets! The one considers the seals to be "an outline of the work of redemption in its silent and irreversible progress," whereas, according to the other and more prevalent view, the temporary glory, and then the decline and fall of Pagan Rome before the power of Christianity, is the subject of the first six seals. Mr. Elliott, not only in the body of his work, but in a supplement of considerable extent, has given reasons at great length for rejecting the Church scheme of the seals, which his defender strenuously espouses. Hence it is idle to talk of the prophecy announcing to every age of the Church and each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand, when there is a fatal schism among themselves, even yet, as to the meaning of the first prophetic series, where, of all parts of the book, one might, on their principles, expect the greatest unanimity.

It is, of course, admitted that whatever system we adopt, many erroneous expectations and defective expositions have gathered around this holy prophecy; but the summing up is that, while the larger interpretation conveys much valuable and seasonable truth as to the past and future, the crisis system compels us to regard the prophecy hitherto as an *ignis fatuus*, and not a beacon light, which has served only to delude the Church with a perpetual series of false hopes, unreal fulfilments, and expositions as utterly baseless and untrue as the oracles of the heathen. I will not trust myself to express, as I feel, the impropriety of such sweeping, unfounded, and injurious statements. Very many, let it be repeated, of those whom he would designate as Futurists are far from rejecting the general interpretation, which supposes the Spirit to have had in His eye the history of the western and eastern empire, and the protracted moral apostacy which followed. Make it *the* accomplishment, the specific accomplishment, and all is confusion, and none prove it so much as men like Messrs. Birks, Elliott, and Gaussen, who seek to define the details.

Lastly, I do not feel it needful to discuss the question of a minority or a majority, though the statement is inaccurate. Such arguments do not savour of Christian simplicity. The writer is a millenarian. Would he rest the truth of the premillennial advent on such a stake? Is any truth to be tested by numbers? What is to be our tribunal of appeal? the opinion of man, or the Word of the living God?

The grand fault of all is, that it is a mere human reasoning. The question here, as every where else, is to whom the prophetic revelations apply, not to whom they are given. Thus the reve-

* Does it not amount to this?—"*If all the Church had held my view of the prophecy*, (which is demonstrably untrue,) they would have profited by it as a warning of events still to come, and as an evidence of things already fulfilled. Since my view is right, it is possible, and indeed highly probable, though little ancient evidence remains of the fact, that many believers in every age did embrace it. Hence, it satisfies the test of practical and proved utility far better than the Futurist view."

* "The first trumpet *begins*, according to Lowman, in the time of *Constantine*; according to Mr. Cuninghame and Mr. Frere, with the *death of Valentinian*, A.D. 376, and *ends* with the *death of Theodosius*, A.D. 395. But Mede, Newton, Dr. Keith, and Mr. Elliott, make it *begin* with the *death of Theodosius*, and reach to the *death of Alaric*, A.D. 410. Cressener and Whiston include in it both periods. Mr. Faber agrees with Mede and Newton in its commencement, but continues it *forty years after Alaric's death*, A.D. 395-450.

"The second, according to Lowman, Mr. Cuninghame, and Mr. Frere, reaches from *Theodosius* to *Alaric*, the exact interval which Mede, Newton, Dr. Keith, and Mr. Elliott assign to the first. Mede refers it to the *fall of the Roman sovereignty*, A.D. 410-455; Cressener, to the Transalpine invasions; A.D. 410-448; Sir Isaac Newton, to *the Visigoths and Vandals*, 407-427, Whiston, Mr. Faber, and Dr. Keith to *the Vandals* only, but within different limits, A.D. 406-450, 439-477, and 429-477 respectively.

"The third trumpet, by Sir Isaac Newton, is applied to *the Vandals*, A.D. 427-530; by Whiston, Mr. Cuninghame, and Dr. Keith, to *Attila and the Huns*, A.D. 441-452; by Mede, Cressener, and Lowman, to the *troubles of Italy, or setting of the Western Cæsar*, A.D. 459-476; by Mr. Faber, to the same within narrower limits, A.D. 462-476; and by Mr. Frere to the *Nestorian heresy*.

"Lastly, the fourth is referred by Mr. Cuninghame to the *fall of the empire*, A.D. 455-476; by Whiston, to the extinction itself, A.D. 476; by Mede, Cressener, Lowman, and Dr. Keith, to the subsequent *eclipse of Rome*, A.D. 476-540; by Sir Isaac Newton, to the *wars of Belisarius*, A.D. 535-552; by Mr. Faber and Mr. Frere, to the reign of Phocas and *the Persian invasion of the East*, A.D. 602-610.

"The remark of Mr. Faber on these differences in earlier writers, is very natural and just. 'While they agree that the downfal of the Roman power in the West is at least the most prominent subject of the prophecy, scarcely any two expositors concur as to the division of that subject among the several trumpets that are supposed to relate to it. The general result brought out is the subversion of the Western empire, but the *particular* steps are as multifarious and discordant as can well be imagined. So curious a circumstance may well be deemed the opprobrium of Apocalyptic interpretation, and may naturally lead us to suspect, that the true key to the distinct application of the four first trumpets has never yet been found, or, if found, has never yet been satisfactorily used.'"—*Birks' Mystery of Providence*, pp. 103, 104.

lation of what happened to Lot was given to Abraham, while the communication was made to Lot in time to deliver him out of the judgment, and that with precision as to the execution of it. So, as to the Apocalypse: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." The book was given, as all the Scriptures, to the Church of God, without distinction of Jew or Gentile—there was none such in the Church; it could be given to none else. On the other hand, there is this observation to be made respecting the Apocalypse and Daniel, that they are the revelation of the consequences, the latter of Israel's failure, the former of the Church's failure, as witnesses of God here below. Hence, we have a far more direct interest and a more solemn responsibility as to the contents of the Apocalypse than as to Old Testament prophecy in general, or even as to Daniel, while, as regards times, scenes, and personages, there is no doubt much in common. But the Babylon which the apostle saw drunken with the blood of saints is something of nearer, graver import than the city which Nebuchadnezzar built. Furthermore, the time was *at hand*, not present. It is very possible that the prophetic warnings it contains may be the divine preservative against the sins which at length draw down the closing strokes of God's wrath upon the apostacy of Christendom. Into this worst rebellion the unfaithful professing mass will sink, if indeed it has not sunk, before the hour of temptation comes which is to try them that dwell upon the earth. Out of this hour the Lord has pledged Himself to preserve such as keep the word of His patience. The faithful Church will not be in that scene. The Lord keep this promise, full of comfort, before our souls!

"IF SO BE YE HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS."

GRACE deals with all men upon one common ground, that of being sinners; it *levels* their moral condition, and comes only to those who have *need* of it. (Luke v. 31, 32.) *This*, man cannot bear; what he is always seeking to do, is, to make a difference between righteousness and unrighteousness in man, so that himself may have a certain character before others. Slighting God's righteousness, and magnifying our own, always go together.

On the other hand, there is sometimes the thought, that *grace* implies God's passing by sin. But, no; quite the contrary! *Grace* supposes sin to be so horridly bad a thing, that God cannot tolerate it. Were it in the *power* of *man*, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God, there would be no need of *grace*. The very fact of the Lord's being *gracious*, shews sin to be so evil a thing, that, man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but *free grace* will do for him—can meet his need.

The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God's love brought in salvation by that very act—came in to atone for the sins of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest manifestation of God's grace. Where does faith see the greatest depth of man's sin and hatred of God? IN THE CROSS; and at the same glance it sees the greatest extent of God's triumphant love and mercy to man. The spear of the soldier, which pierced the side of Jesus, only brought out that which spoke of forgiveness.

I have got away from *grace*, if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying: "I am unhappy, because I am not what I should like to be;" but that is not the question. The real question is, whether *God* is what we should like Him to be—whether *Jesus* is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are, of what we find in ourselves, has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace.—Faith never makes what is in my heart its object, but God's revelation of Himself in *grace*. If we stop half way and see nothing but the *law*, it will just discover to us our condemnation, and prove us to be "without strength." If God allows us enough to shew us our true state, that is just where *grace* meets us.

The grace of God is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that, if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it; we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to learn it out of His presence, we shall only turn it to licentiousness.

If we look at the simple fact of what grace is, it has no limit, no bounds. Be we what we may, (and we cannot be worse than we are,) in spite of all that, what God is towards us is LOVE! Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what He is to us; and that is *grace*.

Grace supposes *all* the sin and evil that is in us, and is the blessed revelation that through Jesus *all* this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins; nay, than all the sins in the world are to us. And yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be toward us, is LOVE! At the same time we must remember that the object and necessary effect of *grace* is to bring our souls into communion with God—*to sanctify us by bringing* the soul to know God and to love Him. Therefore, the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

A man may see sin to be a deadly thing, and he may see that nothing which defileth can enter into the presence of God: his conscience may be brought to a true conviction of sin; yet this is not "tasting that the Lord is *gracious*." It is a very good thing to be brought even to that, for I am then tasting that the Lord is *righteous*; but then I must not stop there: sin without grace would put me in a hopeless state. I cannot say that God *ought* to be *gracious*, but I can say, if ignorant of His grace, that He ought to cast me, as a sinner, away from His presence, because He is *righteous*. Thus we see that we must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is "the God of all grace." The moment I understand that I am a *sinful man*, and yet that it was *because* the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that *He came* to me, I understand what *grace* is. Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us." As soon as I believe Jesus to be the Son of God, I see that God *has come to me* because I was a sinner, and could not *go to Him*. This is grace.

THOUGHTS ON REVEALED FUTURITY.

To observe the distinction between the old and new creation, is absolutely necessary for the edification of truth, whether prophetical or evangelic.

In the OLD creation, all being made to depend on the volition of the creature, failure was the consequence, as all Scripture shews.

The penultimate dispensation, the millennium, like all the conditional covenants which have gone before, shall serve to shew the terrible effects of conditionality—the failure on the part of man, whenever any *conditions* are propounded to him by his Maker.

The millennial dispensation, resulting in the rebellion of all the nations of the earth against God, (Rev. xx. 8, 9,) and that too with the glory of Jehovah, (Is. lx. 1,) and the horrors of the lake of fire* (Is. lxvi. 24,) before their eyes, shall set before the universe the last proof of the fragility of all that depends on the will of the creature.

In the NEW creation, on the contrary, nothing shall be left to the will of the creature. All shall be kept by the power of God. In the meantime, we who have believed do enter into rest. (Heb. iv. 9.) For although the new creation, as far as visibility is concerned, begins with Jerusalem, (Rev. xiv. 4. Is. lxv. 18,) yet in the meantime the new creature in Christ Jesus, (2 Cor. v. 17,) being part of the new creation, is kept by the power of God. KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD (1 Peter i.) is the distinguishing mark of the new creation, and of all that belongs to the new creation, whether it be man, the earth, or Jerusalem. The words, "God shall be all in all," may be profitably considered with reference to this subject, and in contra-distinction to unregenerate man. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, and security also. Where the Spirit of the Lord is not, there is neither the one nor the other.

This being premised, the millennium may be defined as *the seventh millennium of the world predicted by prophecy, and typified by the sabbath day as the* BEGINNING *of eternal rest, which, dawning first upon Jerusalem, subsequently overspreads the new earth.*

* Is this exact?—ED.

As the seventh millennium brings rest and glory to Jerusalem, so the eighth millennium brings rest and glory to the earth in general, now become the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

During the seventh millennium, or, as it is generally called, *the* millennium, the Jew shall shine pre-eminently be the first-fruits (Rev. xiv. 4) of terrestrial glory, (Is. lx. 1,) the first-fruits of the new terrestrial creation; and the Gentile shall acknowledge the brightness of that pre-eminence. (Is. lx. 14.) The latter, however, being placed in a state of probation under a conditional covenant, and not yet constituting a part of the new creation, shall be deceived and destroyed; (Rev. xx. 9, 10;) thus affording an additional proof of the fragility of every thing not "kept by the power of God."

Jerusalem being itself first purged by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, (Is. iv. 4,) shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up nor thrown down any more for ever. (Jer. xxxi. 40.) Invested with heavenly glory,* (Is. lx. 1,) shining on with that glory through the millennium, (Is. lx. 11,) fearing no treason within, (Is. lii. 1,) defying all violence from without, (Is. liv. 17. Rev. xx. 9,) surviving the conflagration of the world by fire, (as Noah's ark survived the destruction of the world by water,) it shall emerge from the fiery flood, the bright, the immortal nucleus of the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

On this new earth a righteous race (2 Peter iii.) shall dwell, which righteous race, it is well to be observed, rises upon our view at the end of the seventh, and at the beginning of the EIGHTH MILLENARY, in fulfilment of the type of circumcision on the EIGHTH DAY, (Gen. xvii. 12,) of which type Adam's race, circumcised in heart at the beginning of the eighth millenary, is the proper explanation and antitype.†

The Pentecostal type teaches the same doctrine, refers to the same period, and bears upon the same point. That effusion of the Holy Ghost (great and glorious as it was) which, when the seven Levitical weeks had run their course, (Lev. xxiii. 15,) was poured forth upon men of every nation under heaven, (Acts ii.) shadows forth the spiritual circumcision of the human race when the seven millenaries shall have run THEIR course.

This spiritually circumcised race shall be reinstated in paradisaical innocence and happiness, like Adam before his fall; but with this difference: Adam was left to his own will — these shall be kept by the power of God — ruled over by the saints of the Most High. (Dan. vii. 18.)

The seventh chapter of Daniel gives a general outline of the history of the kingdoms of the earth, reaching to the remotest ages of eternity. The general conflagration of the earth is not expressly mentioned in this chapter, though darkly shadowed forth perhaps by the "fiery flame," (premillennial,) mentioned in the ninth and tenth verses. The conflagration of the earth (a fit subject to arouse the scoffer and infidel, therefore it is urged by the apostle Peter — 2 Peter iii.) does not stop the course of terrestrial affairs, or hinder the fifth kingdom from succeeding to the fourth.

Although the inhabitants of the new earth shall be partakers of terrestrial and not of celestial glory, there is nothing in this economy to diminish the lustre of that heavenly glory of which Abraham himself, and those who have Abraham's faith, shall have been made partakers. All who have Abraham's faith in this and former dispensations, whether Jews or Gentiles, (Rom. iv. 11, 12; ix. 24. Gal. iii. 28,) shall be partakers of *heavenly* glory.

Here, therefore, let us pause for a moment to observe where the distinction between Jew and Gentile does, and where it does not, obtain.

During the Mosaic dispensation, this distinction *did* exist. During the present dispensation, it does *not* exist. In the heavenly state, it does *not* exist. During the millennial dispensation, this distinction shall exist again. In the postmillennial dispensation, that is, in the new earth, this distinction shall not exist; for then all the inhabitants of the earth being Jews * in the strictest sense, (the term "Jew" carrying in its very etymology the notion of conversion to God,) PRAISE shall be universally the character of that ultimate state into which the terrestrial history shall resolve itself.

When we read that the name of the Lord shall be PRAISED from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, (Ps. cxiii. 3,) how can we deny that the earth shall then be inhabited by JEWS? Jews they shall be in every sense, as well outwardly as inwardly; outwardly, because of their actual descent from Abraham, the destined heir of the world; (Gen. xvii. 5. Is. xxvii. 6. Rom. iv. 13;) and inwardly, because of that circumcision of the heart which constitutes a Jew in the best and truest sense. (Rom. ii. 29.) The nations of the earth being destroyed by fire at the end of the millennium, the new earth is peopled from the preserved nucleus, already mentioned, and from the stock of Abraham, the heir of the world. The promise, "be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee," (Gen. xxvii. 29,) has never yet been fulfilled.† The seed of Jacob, sent forth to prosper to the east, west, north, and south, is a thing to be brought to pass completely in the postmillennial state.‡ (Gen. xxviii. 14.) Over and above the spiritual sense (which I do not deny) of these predictions, there is a literal and terrestrial sense in which Abraham shall become the father of many nations. (Gen. xvii. 5.) In the midst of a whole world of Jews, the family of Joseph shall be pre-eminent. The exaltation of Joseph's sheaf (Gen. xxxvii. 7) is reserved for the postmillennial state.§ The descendants of Joseph (rejected by, and separated from, his brethren, but subsequently set over them) shall be exalted in the postmillennial earth — a retrospective and eternal type of the Saviour.

In the meantime, it is most necessary to bear in mind the distinction which has been so often adverted to between the glory of the celestial and the glory of the terrestrial; between the family on earth and the family in heaven. (Eph. i. 10; iii. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 50.) ‖ For he who would freely discuss the terrestrial prophecies of the Bible, is in danger of being accused of propounding the diminution, interruption, carnalization, or loss of the heavenly glory of those who shall be made like unto Christ. Whereas, nothing is more certain than that all we who are now made partakers of the divine nature of Christ, when we depart this life, (Phil. i. 23,) shall be like Christ in glory, in indefectibility, in administrative beneficence towards the lower creation. (1 John iii. 2.) Moses and Elias, with the crown of glory on their heads, were actually seen on the mount, conversing with Jesus on the affairs of this earth.¶ (Luke ix. 30, 31.) Extend the picture; amplify the thing suggested; and you have the outline of the celestial and terrestrial economy of the postmillennial or eternal state. The children of the resurrection are as the angels of God in heaven. (Matt. xxii. 30.) The place of their abode is the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, (Rev. xxi. 2. Heb. xii. 22.) and the new earth shall be the place not so much of their habitation, as of their reign. Like the angels who heretofore were sent on beneficent missions to the earth; like Him who came not to be administered unto, but to minister, and who shewed by example, as well as by precept, that it is more blessed to give than to receive; (Acts xx. 15;) they are made unto God kings and priests; (Rev. i. 6;) relative terms, necessarily supposing the existence of an inferior creation, the scenes

* *Heavenly* glory is never predicated of Jerusalem.—ED.

† No proof is produced that the eighth day refers to what the writer calls "the eighth millenary," but what in Scripture is treated as the postmillennial, everlasting state, when God is all in all. That the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost shadows forth the spiritual circumcision of the human race, seems to be also improved. But I need not discuss the point now. Again, I believe that a far better condition of blessing is reserved for the inhabitants of the new earth than Adamic innocence. Nor does it appear to be the time of the kingdom, (Dan. vii. 18,) for Christ has given it up. (1 Cor. xv. 24.)—ED.

* Scripture nowhere says so, but "the tabernacle of God is with *men*." Nations, and therefore Jews, as such, disappear in the eternal state, which is described in Rev. xxi. 1-8. From chapter xxi. 9, xxii. 5, the Spirit reverts to the relationships of the New Jerusalem with the earth during the millenium. —ED.

† In the millennial state, Jacob, in his posterity, (the Jewish posterity generally,) shall be Lord over his brethren *of the human race*. (Is. lx., &c.) In the postmillennial state (for Ephraim, the son of Joseph, is identified with Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 16, 19) Jacob, in Joseph's family, shall be lord over his brethren *of the twelve tribes*, (1 Chron. v. 2,) prophecies which, though announced in the germ to Jacob, (Gen. xxvii. 29; xxviii. 14,) that patriarch did not understand when drawn out in their application, and as to their ultimate result, at least *not readily*, though uttered subsequently, in the Spirit of prophecy, by *himself*. (Gen. xlviii. 16, 19.)

‡ The millennial period is the time when Jacob's seed prospers in a distinctive way.—ED.

§ ?—ED.

‖ Eph. i. 10, does not speak of people, but "things" in heaven and on earth. It is the inheritance, not the joint-heirs or the subjects.—Eph. iii. 15 does not speak of *the* family on earth and *the* family in heaven, much less does it state that there is but one family, part of which is above and part below. The force is "every family in heaven and earth." It does not appear that the Church will be the only family in heaven.—ED.

¶ Query, was it on the affairs of this? Was it not on His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem? Besides, was it not the type of the millennium, rather than of eternity?—ED.

and subjects of royal and priestly ministrations, to whom they shall administer as the angels of God in heaven. Thus the work, as well as destiny, of the Church rises on our view.

The existence, the ministry, the joys of the angels of God, are revealed on purpose to show the happiness of beings whom God sends forth to do good to others, and to encourage us to go and do likewise, by the assurance of a similar—aye, of a better destiny. A better destiny! What! Is it possible to conceive a post more fraught with happiness than theirs who, living in the glory and presence of God, are sent forth on messages of good to man? Yes! When sin on the part of man, opposition on the part of Satan, indignation on the part of God, shall be no more; then shall the glorious liberty of the children of God be manifested; * then shall be seen the glorious destiny of the Church, and the beneficent effects of the kingdom to which they are appointed. Angels were not appointed to such a kingdom. Angels never hindered the fall of man. To do so shall be the glorious commission of the Church of God. (Eph. iii. 10.) † *Therefore* they they shall reign with Christ! If it be a happy thing to remedy, how much happier it is to prevent, the approach of evil! If it be a happy thing to soothe the sorrows, rebuke the sins, and guide the steps (such was the office of the angels) of fallen man, — how much happier it is to prevent his fall! If it be a happy thing to administer angelically to the welfare of a world wherein dwell sin and misery, how much happier it is to administer angelically to a world wherein dwells righteousness!

As the incarnate and risen Jehovah shewed, after His resurrection, that He was man after all, that He had flesh and bones, and that neither death nor resurrection had refined away his human sympathies; so also the Church of God, exalted in glory and made like unto Christ, far from being divested of human sympathy, shall find their employment and delight in administering, in the restitution of all things, to the welfare—above all, to the SECURITY of Adam's race.

This was included in the oath which Jehovah sware to Abraham. This was foreshadowed in the vision which He shewed to Jacob. This latter patriarch, when he saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon the holy land, (the very spot which, in the spirit of prophecy, he described as the gate of heaven, Gen. xxviii, the future channel of communication between heaven and earth,) saw something of the glorious Church, ‡ something of the destiny of the children of the resurrection. (Matt. xxii. 30.)

H.

EXAMINATION OF REV. XI. 8.

IN a version of the Apocalypse, printed in "The Prospect," (vol. i., page 158,) it is proposed to translate this verse as follows:—"And their dead body *shall lie* in the great street of the city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." A foot note adds, "It is evident that Jerusalem (literal or symbolical) is the city referred to in the preceding verses, and determined to be the city in question by the words which follow."

Now, quite agreed that the note so far is correct, I cannot but acknowledge increasing hesitation, on various grounds, as to the supposed amendment. The authorized version has "the street of the great city," and conveys the more natural sense of the Greek. Indeed, the only version known to me which adopts the proposed rendering, is that of Lausanne, (second edition, 1849,) in which we read, "leurs cadavres seront sur la grande place de la ville, qui est appelée," &c.

I.—As to the text, without delaying to comment on the question of αὐτῶν instead of ἡμῶν—a reading now adopted by every judicious critic and resting upon the authority of the three uncial and at least thirty other MSS., not to speak of the Vulgate, Coptic, Æthiopic, Syriac, Armenian, and other versions, and directing our attention more particularly to the first clause of the verse, I think it may be safely said that the weight of the more ancient MSS. inclines to the following: Καὶ τὸ πτῶμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἥτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ Κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη. Certain it is that A. C., and twenty-five manuscripts in cursive characters, support the insertion of the article before πόλεως. Accordingly, such is the reading of the Complutensian editors, of Bengel, Matthiae, Lachmann, Tischendorf and Tregelles. From my own knowledge, I can state that the opinion of the present Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, of the Biblical Greek Professor at Dublin, and of Professor Dunbar, of Edinburgh, coincides with their judgment. On the other hand, in the Textus Receptus that article is omitted, and so the editions of Griesbach, Knappe, and Scholz, with others of lesser note.

II.—The rendering would depend, for the most part, I think, upon the reading which is preferred. Thus, if we take the vulgar text, I do not see how one can translate ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, "on the street of the great city." It offends against the well-known and admitted rule that if a noun has another with it in an oblique case, either both have the article or neither. Undoubtedly, exceptions there are to this rule, but there is a principle which governs these exceptions. Does the present instance resemble them? I think not. The only exception which Matthiae cites is the following from Xen. Cyrop. 6, 3, 8, συνεκάλεσε καὶ ἱππέων καὶ πεζῶν καὶ ἁρμάτων τοὺς ἡγεμόνας. The reason is plain. The commanders are the designated object of the mind; not so the cavalry, infantry, and chariots, which characterize them. Τῶν might have been inserted before the first only of the genitives, or before each of them; but either arrangement would have modified the meaning, by introducing additional ideas to those which the author had in view. In both cases it would have made specific objects of the bodies commanded: in the latter, separate objects; in the former, things in themselves, independent, no doubt, but all forming one object in mental apprehension. The reader of Middleton's treatise will remember that the Bishop pronounces Origen's phrase ὁ καιρὸς σύκων to be incorrect Greek; because he believed the insertion of the article before the governed noun to be required by its presence before the governing noun, as is no doubt usually the case. But, without appealing to well-known passages in Plato, Herodotus, or others, τὸ αἷμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων (Heb. ix. 13) is a plain instance from the New Testament itself, which is irreconcileable with the rule. Is then the insertion or omission of the article optional in such cases? By no means. Both might be true, but they do not assert the same thing. The one merely characterizes; the other presents a positive object before the mind.

If it be said we have the article connected with μεγάλης, and therefore it was not necessary before πόλεως, the answer is, that, if the design of the inspired writer had been to convey the idea of "the great city," the regular mode of expression would have been τῆς πόλ. τῆς μεγ. (as in Rev. xvi. 19; xvii. 11; xviii. 10, 16, 18, 19,) or τῆς μεγ. πόλ. (as in Rev. xviii. 21.) Some might refer to Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, but this is the common anarthrous case of a *proper name* followed by a description which has the article. If κινδυνοὺς τοὺς μεγίστους be cited as more in point, I can only ask the reader to examine the passage where it occurs in the Nicomachean Ethics, and he will see that the philosopher had a rhetorical object in view when he wrote thus. Some endure dangers—any dangers, yea, the greatest. A species of climax seems to be intended, and is secured by the phrase: this would have been defeated by writing τοὺς μεγ. κινδ. Somewhat similar is 1 Tim. v. 3, χήρας τίμα τὰς ὄντως χήρας. "Honour widows," and then the apostle qualifies the thought by adding "that are widows indeed." But these cases are obviously distinct from "the great city," supposing that to be the idea which was meant in Rev. xi. 8. What reason can be assigned for departing from the usual formulae, which regulate the phrase everywhere else in the book? If it be said that all the old versions present that idea, this would serve to confirm the hypothesis that they all read τῆς πόλεως. Primasius, it may be added, renders the passage "in medio civitatis illius magnae," which still implies the same reading.

Perhaps it was the omission of the article which led Boothroyd to propose "the broad city, the great one:" a strange phrase, yet, nevertheless, the nearest approach to the force of the ordinary text, inasmuch as πλατείας is most simply made an adjective, if you omit τῆς before πόλεως. So Wetstein understands it, though

* Much, in this paper, is referred to the eternal state, which will be realized in the millennium.—ED.

† The text says that it is *now* unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, God's manifold wisdom in the Church is known.—ED.

‡ Neither Jacob nor any one else in Old Testament days saw the Church. He might see a glory which not the Church only, but all saints who share in the first resurrection, are to enjoy. But the Church itself was a mystery absolutely hidden till the Spirit descended after the glorification of Jesus. (Eph. ii. iii. Col. i.)—ED.

he prefers the sense of *deserta;* which at least proves, as a learned person observes, that, in his judgment, the anarthrous construction forces us to consider πλ. adjectivally.

The author of the Horae Apocalypticae, vol. ii., page 365, has, in note 3, "πλατειᾳ remarked on afterwards." This is clearly a mistake; it ought to be πλατείας. So it is given in note 2, referred to in page 385: "It may be well to observe, that the correct reading of the Greek text seems to be επι της πλατειας της πολεως της μεγαλης, with the της inserted before πολεως. So Tregelles, in his late elaborate and critical edition of the Apocalyptic text; it being so given alike in the Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Ephraemi, as well as many others." But the error of πλατείᾳ for πλατείας occurs again in a supplement to vol. iv., page 512, where in a note it is said, "Εν τη πλατειᾳ της πολεως της μεγαλης. This, as the best reading is given by Tregelles. The omission of the first της, as in other editions, makes no difference in the point of the designation." It is probable that in the first and third of these passages, the author quoted from memory; one cannot easily account for the mistake otherwise. If the text had really been ἐν τῇ πλατείᾳ instead of ἐπὶ τῆς πλ. two of the proposed renderings could have had no place. The authorized and usual versions must have been right, it might be truly said, beyond all question. Tregelles exhibits the latter reading, not the former.—Next, we have seen that the omission of the article so far from making no difference, renders the common rendering, to say the least, very suspicious, because it seems to violate grammar, and compels us to regard as more exact the version of those who take πλατείας as an adjective.

III.—As regards the interpretation of the verse, it is scarcely possible for any man to deny that in the preceding part we are on Jewish ground. Some may contend that this is a mystic scene, and that its application is Christendom; others, that it is the literal temple of God, altar, and worshippers therein, &c.; and that Gentiles, as such, shall tread down the city, the holy city of Jerusalem, for a certain defined and brief term; that two sackcloth-robed witnesses shall prophesy there, who have power to shut heaven and plague the earth, and are miraculously protected till the completion of their 1260 days' testimony. Now, if the scene of this testimony be Jerusalem, (necessarily the centre of worship and witness to the God or Lord of *the earth*, see 2 Chron. vii. 12-21,) what reason can there be to transport the dead bodies of the witnesses from east to west? from Jerusalem to Rome? On earth, the only place which is ever styled "the holy city," is Jerusalem. Such it will be really under the reign of Christ, when there shall no more come into it the uncircumcised and the unclean. (Is. lii. 1.) Nay, even in the captivity at Babylon, notwithstanding the evil and judgment of the city called by God's name, Daniel, in the spirit of faith, still speaks of Jerusalem as His holy city. (Dan. ix. 24.) And this is the more apposite, as there is a manifest link between the reserved bisected seventieth week of Daniel and the Apocalypse, the former half-week, as I believe, answering to Rev. xi. 1-13, the very scene which we are considering, if the application be made to the final crisis. After the return of the remnant, it is just the same. The Spirit of God, in Neh. xi. 1, 18, still describes Jerusalem as "the holy city." But then do we not hear of "the great city" in verse 8? Is this inapplicable to Jerusalem on the Futurist theory? In nowise. Nay, we may just remark that (in the same book, where, we have seen, it is alluded to as the holy city,) Neh. vii. 4 speaks of it as a city broad and great: καὶ ἡ πόλις πλατεῖα καὶ μεγάλη.* In Ps. xlviii. 1, 2, we read: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." This is evidently referred to in Matt. v. 35, where it is distinctly treated as "the city of the great King," as in the former chapter (iv. 5) it appears as "the holy city." (See also Matt. xxvii. 53.) It is almost needless to observe that "great" ought to disappear from the description of the holy city Jerusalem in Rev. xxi. 10, τὴν μεγάλην being properly omitted by all critics.

But it has been urged, from the days of Jerome to Mr. Elliott, that the real, literal Jerusalem was never called Egypt. The answer is that, if you mean by "called," expressly so designated in Scripture, certainly *Babylon* was never so called. So that the utmost that could be pretended is, that both stand on equal ground. Would it be true to say that they *do* so stand? I think not. In Isaiah i. 10, Jerusalem is denounced as Sodom. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom." Is Babylon ever thus called in the Word of God? Nowhere. Jerusalem is, and Babylon is not, called Sodom in the Bible. Again, if the reader consult Ezek. xvi., he will see, in that touching sketch of God's past and future dealings with Jerusalem, that not only is Sodom here also treated as near of kin, "thy sister Sodom," but the charge is, "Thou hast also committed fornication with *the Egyptians* thy neighbours." Is Babylon ever so charged in the Old Testament? Is *she* ever accused of fornication with Egypt? Nowhere. How does Mr. E. prove that Babylon, or Rome, is thus called? Why that Grosteste spoke of "*Egyptian* bondage!" Wicliff of the sages of *Pharaoh!* and Luther of the *darkness* of *Egypt!* as the appellation Sodom was applied to the same state and city by the Romanists Peter Damian, Pope Leo IX., Baronius, as well as by others!—As to two arguments of Berengaud, (a commentator of the ninth century,) which Mr. E. gives in a note to page 388, they are hardly worth noticing: * they seem not even directed against the idea of a *future* Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been destroyed. Does this shew that it cannot be rebuilt upon its old site? It is not to be called Sodom and Egypt, because Christians dwell there. This is doubly false, in the type and in the antitype. The moral character of Sodom and Egypt was unchanged, although just Lot dwelt in the one, and God's people groaned in the other, till the eve of the judgment which overtook their adversaries. Even so, if faith once regarded Jerusalem as the holy city, when in point of sorrowful fact it was as Sodom, I cannot see why it may not be so again. Is the guilt of Sodom, is the dark oppression of Egypt, incompatible with religious profession? Alas! we know it is not; and therefore these terms may spiritually † and with perfect suitableness attach to the literal Jerusalem in its future condition.

At the same time, I am by no means prepared to deny that the Spirit of God had in view a twofold application, as in the prophecy generally, so here in particular.—In general, it would be "the world" at large. It is *the world* emphatically on which, in the gospel of John, the gravamen of the guilt of the Cross is ever made to rest, not the Jews, not the Gentiles only, but "the world;" and this would well fall in with the suggestion of Jerome. —In particular, it would be Jerusalem. In that locality, where Christ was rejected and crucified, Anti-Christ will be received, and will sit in the temple of God.

There is no force in the argument that because *the beast* of verse 7 is the Roman beast, therefore *the city* of verse 8 must be Rome. For it is clear from the last verse of Dan. ix. and elsewhere, that a Roman prince, yet to come, is to covenant with the mass of the Jewish people, and subsequently to set himself up in that city either in his own person, or by a sort of blasphemous high priest, viz. the second beast, his vice-roy. Thus, diabolically imitating the Lord Christ, (who is Son of man, and so head of the Gentiles, as well as the Jewish Messiah,) the last horn of the beast may assume Jewish sovereignty as well as the empire of the west, and hence figure religiously at Jerusalem as well as civilly at Rome, though all his power be an open revolt against God. Accordingly, there seems little difficulty in understanding that "the holy city," (verse 2,‡) "the great city," if it be rightly so translated in verse 8, and "the city," (verse 13,) are various aspects of the same Jerusalem, view it as you will, literally or mystically. Still less is there difficulty in seeing that the Roman beast, which has already enacted so conspicuous a part at and after the first advent, may reappear upon the same stage before the Lord returns again in

* It is worthy of note that, chiefly because of the parallelism with this verse, as well as perhaps the omission of the article, some have considered πλατείας in Rev. xi. 8 to be an adjective.

* . . . . "Quod illa Hierusalem usque ad solum destructa sit, & ista quae proeâ aedificata est non in eo loco, sed in aliâ, sita esse dicitur; neque Sodoma et Aegyptus dicenda est eo quod à Christianis incolatur."

† In the third edition of the Horae, vol. ii., pages 386, Mr. E. understood πνευματικῶς to mean *figuratively*, or *antitypically*, reasoning upon this as almost *fixing* a figurative construction on the description "where also their Lord was crucified," as well as on Sodom and Egypt. But if I be not mistaken, he now abandons such a sense of πν. in the passage.

‡ That there is, in truth, no real incongruity in applying these symbols to the same body, might be gathered even from Mr. Elliott. "It was indeed (says he, speaking of Rome answering to the figure of apostate Israel's capital, i.e. to the *apostate Jerusalem*,) in this character specially that, in process of time, as the apostacy rose to its height, the Great City, professing to be the Holy City also, became the scene of Christ's being crucified figuratively and afresh; just as the ancient Jewish state acted more prominently than the Roman in his first and literal crucifixion." (Horae Apocalypticae, vol. ii., page 368.)

glory. This at least gives unity to the picture which is vainly sought in the scheme which transports Jerusalem and Babylon into the same scene.

While it appears then, that it would be going too far to pronounce the proposed construction absolutely illegitimate, an exactly parallel case has not yet been produced. The expression μεγάλη πόλις is familiar, whereas μεγάλη πλατεῖα is not. Therefore, if the latter had been intended, might we not have expected means taken in order to preserve the reader from gliding into the former, and so misconstruing the thought? This might have been done by a collocation which would exclude all ambiguity; viz. by writing ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας τῆς μεγ. τῆς πόλ. ἥτις.... But such is not the fact. Are we, therefore, shut up in the conclusion that "the great city" of Rev. xi. is Babylon?* Confessedly, the great city of Rev. xiv.-xviii. is Rome, or Babylon. But is it the only great city in the estimate of the Spirit of God? Or may we not consider, on the contrary, that the latter part of Rev. xi. 8 distinctly and positively guards us against the use which some have made of the expression? Assuredly, the analogy of the Old Testament does not restrict it to one city as its exclusive property. Thus we find Nineveh repeatedly styled "the great city" in the prophecy of Jonah. Is it, therefore, the designation of that city solely? By no means. We afterwards read of Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη in the prophecy of Daniel, (iv. 30,) which seems evidently a foreshadowing of the Apocalyptic Babylon. If the Spirit of God had simply said, "upon the street of the great city," His intention might have been mistaken; but, immediately after, He adds certain exegetical words, which are nowhere applied in Scripture to Babylon, but are all of them substantially, and most of them in express terms, said of Jerusalem only. It was Jerusalem that committed fornication with Egypt, sinking back into the world out of which Israel was called; and not Babylon, but Jerusalem was branded as Sodom: therein also the Lord was crucified. These particulars seem designedly supplied to hinder us from imagining that the great city here named is the same great city which is elsewhere so fully described. And when we come to consider the whole context, it seems plain that "the holy city," which is surely Jerusalem and not Babylon, is the central locality of the vision. Might we not call Paris "the great city," dilating on its luxuries, objects of art, sins and siege, and yet have said a little before, without impropriety and in the same essay, "the great city in which the author of Paradise Lost was born?" The two cities, London and Paris, ought not to be confounded, because the same designation was applied with perfect truth to each, and the less, as in one case it was so explained and restricted as in strictness to exclude not only the other, but every other locality on earth. To this may be added an observation, for which I am indebted to a learned person, that Jerusalem is in actual possession of the title "the great city" outside the range of Scripture, if that be thought of any weight. See the Sibylline Oracles, (book v., verses 153, 225, 412,) where the Jewish forger denounces vengeance for the destruction of the capital and people of Judea.

On the whole, then, I think that the common reading is wrong; that the authorized version is right; and that the clauses which follow "the great city" in Rev. xi. 8 were meant, in part at least, to prevent the reader from confounding *this* great city with another whose evil and judgment occupy so large a portion of the prophecy in subsequent chapters. The great city here alluded to is that one where the Lord was crucified, i.e. Jerusalem. Whether it is to be taken literally or figuratively, whether applicable to the dispensation, or to the crisis, or to both, are different questions; but I have no doubt that *Jerusalem* is intended here.

* "What the *Great City* itself, is a point settled: for it is declared by an Angel, in chapter xvii. of this Book, to be the city which then reigned over the kings of the earth; in other words, that of *Rome*:—not indeed the mere *metropolitan Roman City* on the banks of the Tiber, but, agreeably with the representative force of all the associated symbols, the *political* or *ecclesiastical State* made up of the citizens of its empire; that is, at the time of the present vision of the ten kingdoms of Papal Christendom. It is called the *Great City*, in contrast to the *Holy City* just before mentioned by the Angel-interpreter: that society of believers, 'the called, and chosen, and faithful,' united together in an heavenly, though invisible polity, whom the Gentile citizens of this Great City were, through the appointed 1260 years, to tread under foot." (Horae Apocalypticae, vol. ii., pages 385, 386.)—Mr. Elliott and Jerome differ, first as to "the holy city," the one considering it as the invisible Church, (which I believe to be entirely contrary to the text; for who in that case are meant by the contrasted worshippers in the altar-court?) the other as Jerusalem; next, as to "the great city," the one considering it as Babylon or Rome, the other as this world in its largest extent.—Tichonius explains as usual, "in plateis civitatis magnae, id est in medio ecclesiae."

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

The position, and the character, which distinguish the servants of God, are always, and necessarily, in unison with the principles of the relation which exists between God and men. When God only recognized certain families, the head of the family was its priest and prophet. We find examples of this in Abraham, Noah, and the other patriarchs. But this principle acquires a more general and important application, when a whole dispensation is in question; as in the case of Judaism and Christianity: the ways of God, and the principles of His dealings with sinners, are there unfolded with many more details for the concience, and more distinctness and splendour as to the accomplishment and the revelation of grace.

Observe, accordingly, the marked distinction between these two dispensations. In Judaism, under Mount Sinai, where the law was given, and those ordinances established which regulated the intercourse between the people and God, we have a people already formed and recognized as such before God; a people whom God had already brought to Himself; (Exod. xix.) whose existence and whose rights depended on their being the children of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and who, with few exceptions, were perpetuated by natural descent. In a word, they already existed as a people, when God entered into covenant relationship with them; for it pleased God to try if man, so privileged, and put in possession of every possible advantage for the maintenance of his position, could stand before Him.

The work and principle of Christianity are altogether different. Christianity supposes man to be lost; it supposes that the trial to which God has subjected him by means of the law, has only served to prove more plainly how impossible it is for man, whatever his advantages or his privileges, to stand before Him. But this having been proved, Christianity presents to us God in His grace visiting this ruined race; beholding the Gentiles sunk in ignorance and idolatry, and degraded by the most revolting crimes; finding the Jews still more culpable, having been unfaithful to higher privileges; and exibiting both Jews and Gentiles as the terrible proof that human nature is fallen and corrupt; and, that *in the flesh* good does not dwell. In Christianity God sees man wicked, miserable, rebellious, lost; but He sees him according to His infinite compassions; He only notices the wretchedness of man, to bear witness to him of His own pity. He beholds, and comes to call men by Jesus; that they may enjoy, in Him, and through Him, deliverance and salvation, with His favour and His blessing.

The consequence of the position of the Jewish nation was very simple: a law, to direct the conduct of a people already existing as such before God; and a priesthood, to maintain the relations which existed between this people and their God; relations which were not of a character to enable them to draw nigh to Him without mediation. The question was not, how to call or to seek those without, but to *order the intercourse* with God of a people already recognized.

As we have already seen, Christianity has an entirely different character: it considers mankind as universally lost; proves them in reality to be so; and seeks, through the power of a new life, worshippers in spirit and in truth. In like manner does it introduce the worshippers themselves into the presence of God, who there reveals Himself as their Father—a Father who has sought and saved them; and this is done, not by means of an intermediate priestly class who represent the worshippers because of the inability of the latter to approach a terrible and imperfectly known God; but it introduces them in full confidence to a God, known and loved, because He has loved them, sought, and washed them from all their sins, that they might be before Him without fear.

The consequence of this marked difference between the relations in which Jews and Christians stand as toward God is, that the Jews had a *priesthood* (and not a ministry) which acted outwards, i.e. outside the people; while Christianity has a *ministry* which finds its exercise in the active revelation of what God is—whether within the church or without—there being no intermediate priesthood between God and His people, save the great High Priest Himself. The *Christian* priesthood is composed of all true Christians, who equally enjoy the right of entering into the holy places, by the new and living way, which has been consecrated for them; a priesthood, moreover, whose relations are essentially heavenly.

Ministry, then, is essential to Christianity; which is the activity of the love of God, in delivering souls from ruin and from sin, and in drawing them to Himself.

On earth, then, as regards the relations subsisting between God and man, a *priesthood* was the distiguishing characteristic of the Jewish dispensation; *ministry*, of the Christian;—because priesthood maintained the Jews in their relations with God; and because, by ministry, Christianity seeks in this world worshippers of the Father. I say *on earth*, for, in truth, when we consider the portion of the Christian in its highest point of view, namely, in that which has relation to heaven, Christianity has its "kings and priests," that is to say, all saints. The *worship* of God is not ministry; it is the expression of the heart of the children before their Father in heaven, and of priests before their God, in the intimacy of the presence of Him who, in His love, has rent the veil, which His justice had opposed to the sinner; and has rent it by a stroke, which has disarmed justice, and left her nothing to ask but the happy task of clothing with the best robe those to whom, before, all entrance had been denied. To suppose, then, the necessity of a *priestly order*, is to deny the efficacy of the work of Christ, which has procured for us the privilege of our presenting ourselves before God: it is, in fact, though not in words, to deny Christianity, in its application to the conscience, and to the justification of the sinner: it is to overthrow all those relations which God has established that He might glorify Himself, and place man in peace and blessedness. On the other hand, God acting in Christianity according to the active energy of His love towards sinners, *Christian ministry* becomes the expression of this activity. It has its source in the energy of this love; whether it be in calling souls, or in feeding those who are called, and whom Jesus loves.

THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT.

THE two chief forms which have been presented by the sound and unsound portions of the visible church, are *the religion of the letter which killeth, and the religion of the spirit which giveth life.*

Rash indeed would be the conclusion that, as time has rolled on and circumstances changed, the danger of the letter has diminished, or that it was confined to the days when Moses was read and the Jew still dwelt in his own land; that, with the passing away of the daily sacrifice and the services of the temple, has also passed away the peril of the religion of the letter. To me it seems as if the danger were greater now, insomuch as it is more concealed; to me, it seems as if the temptation were to the full as formidable now as of old, to substitute the law of a carnal commandment for the power of an endless life; and sure I am, that the ability needful to administer the New Testament does still pre-eminently consist in a right apprehension, and a bold declaration, of the righteousness of the new covenant, which is life, as opposed to the righteousness of the law, which is death; not our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

And it is to this new righteousness, revealed in the New Testament, that St. Paul ascribes the mighty energy of the Gospel of Christ unto salvation; "it is the power of God unto salvation," for therein "is the righteousness of God revealed," (Rom. i. 17,) and therefore he was not ashamed of it.

The nature and design of the law may, therefore, be briefly considered, so as to unfold the evil which resides in the ministration of the letter.

Although the design of the moral law was obviously to enforce and ensure moral excellence; yet nothing is more certain than that it has utterly failed in this design; and although the design of the ceremonial institute was to provide a way of cleansing, to point to an atonement, and to a way of reconciliation with God, yet it is no less sure that it did not accomplish the expiation of the sinner, "for the blood of bulls and goats could not put away sin."

How did it, then, come to pass that, with circumstances of such impressive solemnity, God gave unto men a revelation of His will and law, and that the result should prove the total inadequacy of the law? Why was it necessary to try the peculiar people of God, for fifteen hundred years, with this fearful experiment of seeking for salvation by the law? Some weighty reason, some deep necessity, must have existed: some lesson of vast importance was to be impressed upon the human race.

This lesson is made known to us in the New Testament; it was to lead us from the letter which killeth, to the Spirit which giveth life; for although the design of the law was to enforce obedience, yet the design of God, in giving the law, was to shew the impossibility of obedience—to show that, with every circumstance of advantage, the attempt to fulfil the law is altogether hopeless; that, with God's will revealed, not merely by the dim suggestions of conscience, but with his own finger in letters of light; with God's presence, not merely guessed at, but actually made manifest to sense; with God's bounty, not merely shewn in the ordinary blessings of his providence, but in the gifts which made the sojourn in the wilderness a succession of miracles; to shew, I say, that, notwithstanding all these things, man's efforts to obey end only in sin, condemnation, and death.

Are we, then, to say that God's purpose was baffled? No! for His purpose was to prepare us for Christ by shewing the hopelessness of any other way.

The evil which it cost so much to remove must strike its roots deep and far into the nature of man; there must be an irresistible impulse sending him to trust in the law, in meritorious exertions and external ordinances—to trust in the phantom of moral excellence as the way of acceptance with God—or, so large a portion of the world's history would not have been occupied with teaching the great lesson, that "by the works of the law no flesh can be justified;" that the effect of the law, when applied to a fallen being, is only to aggravate sin and to cause the offence to abound; nay, that the strength of sin resides in the law.

As long as man is fallen and unhumbled—as long as he is utterly sinful, and yet blind to his sin, so long will the law be most subtle and deadly poison in the cup which Satan mingles for the souls of men.

So it was from the beginning; this was the earliest enemy which the gospel of the grace of God had to encounter. Whether St. Paul writes to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Hebrews, he has every where to deal with the law. We find him testifying to the Romans, "that we are not under the law; that the law worketh wrath;" to the Corinthians, "that the law is the strength of sin," and "the letter which killeth:" to the Galatians, "that a man is not justified by the works of the law; that we are dead to the law through the law; that, if righteousness came by the law, then is Christ dead in vain; that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse:" to the Ephesians, "that the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, was abolished and slain in the flesh of Christ:" to the Philippians, that "he that wins Christ and is found in him, is one not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith:" to the Colossians, that "the handwriting of ordinances is blotted out, removed, and nailed to the cross:" to the Hebrews, that "the law is weak and a shadow, and unprofitable, making nothing perfect, and disannulled."

It was in the papal system that the religion of the letter, with its mischievous results, received its most monstrous development; and the great struggle of Luther and his companions was against legalism in all its forms. And the noble army of our English confessors and martyrs fought for the same end—to exalt the banner of the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, above the ruins of the righteousness of the law.

Now, the unlawful use of the law developes itself in a twofold form: one is the *relying on some moral excellence, obedience, or principle*, as a ground of acceptance with God; and the other is the *setting an undue value on that which is external and ceremonial*, or "preferring the lesser to the weightier matters of the law."

One follows in the train of the other: once make obedience the title to the divine favour, and there will ensue a magnifying of ritual observances, and an exalting of human rules, traditions, and authority, to an exaggerated degree, because ritual obedience may be only carnal, and not spiritual obedience, and then will be an easy task.

The design, the ultimate design, of the moral law was to stamp condemnation on the fallen race of man; the design of the ceremonial institute was to point to a salvation for the condemned, by shadowing forth things to come. The moral law said, "This

do and thou shalt live;" the ritual law said, "This do for the purgation and remission of sins." But what was the result to Israel? Did the moral law bring life, or did the ceremonial law accomplish remission? No: the one proved but a curse, the other was only a shadow; the moral law knew nothing of grace, but only wrath; the ordinances contained only the type and adumbration, and not truth and reality. GRACE and TRUTH came not by Moses, but by Jesus Christ.

Thus, legalism, the religion of the letter, will discover itself in two ways: in the foundation which it lays for the acceptance of a sinner with God, and in the nature of the religious obedience which it enforces and commands.

If the ground on which God's favour and forgiveness are expected by a fallen being be in any form or any degree a moral ground—if it be any quality, principle, or righteousness inherent and internal, then here is "the letter which killeth, and not the Spirit which giveth life."

Or if you find men giving an undue importance to external religion, magnifying a ritual institute, exalting above their just place ordinances and sacraments, discipline and authority, preferring the lesser to the weightier, the positive to the moral, giving breadth and prominence to the visible and outward means, and thrusting into obscurity or holding in reserve the inward and spiritual; here again reigns the letter, and the ministration which prevails is of condemnation and death.

And wheresoever we find religion wearing the garb of a system prominently ceremonial and external, we may expect to find the further evil of unsound views as to the righteousness whereby a sinner is justified before God. Carnal ordinances and self-righteous claims grow naturally together; and men's notions of holiness are degraded when their views of justification are unscriptural. —*Extracted, by kind permission, from a Sermon by G. S. Smith, D.D.*

A GLANCE AT THE CHURCH OF GOD—ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

THE Word of God presents to us a Church formed on earth by the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven when the Son of God sat down there in glory, having accomplished the work of redemption. This Church is one with its Head; it is the body whereof Christ, ascended on high and seated at the right hand of God, is the Head. (Eph. i. 20-23; ii. 14-22; iii. 5, 6; iv. 4-16. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. John xii. 39; xi. 52.)

This precious redemption gave occasion to the establishment of man in this glory in heaven, to the manifestation of this glory such as it is in Jesus, and to the participation of poor sinners in the same glory. Ephes. ii. is a full development of the doctrine, connecting it with the great principles of eternal truth, the Jew being a sinner and child of wrath as well as the Gentile; and both, previously near or afar off, as it might be as to earthly administration, were brought nigh in the true sense, and made one new man in one body, *both* being reconciled to God in one body by the cross. That is, not that Gentiles were brought into a company of Jews, but that Jews and Gentiles were alike brought out of the position they were previously in, into a new body in Christ, where there was neither Jew nor Greek.

In the name of Him who has accomplished the redemption and is seated in the glory, the Spirit, come down as witness of these things, has called believing sinners to come out from the world which had rejected Him, and to enjoy the boundless grace which, according to the counsels of God, has thus called and has washed them in the blood of Him whom the world has crucified. This same Spirit who, by the means of those whom God chose, had thus called sinners and communicated life to them, has also united them in one body, whose Head is the glorified Christ, and of which the Spirit Himself is the bond with Christ, and in which He serves as the bond between the members one with another. But this is a living and powerful bond, and it acts by a divine operation in the members.

The Church, then, is a body subsisting in unity here below, formed by the power of God, who gathers His children in union with Christ its Head; a body which derives its existence and unity from the work and presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven as the consequence of the ascension of Jesus, the Son of God, and of His session at the right hand of the Father, after having accomplished redemption.

United by the Spirit, as the body to the head, to Jesus seated at God's right hand, the Church will be manifested without doubt in its totality when Christ is displayed in glory; but meanwhile, inasmuch as it is formed by the presence of the Holy Ghost *come down from heaven*, it is essentially viewed in God's Word as subsisting in its unity on earth. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit, characteristically heavenly in its relations, but having an earthly pilgrimage as regards the scene where it is found at present, and where it should manifest the nature of Christ's glory, as His epistle of commendation to the world, for it represents Him and takes His place. It is the Bride of Christ in its privileges and calling. It is presented as a chaste virgin to Christ for the day of the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Evidently, this last thought will have its accomplishment in the resurrection; but what characterizes the Church, as quickened according to the power which has raised Christ from the dead and set Him at God's right hand, is the realizing and display of the glory of its Head by the power of the Holy Spirit, before Jesus, its Head, is revealed in person.

What is described in Ephesians and defined as the Church, is a state of things impossible to exist before the death and resurrection of Christ as its basis, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as its formative and maintaining power. Any definition we could give of it, according to Ephesians, supposes these two things. The Spirit of God, there, treats Jews and Gentiles as alike children of wrath, speaks of the middle wall of partition as broken down by the cross of Jesus, the actual exaltation of Jesus above all principality and power, and us raised and exalted with Him, and both Jew and Gentile reconciled in one new man, in one body by the cross, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit; so that there is one body and one Spirit. It is declared, consequently, that "*now* unto principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Moreover, while heavenly, by its union with its Head as *the heavenly ascended man*, it exists now upon earth, and increases with the increase of God by that which every joint supplieth. It is where, as we learn in the Galatians, there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ Jesus. The Holy Ghost, come down from heaven, unites it to its glorified Head there, and thus it exists on earth, while it is heavenly, belonging to, and witnessing, the character of that place where it will be displayed in glory, and where its Head, whence it derives its being and power by the Holy Ghost, actually is.

There are two great truths dependant on this doctrine: the Church united to Christ in glory accomplished hereafter; and meanwhile, as far as existing or developed on earth, the habitation of God through the Spirit. This is its calling, of which it is to walk worthy; a calling clearly impossible in its very nature, till the descent of the Holy Ghost made it such a habitation.

That the saints will all be gathered into everlasting blessedness as partaking of Christ as their life, and redeemed by His blood, according to the counsels of God, and conformed to the image of His Son, is owned. They are all redeemed by blood, and all quickened by divine life. But the doctrine insisted on is this: that Christ, having broken down the middle wall of partition by His death, and ascended upon high, and sat down on the right hand of God, and thus presented the full efficacy of His work in the presence of God, the Holy Ghost has come down and united together believers in one body, thus united to Christ as one body; which body is in Scripture designated the Church, or assembly of God, and is His habitation through the Spirit. In this, as founded on the risen and exalted Saviour, and united to Him, as seen on high, by the Holy Ghost, there is neither Jew nor Greek. Christ, so exalted, is entirely above these distinctions; Jew or Greek are alike brought nigh, as having been children of wrath, by the blood of that cross by which the middle wall of partition has been broken down. Hitherto God had saved souls. At Pentecost, He gathered His children into the assembly on earth; He added daily to *the Church* such as should be saved. It is no longer salvation merely, nor even the kingdom. God begins to form His Church here below. (Acts ii.)

To make the Church a company of believing Jews, with Gentiles added to them, and *Abraham's seed* their proper definition, entirely shuts out this divine teaching; because the position given to the Church in Ephesians entirely precludes their being looked at as Jews; and the character of "Abraham's seed" comes in merely to shew they are true heirs of promise, because they are Christ's,

who is the Seed of Abraham and Heir of the promises. But, most clearly, this is altogether the lower ground on which to speak of Christ, in comparison with His glorious exaltation at the right hand of God, on which the Church as such is founded. Indeed, the being Abraham's seed is only a *consequence* to us of our being in the Church. This is plainly shewn from Gal. iii. where the apostle presses that Christ is the only Seed of Abraham, "and to thy seed, which is Christ." *His*, therefore, are the promises. If, therefore, we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed. That is, Christ having taken up alone in His own person all the promises, we, if united to Him, come into the inheritance of them. We are Abraham's seed, because we belong to the Church; that is, are united to Christ as our Head. But the union of the Church with Christ is much *more* than this.

No one can read the Ephesians attentively without seeing that the Church, as one body existing on earth, though heavenly in privilege and character, takes its place consequent on the work of the cross, the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost. Hence to give any definition of the Church, which implies its existence, (other than in the counsels of God,) which speaks of its existence on earth, (e.g. during the life of Christ on earth, or previous to His exaltation and the descent of the Holy Ghost,) denies its nature and sets aside its character. If this doctrine of the Word be rejected, the saints are deprived of their proper and blessed privileges, and the view of their present condition, as compared with their calling, will be equally enfeebled and set aside. Abraham's seed we are individually, whatever the condition of the Church; and believing Jews or added Gentiles, whether we walk in unity or have the power of the Spirit or not.

Those who compose the Church have other relationships beside. They are children of Abraham. They are the house of God over which Christ, as Son, is chief. But these latter characters do not weaken what has been stated: much less do they annul it.

At the beginning, the truth of the Church, powerfully put forward by the apostle Paul, was, as it were, the centre of the spiritual movement; and those who were not perfect (i.e. in knowledge) were attached all the same to this centre, though at a greater distance. The Church was rather the nearest circle to the only true centre, Christ Himself. It was His body, His bride. This truth is lost now to the greater part of Christians, and their want of faith has a sad consequence. They take up relations belonging it is true to those composing the Church, but inferior to those of the Church itself, and out of them form a system which they oppose to the most precious of all the Church's relations with God. It is true that we are children of Abraham; but why set us on this level in order to deny the position of Christ's Bride? The Gentiles are grafted into the olive tree, in place of the broken Jewish branches; * but why use this, to reduce us to the level of the blessings and principles of the Old Testament? and this to avoid the responsibility of the position God has set us in, and so to get rid of the necessity of confessing our failure? Again, it is true that, in a general sense, we are God's house, a house in which are vessels to dishonour; and this truth is employed to justify a state of things which lays aside all that can appeal to the affections and heart of a bride. Let Christians weigh it!

Thence the putting off Christ's return to epochs connected with the judgment He will execute on an unfaithful house, and on a rebellious world. Thence, too, the loss of the desire of His coming — a desire special to the Bride, and inspired by the Spirit who dwells in her and animates her.

1 Cor. xii. describes the Church, wherein gifts were exercised; describes it as one body on earth. So Ephes. i.-iv. Col. i. ii. Paul wrote to Timothy that he might know how he should behave in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.) There was then one Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, a body manifested on earth, a Bride who longed for the coming of the Bridegroom to complete her happiness; who meanwhile sought to glorify the Bridegroom, manifesting, by the Spirit's power in her, the glory in which the Head was at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. If Jesus was in heaven invisible to the eyes of the flesh, His Bride was visible on earth for the purpose of manifesting the glory of Christ; she was on earth the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. (2 Cor. iii.)

That God secures to the Church, viewed in His eternal counsels of grace, an indefeasible portion of glory in heaven, is certain. That, consequently, the gates of *hades* cannot prevail against that which Christ has founded on the confession of the Son of the living God, is most clear. But to use such precious truths to nullify the Church's responsibility to be here below a testimony to the glory of Jesus, is to employ the certainty of grace to destroy the necessity of a life which answers to it.

While, then, one would sympathize with the godly dread some may feel at any thing which seems to affect the salvation of all saints from the beginning, and the electing love of God in respect of them, it is well, on the other hand, to call things by their right, i.e. scriptural, names. The Spirit of God is infinitely wiser than man, and our business is to see, follow, and admire His wisdom, as in other matters, so here. He has restricted the title "Church of God," in a New Testament sense, to those who are baptized with the Holy Ghost. Let us also bear in mind that what is abstractedly true, may be used by the enemy to oppose the progress of truth given by God; so, the Jews urge the unity of God against Christianity. It is thus Satan still acts, using previous truth, or that which is subordinate in importance, to hinder the special present testimony of God. A faithful Israelite could not have walked rightly before God, save as he intelligently recognized the place and responsibility of the nation to which he belonged. He could not overlook without loss the position in which God had put him. So with the Church: it is a body brought into equally distinct relief, though in a different way, having a given relationship with God, as much as Israel had. Saints were invisible before the Church was formed. The visible unity then was God's elect nation, the mass of whom were not converted. But the Church was called to manifest the glory of Christ hid in God: in short, it was the light of the world. To say that it is "invisible" implies no testimony for Christ here below. For what is the meaning of an *invisible light?* It is the denial of the title of Christ to unite His own, to gather in one the children of God who were scattered abroad, and, thus gathered, to display in them His power and glory. That the Church, alas! is invisible is too true. If so, it is fallen; it is unfaithful to the glory of its Head; it has failed as to the object of its establishment on earth. To recognize this truth—to confess the sin as fearful, a sin perhaps unpardonable as regards integral restoration — to confess, in this respect, our sin and iniquity — is what places us in our true position on this point. To justify such a state of things, to present it as regular and providential, as that which ought to be, is to shew obduracy in sin: it is to want the heart and affections which seek the glory of Christ, and which prove that we have the consciousness of our relationship with Him as His bride.

Let those who would justify such a state of things say openly that the Church never ought, by its fidelity on earth, to have manifested the glory of Christ; if not, let them own that we are in a ruin-state. I appeal to all the New Testament, to all the principles of God's Word, to the history of the Acts, to the testimony of the Epistles, and to the conscience of the saints, to judge if the Church has maintained the testimony to the glory, the holiness, the love of the Bridegroom, and if she has maintained it as a faithful spouse, who ought to be engaged in it during the absence of the Bridegroom, knowing Him only, watching for His glory, and abiding faithful to Him so much the more as He is away.

J. N. D.

* This was the order of the administration of promises on earth, and not the calling of the Church, according to the mystery hidden from ages and generations, though the Church came into this administration of the promises in the character of *Gentiles*, in contrast with Jews in a special way. This is evident to any spiritual mind on considering the statement; but that it is so — that it is not the doctrine of the Church which is considered in Rom. xi.— is quite clear from the consideration of the following points. (By the Church I mean now, the heavenly body united to Christ on high, and manifested on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.)—First, the Jews were natural branches, and the olive-tree was their own olive-tree. This clearly was not the Church: no one was naturally in it. Even the unbelieving ones were in the olive-tree and had to be broken off, so that they never formed part of the Church gathered by faith, though they had ostensibly of the olive-tree. Now, unbelieving Jews formed, in no sense or way, a part of the Church; but they did of the olive tree; yet it was of that olive-tree that the good branches continued a part. Nor further, if they were living members of the Church of God, could they be broken off. Nor are Gentiles grafted into the Church in place of Jews, in the account we have of the Church in Ephesians: both are brought together into one new man. Next, the Gentiles, looked at as members of this body, could not be cut off: and still more would it be impossible to say that the Jewish branches, broken off through unbelief, could be grafted in again. Considered as the earthly administration of promises, nothing is more simple. The Jews, as a nation, had been the depositaries of them. Then the unbelievers were broken off, and the election continued in them in the clearer and better apprehensions. Gentiles became, at the same time, the depositaries of these promises in their administration here below. This system, being unfaithful, would be cut off; and the Jews will be received again, to be the depositaries of them in yet another condition, but which, note, will not then be the Church either. Proofs might be multiplied from the chapter; but these must suffice for any spiritual mind.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

MAN has no righteousness for God. God has one in His grace for man, sinful and wretched man. Who can stand before the law of God? Who can say, "I have not transgressed it?" How can a man justify himself by a law he has transgressed? "By the law is the knowledge of sin." What is to be done? Hear what the apostle says: "But now the righteousness *of God* without the law is made manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even *the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ* unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

It is the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, which is the only answer (which God himself has furnished to us) to the demand of the justice which condemns the sinner. It is the righteousness of God by Jesus that makes righteous the man who has no righteousness to present to God, so that God is just in justifying him that has faith in Jesus.

What grace! What a blessing for the poor sinner who has a heart broken enough and cleansed, sufficiently true for him to condemn himself! Boasting is excluded through faith in Jesus.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST AS TO PROPHECY.

XI.—EARTHLY BLESSING PRECEDED BY JUDGMENTS.

IT is admitted on all hands that there is a time, or dispensation, in which the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. This is a great object held out in prophecy. The question between us is, How is this to be brought about? They say: "By our preaching, or by the preaching of the Gospel." I take the best ground for them. How do they know that? How do they conclude that? Did the Gospel ever do it before? Was it ever promised that it should do it? That man is responsible for its not doing so, I freely admit—but that is not the question. And that he is guilty, too, I admit; I conceive, indeed, that therefore the Gentile Church will be cut off, because it has not done so; and therefore we may say, as a Church, it is damnably guilty because it has not done so. But, as to actual result, those I speak of pass by the present sin of the Church, and then prophesy (i.e. assert as to the future) that of which they can have no experience as to the past,—that their exertions will do it. They charge us with looking into prophecy: undoubtedly we do, and use it as God intended it, as a charge and warning against our present sin and state; while they prophesy for themselves that which is credit for themselves—though never has the professing Church at large been so far from godliness as now; if not, why all this labour, effort, formation of societies, for home or continental purposes? This is the simple difference: we acknowledge it as a result of God's power; they say, without God's word: (and we must add, against it:) "It will be done by our instrumentality." Believers say, with God's word, It will not be done thus. We quarrel not with their efforts; (but join in them according to our ability of God, as far as our poor hearts permit us;) but we do quarrel with their assumption as the coming result of their own labours, as if they were prophets, of that of which God has prophesied otherwise. They prophesy: we consult the word, and apply it to judge ourselves, and find the Church guilty. Our assertion, accordingly, is this:

1. That there is no prophecy or promise in Scripture, (which, as to means—observe, of future accomplishment—is prophecy,) that the gradual diffusion of the Gospel shall convert the world. If there be, let them produce it; if not, I affirm that they are assuming something future, without any warrant for it, but their own thoughts.

2. That the prophecies always connect the filling of the world with the knowledge of the glory—with judgments. And,

3. We add, to those who are labouring without reference to this glory, yet are looking to the gathering out of God's elect—faithfully perhaps—that there is a vast purpose of God, and one which is the result of all God's purposes, not embraced in their views; and that, as teachers of God's mind and will, their system must be wholly and utterly defective; for the earth is to be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. They recognize, and justly, that that cannot be, as it never has been, and as we have seen that it was not intended to be, by the Gospel. There must, therefore, if they admit the truth of God's word, be some great plan and act of God's power, on which His mind is especially set, (for His glory in the earth, as in heaven, must be His end, as well as our desire, because we are His saints, and have the mind of Christ,) of which they embrace nothing, teach nothing.

And now, what do we complain of? Is it not prying into futurity? Far otherwise. Is it not taking the testimony of God and applying it to the present judgment, and therefore offering the sacrifice of folly? I do say it is the privilege of the saints to know what is revealed. It is mere infidelity and unbelief—simple infidelity and unbelief, and rejection of the promise, "He shall show you things to come;" and again: "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit!" that is, the things which He hath prepared for them that love Him. Men may say, It is presumption! But it is no more presumption in me to believe what God has said, and has declared that He has revealed to us for our blessing as to this, than it is to believe what He has stated concerning the accomplished work of Christ: and I suspect the notion of presumption runs pretty much together as to both. Yet this is not my present subject—but this: that the Church is hiding the present judgment of itself from its eyes—that God's judgments are upon the Church in warning, and they will not hear; and therefore they will be cut off, if they repent not—"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said (saith too,) Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Is. xxix. 11-14.)

If it be so, that these things are hid, then I say it is a solemn judgment from God—his greatest judgment on the Church thus to hide them—a sign of judgment that they may be changed. Yet men seem to rejoice and pride themselves on their wisdom in knowing nothing about them—rejoice in the last heaviest sign, the deep hope-obscuring cloud, before the judgments of God break down upon them who have wilfully staid abroad in the field because they believed not, or received not the word, and warning, and threatenings of God the Lord. For there is one that seeth and judgeth—poor man! If the Lord hath indeed poured out upon you a deep sleep and hath closed your eyes, the prophets, and rulers, and seers hath He covered; then woe for you; and what shall the sheep do? All your services are but folly; for when God, perhaps, is calling for repentance, behold, you are in joy; when judgment is ready to strike, you are rejoicing; when God calls to fasting, and weeping, and mourning, behold, you are killing sheep and slaying oxen. If the testimony of God be not received as applicable in our present state, then all our worship and service must be guided by man's judgment, and our fear by the precept of men, and be foolishness and rebellion in His sight. But ye say, We will not consider ..... I say not to you, look at the hopes and the future glory, but I say, God has warned of judgment now. I speak of something which applies to you now; yea, why even of yourselves judge ye not that which is right? Does not the Church, do not we, deserve judgment? The Lord hearken to the supplication of His servants, that our eyes may be opened! Infidel liberty is not Christian liberty. God may use it for His own purposes in punishing the wicked, as He saith, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is *mine* indignation." But if the people rejoice in Rezin and Pekah, trust in this Tiglath Pileser does but shew their infidelity, and will be their distress, and not their strength; for yet it is but a little while (and indeed it is the rod of God against the corruption of the Church) His anger will cease, and His indignation, in their destruction. The prophet may be grieved at the evil of the Church, but the spirit of infidelity is the

spirit of pride—a proud man which enlargeth his desire as hell, neither stayeth at home. It will have its day, perhaps, against a corrupt and guilty church: it may seek to sit upon the mount of God, but as soon as the Lord has accomplished His whole work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, He will punish the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks; and the spirit of the prophet will be of grief, intercession and pity, that the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. The Lord will hearken, hear and deliver; for though he be proud, his heart that is lifted up is not righteous in him, and the just shall live by his faith. Of this infidelity may be sure, that it will rack its heart in bitterness for the madness with which it is now proud; for God's eye is upon it, and the proof of it is, that it sees Him not; it is rushing in blindness into the bitterness of God's wrath. There will they be in great fear, for God is in the generation of the righteous.

XII.—THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

I would now add a little which, I hope, may clear up some minds as to Christ's sympathy with us. First, I assume that my reader holds, as myself, the true and real humanity of the Lord, both in body and soul; that He was a true living man in flesh and blood.

Christ was a man in the truest sense of the word, body and soul. The question is as to His relation to God as man. We are all agreed that He was sinless. He had true humanity, but united to Godhead. He was God manifest *in* flesh. Scripture speaks simply, saying, He partook of flesh and blood. That is what the Christian has simply, and as taught of God, to believe. Was His humanity then without a divine spring of thought and feeling? Were it said it was not of or from His humanity, I should have nothing to say; but to say there was none in it, unsettles the doctrine of Christ's person. There was the fulness of the Godhead *bodily;* and the divine nature was a spring of many thoughts and feelings in Him. This is not the whole truth; but to deny it, is not truth. If it be merely meant that humanity has not in itself a divine spring, that is plain enough; it would not be humanity. I am equally aware that it will be said, that it was in His person; but to separate wholly the humanity and divinity in springs of thought and feeling, is dangerously overstepping Scripture. Is it meant that the love and holiness of the divine nature did not produce, was not a spring of thought and feeling in His human soul? This would be to lower Christ below a Christian. If so, it is merely a round-about road to Socinianism.—His humanity, it is said, was not *sui generis*. This too is confusion. The abstract word *humanity* means humanity and *no more*: and, being abstract, must be taken absolutely, according to its *own* meaning. But, if it is meant that, in fact, the *state* of Christ's humanity was not *sui generis*, it is quite wrong, for it was united to Godhead, which no one else's humanity ever was; which, as to fact, alters its whole condition. For instance, it was not only sinless, but in that condition incapable of sinning; and to take it out of that condition is to take it out of Christ's person. What conclusion do I draw from all this?—That the wise soul will avoid the wretched attempt to settle in such a manner questions as to Him whom no one knoweth but the Father. The whole process of the reasoning is false.

To turn, then, to Scripture, we are told of the sinless infirmities of human nature, and that Christ partook of them. Now, I have no doubt this has been said most innocently; but, not being Scripture, we must learn in what sense it is used. Now, that Christ was truly man, in thought, feeling, and sympathy, is a truth of cardinal blessing and fundamental importance to our souls. But I have learnt thereby, not that humanity is not real humanity, if there is a divine spring of thought and feeling in it; but that God can be the spring of thought and feeling in it, without its ceasing to be truly and really man. This is the very truth of infinite and unspeakable blessedness that I have learnt. This, in its little feeble measure, and in another and derivative way, is true of us now, by grace. He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. This is true in Jesus in a yet far more important and blessed way. There was once an innocent man left to himself; the spring of thought and feeling being simply man, however called on by every blessing and natural testimony of God without. We know what came of it. Then there was a man whose heart, alas! was the spring "from within," of evil thoughts and the dark train of acts that followed. What I see in Christ is man, where God has become the spring of thought and feeling.* And, through this wonderful mystery, in the new creation in us, all things are of God. *That*, if we speak of His and our humanity, is what distinguishes it. Metaphysically to say, "His and our humanity," is nonsense; because humanity is an abstraction which means nothing but itself, and always itself, and nothing else: just as if I said Godhead; and if I introduce any idea of its actual state, I am destroying the idea and notion the word conveys. But the moment I do associate other ideas, I must introduce the whole effect and power of these ideas to modify the abstract one according to the actual fact. Thus, humanity is always simply humanity. The moment I call it His, it is *sui generis*, because it is *His;* and in fact humanity sustained by Godhead is not humanity in the same state as humanity unsustained by Godhead.† Sinless humanity, sustained in that state by Godhead, is not the same as sinful humanity left to itself.

But Scripture never uses the term that Christ was subject to infirmities. Nor is being in infirmities necessary to sympathy with those in them; but being out of them, though having a nature capable of apprehending in itself the suffering it brings into. The mother sympathizes with the babe in the pain she does not feel.

Further, Christ is contrasted in His priestly sympathies with men having infirmity. The law makes men priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, the Son consecrated for evermore. (Heb. vii. 28.) The high priest taken from among men had compassion, for that (*while priest*, note) he was compassed with infirmity. That was mere man's way of sympathy; for he had to offer for his own sins. Instead of this, Christ in the days of His flesh, when He was not a priest, cried to Him who was able to save Him from death, took the place of lowly, subject, sorrowful man, and received the weight of it in His soul, and then, being made perfect, acts as priest. It is not said that He was infirm like us, but in all points tempted like as we are; and that He suffered, being tempted, and therefore is able to succour them that are tempted. Another important passage, connected with

* Did He hereby cease to be a man? Not at all. It is, though "according to God," in man and as man these thoughts and feelings are to be found. And this extends itself to all the sorrows and the pressure of death itself upon His soul in thought. He had human feelings as to what lay upon Him and before him; but God was the spring of its estimate of it all. Besides, the manifestation of God was in His ways. We had known man innocent in suitable circumstances; and, guilty, subject to misery; but in Christ we have perfectness in relation to God, in every way, in infallibly maintained communion in the midst of all the circumstances of sorrow, temptation, and death, by which He was beset—the spring of divine life in the midst of evil, so that His every thought as man was perfection before God, and perfect in that position. This was what marked His state as being down here this new thing.

† Hunger, thirst, uneasiness, are not a kind of humanity, but a state of circumstances in which it is placed. That Christ came into these circumstances is undoubted. I have not different humanity when I am hungry and when I am full. But I am placed in a condition in which hunger and starvation may fall upon me if God so permits. Who will say IF Adam had not had food he would not have been hungry? But God had not set him in that condition.—Further, even as to death, there is much misapprehension. No creature is, in itself, in a state which cannot perish. That is the condition of existence of God alone, "who only hath immortality." If Adam was not mortal before he sinned, it was by God's continually sustaining power—we may say by Christ's. By God's appointment, when man sinned, he passed out of that state of continually sustained existence, and was not to continue beyond a limited period in his actual condition of existence. This was not humanity, but man's state, as such, when Christ came. Now, Christ came expressly to die, and took all this sorrow in its full weight upon His soul; He was made a little lower than the angels, *for the suffering of death*. But His doing this in obedience, "Lo, I come to do thy will," to glorify God and manifest and accomplish His love, exalt His righteousness, and be the suffering vessel of witness to the claims of this necessity, was infinitely acceptable to God, so that His relationship to God as being in flesh, and by being in it, was one of infinite acceptability to God. But, though He came on purpose to die, because of the ruined condition in which man was; to raise His people, and so was in a capacity of dying, as made lower than the angels, yet it was in such sort that it should be a matter of pure grace in Him to give up His life. He laid it down of Himself. He had authority to lay it down and authority to take it again,—still in obedience, "This commandment have I received of my Father." That was the real condition of Christ's death. He came to die, but He came to *give* His life. He had life in Himself. The condition of His existence here was to lay down, by grace, obediently, but of Himself, His life. He was not, as of God, in a condition of losing it. He was not in Adam's condition. For Adam could not, as Christ, lay down nor take again his life, nor had he life in himself. To speak of Him as liable to death, if something had happened, is mere irreverence—He was in a position of commanding His own death and life, but *could* do this, because of his perfection, only in obedience to His Father's will: it is nonsense; because in the supposition is denied the condition of His existence, which was to lay it down. And, as I have said, if Adam had so lived under violence, and been hewed in pieces, would he have survived as a living man? The answer was, That was not his condition of existence. When Christ gave Himself up to the appointed consequences of sin, He took the wrath and the conquences. He came with that purpose, so that it was always before Him. His relationship to God in this (yea, because of this) was of infinite acceptance; not only because He was Eternal Son of God, the title of which He did not forego, as towards God, in assuming flesh, but was in its acceptance all through. But the position itself that He assumed was a cause of infinite acceptance, and in that He stood as man even in what He suffered.—"Therefore doth my Father love me."

this, is in Matthew. Christ took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses. Now, how was this? "And he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." I do not doubt His whole soul entered into them, in the whole sorrow and burden of them before God, in the full sense of what they were, so viewed, in order to set them aside and bar Satan's power as to them. But was He sick and infirm because Himself took our infirmities? Clearly not. In a word, it is not being Himself in the state with which He sympathizes which gives the sympathy. Christ partook of flesh and blood; that is what Scripture states, and that is the whole matter. He was a true real man in flesh and blood. That He was truly a man and an Israelite in true flesh and blood, born such, no one questions. But His associations in relationship with God were with the *saints* in Israel. They no doubt had the thoughts and feelings of an Israelitish saint; that is, Israel's responsibility, failure, hopes and promises formed the basis, or structure, or character of their feelings as saints; but Christ's relationship was with *them*. *And this is the distinctive character of the book of Psalms.* It takes up Israelitish hopes, and circumstances and conditions, no doubt, but as held by the saints only; and excludes the ungodly as an adverse party. Now, that was Christ's place. It was association with the holy remnant in their Israelitish condition. Their relationship to God was a holy relationship; and though they might go through every test and trial of the new nature and faith on which it was founded, and acknowledge all the failure and the sin under which they were suffering, their relationship was a holy one with God. Into that Christ enters;* and, therefore, though He may enter into their sorrows and bear their guilt, He has no need to be in any other relationship to God than a holy one. In that He may feel the effects of another, just as a renewed soul, because it is near God and feels accordingly, feels its former state of sin and guilt; but it is not in it, save where guilt is not yet removed from the conscience, in which position of feeling, clearly, Christ was solely as a substitute. He is not associated with man's or Israel's distance, (save as bearing sin,) but with the children's relationship to God. Because *the children* partake of flesh and blood, He partook of them. The taking flesh and blood is stated as the consequences of his relationship with the children. Let us quote the passages:

"Both He that sanctifieth and they *that are sanctified*, are all of one."

"Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren."

"I and the children which God has given me." (Compare Isaiah viii.)

"I will put my trust in Him."

That is, the proof of His being in human nature is godly relationship in man.

It was not, then, that by taking flesh and blood He placed himself in the distance of man; but that, because he associated himself with *the* children, He partook of flesh and blood, and that is all that is said. The Sanctifier and the sanctified being all of one, He was not ashamed to call them brethren. But His relationship was with the sanctified. His spirit entered into every sorrow, His soul passed through every distress, and He suffered under every temptation; but His relationship with God was never man's or Israel's as it then was, unless the cross be spoken of, because, His was sinless, theirs sinful. It was His own. His relative position, that is, His relation to God, was according to what He was, whatever He might take upon Him or enter into in spirit, which included every sorrow and every difficulty felt, according to the full force of truth, and that before God.

This distinctive relationship with the remnant before God, the Psalms specifically shew. The Spirit of Christ does not accept the position of Israel as it then stood; but distinguishes (see Ps. i.) the *Godly Man* as alone owned or approved of God, and Christ, born in the world, owned as Son, and decreed King in Zion in spite of adversaries. He identifies Himself with the excellent on the earth. (Ps. xvi.) God is good to Israel, *even* to them that are of a clean heart. He is God of Jacob, but a refuge to the remnant alone. With them, Christ in spirit identifies Himself, and abhors the rest, looking for help—judicial help—against an ungodly nation.

The circumstances of His baptism were a remarkable illustration of this. Did the Lord take His place with the Pharisees and scribes who were not baptized? Clearly, not. When does He associate Himself with Israel? In the first movement of the answer of faith to the testimony of God: when the people went to be baptized, Jesus also went. Now, that was the answer of grace to God's testimony in John, in the remnant in whose hearts He was acting—the first and lowest beginning of it—still, it was the movement of the heart under God's grace, in answer to the testimony. It was really the gracious part of Israel; it was really the excellent, the godly remnant, with whom Christ identified himself in their godliness. He was fulfilling righteousness.

* This was His relative position as regards even Israel. Any other would have been morally incompatible with His being and proper relationship to God. A saint may feel the guilt—into that Christ could enter—but He could not be in it in His relationship to God, save vicariously.

XIII.—REGENERATION ESSENTIAL FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The third chapter of John first brings the subject of the operations of the Spirit before us at large.—"A man must be born again," born of water and of the Spirit. But, while this is generally taken simply, that he must be regenerate to be saved, the passage states much more.—He cannot see nor enter into the *kingdom of God*, a kingdom composed of earthly things and heavenly things, of which a Jew must be born again to be partaker (however much he fancied himself a child of the kingdom) *even in its earthly things*, which Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, ought to have known, as from Ezek. xxxvi. 21-38; and to the heavenly things of which the Lord could not direct them then, save as shewing the door, even the cross, a door which opened into better and higher things:—wherein (as in the Spirit's work, being prerogative power, "*so was every one that was born of the Spirit*," and Gentiles therefore might be partakers of it;—for it *made*, not *found*, men, what it would have them) the Lord declared that God loved not the Jew only, but the world. In this passage itself, then, we have not merely the individual renewed, and fit for heaven, but the estimate of the Jew, a kingdom revealed, embracing earthly and heavenly things, which the regenerate alone saw, and into which they entered—to the heavenly things of which, the cross, as yet as unintelligible as the heavenly things themselves, formed the only door: wherein was exhibited the Son of man lifted up, and the Son of God given in God's love to the world. "In the regeneration," of which the Spirit's quickening operation in the heart was the first fruits, "this Son of man would sit on the throne of His glory."

The principle then, on which men dwell, is true; but the revelation of this chapter is much wider and more definite than they suppose. It is not merely that the man is changed or saved; but he sees and enters a kingdom the world knows nothing of till it comes in power; and moreover, that such an one receives a life as true and real, and much more important and blessed than any natural life in the flesh. It is not merely changing a man by acting on his faculties, but the giving a life which may act indeed now, through these faculties, on objects far beyond them, as the old and depraved life on objects within its or their reach; but in which he is made partaker of the divine nature, in which not merely the faculties of his soul have new objects, but as in this he was partner with the first Adam, the living soul, so in that with the second Adam, the quickening Spirit. And we must add, that the Church, in order to its assimilation with Him in it, is made partaker of this, consequent upon His resurrection, and therefore is made partaker of the life according to the power of it thus exhibited; and has its existence consequent upon, yea, as the witness of, the passing away (blessed be God!) of all the judgment of its sins; for it has its life from, and consequent upon, the resurrection of Christ out of that grave in which He bore its sins. It exists, and has not its existence but, consequent upon the absolute accomplishment and passing away of its judgment.

This, then, is the real character of our regeneration into the kingdom, where the charge of sin is not, nor can be, upon us, being introduced there by the power of that in which all is put away. The life of the Church is identified with the resurrection of Christ, and therefore the unqualified forgiveness of all its flesh could do, for it was borne, and borne away. The justification of the Church is identified with living grace, for it has it, because quickened together with Him, as out of the grave, where He bore all its sins.

Thus are necessarily connected regeneration and justification; and the operation of the Spirit, not a mere acting on the faculties, a work quite separate from Christ and known by its fruits, while the death of Christ is something left to reason about; but it is a quickening together with Christ out of their trespasses and sins, in which I find myself indeed morally dead, but Him judicially dead for me, and therefore forgiven, and justified necessarily, as so quickened. The resurrection of Christ proves that there will be a judgment, says the apostle. (Acts. xvii.) It proves that there will be none for me, says the Spirit by the same blessed apostle, for He was raised for my justification. He was dead under my sins; God has raised Him; and where are they? The Church is quickened out of Jesus' grave, where the sins were left.

REVIEWS.

1.—Remarks on Mr. Newton's Doctrine on the Sufferings of Christ. By J. M. C.—1850.

Cork: from the Steam Press of George Purcell & Co., 20, Patrick Street.

2.—What are Mr. Newton's Present Doctrines as to the Human Nature and Relationships of the Lord Jesus Christ? By W. Trotter.—1850.

London: James Nisbet & Co., &c.

3.—The Whole Case of Plymouth and Bethesda, in a Letter to a Friend. By the same.

4.—A Review of certain Evils and Questions that have arisen, &c. By W. H. Dorman.

5.—The Sufferings of Christ, as set forth in a Lecture on Psalm VI. Considered by J. L. Harris.

6.—The Present Question.—1848-49.

7.—Observations, by J. N. Darby, on a Tract entitled "Remarks on the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus," &c.

8.—Remarks, by J. N. Darby, on "A Letter on Subjects connected with the Lord's Humanity."

9.—Notice of the Statement and Acknowledgment of Error, circulated by Mr. Newton.

10.—Observations on a Statement from Christians in Elrington Street, &c. &c.

As the late heresy touching the sufferings of Christ is known to be still held and propagated in a subtle way among Christians, especially among such as search into prophecy, I have felt it right to direct the attention of all whom it concerns to the above-mentioned pamphlets, which will put them in possession of the plainest as well as most complete refutations of an evil rarely equalled by any thing which has ever menaced the Church, or dishonoured the person and work of the Lord. Alas! how true is it that the corruption of the best thing is the worst corruption. (See 2 Thess. ii.)

The first papers on the list are the simplest; the tracts last named are the most profound discussion of the doctrine.

It is well observed by one of these writers, that "not only are the vicarious sufferings of Christ owned by every true Christian, but that He suffered also as the righteous One on the earth. The reproaches of those that reproached Jehovah fell on Him. He suffered being tempted, having come in grace, the sinless One, into our position. His holy nature, sinless and untouched by Satan; still as a man, suffered being tempted; His soul entered in the fullest way into the condition of sorrow and distress in which sin had plunged man, and Israel too, especially. In all their affliction, in this sense also He was afflicted. His heart, fully feeling, entered into the fullest depths of it, so that under the sense of it He could groan deeply in spirit. Not only so: it is evident that He anticipated the trial and suffering of death to which He was to be subject. By the grace of God He tasted death, and we know that He felt it beforehand, not only from the Psalms and the solemn sufferings of Gethsemane, but from His own words: "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And here note, Christ, because it was His soul entering into it, could go to the full depths of all this, unspared, and unsparing Himself. It was sinless grace and perfectness of love, which, having brought Him into this condition, made Him enter into it in all its fulness, and shrink from none of it. It became the divine Majesty, seeing He had placed Himself there, to lead Him through the sufferings suited to this position; that is, it was fitting He should suffer. Hence our souls, though unable to estimate it, can understand its perfectness, and in spirit pass adoringly with Jesus into the midst of His sorrow: nay, it is our privilege to enter into that part of His sorrow—His holy sorrow—which flowed from sinlessness and love, from service in spirit and knowledge of the mind of God in the midst of sin—to have the fellowship of His sufferings. His death itself can and is to be viewed in this light also, looked at as coming from man, and even Satan, however far this may be from being all that is found there, as, indeed, it is.

But the writer takes entirely different grounds,—ground which bases the sufferings of Christ on an entirely different principle. He speaks of sufferings, not into the depths of which He entered as the holy One, but of wrath, to which He was obnoxious by reason of the position He was in, from which God interfered to deliver Him, from which He *extricated* Himself by perfect obedience, so that He never felt the whole of it. It was the curse of a broken law He was under by position, not vicariously, without conflict with wicked men, not by the contradiction of sinners endured in grief by a holy soul, which it is our privilege to endure too for His and righteousness' sake: but what it was no privilege to endure, and no profit neither, for if it was to be endured for the profit of others, how could he extricate himself from it, and be preserved from suffering it all by the interference of God in comforting Him? It lay upon Him, and not vicariously, as that which it was well for Him to get out of as a curse not vicarious. Is it not sufficient to present this to the soul of a saint, for him to see that it subverts the faith of God's elect? It is not the true Christ of God, the Holy thing born of Mary, that we have here, but one who participates, not by grace but by birth, in the curse, the fruitless curse which is fallen on man by reason of sin—not One who has taken the place in grace, for He extricates Himself from it, but one who is in it under the curse of the law by dire necessity of position. The substance of the truth of Christ's holy person is set aside, and His taking the curse on Himself is set aside,—the two cardinal truths of the gospel of grace; and hence we shall find that all is confusion on these subjects, (as it must be where the substance of the truth is lost,) and the use of the Psalms as untrue and unfounded as possible. Under pretence of presenting the sufferings of Christ in a new and important point of view, the whole grace of them is lost; and, instead of *in grace* entering into the depths of the sorrow and suffering, whether of man or of Israel, in their position before God—His soul entering into all the full depth of it in full purpose of soul without the least sparing, that, His soul knowing all, our souls might know His love had entered into all, and find its power there—it is a condition He is in necessarily by position, as under a curse which He prays against, extricates Himself from, and is saved from enduring the full extent of, God interfering to deliver Him. I have already given the quotations which expressly teach this.

It is in vain to present *other* truths to make good the writer's orthodoxy. It is a mere blind. They are not the truths in question. On the point *which the tracts teach*, the truth of God is subverted. It is not a true Christ which is taught there. Nor does Christ enter fully into our sorrow, for He is spared it, and extricates Himself from it.

Thoughts on the Lord's Supper, designed for the Help of Christians in this day of difficulty.—1850.

Jersey: J. Crocker, 16, Belmont Road.

This is a plain and useful work on a subject of deep importance to the family of God.

To the Readers of The Prospect.

A correspondent kindly draws attention to certain loose statements in the "Essay on the Compassion of Christ," (translated from the *Témoignage*,) and printed in The Prospect, Vol. II., Part 2. See particularly page 49, where, *for* "He must be perfected by suffering once, always, and for evermore," *read* "He was to be by sufferings perfected once, always," &c. The meaning, of course, is, perfected—not suffering—for ever. In page 52, the author speaks of Christ suffering with us, &c. Scripture teaches that we suffer with Him. Next he speaks as if we had no fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, which it is clear we have even unto death, (Phil. iii.) always remembering that the atoning sufferings were His alone. There are, besides, some other sentences which seem exceptionable.—Ed.

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