

# *Plain Papers on Prophetic and Other Subjects*

*“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” -- Peter.*

*by W. Trotter*

**NEW EDITION -- REVISED**

## *Preface to the Present Truth Publishers Edition*

This Present Truth Publishers edition has been retypeset from the G. Morrish “New Edition -- Revised.” Any material added has been placed in braces { }. Some type styles have been changed but the original emphasis has been maintained. Some quotations have been indented for easier reading. Sometimes the word “chapter” has been changed to the book in which the chapter occurs in order to facilitate creating the Scripture Index. A few words have been modernized in spelling.

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## *Preface*<sup>1</sup>

The following pages lay no claim to originality in the strict sense of that word. The author has read with attention much that has been written on prophetic subjects by others; and he has never hesitated to avail himself of any sentiment which has commended itself to him as in accordance with the Word of God. How much he is indebted thus to some who have preceded him, it would be impossible for him to determine. Some subjects discussed in this volume he is not aware of having seen similarly treated in any previous work; but as to these, as well as all else that the volume contains, he would have it understood that he has given expression to nothing (unless presented as a mere suggestion) which has not been judged by him, on comparison with the alone test of truth, to be the doctrine of God's blessed book. The reader is entreated rigidly to subject all that these pages contain to the same test.

Upward of ten years have elapsed since the first edition began. That now, in closely perusing the sheets for the present edition, he should find, save for clearness of expression here

and there, so little to change, is with the writer matter of sincere thankfulness to God. Truth is, like its divine Author, immutable. To be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," is the effect of our learning, not from God, but from men. May we all be kept from "the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby" so many "lie in wait to deceive."

The former edition was anonymous; but the French translation having been published with the author's name, though without his knowledge of the fact, it would be mere affectation to withhold it here.

God grant, in His infinite mercy, that these pages may be used of Him to awaken attention to prophetic subjects, and to aid inquirers in the examination of His Word with reference thereto. And may both readers and writer be found, (if still on earth when the Master comes,) with girded loins and burning lamps, and they themselves "like unto men that wait for their lord."

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1. {This is the preface to the second edition, printed by G. Morrish, London, n.d.



## Chapter 1

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### *The Heavenly Hope; or, What is the Hope of the Christian? And What is the Hope of the Church?*

It can scarcely be necessary for me to explain that the above inquiries relate to the *Object* of hope; and thus, that they imply, What is the *Object* of hope to the Christian? and What to the Church? Neither can it be requisite to explain at any length, that the *Object* of hope inquired after is not any which may actually, as a matter of fact, be pursued by Christians or by the Church, but, what is the *Object* of hope set before us in Scripture? What are we there taught to hope for, whether regarded as individual Christians, or as forming a part of the Church of God? Momentous inquiry! Next to the question of a man's salvation, there cannot be one of greater importance than that on which we are now entering.

Man was not made for the present, and the present was never intended to satisfy man. Whatever might have been man's destiny had he remained unfallen, we are all aware that his fall was foreseen, and that the One *for* whom, as well as *by* whom, all things were made, was not the first man, who was of the earth, earthy, but "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven." It is in association with His glory, hereafter to be revealed, that we find the true destiny of our race; that for which man was created, and for which the heavens and the earth were formed. When "all things in heaven and in earth are gathered together in one, even in Christ," then, and not till then, will the first and second great ends of creation and of redemption -- full glory to God and full blessing to the creature -- be consummated. It is not in the present scene of confusion and of darkness, of mystery and of evil, that the glory of God is accomplished and manifested to perfection. Neither is it in man's hurried transit from the cradle to the grave that the destinies of his being are fulfilled. The present is leading on, indeed, to the full display of God's glory in the future; and it is in the present that all the seeds of man's future are sown. But it is in the future that the harvest shall be reaped and God be glorified in the result. *It is for the future, not the present, that man exists.*

The present was never designed to satisfy man. That it does not, as {a} matter of fact, is attested by the consciousness of all. Let the character of the present and the extent of the future be what they may, the present fails to satisfy, and it is for the future the heart sighs and yearns.

How the child of two or three aspires to the school-boy's lot! the school-boy pants to be a youth, the youth to be a man; and the man, be his circumstances what they may, finds not in those circumstances what satisfies and fills his heart, but reaches after that which the future holds out to view. It is not in man to be satisfied with the present. True, indeed, his aspirations may be limited to the present state of being; but his present portion in this state of existence is not that which contents him: it is the future which he expects to do so, even if it be a future here -- a future within the precincts of this narrow world and this short life. *It is for the future, not the present, that man actually lives;* just as we have seen that it is for the future, not the present, man was made.

It is with the future that *hope* has to do.

Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth [or possesseth], why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see [or possess] not, then do we with patience wait for it {Rom. 8:24, 25}.

This is true of all hope: it is of the Christian's hope that it is affirmed; but it is true of hope, whatever be its character or its object. At least thus much is true, that what we hope for is that which we possess not at present. And it is thus that hope becomes such a stimulus to exertion, such a solace in affliction, such a light amid surrounding darkness, such a stay when no other stay remains. Extinguish hope, and happiness is gone. Let the faintest glimmering of hope remain, and a man's misery is not complete. Poor unconverted sinner! It is the most dismal feature in the misery of that hell towards which thou art hastening, that there is no hope there. False hopes may flatter and deceive you, till you are cast into that pit of darkness; but once there, no single ray of hope, true or false, will ever penetrate the eternal gloom. The Lord awaken you, before it be too late, to a sense of the awful prospect that awaits you, if you should live on, and die, in sin and unbelief!

My subject, however, is hope, blessed be God, not despair! And what more powerful in its influence than hope? It is the hope of harvest that cheers the husbandman in his toil. The exile is sustained in his wanderings by the hope of once more beholding his beloved country. It is in the hope of revisiting his native shores that the mariner plows the deep

and braves the storm. The merchant is stimulated by the hope of gain -- the student, by the prospect of success -- the warrior, by the hope of conquest, and perhaps of spoil. Take away from these the hope of securing the objects they severally pursue, and all motive to exertion or endurance is withdrawn. Rob that mother of the hope of seeing her children happy and esteemed, or at least the hope of their being so, whether she should live to see it or not, and what do you leave to support her amid her daily and nightly anxiety and toil? Ah, it is thus that, even in this world, hope goes beyond the limits of the individual's life, and leads men to live and to act for a future in the well-being of their offspring, when their own career on earth shall have come to a close. And hope, even in respect to things of this life, sweetens the bitterest cup, and sustains under the heaviest load of present calamity and grief.

But if the present thus invariably fail to satisfy, and if hope, on which the heart lives and feeds, be bounded by the present state of existence, it follows that, as those things which have been hoped for come to be possessed, they are found to be as unsatisfying as all else; and thus the history of human life is the history of disappointed hopes. Either the object of hope is never attained, or, when attainment has transformed the future into the present, that which has been bright to hope becomes dull and insipid in possession; and the heart still sighs and longs for something which it possesses not. It is, of course, of the natural heart we speak thus. The sum of all that it seeks, as well as of all that it possesses, is vanity and vexation of spirit.

What an infinite mercy it is that, amid the bustle and excitement of this vain and fleeting world, any should have their attention arrested by eternal realities! There are realities, both of sorrow and of joy, which never pass away. And when the light of eternity shines into the soul, how solemn the conviction which presses on the conscience, that not only has one's life been wasted in pursuing that which satisfies not, but worse than wasted, as having been spent in sin and rebellion against God! As long as my thoughts are limited to time and sense, I may regard nothing but myself -- or, which amounts to the same thing, my own immediate circle, which becomes a kind of second self. But the moment eternity is seriously thought of, God must be brought in; and then I find that all my restless longings and searchings after something to satisfy and fill my heart are the fruit of that heart having been alienated from God. When once this discovery is made, the question ceases to be, How am I to be satisfied? The one all-absorbing question becomes, How is God to be satisfied? How is His deserved wrath to be appeased? How is His favor to be secured? Happy the man whose attention is thoroughly aroused to such inquiries! Thrice happy he who has had them all resolved, by the light which the gospel affords as to the person and work of Christ!

Dear Christian reader, you have not only had such questions awakened in your conscience, but you have had them satisfactorily answered. You have understood that, if you cannot satisfy yourself, it is vain to suppose that you can satisfy God. Nor is it needed. You have been led to see, that

however angry -- justly angry -- God is with sin, and however solemn the deserved consequences to the sinner who lives and dies in sin, God has viewed sinners, yea, a whole world of sinners, with such compassion and love, as to give "His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" {John 3:16}. In His blood-shedding on the cross, you have discerned how God can "be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus" {Rom. 3:26}. And as to how God's favor is to be secured, you understand fully, that it is not by your repentance or reformation, your obedience or devotion, your fastings or prayers or tears -- "not by works of righteousness which" you "have done" {Titus 3:5}, or hope to do -- much less by any priestly influence, that your fellow-sinners can use on your behalf. No, you read your title to forgiveness and acceptance, in the glorious Person, the perfect obedience, the atoning blood, of God's holy Lamb. The assurance of God's infinite satisfaction with Him, and with all who believe in Him, you see in God raising Him from the dead, and placing Him at His own right hand in heaven. And conscious as you are of clinging to Christ as your sole trust and confidence in God's presence, how sweet the peace which He breathes into your spirit, as He gently with His own lips assures you, "Because I live, ye shall live also" {John 14:19}. You, at least, need no longer to go hither and thither, restlessly inquiring, Who will show us any good? You have found the true, the everlasting good. The light of God's countenance -- acceptance in Jesus -- peace through His blood -- a conscience purged from sin -- the privilege to enter boldly into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; these, with the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, so that you joy in God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ -- are blessings of such a character that your heart is effectually weaned from the ten thousand objects on which it once was wasted; and you can understand the Savior's words to the poor Samaritan woman,

Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life {John 4:13, 14}.

The secret of happiness -- true, satisfying, unfailing enjoyment -- has been disclosed to you.

"Why speak, then," it may be said, "of the Christian's hope?" Ah, this is not *your* question, dear Christian reader. He who would ask this question is not in the secret which you possess. It is true that you have tasted of real happiness, of eternal life, in the knowledge of the Father, and of Jesus whom He has sent. But this is not to say that you have the full, perfect, unhindered enjoyment of this happiness, this life. This is still before you as the object of your hope. "Then the Christian is not satisfied, any more than others?" It may seem so to the worldling; and it is quite true that in one sense the Christian is not satisfied; but it is in a widely different sense from that in which the worldling is not, and for widely different reasons. The worldling is not satisfied because he knows nothing, is possessed of nothing, which can either now, or at any time, satisfy him. The Christian knows One



who can, and is possessed of One who can satisfy him. He knows Christ -- he possesses Christ -- he enjoys Christ. Christ is his life -- Christ is his peace -- Christ is his joy -- Christ is his portion; but as yet, he has never seen Christ. It is by faith he knows, by faith he possesses, by faith he enjoys Him; but the more he knows and enjoys Him thus, the more he longs to behold Him.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls {1 Pet. 1:8, 9}.

Yes my brethren, believing in Christ, whom we have not seen, we love Him; we rejoice in Him with unspeakable joy; we receive the salvation of our souls. But to see Christ -- to have the salvation which He wrought out on the cross applied to our bodies as well as to our souls -- to have it perfected in our experience even as it respects our souls -- to have it consummated thus in all who are fellow-partakers with us of Christ -- to be with Him, and with them, in our Father's house -- to behold His glory which the Father has given Him -- to appear with Him in glory when He appears -- to reign with Him over a ransomed and redeemed and happy creation -- to fulfil our part in the universal harmony of all in heaven and all in earth, when all shall bow the knee to Jesus, when every tongue shall own Him Lord, and all voices shall join to celebrate His praise, -- this, and far more than this -- far more than heart can conceive or tongue explain, is what we wait for; and, above all, we wait for Him whose return shall introduce us to all this perfect blessedness -- we "wait for" God's "Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" {1 Thess. 1:10}. **He is our hope.** We know Him now by faith as our Savior, our Lord, our life, our peace, our joy, our all. **and He is our hope.** He is plainly said to be so in 1 Tim. 1:1:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, . . . **our hope.**

And what He is thus in so many plain words expressly declared to be in this passage, He is shown to be by the uniform, unvarying testimony of Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation. On few subjects is Scripture testimony more copious; on none is it more uniform and express than on this. The Lord grant us to consider it to our profit.

Let us look at the subject, first, in its bearings on the Christian individually.

Should the question be put to almost any Christian -- What is it that is the object of your individual hope? the answer, in most cases, would be -- Heaven. And this, surely, is according to the Word of God. We read there of "the hope which is laid up for you *in heaven*" (Col. 1:5). We read of being begotten again "unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved *in heaven* for you" (1 Pet. 1:3, 4). Heaven is surely thus the object of our hope; and, in commencing a series of papers on prophetic subjects, it is important to place this in as distinct a light as

possible. Nothing makes Christians so instantly recoil from prophetic studies, as the idea to which too many writers on prophecy have given sanction -- viz., that the future portion of the Church is one of blessedness on earth -- renovated, indeed, and purified, but still on earth. Now, in this, the instincts of the Christian are right. **THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH IS A HEAVENLY, NOT AN EARTHLY HOPE.** Heaven, not earth, is our future dwelling-place. Whatever links of connection there may be in that day between heaven and earth -- whatever benign influences the Church may be employed of God to exert on the earth and its inhabitants -- heaven, not earth, is our distinctive place and portion.

Holy brethren, partakers of the *heavenly* calling (Heb. 3:1).

Blessed . . . with all spiritual blessings in **HEAVENLY** places (Eph. 1:3).

Our conversation [citizenship] is *in heaven* (Phil. 3:20).

Even the patriarchs desired "a better country, that is, an *heavenly*" (Heb. 11:16). Sad, indeed, would be the effect of prophetic inquiries, if they resulted in transferring our hopes from heaven to earth. Happy, to be assured, that the sober and patient study of God's Word has no such effect. Prophecy does reveal the future history of this earth; and it is important that we should know what God has been pleased to tell us on such a subject, or rather, on all the subjects embraced in this one; but rest assured, dear reader, that you will find nothing in any part of God's Word to disturb or unsettle the hopes of heaven awakened by the first entrance of God's word into your soul.

There is another point on which the faith and hopes of Christians generally are undoubtedly according to God's Word. I mean, the expectation of being happy with Christ in heaven after death, in case that event should occur. Scripture certainly and explicitly teaches, that while for a Christian to live is Christ, "to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). So confident of this was the apostle, that he speaks of "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." See the whole of the passage just quoted. Paul elsewhere affirms that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). These passages, with our Lord's assurance to the dying thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43), place beyond question the fact of our conscious and happy existence, in the presence of the Lord, between death and the resurrection. Blessed be God, for passages so clear and so decisive. But I suppose the very putting the case, as above, conditionally -- the saying of death "*in case that event should occur,*" must have startled some readers, and awakened in their minds the inquiry, "And are there any to whom this event will NOT occur -- is it not certain that we shall *all* die?" No, dear reader, it is not certain. Scripture says, "We shall *not* all sleep, but we *shall* all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:51, 52). And while it is most true, and, in its place, most important, that departed saints are happy with Christ in heaven, it is not this disembodied state, this state of happy, departed souls, which is set before us in Scripture as our hope. The passages

I have quoted are, with two exceptions,<sup>1</sup> all that can be found in the New Testament on the subject: and sweet and precious as are those passages, they themselves do not affirm that this disembodied state is the full or final object of our hope. Nay, one of them distinctly affirms the contrary. I refer to 2 Cor. 5:1, 2, where the apostle, having said:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,

adds,

For in this [i.e., in this tabernacle] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

What is this house which is "from heaven"? Surely it cannot be our disembodied state while in heaven awaiting the resurrection of the body! No, it is the resurrection-body itself which the apostle says we earnestly desire: "If so be," he proceeds, "that being clothed we shall not be found naked" {2 Cor. 5:3} Nay, he goes on to say,

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed [or disembodied], but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life {2 Cor. 5:4}.

It is not death, and a state of happiness between death and the resurrection, for which the apostle waits, and longs, and groans. It is the resurrection-state, the being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven, the swallowing up of mortality in life. Afterwards he does intimate, that even to be disembodied is better than to be in these mortal tabernacles.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord . . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord {2 Cor. 5:6, 8}.

Such was the state of the apostle's mind on this important subject. While in this body, or tabernacle, he could not but groan. Why so? Because, while at home in the body, he was absent from the Lord. On this account he was willing, and in Philippians he says he had a desire, to be "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." But though preferring the disembodied state to the present one, it was not for the disembodied state that he groaned and waited, as the definite, final object of his hopes. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon." It was for the resurrection-body, the resurrection-state, the resurrection-glory, that he longed. And *resurrection, not death, is the believer's hope.*

Most true it is, then, dear Christian reader, that heaven is our hope; and that if the Lord should tarry, and we should fall asleep ere He return we shall be happy with Him in

heaven until the resurrection. But it is not this state of separate spirits which is placed before us in Scripture as our hope, but *the return of Jesus*, to raise the sleeping saints, and to change those who are alive and remain, that both being caught up to meet Him in the air, we may thus, in bodies like to His glorious body, be "forever with the Lord." This is the hope set before us as individual believers. Some passages which state this have been already quoted. Let us now turn to a number of others, which plainly declare and irrefragably prove it.

I pass by all the passages in other gospels to one well-known passage in John. To His disciples, when just on the eve of His departure, and conversing with them respecting it, Jesus says,

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

Here we have not only the fact of His return to His disciples, but the object of it, at least, as far as they are concerned. We find that He is to come *for* them, as well as *to* them. It is for us, my brethren, that He is gone to the Father -- to prepare a place for us with Himself in the Father's house. And as surely as for this purpose He has gone away, so surely will He come again, and receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. If it had not been so, He would have told us. And with assurances like these from the Savior's own lips, what can be our hope, save this promised return of His, to receive us to Himself, that where He is, we may be forever?

"But does not Jesus come to each of us when we die? And does not the departed spirit of the saint abide in His presence from the moment of its departure?" Assuredly, dear readers, as we have seen from Scripture, the spirit of the departed saint abides with Jesus from the moment that it quits the body. Where the authority of Scripture is regarded, there can be no question as to this; but where is it said in Scripture that Jesus comes to each of us when we die? *He is with us by the Spirit* -- blessed be His name! -- in our departing moments. But He is with us thus from the moment of our conversion. In this sense, He needs not to come to us in our dying moments. He has come long before, never to depart. But further, Scripture says *we go to Jesus*, not that Jesus comes to us, when we die. "Having a desire *to depart*, and to be with Christ" {Phil. 1:2, 3}. The dying martyr sees Jesus, standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive his spirit when the stones of the murderers have done their work. Further still, the words "that where I am, there ye may be also" are almost literally repeated by the apostle where he says, "So shall we ever be with the Lord" {1 Thess. 4:17}. But what does he mean by "so"? -- "*so* shall we ever be with the Lord". Is it by departing this life -- by our souls being singly and separately received into His presence, while our bodies moulder in the grave -- is it thus the apostle says we shall ever be with the Lord? No, my brethren. Read the passage for yourselves, and see how the Savior's words are to

1. One of these is Acts 7:59; the other, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Rev. 14:13). If this passage be quoted thus, it may seem to refer to the happiness of the righteous dead in general. But the whole passage is, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth"; and it would seem to refer to a certain class of persons, who are to die after a given prophetic epoch.

be fulfilled -- "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Is it at death, or by death, that He comes? Hear the apostle: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" {1 Thess. 4:13}. What was to assuage their sorrow, and comfort their hearts? That Jesus *had* come to them and fulfilled His word? No; "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" {1 Thess. 4:14}. It is the return of Jesus, accompanied by His departed saints.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord [so that our hope is not death in any sense, but the coming of the Lord, which may find us alive and remaining to that moment] shall not prevent [or go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain [this is our hope] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: *and so shall we ever be with the Lord*" {1 Thess. 4:15-17}.

It is thus by His personal return, to receive us all to Himself in the air, that He fulfils His word, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" {John 14:3}. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." What a hope! May its full comforting and animating power be realized by our hearts.

Heaven, then, I repeat it, my brethren, is the place where we hope eternally to dwell; but it is heaven, as we shall be introduced to it along with all saints, departed or alive, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it is Christ Himself, as about to return and receive us to Himself, who is thus our hope. We look back believingly to the cross of Christ, and have perfect peace; we look forward to the coming of Christ, as our hope. And this hope, as it is presented to us in Scripture, is of universal influence on the spirit, and character, and conduct of the saint. There is scarcely a single Christian grace, scarcely a single fruit of the Spirit, with which it is not expressly connected. There is not a form of Christian devotedness with which it is not associated. Would the Spirit of God incite us to the patient and joyful endurance of suffering for Christ's sake? He reminds us that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." With such a hope, the apostle says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:17, 18). Is it a question of the confirming of the saints to the end? "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7, 8). Is it that we are to avoid rash and hasty judgments of persons and things, on the one hand; and to be fortified in our own souls against such judgments of us, on the other? "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's day [see margin]; . . . therefore

judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. 4:3, 5). Is the saint to be stirred up to diligence, and zeal, and untiring exertion? The apostle treats the whole subject of the resurrection and of the coming of Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward, they that are Christ's *at His coming*." He speaks of diverse glories, of heavenly and of earthly, of natural and of spiritual bodies; and he then winds up by a passage already quoted in part,

Behold, I show 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.

This is clearly the event treated of in the passage we have considered in 1 Thess. 4. But what use does the apostle make of the subject here? After further dwelling on it, and raising a note of holy exultation as he views the last enemy under the Victor's feet, he concludes thus,

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:22, 23, 50, 52, 58).

As the grand motive to an unearthly spirit and a devoted walk, the same apostle uses it elsewhere. Having besought the saints to walk as they had him for an example, and told them, with tears, of some who were enemies of the cross of Christ, minding earthly things, he thus proceeds:

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also 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 even to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved (Phil. 3:20,21; 4:1).

This hope stands equally connected with the mortification of our natural, sinful propensities.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.* Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Col. 3:3-5).

In 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the coming of Christ is mentioned in every chapter. The hope of it is, in part, what they had been converted to.

Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and *to wait for His Son from heaven*" {1 Thess. 1:9, 10}.

It was at the coming of Christ Paul expected to have the full joy of the success of his labors among the Thessalonians.

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at His coming*? For ye are our glory and joy. {1 Thess.

2:19, 20}.

The Apostle prays the Lord to make them increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, “to the end,” as he adds, “he may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* with all His saints” {1 Thess. 3:13}. After the long and interesting passage already considered, as to the resurrection of the sleeping saints, the change of the living ones, and the translation of both to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with Him, he adds, to show the value and use of the doctrine he had been teaching, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” {1 Thess. 4:18}. “The hope of salvation” -- not the salvation of the soul, which we now have, but the perfected salvation which the coming of Christ will bring to us -- is “the helmet” we are exhorted to wear. Then finally, the Apostle prays for the Thessalonians,

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* {1 Thess. 5:23}.

How this hope associates itself with every thing in his mind!

In the next epistle, Paul speaks of what will occur at the return of Jesus, “when *He shall come* to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” {2 Thess. 1:10}. This sets his heart on fire, and he adds, “Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power” {2 Thess. 1:11}. “*The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and by our gathering together unto him” {2 Thess. 2:1}. form the basis of all the exhortation and instruction in the second chapter; and in the third he prays thus: “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient *waiting for Christ*” {2 Thess. 3:5}. To his beloved Timothy he writes,

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead *at His appearing* and His kingdom; preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season {2 Tim. 4:1, 2};

while, in the same chapter, he affectingly describes the hope by which he himself was sustained on the very eve of martyrdom. Ready to be offered up, the time of his departure at hand, having fought the fight, finished the course, kept the faith. “Henceforth,” says he, “there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that *love His appearing*” {2 Tim. 4:8}. What a powerful, exhilarating hope!

In the epistle to Titus we are expressly told that the grace of God teaches us to look for this hope; and the looking for it is the crowning lesson of those enumerated by the Apostle, as taught to us by the grace of God.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the *glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour* [see the Greek] Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13).

In the light of this hope patience is inculcated.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come *will come*, and will not tarry (Heb. 10:36, 37).

James uses it in like manner: “Be patient therefore, brethren, *unto the coming of the Lord*” (Jas. 5:7). Peter treats largely of our being begotten again in a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. He speaks of the saints rejoicing greatly in this hope, even though now for a season, if need be, they are in heaviness through manifold temptations. The issue of such trials is to be seen at the coming of Jesus.

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* {1 Pet. 1:7}.

Then further he exhorts us,

Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the revelation of Jesus Christ* {1 Pet. 1:13}.

It is this hope by which Peter, as well as Paul, would encourage the saints under all the afflictions they endure. “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that *when His glory shall be revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” {1 Pet. 4:13}. The godly care of the flock by those who have the charge of it he enforces by the same motive. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, . . . and *when the chief Shepherd shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” {1 Pet. 5:2, 4}.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, and who lay in the Savior’s bosom, is not, as we may well suppose, behind the rest in his joyful anticipations of his Lord’s return.

And now, little children, abide in Him; that *when He shall appear*, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him *at His coming*.

Beloved, [he says] now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that *when He shall appear*, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

The sanctifying influence of this expectation he declares in the most emphatic way.

And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure {1 John 2:28; 3:2, 3}.

As to the Revelation vouchsafed to this favored Apostle -- the closing book of Scripture -- it is impossible to understand it at all, if the coming of Jesus be not, as we have so largely seen, the hope of the Christian. True, that it is the coming of Christ to execute judgment that is most prominently treated of in this book, along with the premonitory judgments which usher in that solemn event, and the reign of peace and blessedness which ensues upon it. But when Christ comes thus, it is *with His saints*; when He reigns thus, *His saints reign with Him*; and all this implies that they have been previously caught up to

Him and glorified. They are those who have part in the first resurrection, that live and reign with Christ a thousand years. I content myself at present, however, with quoting from the last chapter of this book -- the closing chapter in the volume of inspiration -- a passage which shows, in the most affecting way, what the value of this hope is, both to the heart of Jesus, and to the hearts of His saints. The coming of Christ has twice, in this very chapter, been spoken of in the way of warning, "Behold, I come quickly." But ere the whole volume closes, Jesus announces Himself to His people. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" {Rev. 22:16}. This announcement of what He is, elicits from the Church an invitation to Him to come. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come". Any one who has ears to hear is invited to join in the cry: "And let him that heareth say, Come" {Rev. 22:17}. Thirsty sinners are also invited, yea, and whoever will, to partake freely of the living waters. Then, after a parenthesis on quite another subject, Jesus replies to this invitation. It is not a note of alarm -- "Behold, I come quickly!" {Rev. 22:7}. It is an assurance to the hearts of those who long for Him, and invite Him, that He will not long delay. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly." The Church again responds, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" {Rev. 22:20}. The Apostle's benediction on the saints is all that remains of the Apocalypse or the Scripture. It is, if I may venture so to express myself, with this touching dialogue between Christ and His Church, as to Himself and His speedy return, that the Bible concludes. Can any one doubt that the coming of Jesus was intended to be the Christian's hope? Would that it were more vividly realized in each of our hearts!

This last passage relates, indeed, to the hope of the Church in its corporate character as the bride of Christ. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." But the hope of the Church is the same as that of the individual believer: and it is, moreover, in the hearts of individual believers that the Church's hope is cherished. The Church corporately is composed of individual believers; and while, viewed in its corporate character, the Church has relations to Christ which the believer individually has not; (a believer is not the body of Christ or the Bride of Christ -- the Church is;) it is, nevertheless, in the affections and conscience of the individual believer, that those relations of the Church to Christ are to be recognized and to have their effect. Hence the identity of the Church's and the individual believer's hope. That moment which brings to the believer all he has longed and waited for, in the return of his now absent Lord and Savior, brings to the Church the consummation of her happiness and glory, as the body, the Bride, of Christ. The Bridegroom and the Bride join each other in the air. The body is glorified with its Head.

Scripture identifies the corporate and the individual hope; that of the Church and that of the Christian. By man's thoughts and systems these two are separated. First, men substitute, as individual Christians, the hope (true in itself as to all who die) of happiness with Christ after death, for the true, blessed hope of His return, as set before us in the Scriptures we have considered, and in many, many more. Then, when death has been made the certain terminus of our earthly pilgrimage, and

the state of happy, departed saints, all that is looked to or looked for beyond, the only remaining hope for the Church, corporately considered, is the false, delusive hope entertained by multitudes, that as generations succeed one another and the course of time rolls on, Christianity will gradually spread, and the Church increase in numbers and in influence, until the world become the Church, until all nations are converted to Christianity.

Dear reader, is this the vision of futurity as to the Church and the world which thou art accustomed to cherish? Whence has it been derived? Is thy answer, "From the Word of God?" Let me entreat thee, then, to read that word once more. Soberly, earnestly, and prayerfully search the sacred pages from beginning to end, and see if they afford the least shadow of a pretext for such a hope.

Once, dear reader, I was of your mind. I, too, looked for Christianity's universal spread, and for the world's gradual conversion. Awakened by circumstances to inquire after a scriptural foundation for this hope, I searched the sacred volume from Genesis to Revelation. Whatever may be the result of thy inquiries, I avow to you that the result of mine -- a result which cost me no small astonishment -- was, a most profound conviction, which has deepened and strengthened to this day, that there is no such doctrine in Scripture -- that there is nothing which bears the slightest resemblance to such a doctrine; nay, more, that the doctrine of Scripture throughout is as contrary to this as can possibly be. The doctrine I found in Scripture was, that throughout its continuance here below, the true Church is distinguished from the world, as sheep or lambs are distinguished from the wolves which devour them -- as an exile is distinguished from the nations among whom he spends his dreary sojourn -- as a virgin, espoused to another, but not married, would be distinguished from the murderous population of a city, or country, whose hands are yet red with the blood of him to whom she had been betrothed. The Church is that desolate one, "espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ": Christ is the Bridegroom to whom her heart, with all its affections, and desires, and expectations, has been given. The world she knows only as the place where He has been slain, and its teeming millions she recognizes as the people on whom rests the solemn responsibility of having put her Lord, her Savior, her Bridegroom, to a cruel, shameful death. God has taught her, indeed, that by His death her sins have been expiated, and her salvation secured. God has shown her also that He has raised Jesus from the dead, and placed Him at His own right hand, where, by faith, she knows Him as the source and spring of her life, her peace, her joy, her strength, her comfort; and as the alone object of her hopes. Jesus, whom as yet she has not seen, has assured her that His desire is that she should be with Him, <sup>2</sup> and that ere long He will come and receive her to Himself. Does all this tend in anywise to reconcile her to the world? Quite the contrary. She knows that, to be the friend of the world, she must be false to Christ, and an enemy to God. True, that as the vessel of Christ's

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2. See John 17:24 -- "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

sympathies, and the herald and messenger of the Father's love, as well as its fair and bright expression, she regards not the world with enmity, but weeps over it with compassion, as Jesus did over the city of His choice, and rejoices to fulfil the ministry of reconciliation, beseeching men to be reconciled to God. She knows this to be the object for which she is left here, as well as the appointed means of her own completion.

But what does she look for as the result? The joyful reception of her message, and the accession of all nations to her ranks? No; she bears in mind what her Lord has said,

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me (John 15:20, 21).

She finds true what the beloved disciple says -- "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1). She knows from God's word that the world's character will remain unchanged to the end of this dispensation -- nay, that at its very close it will assume an aspect, and take an attitude, of more open and daring defiance and revolt than ever, and be visited by the outpouring of the vials of God's wrath, and receive its complete, everlasting overthrow by the coming of the Son of man from heaven. She looks for Him, however, in a previous stage of His return. She looks for Him, not as the Son of man who comes to execute judgment on the ungodly, but as the Son of God, the Head and Bridegroom of His Church, who comes to receive to nuptial joys and heavenly glory, the Church which has known and confessed Him, in whatever weakness, during His rejection by a proud and unbelieving world. She knows that when He comes in judgment, she shall be the companion of His triumphs, and the sharer in His glories. And this, too, she knows as the epoch of creation's deliverance, and the world's conversion. The world is to be converted -- Israel is to be restored -- creation is to be delivered -- righteousness and peace are to prevail from shore to shore, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. But this is not to be brought about by the present evangelic labors of the Church; much less by the cumbrous and worldly machinery, and carnal, earthly influences with which these labors are hindered or clogged. Judgment is to clear the scene of earth's corrupters and destroyers. Christ's coming to the earth will bring the judgments which accomplish this. Multitudes will, indeed, be spared by sovereign grace; and these multitudes, converted and saved, will form the nucleus, the commencement of the population of the millennial earth. The enemy will be bound. Christ and His saints will reign. Then, and thus, shall be fulfilled the unnumbered predictions of universal peace, and righteousness, and joy, which Christians have vainly supposed were to be fulfilled by the success of their own labors, and the gradual spread of the truth.

But before the crisis of man's consummated iniquity -- before the judgments by which his proud vauntings are silenced, or rather changed to weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth -- and surely before the reign of Christ in righteousness and peace, Christ Himself shall come; His saints who are alive and waiting for Him shall be changed into His

glorious image; the sleeping saints (the righteous dead) shall be raised; both together shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: so shall we ever be with the Lord. This is the Church's, even as it is the Christian's, hope. When the saints have thus been caught up, iniquity will ripen on the earth; the marriage of the Lamb will take place in heaven; the maddened and infatuated nations will gather together against God and against the Lamb; patience, long tried, will give place to righteous retribution; Christ will come forth, attended by His saints; the lake of fire will receive the chiefs in iniquity, who shall be cast alive therein; their armies shall be slain; judgment upon judgment shall overtake and extirpate all but those whom grace shall spare. And then shall the earth rest from its six thousand years of toil and wretchedness under the usurper's sway -- rest beneath the peaceful scepter of earth's long-rejected, despised, and insulted Lord. And when He thus triumphs, my brethren, we shall triumph. When He reigns, we shall reign. When His scepter diffuses liberty and joy throughout creation's vast extent, we shall be honored and privileged to be the vessels for the display of His glory, the channels for the distribution of His royal munificence, the agents in the application of His healing and gentle influences. But, beyond all this official dignity and external glory -- yea, beyond the benevolent satisfaction of dispensing blessings to the inhabitants of a renewed and happy earth -- shall be the joy of the presence of Him who has made His home our home, His portion our portion, His joy our joy! From the moment we meet Him, this shall be, in its fullness, and without alloy or hindrance, ours. *He is our hope.* Earth is a wilderness, not merely, no, nor chiefly, because of its trials and its hardships, its sorrows and its pangs, its disappointments and reverses -- *but because He is not here.* Heaven would not be heaven to the saint, if Jesus were not there. He, His presence, and, as that which introduces us to it, His coming, is our hope -- the hope of the Christian, the hope of the Church. May our hearts cherish it as we have never done! May its brightness so attract us, that earth's fairest, loveliest, most enchanting scenes may be weariness itself to our hearts, as detaining us from the Object of our hopes! May that Object so animate us, that earth's heaviest afflictions -- the narrowest, most rugged, and most thorny portions of the narrow way -- may be welcome to us, as the path that leads us onward to the goal of our expectations, the home of our hearts, the Jesus whose presence makes it what it is, whose love made Him tread a narrower and a darker path than this, and whose smile of ineffable satisfaction shall crown the faith that has trusted Him, the love that has followed Him, and the patience of hope which has waited for Him, throughout this dreary journey, along this narrow way, amid the darkness and solitude of this long and dismal night.

No attempt is made to give here the proofs from Scripture of many things which, in the latter part of this paper, have been stated. The illustration and proof of these statements, as well as of many other topics of equal interest, will form the object of ensuing papers.

## Chapter 2

### *Approaching Judgments*

It is possible, that a few years ago these words would have secured more instant and earnest attention than at present. When famine was stalking through the sister kingdom, and pestilence following at its heels -- when, even in this country, the trading part of the community were beset with embarrassments, and the working classes suffering from want -- when, on the continent, thrones were overturned and scepters broken, more rapidly almost than the intelligence could be conveyed -- when all who had any stake in society were trembling to think what the end of these disasters and commotions might be; then, to have written of "approaching judgments" would have been to secure the terrified attention of many, whose "hearts were failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which" seemed to be "coming upon the earth." The voice of warning would have had many an echo then, from the depths of troubled and trembling hearts. But now <sup>3</sup> that the storm seems to have past by, and the elements are hushed to rest; now, that plenty smiles, and prosperity abounds on every hand; now that order seems everywhere the more firmly established for the temporary anarchy by which it was threatened, while mines of untold wealth are opening golden prospects to the myriads who resort thither in pursuit of gain; now, to lift the warning voice, and speak of judgments at the door, will seem to many a strange and uncalled-for thing. I can well imagine many a one exclaiming, "Judgments! Approaching Judgments! Why, when did there seem less occasion for fear? When was the air so calm? the horizon so clear? the prospect so enchanting?" Dear reader, it is not by appearances we have to judge, but by

the Word of God. And know you not what that Word records in the history of the past, as well as what it foretells of the history of the future? The antediluvians thought Noah mad to predict a deluge and prepare an ark. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark" -- and what then? "The flood came, and destroyed them all" {Luke 17:27}. So it was, too, with the cities of the plain:

They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded {Luke 17:28}.

And nature seemed to smile on their pursuits. The sun rose as usual on the morning of their overthrow. Scripture notes this:

The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar {Gen. 19:23}.

What ensued?

Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground {Gen. 19:24, 25}.

"But what is all this to us?" you perhaps inquire. Let our Lord Himself reply:

*Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed* (Luke 17:30).

Ah yes, peace and plenty, order and tranquillity, the advance of science, and the growth of intelligence, are no signs that judgment is far off! "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" {1 Thess. 5:3}. And while it is quite true that they who only regard appearances *on earth* may suppose that everything bespeaks the continuance of peace and prosperity, there are those who know that God's word is "settled forever *in heaven*" {Psa. 119:89}, and who will, through His grace, listen to what that word proclaims, of approaching judgment, desolation, and woe. Then, besides, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, they to whom the knowledge of these things has been confided, must, to deliver their own souls, lift up their voices, and cry aloud, and spare not.

There may be some, however, who read these pages, who are not so blinded by appearances as to suppose that the present lull will continue, who yet have no adequate conception of the nature and extent of the solemn changes

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3. The above was written in January, 1853, and is left exactly as it appeared in the first edition. The events which have filled the interval have been such as to demonstrate, to the most sanguine, the deceitful character of the lull, which, for a passing moment, seemed to promise to the nations a period of repose. Scarcely had the congratulations of the multitude, who crowded to the world's Great Exhibition, in 1851, passed between them -- a long reign of universal peace being the almost universal anticipation -- when the first murmurs of war with Russia began to be heard. Its history of blood is too deeply written on many a bereaved heart to need further allusion to it here; but the rejoicings at its close were quickly followed by the outburst in the East of that dreadful rebellion, which for a time, so threatened the whole fabric of British rule in India. Then came the war of liberation in Italy; and now, as these words are being penned, the Northern and Southern States of the once gigantic American Union are waging deadly strife with one another; while, from every quarter of the globe, tidings are heard of restlessness, discontent, and fear. "Wars, and rumors of wars," have truly, almost ever since our first edition was printed, justified our warnings, notwithstanding the hopeful appearance of everything at the moment when they were written.

which are at hand. You see, dear reader, that no dependence is to be placed on the sort of quiet which at this moment exists. You know well that the atmosphere is never so still as just ere the bursting forth of a wild and desolating storm; and seeing, probably in Scripture, that there are great convulsions to take place, ere the world is subdued to the scepter of Immanuel, you may be looking for these things as near at hand. But then your expectations of these convulsions, and of the woes and calamities inseparable from such events, is associated in your mind with the idea that, after all, the world is to be converted, and the Millennium introduced, by agencies and influences of a kind already at work for this end. You see, indeed, that at the slow rate at which Christianity has progressed, even where it has achieved its greatest victories, it can only be after the lapse of almost interminable ages, that it becomes universal among mankind. Its forces seem so feeble and so few, and the opposition they encounter is so formidable, that there appears no prospect of universal triumph within any period that the mind can span. But judgment, you think, is to aid in accelerating the work. And all that you anticipate in the way of judgment is, that national convulsions and political overturnings, accompanied perhaps by providential scourges, such as famine, pestilence, and the like, will open the way for the wider, more rapid, and more effectual spread of the Gospel. The Papacy will, as you suppose, be overthrown; Mahommedanism be deprived of political power; governments hostile to the spread of truth, give place to others, who will be its nursing fathers; China, Japan, and Tartary, be opened to Christian missionaries; while in these and other ways, the God of providence will interpose to accomplish the final, universal triumphs of the Gospel of His grace. Such are the thoughts cherished by numbers of Christians at the present moment.

Two points in view of these things forcibly occur to one's mind. First, this anticipation of providential interpositions and mighty national convulsions, is itself an advance on the thoughts generally entertained by Christians thirty or forty years ago. We heard of nothing then but the power of the truth, the effusion of the Spirit, the spread of the Gospel, the speedy and universal triumph of missions, with all kindred institutions and efforts for the conversion of the world. The experience of the last half century has so far sobered the expectations of many that they do now admit the necessity of some grand providential interposition, to remove obstacles otherwise insuperable, and to secure thus the end, which once they expected to be attained by the blessing of God on philanthropic efforts and evangelic labors alone. This is, of itself, progress toward the truth. But then, and this is the second point referred to, if it be necessary that God should interpose, and if it be revealed in His word that He will do so, where are we to learn the nature and extent of this interposition? Where but in the same "sure word of prophecy," which makes known to us that such interposition will take place? If, as many still think, the conversion of the world is left in human hands, dependant upon human diligence and the progress of human affairs, then speculation and calculation may both be of service in determining the

probable aspect of the future -- and all one can say in this case is, if the past is to afford a presage of the future, alas, for us! alas, for the Church! alas, for the world! <sup>4</sup> But if it be admitted that God must in some extraordinary way interfere; and if it be further admitted that Scripture foretells that He will interfere; then, where, I ask, are we to learn the manner, the mode, the magnitude of such interference, but in those Scriptures which warn us of its approach? Speculation has no place here. Calculation of the future from the past is utterly out of the question. Nothing will serve but simple subjection to God's Word; a child-like, docile reception of whatever God's word declares. God grant us such a spirit, in inquiring what the testimony of Scripture is, on the solemn subject at present before us.

Before producing, however, the direct testimony of Scripture on this subject, I would make this one remark; viz., that it is taken for granted here, that there is to be a Millennium. Proofs of this from Scripture may occupy our attention hereafter, as well as much that relates to the nature of millennial blessedness. For the present, I would assume, that my readers concur in the belief, all but universal among Christians, that there is to be a long period of universal peace and righteousness on the earth. This is not our present question. The question before us is, *First, Whether judgments do not introduce this period of universal blessing? Secondly, What is the nature and what the extent of these judgments?* Not only shall we find that the Millennium is introduced by judgments, but that these judgments are of a character perfectly unparalleled. National convulsions there will be, no doubt, and political overturnings, such as this earth has never witnessed. Providential scourges too, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, hurricanes, and every kind of terrific deviation from the usual course of things. But all these, so far from being subsidiary interventions, designed to hasten the triumph and secure the success of benevolent agencies already at work, are themselves either the precursors or attendants of an event, which closes the present, and introduces a new, dispensation; an event with which no other (save one) in the whole history of this world, past, present, or future, can for a moment compare. *That event is the second coming, the appearing in glory, of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The one exception, His own first coming in humiliation, was indeed more wondrous still. Into its marvels the angels desire to

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4. Let not these words be supposed to express any want of confidence in the Gospel, or in the power of the Spirit to make it efficient in man's conversion. It is from no lack of suitability in the one, or power in the other, that the world is not yet converted. The question before us is simply a question of facts. What progress has been made, in eighteen hundred years, towards the conversion of the whole human race? This is the first question: and the second, supposing matters are to be left as at present, when may we anticipate the world's conversion? "Yes," it may be replied, "if matters are to be left as at present. But we don't suppose matters are to be so left. God can, and doubtless will, interpose in much greater power than heretofore." Exactly; but this entirely changes the ground taken by objectors. It admits that for which we contend, *that God must interpose*; and, if God is to interpose, it is He only who can instruct as to *how* and *when* He will interpose. The Scripture answer to these inquiries is what we are seeking to ascertain.



look; but Christ's second coming is the grand event which is before us; an event to which the Christian indeed and the Church may look forward with intense desire and expectation; but which, in its bearing on the world, is connected with those terrible judgments which shall prostrate the pride of man, rebuke for ever the swelling, and vauntings of iniquity, purge the earth of its corrupters and destroyers, and usher in the blissful period of the reign of Christ with His glorified saints, over the spared, and pardoned, and renewed inhabitants of the millennial earth.

First, let us glance through the Scriptures, and seek to gather their general voice, their concurrent testimony. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is the first whose voice we hear. True, that it is Jude, not Moses, who records his prophecy; and he records it as yet to be fulfilled. But what does this prove, save that the Spirit of prophecy in Enoch looked beyond the deluge, beyond the judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah, beyond all intermediate ages and events, to that stupendous one which is before us? Hear his words,

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, *to execute judgment upon all*, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him {Jude 14, 15}.

To what else does the Midianitish seer refer when he says, "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth" {Num. 24:17}? He says, further,

Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city {Num. 24:19}.

Nor is it of mere local circumstances, that this extraordinary man is inspired of God to treat. The prophetic Spirit looks far and wide, and speaks not only of Moab and Sheth, of Israel and its glorious Star, but of Edom and Amalek, the Kenites and Asshur, Eber, and the ships from the coast of Chittim. It is in reference to all these, and to the utter destruction of the wicked from among them, that this grand intervention of God's power takes place. And in view of all this, what does Balaam exclaim?

And he took up his parable, and said, "*Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!*" (Num. 24:23).

Thus early in Scripture have we the prophetic anticipation of God's doing a work of judgment, so terrific as to awaken the inquiry, "Who shall live when God doeth this?"

But my immediate object is not in the first place to discuss individual passages, so much as rapidly to glance along the current of Scripture testimony and prophetic instruction, that we may have some idea of its general burden and tone. Hear we then a Moses, who recites to us the words of the Almighty:

For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows

drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy (Deut. 32:40-42).

Listen to a Hannah, who sings,

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed (1 Sam. 2:10).

Hear, too, for a moment, the son of Jesse, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel. They are his "last words" I am about to quote -- words uttered amid the sad fruit of his own sin, and in the deep consciousness of his having been himself unable to cope with the enemies which his sin had raised up around him. But it is no mere effusion of his own which his pen records or his lips utter. "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" {2 Sam. 23:2, 3}. Alas! he himself had failed in this. But he anticipates the coming of One who should not fail, and who should be "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" {2 Sam. 23:4}. I need not say to whom this refers. But what is there here of judgments? Nothing, as yet; but read what follows:

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 (2 Sam. 23:6, 7).

But David's testimony cannot be so summarily dismissed. I am not about to analyze the different passages in the Psalms which treat of approaching judgments. To do this would require a volume, and a large one, instead of a few pages such as these. But look through the Book of Psalms, leave aside every passage which admits of a question as to its bearing on our present subject, and what have we still remaining? Why the occurrence at almost every turn of anticipations or predictions such as the following? --

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 as a potter's vessel (Psa. 2:8, 9).

The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The LORD is known by the judgment which He executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands (Psa. 9:15, 16).

Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup (Psa. 11:6).

Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them (Psa. 21:8, 9).

Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth (Psa. 46:8).

The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof . . . Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him (Psa. 50:1, 3).

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth (Psa. 58:10, 11).

Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah. Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men (Psa. 66:3-5).

Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth (Psa. 76:8, 9).

The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries (Psa. 110:5, 6).

These are but a few out of a whole class of passages running through the whole Book of Psalms. How manifestly they point onward to an intervention of God's power in judgment *such as the earth has never yet witnessed*.

The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were the three great divisions of the Old Testament, according to the words of our Lord Himself (Luke 24:44). The testimony of two of these, the Law and the Psalms, we have already heard. In turning to the Prophets, what do we find at the very beginning?

Therefore saith the LORD, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: . . . Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed (Isa. 1:24, 27, 28).

In the very next chapter we have the day of the Lord foretold -- a day the power and terror of which shall "be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he," says the prophet, "shall be brought low" {Isa. 2:12}.

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth {Isa. 2:21}.

Such is the testimony with which the First Book of the Prophets opens.

Such a testimony is sustained throughout. We read of the Lord standing up to plead, and standing to judge the people. Mention is made of "the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far?" {Isa. 10:3}. We read of the world being punished for their evil, and the wicked for

their iniquity -- of a man being more precious than gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. We are told of a

purpose that is purposed upon *the whole earth*, and that

this is the hand that is stretched out upon all *the nations* {Isa. 14:26}.

It is the Lord of hosts who hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? All the inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth are called upon to see an ensign which is to be lifted up, and to hear a trumpet which is to be blown: and this call for universal attention is connected with a rushing of the nations, and of the multitudes of many people, like the rushing of mighty waters. The nations are thus to rush; but God, we are told, shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and be chased like chaff before the wind, and thistle-down before the whirlwind (see Isa. 17 and 18). We read, moreover, of the Lord's purpose,

to stain the pride of *all glory*, and to bring into contempt *all the honorable of the earth*. {Isa. 23:9}

We read of *the Lord making the earth empty and making it waste*; of the inhabitants being burned and few men left; so few as to be compared, at least in the center and special scene of these judgments, to the shaking of an olive tree, and the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. The earth is spoken of as being utterly broken down, clean dissolved, and moved exceedingly. We hear an invitation to God's people to enter into their chambers, and hide themselves, as it were, for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast, *for the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity*: the earth also is to disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain. An overflowing scourge is to pass through; judgment is to be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: the hail is to sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters to overflow the hiding-place. From the time that the scourge goes forth, it is to pass over, morning after morning, by day and by night; so that it shall be a vexation merely to understand the report. The Lord is to rise up as in Mount Perazim, to be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; that He may bring to pass His act, His strange act. Men are warned not to mock, lest their bands be made strong; "for I have heard," says the prophet, "from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined *upon the whole earth*" (Isa. 28:22). We read of the name of the Lord coming from far, burning with His anger, and the burden thereof being heavy: His lips full of indignation, and His tongue as a devouring fire. We are told that the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. No mere national convulsion this! No mere political overturning. No;

Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself (Isa. 33:10).

The nations are again invited to hear, the people to hearken;

the earth, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. And why?

For the indignation of the LORD is upon *all nations*, and his fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from a fig tree (Isa. 34:2-4).

Such is the doctrine of the prophet Isaiah: such are the approaching judgments to which he bears testimony. He speaks of One who is to tread the wine-press alone: who will tread the people in His anger, and trample them in His fury, sprinkling their blood upon His garments, and staining all His raiment. He is to tread down the people in His anger, to make them drunk in His fury, and to bring down their strength to the earth. The Lord is to “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” {Isa. 66:15-16}.

It may be said by some, “These are undoubtedly predictions of terrible judgments, but what warrant have we for concluding that they are future and universal? May they not have been already accomplished in calamities of a local character, which are now matters of history? How shall we distinguish those judgments which are local, partial, and accomplished, from those which are future and universal?” To these questions I would reply, that many of the passages quoted or referred to, bear the evidence of their futurity and universality on the surface. Has God ever yet arisen to shake terribly the earth, so as to cause men to cast their idols to the moles and bats, He alone being exalted, as the result? Has the world ever yet been punished for its iniquity, so as to make a man more precious than gold -- than the golden wedge of Ophir? -- precious, not in intrinsic value, which of course is always the case, *but in respect to scarceness*, as the passage evidently implies? Has the consumption determined upon the whole earth ever as yet taken place? Has the passage in Isa. 63:1-6, ever been accomplished? The prophet beholds in vision a mighty warrior, returning victorious from the slaughter of his enemies, his garments red with their blood, and, astonished at the sight, he asks,

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?

What is the reply?

*I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save* {Isa. 63:1}.

Can this be any but Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Could any but He use such language and not blaspheme? Hear Him further:

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my

raiment {Isa. 63:3}.

Some, indeed, interpret this of the sufferings which Christ endured when He was here eighteen hundred years ago. But what more than the simple reading of the passage is requisite to show, that it is not with His own blood that His garments are stained, but with that of His adversaries?

For I will tread *them* in mine anger, and trample *them* in my fury; and *their* blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment {Isa. 63:3}.

Further, He says,

I will tread down *the people* in mine anger, and *make them* drunk in my fury, and I will bring down *their* strength to the earth {Isa. 63:6}.

Is this a character of action that has ever yet appertained to the meek, the lowly Sufferer, who said, describing the object of His mission, “The Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” {Luke 9:56}? How evident that this passage, and the whole class of passages to which it belongs, point out an interposition of Christ in destroying judgment, which is yet future!

Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, takes up the sorrowful strain, and adds his testimony to all that has been now rehearsed. How his tears remind one, that the spirit in which a poor sinner saved by grace should warn his fellow-sinners of approaching judgments, is that of weeping entreaty, rather than of stern, harsh, denunciation and rebuke.

My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

And what was it that had stirred thus his heart to its inmost depths?

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger (Jer. 4:19, 23-26).

True, indeed, that Jeremiah’s prophecies in general relate chiefly, or even exclusively, to his beloved nation, and the city of his heart, Jerusalem, which, in his day, began to be a prey to the destroyer of the Gentiles. But this is not always the case.

Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it (Jer. 30:23, 24).

Dear reader, this is a different vision of futurity from that which is before most men’s minds. But this is what is really coming. Observe these last words:

*in the latter days ye shall consider it.*

Whatever foreshadowings there may have been of this terrible

intervention of God's power in judgment, the fact itself has its accomplishment "*in the latter days*." Would that even now, in these latter days, men might be warned, and led to consider these solemn and impending visitations of God's wrath.

Ezekiel had a roll presented to him, by a hand which spread it before him. What were its contents?

It was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe (Ezek. 2:10).

Fit emblem of the testimony he was called to bear! True, indeed, that like that of Jeremiah it was addressed very chiefly to the nation of Israel, and a great part of it in reference to circumstances at that time transpiring, or calamities at that time about to visit them. But in the latter part of the book, he looks out beyond Israel, and beyond any circumstances either passing or impending at the time he wrote. He prophesies of judgments upon all the surrounding, and even all the more distant nations: not only Ammon, and Moab, and Edom, and the Philistines, but Tyre, Sidon, Egypt, the isles of Chittim, Persia, Lud, and Phut, Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, and numbers more -- too many to enumerate. It is in Ezekiel we read of a huge assembly of God's adversaries, whose overthrow is to be so terrible, that their weapons are to furnish fuel to a whole nation for seven years; and seven months are to be employed in burying the dead. The fowls of heaven are invited that they may eat flesh and drink blood. They are to eat the flesh of the mighty, and to drink the blood of the princes of the earth.

And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD. And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them (Ezek. 39:19-21).

Who anticipates such an interposition of divine power and righteousness as this?

The minor prophets do not contradict, but corroborate, the testimony of the others. Daniel prophesies of a mighty image, emblem of the great monarchies of this world, and of a destruction overtaking it, in which

the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them. {Dan. 2:35}.

He sets forth the same great monarchies, in another chapter, by the symbol of four great beasts, the last of the four being most terrible of all. He beholds, till the thrones are set, and the Ancient of days sits, a fiery stream issuing from before Him, while thousands minister to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him; the judgment is set, and the books are opened. He still beholds, till the beast is slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame (see Dan. 7). I need not stop to discuss the meaning of these symbols. As far as our present subject is concerned, their language is sufficiently clear. It speaks of judgments yet to

come, such as we have found foretold by all the prophets to whose predictions we have as yet referred.

Joel testifies of a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness; a day ushered in by wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. He speaks of God sitting in the valley of Jehoshaphat to judge all the heathen round about. "Multitudes," he says, "multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision" {Joel 3:14}. In Micah's prophecy we hear God saying, "I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, *such as they have not heard*" {Mic. 5:15}. Zephaniah witnesses of the great day of the Lord:

A day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wateness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness {Zeph. 1:15}.

He speaks of God bringing distress upon men, so "that they shall walk like blind men, . . . and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung" {Zeph. 1:17}. Haggai's voice to us is,

For thus saith the LORD of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake *all nations*. {Hag. 2:6}.

And again,

I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother {Hag. 2:21, 22}.

Passing over Zechariah, who nevertheless does testify most distinctly to these approaching judgments, we come to Malachi, the last of the prophets of the Old Testament. And what is the message he bears?

Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch {Mal. 4:1}.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts {Mal. 4:3}.

With such anticipations of "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" does the Old Testament close. Its very earliest intimations of that future which awaits this poor, giddy, thoughtless, proud, and boasting world, are in perfect and solemn harmony with the warnings which terminate the book. God grant, that this passing glance at the solemn depositions, made by these many witnesses, at various times during a period of thousands of years, may not be lost upon the consciences of those who read these pages.

In turning to the New Testament, we must bear in mind that its grand subject is not judgment, but grace.

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ {John 1:17}.

God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them {2 Cor. 5:19}.

Nor is the testimony of mere prophets to which we listen in the New Testament.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son {Heb. 1:1, 2}.

But while the grace of the message, and the divine dignity of the messenger, thus wondrously comport with each other, what shall be said of the guilt of those who reject the message, and despise the messenger? *And this is the guilt under which the world lies.* A few in each successive generation have had their hearts opened by almighty grace, to receive the one and welcome the other. These, if left to their own inclinations would, like all the rest, have continued to reject both. But as to the mass of mankind, yea, even in those countries where Christ is nominally owned, they join with one consent to slight, to neglect, to despise God's embassy of peace. Nay, worse than this, in nominally Christian countries, the name, and the ostensible authority of Christ, are used to consecrate the sins from which He came to deliver us, -- to bind more firmly on men's souls, the chains and shackles from which He came to release us. *Christianity, instead of converting the world, as is the boast of our day, has itself been corrupted, and is the means, in this corrupted state, of plunging men (with fairer appearances) into deeper moral debasement than that in which it found them.*<sup>5</sup> It is for this, that judgment is at the door. God has long patience, and we know that His long-suffering is salvation. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But ere long, He who once came in humiliation will come in glory. He who once came to suffer and to save will come to judge. First, must the coheirs of His glory be quickened to know and to confess Him; and when these have all been brought in by grace, the One who has been owned by them in His rejection will come, as we saw in a previous paper, to receive them to Himself. This is the first stage in His return to the earth. But when He has thus taken away the true Church, wickedness on the earth will come to its full head, and He will descend, accompanied or followed by His glorified saints, to execute the judgments of which we have been hearing in the Old Testament, and of which we have abundant warning in the numerous and explicit predictions of the New Testament as well. I do not now refer to them as proofs of Christ's speedy coming. We shall, if the Lord will, consider them thus ere long. I now adduce them as following on in the train of those already cited from the Old Testament,

as premonitory of those approaching judgments, which will shortly burst upon an astonished and affrighted world.

What can be more solemn than the testimony of our Lord Himself? Does He not tell us of tares mingled with the wheat, and continuing till the time of harvest? Does He not declare that at the time of harvest the tares shall be gathered into bundles to be burned, and the wheat gathered into the barn? And does He not in explanation of this parable assure us, that at the end of the age (συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνός)

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall 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 {Matt. 13:41, 42}?

Does He not apply to Himself the Psalmist's words as to the rejected stone becoming the head of the corner? And while He intimates that any, during this whole period, who fall on this stone or stumble over it, shall be broken, does He not also warn us, that the stone itself is yet to fall, and that on whomsoever it does fall it will grind him to powder? Does He not tell us of a time of tribulation to which there has been, and shall be, no parallel, and which is immediately succeeded by signs in the heavens, the sun darkened, the moon not giving her light, the stars falling, and the powers of the heavens being shaken?

And then [He adds] 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 {Matt. 24:30}.

Does not our Lord, in another gospel, utter the words quoted at the commencement of this paper?

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed* {Luke 17:26-30}.

Does He not set forth to us the whole subject of His rejection, and absence, and return, in the parable of the nobleman, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return? "His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" {Luke 19:14}. His servants were left to occupy in his absence. Among these, when he returns, he distributes the tokens of his approval or displeasure; but what becomes of the citizens who hated him, and would not submit to his reign? "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" {Luke 19:27} Such are the words of Jesus. And, still further, He speaks of days of vengeance on the Jews, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But are approaching judgments confined to them? Nay, far from it.

5. Be it remembered, that Romanism and the Greek Church form the greater part, by far, of what bears the name of Christianity. And who that is acquainted with the history of either can deem the above statement too strong? Even as to Protestant countries, it is well known that the greatest obstacles our missionaries meet with, in evangelizing the heathen, are produced by the ungodly habits of so-called Christians, with whom they have come in contact.

There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken {Luke 21:25, 26}.

True, the word to the remnant is, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" {Luke 21:28}. That which fills the world with forebodings, inspires with stronger hopes those who have hearkened to the Lord's voice. But even to these, He says,

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 them that dwell on the face of the whole earth* {Luke 21:34, 35}.

How awful are these words! Are any of those quoted from the Old Testament more pregnant with solemn warning and admonition? But how is this? How can men's hearts be failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, and yet this terrible day come as a snare on all them that dwell on the earth? Ah, there is no contradiction here. The premonitory calamities will awaken men's fears, and cause their hearts to fail, just as many hearts did fail amid the convulsions of a few years ago. But we have evidence all around us of how soon men's fears may be allayed; how a temporary lull soothes all to deeper slumber; slumber, not disturbed, but made still more fatally sweet by dreams of safety, and prosperity, and peace, and plenty, and all that the heart of man desires to form a paradise here below. It will be at such a time, that as a snare the day of the Lord will at once inclose them in the grasp of those terrific judgments, from which there is no escape. As Paul witnesses,

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape {1 Thess. 5:2, 3}.

How sad to think that the mistakes of the Lord's own people -- their perversion, through mistake, of His greatest mercies -- may contribute to this false peace. To what use is "the revival" of the last three years being turned by numbers? It is being employed as an unanswerable proof that the Millennium is fast approaching, and that it is by "revivals," and not by judgments, or the coming of Christ, that it will be introduced. But have our brethren, who draw such inferences from God's present gracious dealings with us, forgotten that all God's Israel had to be put under the shelter of the paschal blood, before the destroying angel went through the land of Egypt? Of what was the revival in Josiah's day the precursor? No such revival had occurred in Israel's history; but how soon was it followed by deeper declension than ever, and by the judgments of which the Chaldeans were the executioners! So, in apostolic times, when three thousand were converted in a day, and the faithful soon after numbered five thousand, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, of

what was all this prosperity the prelude? Was it Jerusalem's *conversion* or Jerusalem's *overthrow*? Already have we seen the blessing in America succeeded by the scourge of war; and we have need to lay the warning to heart. The more rapid and mighty the work of conversion since the spring of 1859, the more loudly does it proclaim in the instructed ear, that the day of the Lord draweth nigh. We have heard of a "short work" of judgment that the Lord will make upon the earth; and it would seem that a short work of grace is to precede this short work of judgment. Depend upon it, God is gathering out His own from the scene of judgment, that they may be in safety with Himself when the judgments come upon the earth.

Want of space compels me to pass over all intermediate testimonies, that we may listen for a moment to the beloved disciple, the prophet of Patmos, and to those wondrous revelations he was privileged to receive and to communicate. What have we as one of the earliest anticipations in this prophecy?

Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and *all kindreds of the earth* shall wail because of him {Rev. 1:7}.

Visions of judgment, one after another, are beheld by the apostle. Seals are opened, trumpets are sounded, vials of wrath are poured out. War, famine, pestilence, persecution of the saints; earthquakes, judgments upon natural objects, judgments upon commerce, and judgments upon all the sources of moral influence by which men are affected; a withholding of the light which had been previously vouchsafed, the letting loose of one horde after another of infernal enemies and tormentors, till men shall seek death and not find it, shall desire to die while death flees from them: these are some of the woes pronounced in this book upon the world of the ungodly. The final crisis of human iniquity is portrayed, and the principles marked out of which this crisis will be the full development. Then we are told of worse judgments still. The vials of God's wrath are to be poured out -- poured upon the earth, and the sea, and the rivers and fountains of waters; on the sun, on the seat of the beast, on the great river; then, last of all, upon the air.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great {Rev. 16:17, 18}.

Then we are told of a plague of hail, every stone about the weight of a talent. We have further details of instruction as to the ecclesiastical apostasy, and the revolt from God of the imperial power of the earth. We have the doom of Babylon, with all its luxuries, delicacies, and refinements, and heaven rejoicing at her fall. A mighty angel, taking up a stone like a great millstone, and casting it into the sea, says,

. . . Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, *and shall be found no more at all*. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and

trumpeters, *shall be heard no more at all in thee*; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, *shall be found any more in thee*; and the sound of a millstone *shall be heard no more at all in thee*; and the light of a candle *shall shine no more at all in thee*; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride *shall be heard no more at all in thee*: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived {Rev. 18:21-23}.

Then, finally, heaven opens; a white horse comes forth, and He that sat upon him called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS {Rev. 19:16}. The armies which were in heaven (previously caught up there, as we saw in our last number) follow Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of the mouth of the glorious One goes a sharp sword with which to smite the nations: He is to rule them with a rod of iron: He treads the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gather together to make war against Him that sits on the horse, and against His army. The beast and the false prophet are taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and their followers are slain with the sword of Him that sits upon the horse.

Such is the end of the course of this age! Its commerce and its pleasures, its politics and its religion, its philanthropy and its misanthropy, its hypocrisy and its blasphemy, its morality and its open wickedness, all find their termination here. Reader, whoever thou art, if thou hast not been separated from this present evil world, by God's revelation to thy heart of His Son Jesus Christ, this is the end toward which thou art hastening. Thou art unconscious of, it is true, but this makes thy situation not one whit the safer. Thou art like a man in a boat drifting down a rapid stream, with his back to the danger, and entertaining himself, as he looks up the river, with all the gay, pleasant objects which are flitting past him. But as each moment bears him onward to the falls, where he must ere long be dashed to pieces; so, my reader, thou art, with the poor world, gliding down to destruction. There is no hope of stopping the vessel; it must perish. God can snatch thee out of it, and rescue thee from the overthrow; and this is the only hope one can have concerning thee. God grant that these pages may be used to this end!

Christian readers, what shall we say to these things? The detailed proof that the judgments we have been hearing of precede and introduce millennial blessing, and that it is the personal return of Christ which brings these judgments, is purposely reserved for another occasion. But can we think of such a doom awaiting the world in which we sojourn, and not weep over its guilty, condemned inhabitants? Did Jesus weep over one city, and say, "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 19:42}, and shall not our hearts melt -- shall not our tears flow -- for a whole world that lieth in wickedness, and daily ripens for destruction? And shall we be content, my brethren, with

shedding tears? The hour of judgment, near as it may be, has not yet come. The door of mercy still stands open: yea, as yet it opens into the scene of those heavenly delights and bridal glories which Christ and the Church shall share, ere He comes forth from the wedding to execute vengeance on His foes. And shall we not use the opportunity to sound forth the gospel of God's grace? If it be true that judgment is at the door, instead of the gradual peaceful introduction of millennial blessedness, shall we on that account be less urgent in our entreaties, less zealous in our labors, less instant and earnest in our prayers? God forbid! Knowing the judgments which await the world around us, knowing that grace has rescued us from those judgments, and that when they are executed, we ourselves shall be with Him who executes them, is it possible that we can selfishly enjoy the thought of our own security, and leave the poor world unwarned, the grace of Christ and the Father's love unproclaimed, or poor sinners uninvited -- *unurged* -- UNINTREATED to flee to the shelter of His open arms? O for more earnest love to Christ, and deeper compassion for poor souls! Brethren, the time is short. The moments glide rapidly away. Soon will the only opportunity be gone that we shall ever have of confessing our Master and seeking His glory, in the midst of a world which either rejects Him openly, or the more decidedly rejects Him in reality for owning Him in appearance and in word. May His own Spirit animate us! May communion with Him cause the fountains of compassion for those around us to gush forth! May souls be gathered to His arms of mercy! May His people be stirred up to pray, and watch, and labor! May we humble ourselves, and stir up and exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching!





## Chapter 3

### *The Coming Crisis and its Results*

Scripture testimony to approaching judgments was what last engaged our attention. As to these judgments, three things may be affirmed. First, They introduce the Millennium. Secondly, They are the precursors or accompaniments of Christ's second appearing. Thirdly, They are connected with a total change of dispensation. Each of these statements I hope, by the Lord's help, to establish by plain and abundant testimony of Scripture. It is to the first and second I would now entreat my reader's attention. The proof of the third will more naturally present itself when some other points have been considered.

Judgment has often been executed on the wicked. The deluge, the overthrow of Sodom, the destruction of the Canaanitish tribes, the destruction of Jerusalem, whether by Nebuchadnezzar or by the Romans, the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, as well as other similar events, each affords an instance of the execution of righteous judgment on the wicked. What is it, then, which distinguishes this interposition of God in judgment which is yet future (and which we saw, in "*Approaching Judgments*" {ch. 2} to be foretold throughout Scripture,) from all other judgments such as have been enumerated? The distinction is in this, that the awful judgments which are fast approaching introduce the Millennium; and further, *that Christ Himself comes in connection with these judgments*. Let us look at the evidence of these things in Scripture. But earnestly would I remind my Christian readers, that it is not the coming of Christ to execute judgment which is our hope, but His descent into the air to receive us to Himself. It was this we sought, in "*The Heavenly Hope*," {ch. 1} to place in the foreground; and so the subject is presented in the New Testament, however needful it may be to be forewarned of Christ's coming to execute judgment also. When He so comes, we shall come with Him. Must we not have been previously gathered to Him?

No passage is more commonly or more justly quoted in proof that there is to be a Millennium, than that in which Jehovah promises to His Son to give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. But turn to Psa. 2, where this promise is recorded, and you will find that it is by the execution of terrible judgments on the wicked, that it is to be made good. It is not peacefully, or by man's submission brought about by the gospel and by grace, that the rightful Heir takes

possession of His dominions. We read of a confederacy against Him: the heathen rage, the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah, and against His anointed. Their cry is, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" {Psa. 2:3}. True, we learn from Acts 4:25-27, that this confederacy was formed in the days of Pontius Pilate, Herod, and the rulers of the Jews. But then we have intimation in the psalm, that there would be a period during which the Lord would laugh at their puny rage. Not as yet interfering in judgment, He would allow them, as it were, to go to the length of their chain, but treat with utter derision their attempts to set aside His purpose, and to order the affairs of the earth after their own hearts' desire. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" {Psa. 2:4}. But this period of patient endurance comes to a close. It gives place to judgment. "Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" {Psa. 2:5}. God's purpose is irrevocable. Their rage and opposition cannot alter that.

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 will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession {Psa. 2:6-8}.

Thus far the passage is often quoted. But what follows immediately? How are the rights of God's anointed, but earth-rejected Son, to be established?

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel {Psa. 2:9}.

Could any language be employed to teach more clearly or impressively, that it is by judgments on the wicked that Christ's glorious kingdom will be introduced?

We see thus how it is God's irrevocable decree, that His Son shall reign over all the earth, and how vain and puny are all man's efforts to prevent it. Turn to Psa. 96, and you will find all the earth invited to sing a new song unto the Lord. It is in anticipation of the blessings of His reign that universal anthems are thus demanded. True, that it is by power in judgment, that His reign is to be introduced and established; and the psalm before us recognizes this. But universal blessing will attend His reign; and hence the call for universal joy and praise. But it is not the mere execution of providential

judgments which introduces this glorious period, and wakes up this universal harmony. No, the Lord *comes* to judge, and *comes* to reign.

Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth {Psa. 96:10-13}.

So also at the close of Psa. 98:

Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King . . . Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity {Psa. 98:5-6, 8-9}.

Reader, have you ever considered these passages? It is not of the judgment of the great white throne they treat. Then, heaven and earth are to flee from before the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and no place is to be found for them. Here, heaven and earth are called on to rejoice at the coming of the Lord, at His coming to judgment, as that which introduces the period of His universal reign, and of earth's universal blessing and delight.

Another passage, beautifully depicting the happy days which are yet to dawn on this afflicted and groaning earth, is that well-known one in Isa. 11. Sweet it is (whether the language be understood literally of a change in the brute creation, or figuratively <sup>6</sup> of peace and concord among men), to think of the wolf dwelling with the lamb; the leopard lying down with the kid; the calf, the young lion, and the fatling together; and all so gentle, that a little child shall lead them.

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 {Isa. 11:9}.

Delightful prospect for this miserable world! But how are those days of peace, and piety, and universal blessing to be ushered in? By the interposition of One, whose lowly grace, and perfect rectitude and holiness, are so touchingly portrayed in the opening verses of the chapter. The Christian can be at no loss to say whose portrait it is, with which we are furnished here. But, are grace, and lowliness, and perfect faithfulness, the only features presented to us? No; we are told of His *acts* as well as of His moral excellencies, -- acts such as He never performed when He was here before.

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 {Isa. 11:4}.

The predictions of the Millennium follow.

But if we turn to 2 Thess. 2:8, where the apostle seems to quote this prophecy, we find additional instruction on two points. First, we find that it is Antichrist, the man of sin, that is intended by the term, "the wicked." Both in the Hebrew of Isa. 11 and the Greek of 2 Thess. 2 the term is in the singular number, and means literally, "that wicked one." But without insisting on this, it is enough to notice that in 2 Thess. 2, our English translators have marked that it is some one, or some thing, pre-eminent in evil that is intended, by using a capital letter in the word "wicked." "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit [or breath] of His mouth, and shall destroy with *the brightness of His coming*" {2 Thess. 2:8}. This is the other point here brought out: it is *by the brightness of the Lord's coming*, that Antichrist, this wicked one, is to be destroyed. But let us examine a little more minutely the combined testimony of these connected passages.

The apostle informs the Thessalonians that the day of Christ {of the Lord} shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed. He had told them of these things when present among them, and now reminds them that they know what hindered the revelation of this man of sin. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," is his language; "only he who now letteth [hinders] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed" {2 Thess. 2:7, 8}. The mystery of iniquity was working then, and would continue to work, until, the hindrance being removed, it should issue in the revelation of the man of sin, that Wicked,

whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming {2 Thess. 2:8}.

Thus we have the continued working and progress of evil, from its germ, which existed even in the apostle's day, to its maturity in this man of sin, who only meets his doom *at the coming of the Lord*, and *by the coming of the Lord*. Isaiah takes up the subject where the apostle lays it down, and shows us the blessed results of this glorious interposition, -- the peace, the concord, the happiness of Messiah's reign; the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The two passages together afford the most conclusive proof of all we are seeking to establish, that the Millennium is introduced by judgments on the wicked, and that those judgments attend the coming of the Lord.

My readers will remember the quotations from Isa. 24 as to the earth being made empty and waste, as to its being utterly broken down, and clean dissolved, and moved exceedingly. It would be well to read the whole chapter. How does it close? What is the sequel to those overwhelming judgments which it teaches us to expect?

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 {Isa. 24:23}.

The judgments commence and introduce this glorious, universal reign. I say universal: for while Zion and Jerusalem

6. It is not meant by this to raise any doubt as to the meaning of the passage. I have no doubt myself that it is to be taken literally.

are its special earthly <sup>7</sup> center, its blessings will extend to all the earth. Thus, a few verses below the one just quoted, after having again celebrated God's interposition in judgment, making of a city an heap; of a defended city a ruin; a palace of strangers to be no city; bringing down the noise of strangers; the prophet thus speaks of the issue, the effect, of these judgments.

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 {Isa. 25:6-7}.

Then in the next chapter (vv. 8, 9) the righteous are represented as saying,

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: *for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness* {Isa. 26:8, 9}.

Here is the definite, absolute assertion, that it is by God's judgments the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

But what is the peculiar character of these judgments, that they should have such an effect? Let my reader compare this passage with 1 Cor. 15:54, and he will find that these stupendous events are connected with the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of the saints. 1 Cor. 15, it is well known, treats fully the subject of the resurrection:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's --

When?

at His coming {1 Cor. 15:22, 23}.

The resurrection of the saints, then, takes place *at the coming of Christ*. But what connection has this with Isa. 25? We shall see immediately. The apostle declares that we shall not all sleep -- that the living saints shall be changed when the departed ones are raised:

for this corruptible, [he says] 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 {1 Cor. 15:53-54}.

Where is this saying written? *In only one place in Scripture, and that Isa. 25:8*. We have the awful judgments in Isa. 24; and at the end of it, the reign of the Lord of Hosts in Mount Zion. Then, in Isa. 25, we find that in this mountain the Lord of Hosts is to make a feast unto all nations, and to remove the vail, the covering. The words quoted by the apostle immediately follow: "He will swallow up death in victory."

In a word, the apostle tells us when the prophecy of Isa. 24, 25, will be accomplished.

*When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written [in Isa. 25] Death is swallowed up in victory*{1 Cor. 15:54}.

And when is this corruptible to put on incorruption? When are the dead to be raised?

Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's *at His coming* {1 Cor. 15:23}.

Could there be more decisive proof, that the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the sleeping saints, and the change of those who are alive, the fearful judgments which are to destroy the wicked, and the commencement of the reign of Christ, are all indissolubly linked together? They all are comprised in, and constitute, the grand epoch to which everything is tending, and with which nothing in the history of man, or of the world, can compare.

Another remarkable testimony to the same effect we have in Isa. 59:18, 19. The prophet has been lamenting, in the most moving terms, the deep and wide spread and universal corruption which precedes this interposition of God in judgment.

For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; in transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment {Isa. 59:12-15}.

No doubt the prophet has in this passage a special eye to Israel and its moral condition. But what a picture, my brethren, have we here, of the state of things existing at the present day! How is it to be terminated? The Lord is represented as interfering. In what way?

He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So [mark, reader, this word SO] shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun {Isa. 59:17-19}.

Could words more accurately express, could language more emphatically announce, the very position we are seeking to establish? What is that position? That the approaching judgments, considered in our last, are what will introduce the Millennium. What is the testimony of the passage before us? That all power of judgment and testimony having failed and ceased *morally* among men, the Lord will Himself rise up to execute judgment *by power*: repaying men according to their deeds, repaying recompense to the islands: thus universal is to be this interposition of God. And what is to be its effect?

7. Our place, the Church's place, will be in the heavens.

“SO shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.” From hemisphere to hemisphere is the fear of the Lord’s name and glory to extend, as the result of these retributive judgments on the wicked. Had there been no other passage of Scripture on the subject, we might have supposed that the testimony of this would have been completely decisive.

But does not this passage shed further light on our present subject? Does it not afford evidence of both the truths we are seeking to establish? Here is the answer:

*And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord {Isa. 59:20}.*

This also is quoted in the New Testament. Paul quotes it in Rom. 11:26. He has been treating of the temporary setting aside of Israel, but declares that it is only for a time; that

blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob {Rom. 11:25-26}.

No doubt my readers are aware that before New Testament times, the Old Testament had been translated into Greek, and that from this translation, called the Septuagint, many of the quotations in the New Testament are made. This accounts for the verbal difference in many such cases as the one before us. But no one can doubt that the passage quoted by the apostle is the one in question in Isa. 59. Nor is it possible to evade the proof afforded by the two, that it is *at His coming* the Lord renders recompense to His enemies and to the islands, SO that they shall fear His name and His glory from sphere to sphere.

Let us now turn to Isa. 66. There we read, amid strongest exclamations of surprise, of the earth being made to bring forth in one day, of a nation being born at once; “for as soon,” says the prophet, “as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children” {Isa. 66:8}. All who love Jerusalem are called upon to rejoice with her.

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 {Isa. 66:12}.

Who can fail to discern here the bright anticipations of Millennial blessing? But how is such blessing to be introduced? “A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies” {Isa. 66:6}. Then, again: “The hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies” {Isa. 66:14}. We are told that “by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many” {Isa. 66:16}. It is not that all flesh will be slain. Many, so many as to baffle description, and defy conception, will be slain; but there will be many spared. By fire and by His sword will the Lord thus plead with all flesh: and what shall be the result?

For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come,

that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles {Isa. 66:18-19}.

What further ensues? The perfect re-gathering of God’s earthly people Israel, brought for an offering to the Lord out of all nations to God’s holy mountain Jerusalem;

And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD {Isa. 66:21}.

Is this the whole? Is Israel only to be brought into blessing? No.

And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD {Isa. 66:23}.

I enter into none of the questions which have been raised as to the precise meaning of these words. All agree that they express, in one way or another, the universal prevalence of true religion in the Millennium. And surely the whole chapter leaves us in no doubt, as to its being by overwhelming, desolating judgments, that this glorious period is to be introduced. But further: the memorial of these judgments is in some way to remain.

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses 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 {Isa. 66:24}.

With regard to this chapter, I will only add, that it also connects the judgment on the nations and introduction of the Millennium with the coming of the Lord.

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 {Isa. 66:15}.

It is then, at the coming of the Lord, that by fire and by His sword will He plead with all flesh, and subdue the whole world to His sway.

My readers will remember the passage quoted from Ezekiel in *Approaching Judgments*; a passage predicting judgments so terrific, and a destruction so overwhelming, that seven months are to be occupied in burying the dead. I would add here a passage on the same subject, from the previous chapter.

For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him <sup>8</sup>

8. That is, against Gog. But let not my reader confound the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel with the Gog and Magog of Rev. 20. The latter do not arise till  
(continued...)

throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone {Ezek. 38:19-22}.

And what is to be the result among men of this awful interposition?

Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD {Ezek. 38:23}.

Then, after the fearful predictions in the next chapter, quoted at length in our last, we have these words:

And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them {Ezek. 30:21}.

And though the predictions of Millennial blessing which follow are restricted to Israel, they are so expressed as to show indisputably, that it is the Millennium of which they treat, and that it is at the commencement of the Millennium that these terrible judgments take place. The verse immediately succeeding the one last quoted is as follows:

So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day forward {Ezek. 39:22}.

How manifest, that it is at the epoch of these terrible judgments that their national conversion takes place. Nor their conversion only: their national restoration will also then take place.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name {Ezek. 39:25}.

After being thus converted and restored they are not to apostatize any more. Their blessing is to be permanent.

Then shall they know that I am the Lord their GOD, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD {Ezek. 39:28, 29}.

Could there be more conclusive proof than that which the whole passage affords, that the judgments of which these two chapters treat, are at the commencement of the Millennial period?

If we turn to Dan. 2, what is it that follows the smiting of the image on his feet, by the stone cut out without hands? The destruction of the image is complete, but what follows it? what takes its place?

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them

away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth {Dan. 2:35}.

As to what the meaning of all this is, we are happily not left to our own thoughts. The prophet not only gives us the symbols, but also the interpretation of them. Still men have substituted their own imaginings and speculations for the plain words of the prophet. It is not disputed generally, that the interpretation of the first part of the vision is correct. All agree, that four empires or universal kingdoms are set forth: nor is there much dispute as to what kingdoms these are. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, are agreed almost on all hands to be the four empires represented by the image. But the Stone is erroneously supposed by many to represent the gospel, and that what is foretold respecting it is, that it will gradually spread, until the whole world, these four kingdoms included, shall, by its means, become the kingdom of Christ. But who does not see, that there would thus be no destruction of the image, or of the empires which it represents? What is foretold respecting the Stone, is not, that contemporaneously with the existence and supremacy of the fourth empire, the Stone should be slowly and gradually increasing, and, as it increases, changing the character of the image, as this false interpretation suggests. No, but, that at a given epoch the Stone should smite the image on its toes; that in the last days of the fourth empire a sudden blow should be given, which should be fatal to the whole image; and that then, and not until then, the Stone that smote the image should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven 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. 2:44}.

Here we have the formal declaration, that it is by the overthrow and destruction of the previously existing kingdoms that the final, Millennial kingdom is to be established.

Dan. 7 gives us still more full and explicit instruction. It is the same general subject, embracing many additional particulars, and the whole presented, if possible, with greater precision. Four beasts represent the same kingdoms which in ch. 2 are symbolized by the several parts of the metallic image. But the fourth is represented in a form which it has never yet assumed, viz., as having ten horns, in the midst of which comes up another, a little one, whose rapid growth, amazing intelligence, swelling words, and valiant looks, excite the special and wondering attention of the prophet. This one continues till the thrones are set, the Ancient of days sits, the judgment is set, and the books are opened. "I beheld then," says the prophet, "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" {Dan. 7:11}. And what is it that accompanies this judgment? and what succeeds it?

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.

8. (...continued)

after the Millennium. The former, as may be seen above, have their existence and downfall at its commencement.

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 {Dan. 7:13, 14}.

Who that believes the Bible can resist the evidence which thus accumulates on our hands, that it is by such destroying judgments as have been considered, that the Millennium, or universal kingdom of Christ, is to be introduced?

Zephaniah tells us of a great gathering of the nations; of terrible judgments overtaking them when thus gathered; and of Millennial blessedness as that which ensues. Hear his words.

Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then [mark, dear reader, how God tells us when the Millennium shall commence] *then* will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering {Zeph. 3:8-10}.

All the rest of the chapter describes the happiness of those millennial times.

Zech. 14 I purposely pass by for the present, as it will have to be specially considered further on. In turning to the New Testament, Luke 19 may claim our first consideration. Can there be any doubt that what is there termed "the kingdom of God," is really the Millennium which prophets had foretold, and which the Jewish nation had been taught to expect?

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear {Luke 19:11}.

Were they wrong, then, in expecting God's kingdom to be set up? No; it was the expectation of its *immediate appearance* in which they were mistaken. In a certain sense it was even then among them: and in this sense it has been among men ever since. But it had not then *appeared*: nor has it yet. Listen to the parable of our Lord.

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return {Luke 19:12}.

There can be no mistake as to the person represented by the nobleman, or as to what is intended by His going into a far country. Instead of openly setting up the kingdom when He was here before, Christ had to be rejected by the earth, and to ascend into heaven. His servants occupy during His absence, and His citizens send after Him the insulting defiance,

We will not have this man to reign over us {Luke 19:14}.

What is it terminates this state of things?

And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him [etc.] {Luke 19:15}.

His servants are rewarded according to their works. But is this all? No.

But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me {Luke 19:27}.

This verse was quoted in our last, as prophetic of approaching judgments on the wicked. But what does this judgment on the wicked introduce? *The kingdom -- the kingdom in open manifestation, or display*. They thought it was immediately to appear. No, says our Lord, I will tell you what must intervene. What is it that intervenes? or rather what are the last intervening events? *The Lord's return, and judgment on the wicked*. Our Lord was to depart; His servants were to be held responsible to Him in His absence; He was to receive the kingdom, to return, to reward and punish His servants; and then, last of all, His enemies were to be slain. This accomplished, what but the kingdom can remain? The kingdom not in mystery, as at present, but in full, manifested, and universally acknowledged glory -- in other words, the Millennium.

To pass by a number of other passages which might be adduced, what is the testimony of Rev. 11:14-18? Without at present entering into any questions as to the general interpretation of this wondrous book, suffice it to remind my reader, that seal after seal having been opened, and trumpet after trumpet blown, we arrive, in the chapter before us, at an epoch of which intimation has been given in the previous chapters. Four trumpets sound their loud, shrill blast of warning and of terror:

And I beheld [says the prophet] and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (Rev. 8:13).

Then, another mighty angel is seen by the apostle, his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth. His voice is as when a lion roareth; and when he cries seven thunders utter their voices. This angel lifts his hand to heaven, and swears by Him that liveth forever and ever, that there should be time no longer.

But 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 (Rev. 10:7).

Such are the terms in which the last three, and especially the last, of the seven trumpets, are previously announced. What, then, is the language of our chapter itself?

The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever {Rev. 11:14, 15}.

Need we, my brethren, any further witness? Whatever fancies men may have indulged, and however counsel may have been darkened by a multitude of words without knowledge (as, alas! it often has been), no one dreams that this epoch has

arrived, that the predictions of the verses just quoted are fulfilled. The kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. When shall they become so? When the first and the second woe trumpets have sounded, and the third woe, following quickly, and accompanying the sounding of the seventh angel, has spent itself on the guilty inhabitants of the earth, then shall the mystery of God be finished; then shall the many voices in heaven proclaim the transfer, to our Lord and to His Christ, of the sovereignty of the whole earth. But listen! There is a second chorus.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry [not converted!], and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth (Rev. 11:16-18).

Oh yes! it is thus the universal reign of Christ is introduced. The nations, we know, will be angry (see Psalm 2); but when the seventh angel sounds, and God takes to Him His great power, and His wrath comes, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and reward be given to the saints, while the destroyers of the earth are themselves destroyed; when this epoch arrives, then, and not until then, shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. It is by judgments, overwhelming, and yet rapidly approaching judgments, that the Millennium will be ushered in.

Dan. 12:1 informs us,

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.

Why do I quote this? On account of our Lord's quotation of it in Matt. 24. He foretells a time of unequalled tribulation. But might not that be at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans? No; because the passage just quoted from Dan. 12 declares, that the time of trouble, unequalled by any since there was a nation, is when the Jews, Daniel's people, are delivered -- not dispersed. Bear this in mind, my readers. The tribulation attending the deliverance of the Jews is to be such as never was till then. So says Daniel. Now this shows that it could not be of any event now past that our Lord speaks.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be {Matt. 24:21}.

There cannot be two such periods, for our Lord declares that this is unequalled by anything before it, or by anything after it. It must be future, for the Jews are not yet delivered; and Daniel assures us that it is then there shall be tribulation unequalled by anything till that time. Clearly, then, it is of the

same period that Daniel prophesies and our Lord speaks. Equally plain is it that it is yet future. But why so anxious to establish this? Turn to v. 29. What have we there?

Immediately after [mark, dear reader, not a thousand or thousands, of years, but "*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 {Matt. 24:29, 30}.

Ah! this is the event which is to bring the present dispensation to a close, and usher in the period of universal righteousness and peace.

Let us turn now to Zech. 14.

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle {Zech. 14:1, 2}.

Here I pause. Many passages speak of a gathering of all nations.

It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues (Isa. 66:18).

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations (Joel 3:1, 2).

Now also many nations are gathered against thee . . . for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor (Mic. 4:11, 12).

For my determination is to gather the nations (Zeph. 3:8).

It is of the same subject the passage before us treats.

For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city {Zech. 14:2}.

Such are the straits to which the returned Jews will be reduced in that time of unequalled tribulation of which Daniel and our Lord inform us. How are they to be delivered?

Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle {Zech. 14:3}.

But is this any thing more than a figurative prediction of some striking providential interposition at the juncture referred to? Read what follows.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: **and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee** {Zech. 14:4-5}.

If this does not foretell the coming of the Lord with all His

saints at the period of this great gathering of all nations, where could language be found in which to clothe such a prediction? And what follows this event? To what is it introductory? To a period in which, we are told, "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem"; . . . "in summer and in winter" {v. 8} are they to flow. But more than this, --

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one {Zech. 14:9}.

Here we have the whole matter. Desolating judgment on God's congregated adversaries; the coming of the Lord, which brings this judgment; and, as the result, His peaceful reign over all the earth.

Turn now, dear reader, to Rev. 19 and 20. We are told previously (Rev. 16:14) of three unclean spirits:

. . . spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Here, in these chapters, we have the issue of this gathering. The apostle says,

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war {Rev. 19:11}.

We are left in no doubt as to who this is.

He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God {Rev. 19:13}.

Nor does He come alone. As in Zech. 14 we have read, "And the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," so here,

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean {Rev. 19:14}.

In v. 8 we read,

For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Thus He comes, attended by His saints. Woe to the wicked then!

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God {Rev. 19:15}.

Yes, the hardihood of God's enemies will not then protect them from His wrath. Infatuated beyond conception, they will indeed rush to the battle, but it will be to their everlasting overthrow.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone {Rev. 19:19, 20}.

Distinguished above all others in iniquity, they will be thus awfully distinguished in their doom. And will their followers escape? Alas, no!

And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth:

and all the fowls were filled with their flesh {Rev. 19:21}.

What ensues on this glorious advent of Christ and His saints, and this utter overthrow of His enemies? Read Rev. 20, and you will find Satan bound for a thousand years, and Christ reigning, with His risen and glorified saints, throughout that blissful period.

Here I pause. Space forbids further proof at present of what is, however, fully proved by all the Scriptures which have passed under review, that it is by judgments, and by the coming of the Lord, that the Millennium is ushered in. As to what it is that makes these judgments needful, we are not left ignorant. Scripture fully informs us. And this is one thing which makes the study of prophecy of such immense practical importance. It is not, my brethren, that we shall be on earth when these judgments are executed. Our scriptural hope, as we sought to exhibit it in our first paper, is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so to come with Him when He comes to execute judgment on the wicked. But we are surrounded by those principle, influences, and systems which are ripening to that maturity of evil which mankind will reach ere those judgments come. God will judge them at the coming of Christ, when they are fully ripe. But has acquaintance with these subjects no tendency to keep us apart from such evils now? Surely it has; and that we might be so sanctified, or kept apart from evil, is one object God has in view in revealing these things to us.

It is not by exciting applications of prophecy to passing events, that true edification is secured. The natural mind may feel the deepest interest in prophetic inquiries thus conducted; but Scripture was never designed to instruct us as to what transpires in the arena of political strife, or to occupy our souls with such subjects.

Our conversation (citizenship) [πολίτευμα] is in heaven {Phil. 3:20}.

Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth {Isa. 45:9}.

It is not with such contentions that God's revelation of the future concerns itself. It forewarns us, in general terms, that wars and rumors of wars may be expected, till God shall interpose in power for the settlement of His great controversy with mankind: -- till, as the result of this interposition, the scepter of universal dominion shall be wielded by the Prince of peace. But it is as to this interposition in judgment, and the approaching climax of iniquity which renders it inevitable, that prophecy instructs us. And even as to this, *it is not because the Church is to be on earth, amid the desolations of the crisis which is so rapidly approaching*, that she receives those revelations respecting it. Ere the coming crisis opens upon the world, the Church will have been received into heaven, at the descent of Christ into the air. I do not enter here upon the proof of this. It belongs properly to a further stage of our inquiries. But I would not here withhold the expression of this conviction; entreating my readers to search the Scriptures as to it for themselves; and trusting that, if the Lord will, the grounds of this conviction may ere long be fully presented in the progress of this little work. The Church



is not instructed by prophecy as to the approaching crisis of evil and of judgment, because she is to be present on earth when it arrives, but because she is now surrounded by all those active and insidious principles of evil, which when ripe God will judge. The Church is thus enabled morally and spiritually to judge those things *now*, which, in their maturity of evil, God will judge by the righteous retributions of His wrath. All the principles of Babylon and of the ten-horned beast are in existence and operation now. How can a Christian more effectually learn what they are, and why and how they are to be avoided, than by the prayerful study of God's prophetic description of their final forms, and of the awful judgments by which they will, at the coming of Christ, be destroyed? Nothing can be more dissimilar to this, in its moral tendencies and effects, than the attempt to weave together human political speculations, and the solemn prophetic announcements of Scripture. The one course tranquillizes and sanctifies; the other, while it excites the imagination and distracts the mind, tends powerfully to draw the thoughts and affections from heaven to earth.

There are three very distinct spheres on which the judgments will fall, when the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: Israel, the Gentiles, and professing Christendom. These, will, indeed, be all united in the final climax of evil, and so judgment will come upon the whole. Still, as their responsibilities, and the dealings of God with them, have been so very distinct, each demands distinct consideration. And if we are to understand why judgment comes upon Israel, we must know what the calling and testimony of Israel are, and how that nation has failed therein. If we are to discern the grounds of God's righteous judgment upon the Gentile nations, we must be acquainted with His past and present dealings with them, and with their conduct under their special responsibilities. So also, to understand the guilt of professing Christendom, and what it is that brings judgment on the highly favored nations which are so designated, we must know what the calling of the true Church is, what is its testimony, and in what respects Christendom, while assuming the place and owning the responsibilities of the Church, has acted contrary thereto. These are solemn subjects of inquiry. May our hearts be prepared for them. Much that is brighter remains beyond. But all these things, and others, must be left for succeeding papers.



## Chapter 4

### *The Doom of Christendom or, Why are the Judgments Coming?*

A solemn question this, and one that had need bring into solemn, prayerful exercise, the conscience of each one who considers it. The Lord grant us to discern the answers He has so plainly written in His holy word.

First, it is not because judgment is His delight. Let God be true, but every man a liar.

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel {Ezek. 33:11}?

If God expostulated thus with Israel of old, we may be sure He is no more willing to execute judgment now on Christendom and on the nations. Nay, where He foretells those judgments in the most solemn terms, He speaks of rising,

that he may do his work, *his strange work*, and bring to pass his act, *his strange act* {Isa. 28:21}.

As to this very period which is passing over our heads, and in which He delays to strike the long threatened blow, it is thus the delay is accounted for:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance {2 Pet. 3:9}.

No; it is not that God has any pleasure in the destruction of any; but that men despise, alas! the riches of His goodness and forbearance, and longsuffering; after the hardness of their impenitent hearts treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Reader, is this the case with you? If it be, O that the question may rouse you from thy slumbers, to consider what you can do in the day that God shall deal with you!

But are there not various spheres of judgment pointed out in prophecy, and may not the judgments be executed in those several spheres on various and distinct grounds? Assuredly, my readers, this diversity does exist. There will be judgments on Israel -- judgments on the nations -- judgments on Christendom. It is in this last, however, that we are most immediately interested; and it is wise on every account to begin with ourselves. The Lord grant us an honest desire to know the whole truth, and give us to humble ourselves under His mighty

hand!

The Apostle Paul brings the subject before us in a most impressive way in the following passage:

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (Rom. 11:22).

Let us attentively weigh these solemn words.

Toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: *otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*.

Who is it that is here addressed? It must be either an individual professor, or some body of men, personified by the apostle, and addressed as an individual. The context shows that it is not the former, but the latter. The grand subject of the chapter is the partial, temporary setting aside of Israel, and the bringing in of the present nominal professing body, mainly Gentile, to take the place and sustain the responsibilities of God's people on the earth. God dwelling within the veil of the Jewish sanctuary, and governing the Jewish nation by the law given on Sinai, was the God of the Jews: God, who raised up His Son Jesus from the dead, and placed Him at His own right hand in heaven, sending down the Holy Ghost to proclaim good tidings to lost sinners, is God of the Gentiles also. So the apostle shows at the close of Rom. 3.

Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith {Rom. 3:29, 30}.

To the mass of the Jewish nation this was "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence" {1 Pet. 2:8}. They rejected mercy, and were in consequence themselves rejected. But what is it that has taken their place? The nominal, professing body -- Christendom: and this is the body here addressed. But if so, why say, "on *them* which fell, severity?" Why not speak of Israel, too, as an individual? Ah! here is the divine beauty of the passage. Israel, as a whole, had *not* fallen, was *not* set aside. There was a remnant from among them according to the election of grace, and this remnant was incorporated with those Gentiles who formed, and have till now formed, the bulk of nominal Christendom. Accordingly, using the figure of an olive tree, we read of some of the branches being broken off, and of

a wild olive being grafted in. And it is to that which is represented by this wild olive that the apostle here addresses himself.

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I [Christendom, the professing body,] might be grafted in.' Well; because of unbelief they [the natural branches, the unbelieving Jews,] were broken off, and thou [Christendom] standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, [unbelieving Jews,] take heed lest he also spare not thee [Christendom]. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, [the Jews who did not believe,] severity; but toward thee [Christendom], goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off {Rom. 11:19-22}.

Can we fail to see here the detailed comparison between the bulk of the Jewish nation, set aside and broken off for their unbelief, and Christendom, which, by the goodness of God, has been set in the place which they filled as God's people on the earth, and put under the responsibilities inseparable from such a place?

Three points demand consideration. First, What would it have been for Christendom to have continued in God's goodness? Secondly, Has it done this? Thirdly, If not, the inevitable doom pronounced upon it, "otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off."

In ascertaining what it would have been for Christendom to have continued in God's goodness, we need not bring in view the special calling of the Church, or any of its highest privileges and dignities. True, that where these are known, the guilt of the fallen Church is seen to be by them greatly enhanced. But the apostle's entire argument in this chapter is on lower ground than this; and enough is known by professing Christians generally, at least by those who are likely to read this paper, of the distinctive character of Christianity, to lay a ground-work for conviction as to what it would have been to have continued in God's goodness, and as to whether we have done so or not.

What is Christianity? It is the result of the activity of God's love in a world of sinners, towards those who are hopelessly lost and ruined in themselves. The whole world was subject to the just judgment of God, ere the day of Pentecost dawned with its new wonders of divine beneficence and grace. "Now is the judgment of this world" were the words of Jesus as the cross rose to His view. Jew and Gentile there united, under Satan, the prince and god of this world, to reject and crucify, and slay the Heir of all things, the Son of God, the Lord of glory! Could human wickedness proceed further? Could it rise to a greater height? Not only had the Jews utterly broken their law, and the Gentiles abused the power entrusted to them of God, and gone into all the abominations detailed in Rom. 1, but when Christ came, the Messiah of the Jews, and a light to lighten the Gentiles, Jews and Gentiles conspired to put Him to death. As to both, it was thus made manifest that

this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil {John 3:19}.

This being the world's condition, condemned, under judgment,

for rejecting and crucifying the Son of God, why was not judgment executed at once? Ah, there were depths of compassion and grace which God had in store, and which Pentecost was to disclose. What were these? That God had raised up His Son Jesus, and exalted Him to His own right hand, and that, guilty and condemned and hopelessly undone as all men were, all who believed on the name of Jesus should receive remission of sins. The blood of Christ shed by man on earth had availed *for* man in heaven, and through it God now made Himself known as the merciful yet just justifier of the guiltiest who believed in Jesus.

Such is Christianity. Existing by virtue of the death, and resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, it assumes that man is wicked and condemned, and the world under judgment for the murder of God's Son; but it proclaims God as the Pardoner, instead of the Avenger, of man's sin -- as the Justifier, instead of the Condemner, of any one, of every one, who believes in Jesus! This is Christianity. Abounding grace -- pardoning mercy -- infinite, unfathomable love; and all these exercised *holily* and *righteously* through the sacrifice of Jesus, in the complete, free, everlasting justification of all who believe in Him: all, I say, whatever their country, character, or condition might be. All had sinned, all were lost, all had come short of the glory of God. To all did the gospel, did Christianity, proclaim this free gift of righteousness, through the blood of Jesus, to any one anywhere who, through grace, believed in Him!

Now it was at this the Jews stumbled. It was for the rejection of this gospel of an ascended Christ, that wrath came upon them to the uttermost -- that so many of the natural branches were broken off. What riches of divine goodness to confide to Christendom this light, by the rejection of which the Jews in general excluded themselves from all hope of eternal life. Light -- not only of perfect holiness and divine love in the person and ways of Jesus as He lived among men, but the light of divine holiness and love as manifested in the cross of Christ. Holiness, which could accept nothing less as a sacrifice for sin than all that He endured on the cross. Love, which met man's utter, perfect hatred and evil, and triumphed over it, by providing and accepting such a sacrifice, and by bestowing, through its efficacy, a free pardon, a perfect righteousness, yea, eternal life, on all, however guilty, who, renouncing all other dependence, simply believe in Christ. This is the light; the pure, the glorious light of God's goodness, confided to Christendom.

Has Christendom continued in this goodness? Has she even done so doctrinally? Do not misunderstand me. I am not asking whether this light still shines. Blessed be God, He has taken care for that. I am not asking whether there have been at all times since Pentecost some who have rejoiced in this light, and been ready to suffer death in its most horrid forms, rather than deny it, or put it under a bushel. Thank God, there always have been such! But has *Christendom continued* thus in God's goodness? Alas! there can be but one answer to this question. IT HAS NOT. The epistle to the Galatians shows that even in the apostle's days, the leaven of contrary doctrine had been introduced among Gentile Christians, and that it wrought so energetically as to threaten to leaven the whole lump. The

“hearing of faith” was that by which the Spirit had been ministered to them, and by which they had been introduced into perfect liberty. Those had come to them, however, who taught that unless they were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved. Faith that worketh by love was not sufficient! They must observe days, and months, and times, and years! A new creation in Christ Jesus would not suffice for those teachers; circumcision, the grand fleshly distinction, must be added thereto! See we not in all this the germ of what afterwards budded, and blossomed, and brought forth full ripe fruit; so that throughout Christendom for dark, dreary ages, and *through a great part of it to this day*, the test of orthodoxy is the denial of that goodness of God in which Christianity had its origin, and of which Christianity was the bright expression? For ages throughout Christendom, and to this day through two-thirds of it, and more, to confess this goodness is to be a heretic; to deny it, and to persecute those who confess it, is to be a good orthodox member of what boasts itself to be the only true Church of Christ! Has Christendom continued in God’s goodness? If to denounce, and anathematize, and persecute to prison and to death, those who maintain and confess the grace -- the goodness -- of God, be to continue in it, then has Christendom continued in it; but not otherwise. “Let him be accursed,” is the language of the great bulk of Christendom, as to the man that maintains that the goodness of God is such as to justify and save eternally a poor sinner, who, without one good work to plead, or one ordinance to rely upon, simply believes in Jesus Christ, and confides for salvation only and altogether in His precious blood. And this, reader, not for a passing moment, under some temporary evil influence, but the standing doctrine, and abiding course of the greater part of Christendom, recorded in numerous formularies of belief, enforced in as many authoritative decrees, and carried out with a tenacity and rigor which scarcely has a parallel.

My readers may be ready to say, “Yes, but it is Popery you are speaking of, not Christianity. Christianity is to be found among the martyrs and confessors, with whose blood her hands and her skirts are stained.” Most readily do I agree to this: but what then? If Popery be not Christianity, it is the religion of a great part of Christendom; and if Christianity be not found with her, but with the victims of her cruelty and rage, what is this but to repeat what has been maintained -- that Christendom, of which Rome forms so principal and so predominant a part, *has not continued in God’s goodness*? What is the profession and the boast of Rome? *That she is the visible, historical perpetuation of that which commenced with the ministry of Christ and His apostles*. And though it be true, that visible, historical perpetuation, or succession rather, is all that belongs to her, instead of moral, spiritual identity with that which she claims to be, can she escape the responsibility attaching to the character she assumes -- the pretensions she makes? Impossible! Nor can we, any of us, escape the admission of the solemn fact, that the blood of the martyrs of Jesus has been shed chiefly, not by the Trajans and the Neros, but by men who claim to be the successors of the apostles, and whose claim is acknowledged by the vast majority of those who bear the Christian name! Christendom has not continued in God’s goodness.

It is indeed true, that God has never, even in the darkest period, left Himself without witnesses of His grace. And it is also true, that at different seasons He has wrought by His Spirit in special energy, as at the Reformation, the blessed light of which has descended to our own times. But though the word of God was, as it were, disinterred at the Reformation, and the glorious gospel of the grace of God proclaimed to the nations, so as to quicken and emancipate numbers of souls, and kindle a light the brightness of which still surrounds us; though all this be true, yet nothing took place at that time, nothing has ever taken place, to alter the state and character of the bulk of Christendom. If such an alteration could have reversed the doom which hangs over the nominal, professing body, no such alteration has ever taken place. Rome did, at the time of the Reformation, receive a serious blow; but however it might cause her for a time to reel and stagger, it never thinned the ranks of her adherents more than a third; and she is now, as all are aware, putting forth fresh and unwonted energies, insisting as loudly as ever on all her blasphemous claims, and even preparing to glut herself afresh with the blood of her victims. Then my readers must remember, that if the Reformation had changed the character of Christendom, that would not have fulfilled the condition of continuance in the passage before us:

. . . toward thee goodness, **if thou continue** in his goodness: **otherwise** thou also shalt be cut off {Rom. 11:22}.

Restoration is not continuance: nay, it is incompatible with it. That which continues has no need to be, and in fact cannot be, restored. Then besides, as we have seen, if restoration could have averted the impending doom of Christendom, there has been no such thing. Nothing can avert the sentence; and if it could have been averted, there is and has been nothing to avert it; *“thou also shalt be cut off.”*

Thus far our attention has been confined to what it would have been, and that in the lowest sense, for Christendom to have continued in God’s goodness *doctrinally* -- and we have seen that, beyond all controversy it has not. But let us look further, and inquire whether Christianity was not intended to be a living exhibition and testimony of God’s goodness, and that in two ways. First, as conveying to all nations the tidings of God’s grace to lost sinners; and secondly, as exhibiting the blessed fruit of this grace in those who professed to be partakers of it. Let us see whether, in respect to both these points also, Christendom, has or has not, continued in God’s goodness.

There is this essential difference between Judaism and Christianity, that the one was local and stationary, the other diffusive and missionary. Judaism was the worship of a people who had been outwardly brought nigh to God, and who needed a priesthood through whom to approach God. Christianity, as we have seen, takes for granted that all men, whether outwardly nigh or far off, are really lost -- dead in sins: it proclaims the love God has had to such, the work Christ has done for such; and it makes known that all the riches of God’s love, and all the efficacy of Christ’s work are the portion of any poor sinner anywhere who, through grace, *believes* in Christ. What flows from this is, that all being alike by nature dead in sins, and all who truly *believe* being alike brought nigh

by the blood of Christ, all such distinctions as existed in Judaism between priests and people are unknown in Christianity, *save as respects our Great High Priest*, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is through Him we draw nigh to God: but as all believers have equal title and privilege through Him to draw near, all Christians are priests, and all alike are priests. All alike are

a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;

called to

tell abroad the virtues (ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε) of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light {1 Pet. 2:9}.

A privileged class of priests, nearer to God than their brethren, did exist in Judaism, but is a fiction unknown to Christianity. Christ alone has such a special, distinctive priesthood.

But if a class of priests, essential as it was to Judaism, is thus unknown in Christianity, Christianity has, what Judaism had not, a ministry of love, suited to its own wondrous character, as the fruit of the active interference of God's love on behalf of sinners. I speak not now of ministry within the Church, where the Holy Ghost acts by the varied gifts which he bestows and uses,

dividing to every man severally as he will {1 Cor. 12:11};

but of that active service of love which has the whole world for its sphere, and consists in beseeching men to be reconciled to God.

God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

Such was the ministry by which Christianity was distinguished. For the fulfilment of it, the apostles and others were endowed with the Holy Ghost: and as to this and its range, the words of Christ were --

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth {Acts 1:8}.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature {Mark 16:15}.

Such were the commands of the risen Savior; and how they were, for a while, fulfilled! How Paul, for instance, constrained by the love of Christ, and undaunted by all the gigantic forces arrayed against him, went onward in the mission of mercy, proclaiming himself debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise, ready, as much as was in him, to preach the gospel at Rome, or wherever his Master opened the door. What countries he traversed! What seas he crossed! What perils he braved! What hardships he endured! What a work of God accomplished by his means! Was this then the genuine spirit of Christianity? Who dare say it was not? Let us use it then as a

standard, and ask, in the light of it, has Christendom continued in God's goodness? Alas! even in his own life-time, Paul had to say that he had no man like-minded to his beloved Timothy, who was, indeed, a worthy companion of his toils! But where have been the Pauls, where have been the Timothys, since that day? Alas! when ordinances began to take the place of Christ, human merit to be substituted for God's grace, and works to be put in the place of faith; when the very doctrine of God's goodness as distinctive of Christianity began thus to be obscured, the sure and natural consequence ensued. The only motive to missionary zeal and labor being gone, Christendom ceased to be missionary in its character. As this loving ministry to souls declined, pretensions to distinctive priesthood were put forward; and these suited the state of souls not half rescued from Paganism, and strangers to the liberty and grace of the gospel. The downward course became more and more rapid, until Christendom accepted, in lieu of Christianity, a hideous, disproportioned mixture of Judaism, Paganism, and Philosophy, with a few Christian doctrines and phrases to save appearances, and keep up some connection with the form of that pure and heavenly system, whose whole spirit and life had evaporated and fled. The only missions which for centuries emanated from Christendom, were conducted by ambitious priests, who employed false miracles and political stratagems, to induce uncivilized hordes of men to embrace and endow the spurious Christianity thus introduced among them.

"Ah!" says my reader, "but it is of Romanism again that you are treating. Has there been no change in this respect since the Reformation?" Yes, indeed, thank God, there has been. The moment the gospel of God's grace began again to be proclaimed and believed, it began to produce a missionary spirit. To be sure for a time the missions of the Reformation were chiefly directed to countries where Popery, not Paganism, reigned. But after the great revival in the last century, a missionary spirit began to manifest itself in other directions; and this century has been distinguished by its missionary enterprises. And while many may have questions as to some parts of the machinery with which missionary labors are connected, there can be but one sentiment among those who love Christ, as to the fact of those labors, and of the gospel being conveyed to the dark places of the earth. But Protestant Christianity boasts of its missions, and many expect, as the result of them, the universal spread of the gospel, and the introduction of millennial days. Yea, some who read this and the preceding papers may be inclined to resent the thought of approaching judgments being introductory to millennial blessing, as though we questioned the sufficiency of the gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit to make it effectual to the world's conversion. If this be your feeling, dear reader, bear with me in pressing on your attention an inquiry or two which you may not have considered.

Do you really believe, then, that the gospel was designed to convert the whole world, and that the Church has been entrusted with it, and endowed with the Holy Ghost for this end? Then what say you to the conduct of Christians for the last eighteen centuries in caring so little for the diffusion of the gospel, and making so little progress toward the end you contemplate? You will admit, no doubt, that this is lamentable

-- that the conduct of the Church is inexcusable; but then you hope that she will yet be aroused to a sense of her duty, and go forth in her might to convert the nations of the earth. But be entreated to ponder one question as to this. Has God no controversy with us for eighteen centuries of neglect and unfaithfulness and sin? Now without saying as you do, that the gospel, or the Church, was intended to convert the world, one may well be bold to affirm two things: first, that the Church was called to be so faithful a witness and messenger of Christ, as not to leave one individual of the human family without the tidings of salvation through His name; secondly, that each individual to whom such a message comes is responsible to God for its reception. And what is it but apathy, and worldliness, and love of carnal ease and indulgence, that has hindered the gospel from being proclaimed to every living person on the globe? The discovery of gold fields in a given island attracts thither in a single year from forty to fifty thousand -- British Christians, I had almost said; and in name at least they are so. But if Christ were only as dear to us, my brethren, and souls as precious in our eyes, as gold is to the natural heart, why should not from forty to fifty thousand missionaries go out in the course of a single year to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ? Protestant missions! Why, if a hundredth part of the energy was employed in endeavoring to spread the gospel which is devoted to the pursuit of wealth, in a short time there would not be a country, or a village, or a hamlet, where its sound had not been heard. And have we no account to render, my brethren, for unfaithfulness in such a stewardship? Has God no controversy with Christendom on this account? Has Christendom in this respect continued in God's goodness? The fact is -- but the proof of it we must reserve for another occasion -- it is restored Israel that is to "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" {Isa. 27:6}. When Christendom, the wild olive, has been for its non-continuance in God's goodness cut off, the natural branches are to be grafted in again to their own olive tree; and, as far as human instrumentality is to be employed in that work, they are to be the instruments of subduing the whole world to Christ's sway. To Christians belonged the privilege, even as on them devolved the responsibility, of bearing testimony to that perfect grace and goodness in which God has, through the sacrifice of Christ, found a way holily and righteously to justify the ungodly, who, through grace, believe in Christ. Alas, how this privilege has been slighted! How this responsibility has been forgotten! How Christendom has failed to continue in God's goodness! How certain and inevitable the consequence -- "thou also shalt be cut off"!

Another point demands our attention. It was not only by the active diffusion of the gospel, that Christianity was designed to be a living manifestation of God's goodness: its actual effect on Christians themselves, was intended to answer the same end. To teach others what they themselves practically denied was the sin of the natural branches (see Rom. 2); and it could never be God's purpose that Christians, who were grafted in when they were broken off, should doctrinally make Him known, while denying Him by their works. Accordingly, our Lord Himself, and the apostles, lay the utmost stress on the living, practical manifestation by Christians of that grace by

which they have been saved, and in which they stand.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven {Matt. 5:14, 16}.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples {John 15:8}.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ {Phil. 1:27}.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life {Phil. 2:15, 16}.

It were easy to proceed quoting passages like these, and equally so to put it to the consciences of my readers, whether we (that is, professing Christians at large) have thus glorified God, and shone as lights in the world. There could be, alas! but one verdict as to this. But let the question be narrowed, and brought even to a readier issue than this. It has pleased our blessed Lord to make known to us in the most explicit way, how we might have led the world to believe that the Father had sent Him. He had previously said to the disciples,

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another {John 13:35}.

But in the passage I refer to, it is the Father Himself who is addressed by our Lord. Nor is it merely for the apostles, or the disciples then living, that He prays. He has been praying for them; but this is what He goes on to say:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:20, 21).

Am I assuming too much as to the meaning of these words, in taking for granted, that the unity among His followers, for which the Savior asks is a visible unity? How else could it act upon the world, and induce them to believe that the Father has sent His Son? Now such a unity did, in the earliest days of Christianity, exist.

And all that believed were together (Acts 2:44).

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul (Acts 4:32).

There was then, for a little space, the manifestation, practically, as well as in doctrine, of that goodness of God which Christianity was to make known. Has Christendom, in this respect, continued in God's goodness? I speak not now of the church of Rome. She pretends to unity -- visible unity. What the character and value of her unity is, we may by and by inquire. But in the great revival of gospel light at the Reformation, a mercy for which we can never sufficiently bless God, was there any recovery of the Church's original position and character in respect to visible unity? Alas! my brethren, however humbling the acknowledgment, it is impossible for any of us to refuse it, -- that wherever that light has most clearly shone, division upon division has taken place. I say not that these divisions are the result of the light which dawned afresh at the Reformation. God forbid. But, that they have been

its accompaniments, who can deny? Supposing, that in this question of whether we have continued in God's goodness, Rome could be entirely left out, and the question limited to the sphere within which the light of the Reformation has shone, can it be said within that sphere, that believers are so manifestly one as to constrain the world to believe that the Father has sent the Son? My brethren, is this the case? Or, is it not undeniable, that our divisions, glaring and multitudinous as, alas! they are, form at once the taunt of Rome, and the favorite plea of the infidelity of the age, which demands of us to agree among ourselves, ere we challenge the submission of heart and intellect to the revelations which Scripture contains? True, indeed, that neither the taunts of Rome, nor the excuses of infidelity, can shift off the responsibility from men's own souls, to hearken to what God says: -- our divisions can be no real excuse for either the one or the other: -- but are we the less really culpable for this? We were to have been, by our visible unity, a light to attract men to Christ. Instead of this, by our divisions, we are a stumbling-block in their way. True, that none stumble but those who wish for some pretense for rejecting Christ. But are we the less guilty, to furnish such pretenses to those who wish them? I say nothing as to the causes of our divisions: I say nothing here as to a remedy, or as to whether there be one. It is *the fact* to which I would fain draw the solemn, prayerful attention of my brethren. It is worse than useless casting the blame on one another. We are all responsible for it. It is our common sin, our common shame. But then it is connected, inseparably connected, with a solemn, irrevocable sentence: --

. . . toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: *otherwise* [and is not this the clause that applies to us?] *thou also shalt be cut off* {Rom. 11:22}.

Rome does, indeed, pretend to unity, and boasts of it as one of her chief claims to universal homage. But what is the unity on which she prides herself? Is it the unity of the Spirit? the holy unity for which the Savior prays in the passage we have been considering? Precious as true unity is, there is something which precedes it. Those for whose real and manifested unity the Savior prays, had been previously described by Him. And how had He described them? Hear His words:

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world {John 17:6}.

They had been given to Him *out of the world*. But again:

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world {John 17:14}.

Again,

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. {John 17:16}

Once more,

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me {John 17:25}.

They for whose unity Jesus prays the Father, are those who, in the midst of a world which knows neither the Father nor Jesus, have been separated from that world by the vital knowledge of both. They are no more of the world than Jesus

was; objects, moreover, of the world's hatred, as was their Master. Long before this, Jesus had said to those who would have had Him accredit the world as it then was,

My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil (John 7:6, 7).

This unworldly character is that by which He here describes those for whose manifested unity He prays. And what an answer to His prayer does the Church in its earliest days present! Its unity we have already seen. Its worldliness, and the effect upon beholders of the manifested presence of God in its midst, are strikingly depicted in Acts 5:12-14:

And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women).

There was an attraction which none could resist, -- the people magnified them. Still, they were so obviously the habitation of God -- God so manifested His presence among them -- that of the rest dared no man join himself to them. None but true believers dared venture so near God as to enter their assembly, though all magnified them, and believers were added, multitudes both of men and women. Is it unity like this that Rome boasts? Alas! it is a unity accomplished and maintained by calling the world the Church, baptizing whole nations in the name of Christ, pretending to regenerate them thus, and bring them within the pale of the Church of Christ. Instead of a holy unity with Christ, and the Father, and each other, of those who by the Holy Ghost have been brought to know the Father, and Jesus whom He hath sent, and who have been separated thus from the world which knows neither the Father nor the Son, it is a unity of the world under the name of Christ; a unity of those who, instead of being hated by the world, as Christ was, are themselves the world, which hates and persecutes, to prison and to death, the true confessors of Christ's name.

Such is the boasted unity of Rome: a unity, to stand apart from which one needs no other warrant, and could not have a more solemn necessity, than is found in those words of scripture,

Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Rev. 18:4).

But may we not, my brethren, put it seriously to our consciences whether Romanism be the only form of Christianity which accredits and seeks to sanctify the principle of union with the world?

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious (1 Pet. 2:4).

The Christ with whom the first Christians were identified was a Christ *disallowed of men*. Is it so with us, my brethren?

Ye adulterers and adulteresses [says another apostle], know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (Jas. 4:4).



What is the indictment against Babylon in Rev. 17 and 18? There are many counts in it, doubtless, and I am not enquiring after them all; but what is it that is the head and front of her offending?

Come hither; I will show unto 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 {Rev. 17:1, 2}.

It is this spiritual harlotry -- this alliance with the world, its kings, and its inhabitants, of that which bears the name of Christ and pretends to be His spouse, which is the grand predominant characteristic of what is here described. And is that characteristic confined to Rome? I enter into no particulars; my object is not detail; but I put it to your consciences, my brethren, can Reformed Christianity, whether in this country, on the continent of Europe, or in America, plead perfect innocence of this spiritual uncleanness? I refer to no questions between Establishments and Dissent, between one form of Protestant Christianity and another. Does not the conscience of each testify that the sin lies more or less at his own door? Alas! who of us is clear? Does not union with the world, instead of separation from it, characterize Christendom in the mass -- Christendom, whether Greek, Romish, or Reformed? And what shall be the end of these things? What says the Scripture we have been considering?

Toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" {Rom. 11:22}.

And now, my readers, let me ask you, Can there be a doubt as to the three points which were to be considered? Had the Church remained what it was at first, the bright witness of God's free love to lost, ruined sinners, -- had she, in the activity of love and the power of the Holy Ghost, fulfilled her mission in making known this love of God to every creature -- had she continued, by her manifested unity, to be herself the living expression of this love -- and had she maintained her holy separateness from the world, as Christ did, while serving it, and bearing testimony in it, and to it; then had she continued in God's goodness. As to the question whether she has done this, we have seen, alas! that for many centuries the great mass of those who have borne the Christian name have been, and are still, deniers, *even doctrinally*, of that goodness of God which is the grand distinction of Christianity: that instead of making this goodness known to all mankind, we are so absorbed, alas! in other pursuits, that in one short year mammon can number far more pilgrimages in search of gold than the whole course of the Christian era can number in search of souls; that instead of our unity attracting souls to Christ, our divisions repel them, and afford occasion of stumbling and offence to those who wish it: while our worldliness, alas, is written on our foreheads, and needs no one to proclaim it! Then, as to the third point, we have seen that the consequence is inevitable. The sentence has gone forth, and cannot be revoked. Excision must take place. "Thou also shalt be cut off." What a prospect! How different from the dreams of increasing light and progress and blessing indulged by most! How terrible the surprise, to be awakened from such dreams by the fulfilment of the sad reality!

Because, even because they have seduced my people,

saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it. . . . So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I am the LORD (Ezek. 13:10-11, 14).

True, these words were spoken of the prophets of Israel, which prophesied concerning Jerusalem, and which saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace. But is there nothing in the passage to be a warning to us? When God says Christendom shall be cut off, and men say that it shall flourish yet more and more, till the whole world be converted and the Millennium introduced, is it less grievous in His eyes for a false peace to be preached to Christendom, than it was for false prophets to see visions of peace for Jerusalem when there was no peace? Will a wall cemented with such untempered mortar be more enduring in the present dispensation than the last? Does not our Lord, speaking of His day, the day of the coming judgments, say that

as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth {Luke 21:35}?

Does not Paul tell us,

When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape {1 Thess. 5:3}?

Does not Babylon's overthrow take place in the moment of her proudest exultation, and fullest fancied security?

For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her {Rev. 18:7, 8}.

And is not the word to Sardis quite as solemn?

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee {Rev. 3:3}.

Reader, "he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear"!

Let us not, however, confound the prospects of the true Church of Christ with the impending doom of Christendom! Ere the deluge came on the guilty inhabitants of the old world, Enoch was translated to heaven, while Noah was preserved through all the swellings of the flood to repeople and replenish the earth. Before the cities of the plain were destroyed by fire, Abraham was in communion with God as to their approaching doom, pleading that if possible they might be spared, while Lot was sent out from the midst of the overthrow. When most of the natural branches were broken off for their unbelief, there was, as the apostle tells us, a remnant according to the election of grace; and these, as we know, were incorporated along with Gentile believers, in the one body of Christ -- the elect body, the completion of which is that for which alone God waits, ere He begins to deal afresh with the earth in judgment. The heaviest judgments are to fall on Christendom, for its non-

continuance in God's goodness.

That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes {Luke 12:4}.

But ere judgment comes on Christendom, the true Church will have been, like Enoch, translated to heaven. This heavenly hope of the true Church we considered at large in *The Heavenly Hope* {ch. 1}. The natural branches, a remnant of Jews, will, like Noah and like Lot, be preserved through all the judgments, and grafted once more into their own olive tree. These, with many spared Gentiles, will form the population of the millennial earth, over which Christ and His glorified saints will reign. Those Jews who believed in Christ at the commencement of the present dispensation were introduced, prior to the judgments that came on their nation, into a far higher and better position, even into that of being members of Christ's body, the Church. So, at the close of the present period, ere the sentence of excision is executed on Christendom, the true Church will be raised to its own place in heavenly glory with its Head. At Pentecost, and for some time afterwards, the Church and Christendom were identical: the Church was Christendom, and Christendom was the Church. We know, however, how evil men crept in unawares, how the enemy sowed tares among the wheat, how grievous wolves entered in, not sparing the flock, and perverse men arose, drawing away disciples after them. We know how the mystery of iniquity, which wrought even in the apostles' days, has continued to work, and how, as the result, *Christendom* has not continued in God's goodness. But, notwithstanding this, the true Church has never ceased to exist. Through this whole dark period, all who, through grace, have been quickened to believe in Christ, have been identified with His position in heavenly places, and have been, in fact, and are, His body, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who forms and fashions them, by heavenly hopes, for heavenly blessedness and glory. The cutting off of Christendom, need I say, will not touch the life of one single member of this elect body, or bride of Christ.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand {John 10:27, 28}.

Because I live, ye shall live also {John 14:19}.

But how are we to use this precious certainty of everlasting life? Surely not to reconcile ourselves to those evils, or to connivance at those evils, which are drawing down the heaviest judgments of God on that which professes the name of Christ. That would be to turn

the grace of God into lasciviousness {Jude 4}

indeed. No, let us rejoice in the assured, unfailing certainty of being with our Head and Bridegroom in the glory which has been given to Him, and which He has given to us; let us the more bless God for it, seeing the end that awaits the poor world around us -- the Christian world, (sad paradox and contradiction!) as it terms itself; but let us not forget that he

that hath this hope in him [Christ] purifieth himself, even as he is pure {1 John 3:3}.

Never let us seek to reconcile ourselves to any thing which will

not bear the light of His coming glory. What that glory will consume is no object for our affections or pursuit. The Lord grant us the full sanctifying power of the heavenly hope which sovereign grace has made, with such precious certainty, our own.

With Christendom we are sufficiently identified by a common profession of Christianity, and by personal participation, alas! in its sins, to feel the sentence of excision pronounced on it, to be a loud call on us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. It was when Josiah was informed that nothing could cause the sentence to be revoked, which had gone forth against Jerusalem and Judah, personal exemption indeed being promised to him, that he still further humbled himself before the Lord, and set about promoting a reformation, which had till then no parallel in the nation's history. The judgments could not be averted, and they were not: but Josiah's penitence was fully owned of God; and the reformation, he was used to bring about, was a bright testimony for God, on the very eve of the nation's overthrow. Oh for something of his spirit!

Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and upon the inhabitants of the same (2 Chron. 34:27, 28).

We, my brethren, are not comforted by the assurance of being gathered to the grave in peace, but by the hope of being gathered to meet the Lord in the air, so that when the judgments come, we shall not be amid the scene on which they are poured, but in the heavens whence they issue. But surely the effect of such a hope, is not to make the heart indifferent to the dishonor cast on Christ's name by the sins of those who bear it, whether really or in profession only. We are identified with that to which Christ has, in His absence, so to speak, entrusted His glory; and can we refuse to bow our heads, and, by confessing our sin, and bearing the shame and sorrow of it before Him, justify Him in those judgments by which, ere long, He will vindicate His despised and dishonored claims; and make manifest that however we may have forgotten His glory He remembers it, and knows how to assert and manifest it, to the glory of His Father, the joy of His saints, the confusion of His adversaries, and the deliverance of an oppressed and groaning creation! To His name be glory forever.

## Chapter 5

### *Christ and the Church*

The responsibilities and the doom of Christendom were what last occupied us. But within the sphere to which the name of Christendom attaches, there exists that which is unspeakably precious to God the Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. What is that of which we thus speak? It is **the church of God**. The true portion, the highest privileges, of the Church of God, as well as the responsibilities flowing therefrom, we purposely passed by. Our attention was confined to such views of the responsibility of those who bear the name of Christ, as Christians generally, would be able to recognize. Alas! that to Christians generally the Church of God is a subject but little known. I do not mean that they are not true believers -- that they are not saved. A man may be a true believer, and know little about the Church of God. A man may be a member of that Church (as all true believers during the present period are) and yet be ignorant of its nature and destiny. The Church is the bride of Christ -- His body. It is the habitation of the Holy Ghost. Its calling is a heavenly one. Its portion and its hopes are heavenly. Its continuance here is only to represent Christ, and show forth the riches of the grace of God. When its formation and discipline are completed, it will be removed to its own heavenly sphere, and God will then begin to deal in judgment with the earth. How distinguished must be the privileges, and how solemn the responsibilities, of such a body! And seeing that Christendom has assumed this place, and pretends to be nothing less than this Church of God, how seriously are its own responsibilities enhanced thereby! Let us now turn our attention to this subject, and inquire what light is shed upon it in the Word of God. The Lord grant us very simple faith, and the spirit of sobriety and godly fear, in pursuing this inquiry.

It was not till after the death and resurrection of Jesus that the Church began. In the purpose of God, as we shall see, it existed before all worlds. But as to its actual existence on earth, the Church was formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Those who till then had been individual believers, disciples of Christ, were by the descent of the Holy Ghost incorporated into one body; and that body, which has existed ever since, is the Church of God. Christ glorified is the Head of this body. All true believers in Christ are its members. The Holy Ghost unites the members to the Head, and to each other. He dwells in the body, moreover, supplying life, strength, guidance, and blessing from the Head to the whole; His own presence constituting its sole power of growth, unity, testimony, and rule. Such is the scriptural idea

of the Church. But to understand what the New Testament teaches us concerning it, it is necessary that we consider certain previous dealings of God with mankind.

From the time when sin entered the world, and God gave the promise of the serpent's overthrow by the woman's seed, there have always been those who have been saved by grace through faith {see Eph. 2:8}. Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, in the antediluvian period; since then, Abraham and others, -- patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings; besides multitudes whose names have not been transmitted to us, but who are noticed in Heb. 11 as having lived in faith and died in faith, looking for a better resurrection, are proofs that God never left Himself without a witness, even in the darkest of times. But these believers of other days were never incorporated into one body. They were never formed into an assembly inhabited and ruled by the Holy Ghost. Enoch walked with God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Isaac and Jacob followed in the pilgrim steps of their father Abraham. Joseph was enabled through grace to maintain his integrity in circumstances of most terrible temptation. Moses had close converse with God for forty days and forty nights on the summit of the mount. Joshua led the victorious armies of Israel into the promised land. Samson, Jephthah, and others, were used of God as instruments of deliverance to Israel. Samuel was the chosen instrument and channel of renewed blessing after the ark had been carried away, and the house of God at Shiloh had been overthrown. David, the man after God's own heart, served his own generation by the will of God, and fell asleep. Others might be mentioned, Elijah, Elisha, and multitudes besides. But all these are presented to us in God's Word, as individual servants of His -- not as members of a body. They were men of faith. Their devotion and obedience shine brightly on the pages of the inspired record. But there is not such a thought suggested by all that is said of them, as that they were members of "the body, the Church" {Col. 1:18}. They were beyond all doubt quickened by the Spirit. By virtue of the foreseen sacrifice of Christ, they were forgiven and saved. They will all have part in the first resurrection, and partake of heavenly glory. There can be no question as to any of these things. But no one of these things, no, nor all of them together, constitute the Church. The Church shares these things -- life, justification, resurrection, and heavenly glory, with the saints of Old Testament times; but what constitutes the Church is something

distinct from, and beyond, all these things. *It is the actual living unity with Christ, and with each other, of those who, since Christ's ascension, are formed into this unity by the presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.* Was there anything like this in Old Testament times?

God had a nation, indeed, in Old Testament times; and the history of this nation, with the prophetic details of the counsels and purposes of God respecting it, form the principal subjects of the Old Testament Scriptures. Israel was not manifested as a nation until its redemption out of Egypt by the hand of Moses. Long before this, God had promised to the patriarchs, that their seed should possess the land of Canaan; but now this promise was to be accomplished.

My object is not to consider the way in which God fulfilled His promise, and brought them into the land. My readers know well that this was done, and that the nation of Israel possessed the land for many hundreds of years. Placed there under God's immediate government, they proved themselves in the land, what they had already shown themselves to be in the wilderness, a stiff-necked and rebellious nation. God had long patience with them; now chastising them for their sins, and then, on their confessing and bewailing their iniquities, raising up for them judges, who first delivered and then governed them. A crisis of national iniquity led to the setting aside of this order of things, and the elevation of David to the throne. With David God made a new covenant, and, from this point in the nation's history, the hopes of Israel were suspended on God's covenant with David and his house. It is in fulfilment of this covenant that Christ, the true Son of David, is yet to reign over the house of Israel, and His kingdom to extend over the whole earth. When the house of David began, in the time of Ahaz, utterly to decline, the prophetic books of Scripture began to be written. In these books, while the nation is called on to repent and return to the paths of obedience, and threatened with the most solemn judgments in case of their refusal, the glory of Christ's kingdom -- a kingdom to be established by means of these very judgments -- is held out as the encouragement of any who do hearken and repent. All this went on till the time of Nebuchadnezzar, when, the iniquity of the nation having become intolerable, they were given up to the Gentiles and carried into captivity. At the close of seventy years, a small remnant returned to Jerusalem, and their descendants formed the population of the land at the commencement of the Christian era. To them the Lord Jesus Christ was presented. Heir of the promises made both to Abraham and to David, answering in all respects to the prophecies which were read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day, showing, by His works, that He was not only the Messiah of Israel, but Israel's Jehovah, Emmanuel, God with us see {Matt. 1:23}, He was presented to the nation, the long-looked-for object of their national expectation, and ready, had they been ready to receive Him, to be the fulfiller of their national hopes; but all was in vain. When they saw Him, they discerned no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. They scorned and rejected Him. A little band of disciples was indeed gathered round Him by the power of divine grace. All who had heard

and learned of the Father came to Him. But how few they were! And how many, who at first seemed earnestly to follow Him, fell back, and walked no more with Him. The issue was, that after a patient ministry of love, lasting for more than three years, His hour being come, the hour appointed of the Father, He was delivered into the hands of the Jews, and they all but consummated their iniquity by putting Him to death. With wicked hands they crucified their King! We know, my brethren, how this was. Blessed be God, it was grace, grace to sinners, that gave Him up to bear the wrath due from God to sin, as well as permitted man to wreak upon Him the relentless hatred of his own heart towards God! The blood shed by man was needed -- needed by us to wash out our guilty stains! It was needed by Israel itself, as the only basis on which its blessedness can be established. It was needed for God's glory, either in sparing an ungodly world, or in addressing to it, as at present, the ministry of reconciliation, or in bringing out of it to Himself those who are co-heirs with Christ, as well as in blessing Israel and the whole earth by and by, under the reign of Christ, when the judgments shall have purged the earth. But the Jews had no thought of this in putting our Lord to death. It was "by wicked hands" {Acts 2:23} He was crucified and slain; and, except one fearful addition to it afterwards, this act filled up for the time the measure of their iniquity.

The one crime added by the Jews to the crucifixion of Jesus, was their rejection of mercy through His blood, when proclaimed to them by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. But ere passing on to this, let us reverently inquire, What became of the Blessed Sufferer? Was it possible for the grave to retain Him, or that He should be held of the bonds of death? Ah, no! Peter had rightly confessed Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" {Matt. 16:16}; and it was on the occasion of his so confessing Him, that the first mention was made of the Church. "Upon this rock [said our Lord] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" {Matt. 16:18}. Now it was by the resurrection from the dead, that He was declared to be the Son of God with power. As another has remarked, "The Son of the *living God*, in building His Church, would shelter it from the power of hades, and of him who had the power of death. The death of the Messiah might break the links between Israel after the flesh and the head of their blessing, whatever grace might do afterwards for that nation; but whatever was based on the power of the resurrection (and it is in resurrection that Christ has been declared the Son of God with power,) was secured against him who, at the most, had the power of death." How sweet that the very first mention of the Church in Scripture -- the mention of it when it was yet future, yet to be built -- should thus show, that by union with Him who is the Son of the living God, it is placed beyond all the power of death!

But not only was Jesus raised from the dead, He was exalted to the right hand of God; and it is as seated there, that He has sent down the Holy Ghost to form and inhabit the Church. The descent of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is connected, not with the resurrection, but with the ascension

of Jesus. "This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). So in John 16:7; the going away of which the Savior there speaks to His disciples, is not His going away by death to return in resurrection, but His going to the Father.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you {John 16:7}.

The coming of the Holy Ghost depended on the exaltation -- the glorification -- of Christ.

He did, indeed, appear to His poor, fainting, scattered disciples, after His resurrection. He gathered them, as it were, around Himself. Again and again He appeared in their midst, instructing and comforting them, certifying to them in various ways that He was really risen, and, breathing upon them individually, He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" {John 20:22}. But even all this, precious as it was, did not constitute them the Church, or qualify them fully for the place they were designed to fill. Nothing less than the actual, personal presence of the Holy Ghost on earth could suffice for this. And for His coming they were instructed still to wait. Led out by their Lord as far as to Bethany, they saw Him ascend, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. But just before His departure, He bade them tarry at Jerusalem, and 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 1:4, 5}.

And when, on the day of Pentecost, He did descend, with the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and the appearance of cloven tongues of fire, so that the disciples were all filled with the Holy Ghost, what was the subject of His testimony? Charging upon the Jews by Peter's mouth the murder of their Messiah, He proceeds by the lips of the same apostle to bear this glorious testimony:

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear {Acts 2:32, 33}.

The three thousand (fruit of this testimony) who gladly received the word, and were baptized in the name of Jesus, were added to the Church. The Church was now in actual existence. The hundred and twenty disciples, now incorporated in one by the presence of the Holy Ghost, received at once the addition of these three thousand earliest converts: and the chapter closes with the statement,

And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved {Acts 2:47}.

The natural place of these Jewish converts was, according to the prophecy of Joel and others, to have part with the delivered Jewish remnant.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion

and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call (Joel 2:32).

But all this was on the supposition of Israel's repentance (see Joel 2:17, 18): and as Israel had no heart to repent, but having crucified its King, was now about to complete its guilt by rejecting this testimony of the Holy Ghost to the ascended Jesus, all this deliverance and blessing in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem had to be put off till Israel shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" {Matt. 23:39}. Meanwhile, these converts, who, according to natural order and prophetic hopes, should have been saved with this earthly, Jewish deliverance, are introduced into something far better. The Lord added them to the Church daily. Still God's mercy lingered over Jerusalem and the Jewish people; and no one can read the early chapters of the Acts without perceiving how the testimony in these chapters was especially addressed to the Jews. If even then they would have repented of their sin in rejecting and crucifying their Messiah, how ready God still was to pardon and blot out all! But, alas! in the martyrdom of Stephen, they as utterly rejected all these gracious overtures by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, as in the crucifixion of Jesus, they had refused the One who, in incarnate love and tenderness, would fain have gathered their children together. Jerusalem had now to be given up. The disciples are scattered abroad, and carry the Gospel first to Samaria, and then to the Gentiles; while, from among Stephen's murderers, one is chosen by sovereign grace to be the special instrument of making known the full heavenly portion and glory of the Church. Saul of Tarsus is transformed into Paul the apostle; and it is in his Epistles that we find the full revelation of this mystery, till then hid in God from before the foundation of the world.

To gather up a little the points which have been touched upon: -- Individual saints, or believers, there have always been; but they were not incorporated into one in Old Testament times. God has besides an earthly people, a nation, which He governed by His laws, and in the midst of which many of those individual saints were found, whose names are recorded in the Word. The nation itself, however, that is, the mass of it, always consisted of mere natural unregenerate persons. Favored of God above all other nations, their very privileges became the means of demonstrating their wickedness; and not theirs only, but also the hopeless evil of man's nature, placed under any possible circumstances of religious culture and privilege. When, last of all, God sent His Son, they took advantage of His condescension and His grace to put Him to death. This, followed up by their rejection of God's grace as proclaimed by the Holy Ghost in the ministry of the apostles, terminated for the present all hopes of their national blessing. They were left to the fearful judgments which soon after overtook them, and under which they still remain. Grace, we know, and divine power, will restore them as a nation in the end. But for the present they are left under judgment. What is it fills up the interval? **The church**. When did it commence? Not with the incarnation -- not even with the personal ministry -- of our Lord. He came

seeking fruit of Israel. Alas, there was none to be found! But during His patient ministry of grace in the midst of Israel, there was gathered around Him, as we have seen, a little band of disciples. These knew, by revelation of the Father to their hearts, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. They were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God {see John 1:13}. Still they were not the Church. They were the materials of which the Church was afterwards to be in the first instance composed; but they were not as yet the Church. For the formation of the Church two things were needed -- the death of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. Caiaphas, being high priest, in using certain words with quite a different meaning in his own mind, unwittingly prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation of the Jews;

and not for that nation only {adds the Holy Ghost by the evangelist}, but that also he should *gather together in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad (John 11:52).

The death of Christ was necessary to this, both in the counsels of God, and in the actual putting away of sin. Then, further, the power by which alone this gathering could be accomplished was the power of the Holy Ghost; and He, the Comforter, could not come till Jesus was glorified -- not risen merely, but glorified. Hence, the very first mention we have of the Church historically, i.e., as actually existing, is in Acts 2, when Christ had been glorified, and the Holy Ghost had come down. Then the Church was formed. True that for awhile it consisted entirely of Jews, while a special testimony to the Jews was being carried on at Jerusalem. This being rejected, Peter was sent to the Gentiles; the apostle of the Gentiles was called; believing Gentiles were incorporated with the Jews who had already believed; and the full, heavenly portion and unity and glory of the Church, as one with Christ by the Holy Ghost, was revealed to Paul, and made known in his ministry and epistles. The Church existed from the day of Pentecost; but the chosen vessel for its full instruction as to the mind of God respecting it was Paul; and his conversion did not take place till after the definite rejection by Jerusalem of the last lingerings of divine mercy, in the testimony of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.

We may now consider the epistle to the Ephesians, where we have the subject of the Church perfectly unfolded. How the heart feels, in turning to such a portion, the deep need of what the apostle so touchingly implores, where he asks,

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto 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 his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints {Eph. 1:17, 18}.

The Lord grant that it may be thus, both with writer and readers, in further pursuing the present inquiry!

The first thing to be noticed in what this epistle teaches as to the Church is this -- that though, as we have seen, the Church was called last into existence in the developed order of God's ways, it existed in His mind and purpose before the

unfolding of His ways commenced. Before God separated Israel to Himself as a peculiar nation on the earth -- before the nations existed from amid which Abraham and his seed were called -- yea, before the mountains were settled, or the hills brought forth, the Church existed in the purpose of God.

According as he hath chosen us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

It is not the covenant with David, or the redemption from Egypt, or the call of Abraham, or even the creation of the world, to which our thoughts are here led back, as the date of God's counsels and purposes respecting the Church. They are without a date. Eternal as the Father, whose counsels and purposes they are, and as the Son, in whom they are all established and accomplished -- the Holy Ghost (Himself eternal, the eternal Spirit) here reveals them to us, as before the foundation of the world. Nay, more; the creation of all things was in order to the accomplishment of these counsels of eternal wisdom and love.

. . . God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church [i.e., by means of the Church] the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:9-11).

What a place this gives to the Church! The subject, in Christ, of divine thoughts and counsels in all past eternity, it is to be the vessel for the display of God's brightest glory in eternal ages yet to come.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory **in the church** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (Eph. 3:20, 21).

May our hearts humbly and reverently adore the grace which has thought of us, and dealt with us, after such a sort as this!

Another thing demanding attention is, that this great thought of God from all eternity was not revealed, or made known, till at least four thousand years of the world's history had run their course.

If ye have heard [says Paul] of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward: how that by revelation he made known unto me **THE MYSTERY**; . . . 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; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, **AND OF THE SAME BODY**, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph. 3:2-6).

Then, again, he speaks of making all see

. . . what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God (Eph. 3:9).

Observe, that we are not told here of a mystery, in the mere sense of its being something, in itself, above the powers of nature or reason to have discovered. All the revealed truths of the Gospel are mysteries in this sense. But this was a mystery "hid in God" -- an unrevealed mystery. The apostle not only says that it required revelation to make it known, but that it had *not been*, till in his time, *made known* by revelation.

Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed {Eph. 3:5}.

This declaration is of great importance: it draws a wide line of distinction between this mystery, now revealed to Paul and the other apostles and prophets, and all that had been the subject of Old Testament instruction or prediction. It was not a mystery *hid in God* from the beginning of the world, that Christ should come -- that Christ should suffer -- that Christ should reign. It was not an *unrevealed* mystery, even that Christ should rise from the dead, and take His seat at the right hand of God. *Psa. 16, 110*, and many other portions of Scripture, had foretold these things. It was no mystery *hid in God*, that Israel should be happy and prosperous under Messiah's reign; or, even, that the Gentiles should, in a subordinate place to that of Israel, be brought into blessing beneath His scepter of peace. Many passages in the Old Testament plainly foretell all this. But that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, not only with believing Jews, but with Christ Himself; in short, that Christ should have a body, quickened and gathered into unity with Himself by the Holy Ghost -- gathered from among the fallen sons of men, both Jews and Gentiles -- a body united to Him now by the Spirit, and to share His blessedness and glory forever -- this was a mystery indeed -- a mystery hid in God, and never revealed, till it was revealed to the holy apostles and prophets of the New Testament by the Spirit. Yet such a body is the Church of God.

The next thing to be considered is, that the blessing of the Church is complete; and as to all that secures and establishes it, already accomplished. It is not blessing conditional on obedience,<sup>9</sup> as was that of Israel in the land; but blessing in Christ, to which we are introduced, consequent on His accomplishment of all that the Father gave him to do.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

*Who hath blessed us!* And with ALL spiritual blessings! And in Christ! How complete! How certain! How inalienable!

Further: the blessings of the Church are *spiritual* blessings in *heavenly* places -- not *temporal* blessings, as Israel's were. It was promised that they, if obedient, should be blessed in their basket and in their store, in the fruit of their body, the fruit of their cattle, and the fruit of the ground. It was with temporal blessings that they were to be blessed. And even in millennial times, when they will enjoy spiritual blessings also, the possession of every temporal comfort is a prominent feature in their predicted condition.

And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the LORD (Ezek. 34:27).

There are no such promises as these to the Church. Existing,

as it does, by virtue of union with a risen and exalted Savior, its blessings are spiritual. Redemption, forgiveness, acceptance, adoption, knowledge of God's mind and will, coheirship with Christ, the earnest of the Spirit; these, and such as these, are the blessings with which the Church is blessed. And it is *in heavenly places* too. Many read this passage as though it spake of heavenly frames or feelings, or dispositions, or states of mind; but this would make it the same thing as spiritual blessings: instead of which, it is,

Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places {Eph. 1:3}.

But if we refer to the latter part of the chapter, where the expression, "heavenly places" again occurs, the meaning of these words will become self-evident: it speaks of Christ being set at God's right hand in heavenly places. Are not *places* intended there? Is there not *a place* where the glorified body of Christ resides? Is it in that place, then, or in those places, that the Church is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. In Christ! Ah, that is the key to the whole mystery! But we may well pause here, and meditate a little further. The Lord grant us with unshod feet, as treading on holy ground, to turn aside and see this great sight!

Man and the world had been on trial for more than four thousand years. Man in innocence had been set amid the fulness of earthly blessing in Eden, and had failed. Men were left between the fall and the flood to take their own course, and they filled the earth with violence, till God had to sweep away the human race. Again was man tried, the sword of government being now entrusted to the patriarch Noah, and any who succeeded him in the place of authority or rule. What did Noah, but degrade himself in the eyes of his children? and what did mankind at large, but forsake the true God, and corrupt themselves with idols? Abraham was called out, and Israel appeared on the scene. There, within narrow limits, man and the world were still more strictly tried. With what result? Need it be rehearsed? Who that reads his Bible does not know how Israel failed throughout? They failed in the wilderness, and failed in the land. They failed under the judges, they failed under the priests, failed under the prophets, failed under the kings. Last of all Christ came. He had the rights and titles connected with every position in which man had been placed, and in which man had failed. The true Son of David, He was heir to David's throne, and as such He was the hope of Israel. Seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth were to be blessed in Him. The sword of government, first confided to Noah, really belonged to Him. Second {last} Adam, He was heir to the universal dominion confided to the first, who had proved himself, alas! so unworthy of the trust. Such are some of Christ's earthly dignities and titles; and how evident that when He makes them good, universal blessing to the earth will be the result. But He was first to be presented to man for his reception, and man and the world were thus to have a still further trial. How was He received? *He was put to death!* Calvary's cross, and the rich man's sepulchre, were all that the earth could afford her King! Seed of the woman, the serpent bruised his heel. Satan was proved the Prince of this world, in his being able

9. It is not meant by this to call in question that our enjoyment of the present manifestations of the Father and of Christ by the Spirit are conditional on our obedience *as saints*, whether individually or collectively; and indeed, in some sense, our future rewards as well. But we must *be saints*, in order to obey.

to hurry it on to the rejection and crucifixion of its rightful Lord. Was God to send Christ into it to be rejected and to suffer a second time? Impossible! No, the world is left under judgment. "Now is the judgment of this world" {John 12:31}. Satan and the world are convicted of being guilty of the death of Christ, and lie under sentence on this account. Where then is Jesus? *Ascended into heaven*. Rejected of the earth, heaven's worship is presented at His feet, while heaven's highest glories surround His brow. How is it He has not long since executed judgment on the earth? Ah, the mystery which we have been considering was to be both accomplished and revealed. There were deeper glories in the person of Jesus than those we have been enumerating. He was more than the Son of David -- more than the seed of Abraham -- more than the Second Adam. He was higher than the angels. He was God manifest in the flesh. He was the Son of the Father; the Son of the living God. Hence His death -- His blood -- is of infinite efficacy. What is the first great proof of its power? Why this -- that He who so really was "made sin" {see 2 Cor. 5:21} as to have to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" {Psa. 22: 1, Matt. 27:46} has so really by His blood put it away, that He Himself is now at the right hand of God! What is the second great proof of its efficacy? This, that the Church is united to Him there! But let us hear the apostle in the latter part of Eph. 1. He prays that the saints may know

what is the exceeding greatness of his [God's] 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 [mark now, dear reader, what follows next -- 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 {Eph. 1:19-23}.

Notice in this passage --

- (1) That Christ having, in order to vindicate God's holy majesty, and accomplish His purposes of holy love, gone down into death, He, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, has raised Him from the dead, exalted Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places, and made Him head over all things, all things being put under Him.
- (2) The Church is the body of Him to whom all things in heaven and in earth are thus subjected.
- (3) The power which now works in the believer, is the power which wrought in Christ, when He was thus exalted from the grave to the right hand of God.
- (4) The working of this power in the Church is according to its working in Christ when He was raised from the dead, and received up into glory.

In a word, earth having rejected, and heaven having received, Jesus, the Church is the body of Him, who has been thus rejected by the one and received by the other. And where can the Church have its blessings? On the earth which has

*rejected*, or in heaven which has *received*, Christ? There can be but one answer to this question.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in *heavenly places* in Christ {Eph. 1:3}.

May the heart of each Christian who reads these pages join to say so!

But the apostle proceeds. Having shown the exaltation of Christ, and that the Church is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, he turns to the Ephesian saints, and writes as though he would remind both them and himself of the rock from which they were hewn, the hole of the pit from whence they were digged. All alike, whether Jew or Gentile, were dead in sins, and children of wrath.

But God, [says the apostle] who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:4-7}.

So completely is the Church identified with Christ, that what is affirmed of the one is affirmed of the other also. Did Christ die *for* sin, while we were dead *in* sin, and was He quickened from that death He stooped to undergo? God hath quickened us together with Him! <sup>10</sup> Was Christ raised as well as quickened? God hath raised us up together. Has Christ sat down in heavenly places? God hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The Church is in Christ. It is His body, His fulness. In the language used by another,

As the body is the complement of the head to make up a man, so it is with Christ and the Church: He, as Head directing, exercising all authority over the Church -- His

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10. It is not simply the quickening of dead souls of which this passage treats. All saved souls were quickened, from the time when Satan triumphed and man became dead in sins. And, while the Spirit was always the *agent* in communicating spiritual life ("That which is born of the Spirit is spirit)," the power to quicken is equally the attribute of the Father and of the Son (see John 5:21). Such quickening of souls was always, no doubt, the conjoint act of all the Persons in the Godhead. The power thus to quicken, was claimed and exercised by the Son, when in humiliation on earth, as really as when exalted to the right hand of power. The power and the act are both essentially divine. "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 5:25). But the subject in Eph. 2, is that of our being quickened *together with* Christ, raised up *together*, and made to sit *together* in the heavenly places in Him. It is not Christ's act, as the Son, quickening us, but our participation, by God's mighty power, in the quickening, raising up, and setting in the heavenlies, of *the Man Christ Jesus Himself*, when His life had been laid down in sacrifice for sin. Such participation there could not be, till Christ Himself had passed through death, and had come forth, being raised up, and set on high, by the One whom Paul addresses as "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." Old Testament saints had divine life, and looked forward in faith and hope to the promised Redeemer. Millennial saints will also have divine life, and be happy under Christ's glorious reign. But we read of none save the Church, Christ's body and fulness, participating by divine power in the quickening, raising up, and setting in the heavenlies of the Son of Man Himself, when, for the glory of His God and Father, He had gone down into the dust of death.



body; but the Church, as the body, rendering complete the mystical man, according to the eternal counsels of God. It is evident this is no question about the divine person of Christ. But in the counsels of God, the (mystic) Christ would not have been complete without the Church.

How evident that it is thus we sit together in heavenly places with Him.

I cannot forbear adding here some more words from the same pen.

It is this thought which was completely hid (hid in God) under the old covenant, and which is not found in the whole of the Old Testament. The idea of a Christ not perfect simply in His own person, as an individual, would have been unintelligible to the most advanced saint of the Old Testament. There was to be blessing under His government -- but the being a part of the Christ, as a member of His body, would have been incomprehensible.

Surely this is true. And do we not need very simple faith, my brethren, we who are the happy subjects of this now revealed mystery, to receive the revelation of it into our hearts? Would that we might receive it in greater simplicity and power!

One thing follows immediately in the chapter we are considering. That is, that in the presence of this unity with Christ, and with each other, all earthly distinctions disappear. No earthly difference could be so great as that between Jews and Gentiles. It was a distinction established of God Himself, who had separated Israel to Himself as His own peculiar nation. It was a distinction inseparable from the law, which, being the instrument of God's government of the Jews, while the Gentiles were not so governed, made manifest that God was the God of the Jews, while the Gentiles were "without God in the world" {Eph. 2:12}. But, now that the earth is no longer thus in view as the scene of God's discriminating government, men are regarded according to what they really are; and viewed thus, Jews and Gentiles are alike "dead in sins" {Eph. 2:5}. There is no difference. A Jew might be outwardly nigh, and a Gentile outwardly far off;

But now [says the apostle] 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 {Eph. 2:13-16}.

All that separated Jew from Gentile, as well as all that separated both from God, Christ has set aside by the cross, making peace by His blood, and reconciling both to God in one body. What was the design of this? It was "to make in himself of twain one new man" {Eph. 2:15}: this new mystic man of which He Himself, Christ, glorified, is the Head; and of which Jews and Gentiles, who truly believe, are alike members. The Jew taken out of his natural position, and the Gentile taken out of his, are both brought into this new wondrous position -- of being members of this new mystic man -- "members of Christ" {1 Cor. 6:15}. Marvellous grace! May the sense of it unite us practically to each other.

What are the distinctions between Churchman and Dissenter, Methodist and Presbyterian, compared with the distinction, divinely established too, between Jew and Gentile? Did unity in Christ absorb and obliterate the one? Why should it not the others also? One body with each other and with Christ, -- would that we might realize and manifest this unity in fuller measure than we do!

As to the close of Eph. 2, where the Church is spoken of as the habitation of God through the Spirit, I quote again from the pen which has supplied more than one extract already.

The Christian was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (of the New Testament, compare Eph. 3:5), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. The Gentiles were builded together with the Jews to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. As Israel was separated from the nations, so was the Church from the world. It was no longer of it. Its formation on earth began after the breaking down, by the cross, of the middle wall of partition. It was as a new man, Jews and Gentiles being reconciled to God in one body. Besides, we find that instead of a temple made with hands, where Jehovah dwelt, this union of Jewish and Gentile believers in one body, formed the habitation of God upon earth, and that this habitation was by the Spirit. This latter truth gives us the true character of the Church upon earth; a character, it is evident, of the most important bearing. It is a character which involves the deepest responsibility, and, let me say it, the most precious: for the responsibilities of Christians all flow from the grace which has been shown them. This character of being the habitation of God is one, in fine, which the Church cannot lose, because it is made to depend on the grace and promise of God, that this other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, would not go away as Christ did, but abide for ever with those that were his.

Eph. 3 which shows how all this was a mystery hid in God from all previous ages, has been already considered; and it is only noticed here to call the attention of my reader to the tenth verse. How important must be the place in divine counsels filled by the Church, when we see, that it is by means of the Church the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. We naturally think of the world, and the Christian feels the importance of a true and faithful testimony for God in the world; and so he ought to feel. But here is disclosed to us, that God is making Himself known in heaven as well as on earth; and that in the Church -- fruit as it is of his own workmanship (see Eph. 2:10) -- He is making known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places His own manifold wisdom. What an unspeakably honored place for the Church is this; to be thus the vessel for the display of God's glory, not only, not chiefly, to those on earth, but to those in heaven!

The fourth of Ephesians begins with the practical use of this doctrine of the Church -- inculcating the lowliness and meekness, the longsuffering and loving forbearance, suited to the walk of those who are brought into such intimate relationship to Christ. He, as the Son of God, could say,

. . . no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; [and] All

things are delivered unto me of my Father {Matt. 11:27}; yet could He add, yea, as the perfect moral expression of all this divine and ineffable glory,

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart {Matt. 11:29}!

This blessed One is now no longer on earth, amid the circumstances in which His lowliness and meekness were so wonderfully displayed: but He has brought us, poor saved sinners, into unity with Himself on high, that as members of His body, and actuated and inhabited by His Spirit, His meekness and lowliness may still be manifested -- manifested in us, who are yet in the scene, and amid the circumstances, which afford the opportunity for their exercise. And where shall such opportunity be found, so fully as within the Church itself?

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace {Eph. 4:3}.

Would that all our consciences, the consciences of all saints, were made deeply sensible of our sweet, sacred, solemn obligations with regard to this!

This allusion practically to the unity of the Spirit, seems to bring up afresh before the soul of the Apostle, the whole doctrine of the unity of the Church, and he proceeds to re-state it, in the most simple, striking, and forcible way.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling {Eph. 4:4}.

He speaks of Christ's ascension on high, noticing that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth, and that He who descended is the same also who ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. From this place of highest glory, to which He has ascended, He is represented as bestowing gifts for the growth and edification of His body, the Church.

And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ {Eph. 4:11-13}.

Observe, it is not till *each* comes to be a perfect man, or till we all come to be perfect *men*; that is, it is not individual attainment here, though, of course, the growth of individuals is included in the growth of the body. But that is not the point presented here. It is, till we *all* come to a *perfect man*. It is the completion of the new mystic man, of which Christ personally, Christ glorified, is Head, the Church being His fulness, thus considered. The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ is that to which the whole has to attain. And observe, it is the whole Church that is in view -- it is not a local church. Hence, a little further on the apostle speaks of

. . . the head, even Christ: from whom **the whole body** fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love {Eph. 4:15, 16}.

What a picture of Christ, and His body, the Church, according to the mind and thoughts of God! As far as it respects the Head, blessed be God, all remains in full perfectness of blessing and glory. And as far as respects our inalienable standing and portion in Him, this remains also. But as to what has been confided to us in responsibility, for the manifestation, the display, of this divine idea, what shall we say? Where, my brethren, is there anything answering to this picture of the Church's unity in Eph. 4? Alas! we need to hide our heads. May we have grace to do so in unfeigned humiliation before God! And may we not shrink from seeing in His light, the light of His Word, all that perfectness with which we have to compare the present actual condition of the Church, if we would estimate it rightly before Him!

In Eph. 5 the apostle is inculcating on Christians a walk suited to their high calling, and extends his exhortation to all the relationships of life. In thus exhorting husbands and wives, he is led to present a new view of the relation between Christ and the Church. He speaks of the husband as the head of the wife,

. . . even as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands, [he says] love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish {Eph. 5:23, 25-27}.

Then further,

He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones {Eph. 5:28-30}.

Yes, the Church is the Eve of the Second {last} Adam, the Lord from heaven. But Adam received his Eve at the hands of the Lord God, before his own probation was completed; and they were, in fact, both put on probation together. All things in this lower creation were put under Adam, and Eve was associated with him in his headship over the whole earth; but both were to be tried; and every one knows that, in result, it was the woman who was deceived. The Second {last} Adam receives not His Eve, the Church, until Satan has been permitted to test Him to the uttermost; nor until He has accomplished the redemption of the Church, by the stupendous sacrifice of Himself. *The Church becomes the bride of Christ by virtue of His having loved her and given Himself for Her.* How blessed and how secure must be her position!

The passage before us presents three things as to Christ and the Church. First, it is the object of His affection -- an affection He has demonstrated by giving Himself for it. So inestimable was the Church in Christ's eyes, that He would purchase it at the cost, not only of His life, His blood, but of "**himself.**" *He gave Himself for it.* Secondly, when He has thus purchased the Church, He fashions it by the word -- cleansing, washing, sanctifying it, according to His own heart's desire. Thirdly, He does this in order that He may, in the end, present the Church to Himself, without one spot or

blemish to offend His eye or grieve His heart; arrayed, too, in a glory suited to the place she is to fill with Himself, and answering to the depths of His own infinite, ineffable love.

Further on, the apostle quotes, almost verbally, the joyous exclamation of Adam on receiving his bride at the Creator's hands. Adam said,

. . . This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh {Gen. 2:23, 24}.

What says the apostle?

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; **but I speak concerning Christ and the church** {Eph. 5:29-32}.

A wondrous mystery indeed!

As to the actual identification of the Church with Christ, and the way in which it comes to be so identified with Him, we have a remarkable testimony in 1 Cor. 12. The baptism of the Holy Ghost had been witnessed of by John the Baptist, as that which was specially to distinguish Christ from all who had preceded Him as prophets or messengers from God. Of these John himself was confessedly the greatest; but observe how he speaks of the contrast between himself and Jesus --

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (Matt. 3:11; see also Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

Our Lord's own words to His disciples after His resurrection show that He had not yet baptized them with the Holy Ghost. Just before He ascended to heaven, we are told that

. . . being assembled together with them, commanded 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 1:4, 5).

It was on the day of Pentecost that this promise of the Father was fulfilled. Peter's words leave no room for question as to this:

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (Acts 2:32, 33).

Turn now to 1 Cor. 12:12, 13:

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*.

So absolutely identified are Christ and His members, that the whole body (Head and members) is called Christ -- "*so also*

*is Christ*." How is this unity, this absolute identity, of the members and the Head in one body produced? *By the baptism of the Holy Ghost*.

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.

The baptism with the Holy Ghost never took place till the day of Pentecost. On that day it did take place; and its effect was, this unity of the saints with Christ in one body, so that the whole body, formed of Head and members, is called Christ.

The Epistle to the Colossians treats of the same precious mystery, in a somewhat different aspect. Christ's headship of this body is mentioned as one of the many titles and glories which belong to Him. He is spoken of as

. . . the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of [that is, the chief over] every creature {Col. 1:15}.

. . . by him [we are told] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist {Col. 1:16, 17}.

These are titles essentially divine. Creation of all things in heaven and earth -- proprietorship of all things thus created *for* as well as *by* Him -- priority to all things -- and the actual upholding of every thing, so that by Him all things consist -- such are the titles in which Christ is here presented. To these are added --

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things He might have the preeminence {Col. 1:18}.

What are the truths here presented to us? First, that the Person with whom the Church is, by marvellous grace, identified as its Head, is the One to whom, in Himself, all these divine rights and titles belong. Secondly, that ineffably near as is the relationship between the blessed One, the Head, and His body the Church, yet the headship even here belongs to Him. If grace has brought us so near to Christ as to be one body with Him, we are still to remember that we are but the body, and that He is the Head -- that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. Thirdly, it is as risen that He takes this place of headship to His body, the Church -- "who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead," The importance of the truth last named -- that it is as risen He has become Head of the Church, is further apparent from what follows.

For it pleased the Father<sup>11</sup> that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight {Col. 1:19-22}.

11. More literally, "For in him it pleased all the fulness to dwell."

All things (not persons, observe) in heaven and in earth are to be reconciled by Christ, in virtue of His having made peace through the blood of His cross; but as to the Church, its reconciliation is already accomplished -- *you hath He reconciled*. The Church, already "reconciled in the body of Christ's flesh through death," peace being made by His blood, is in resurrection become His body. Of this body, He Himself, the beginning, the first-born from the dead, is the ever-living and glorious Head. He is also by divine rights of creatorship, sustentation, and proprietorship, Head over all creation; and He is actually to take this place, when, by virtue of the same peace-making blood by which the Church is already reconciled, He reconciles all things both in heaven and in earth. He has already reconciled the Church, that when He does take this place, the Church may be with Him, presented "holy, unblameable, and unrepensible in His sight." This is the hope of the gospel, whereof Paul tells us he had been made a minister. He also speaks of rejoicing to

. . . fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh **for his body's sake, which is the church** {Col. 1:24}.

He still further testifies here, as in Ephesians, of this being a mystery, or to give his own words,

. . . **the mystery** which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory {Col. 1:26, 27}.

It was indeed a mystery, of which no one in previous ages could have had an idea. It was clearly enough revealed in the Old Testament, how Messiah should reign in glory over Israel and the whole earth, and how He should thus be the glory of His people Israel. But that any, and most of all, that Gentiles should form the body of Christ, so that what an apostle preached should be, "*Christ in you*"; and yet that this should be before the manifestation of His glory as Head and Reconciler of all things; so that it is "Christ in you, *the hope of glory*"; -- this was indeed a mystery previously unrevealed! Alas! to how many Christians might it as well have remained still unrevealed; I mean as to any knowledge or enjoyment of it possessed by their souls. The Lord awaken His beloved people to a perception, by faith, of what their real place and portion, and privileges, and prospects are!

It may be well here to look back a little to the Epistle to the Ephesians, to a passage purposely passed over in our last number, when the Epistle was under review. We read, in Eph. 1:7-12, of

. . . the riches of his [God the Father's] grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 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: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that

we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted<sup>12</sup> in Christ.

Several things in this comprehensive passage demand our prayerful consideration.

First, the Church stands in such a relation to Christ -- it is so intimately united to Him, and in Him brought so nigh to God -- that God our Father in the riches of His grace "hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, *having made known unto us the mystery of his will*." As Joseph, prior to his exaltation, was an interpreter of dreams, and a revealer of the mind of God, so the Church is even now, before the dispensation of the fulness of times is ushered in, entrusted with the knowledge of the mystery of God's will respecting it. The whole intelligent universe will know this mystery when the time for its manifestation has come; but to the Church is confided the knowledge of it *while it is yet unmanifested*, and, as to fact, unaccomplished. "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

Secondly, the mystery of God's will, the knowledge of which is thus entrusted to the Church, has reference to a period here termed "the dispensation of the fulness of times." Many have supposed that this denotes the present dispensation, confounding it with another expression used in Gal. 4:4,

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son.

But the fulness of *time*, and the dispensation of the fulness of *times*, are two very different expressions. "When the time appointed in divine counsels was fully come, God sent forth his Son," would seem to be the plain, obvious meaning of the one. The other designates a period, "the dispensation of the fulness of times," in which all things in heaven and in earth are to be gathered together in one, that is, in Christ. This is evidently something future. The reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth, we have already seen in Col. 1, is future, though peace has been already made by the blood of the cross. The Church is now reconciled; but things in heaven and on earth are yet to be reconciled. So here, in Eph. 1 -- the Church is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and has confided to it the knowledge of the mystery of God's will: but things in heaven and things on earth are not yet being gathered, much less actually *gathered* together in one in Christ. The Church itself is being gathered for the heavens; but it is of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth that it is said they are all to be gathered together in Christ.

Thirdly, as to the meaning of the expression, "fulness of times," it is important to observe that there are certain times or periods, each bearing its characteristic feature, which all run on till they meet, as it were, and terminate in the dispensation yet to come. As another has written, "The dispensation of the fulness of times is that in which *all these several times* will have run out, and into which they all are

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12. More strictly, "who pretruded," or, "who are pretrusters in Christ."

now running. When the Lord Jesus leaves the right hand of God, *then* will God visibly interfere with all that is measured by these times. The time of *misrule* ends by Christ 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 veil being taken away. The time of *Gentile domination* ends by the Stone cut out without hands smiting the image. The time of *creation's thralldom* ends by the manifestation of the sons of God; and this, we know, is when Jesus shall be manifested. 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 of God will be proved to have been but the means of displaying His power and wisdom."<sup>13</sup>

Fourthly, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when Christ is the center of unity and blessing to all in heaven and all on earth, all being under His Headship, and gathered altogether in one, even in Him, the Church is to share with Him this inheritance of all things -- "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Not only is Christ the second {last} Adam, to whom universal dominion *on earth* belongs; God has

. . . 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 {Eph. 1:20-23}.

It is in the dispensation of the fulness of times that He is to be manifested as Head over all things in heaven and on earth. And the Church is to be manifested as His Body, His Bride. Wondrous destiny! Already is He seated at God's right hand on high; but He waits for this inheritance of all things both in heaven and on earth. We now are seated in heavenly places in Him, and are waiting for the moment when we shall share this inheritance of all things, with our now-rejected Savior, Head, and Lord.

A few Scriptures may now be considered which set forth this joint heirship of the Church with Christ. The general truth that when Messiah takes His kingdom, there are saints who will reign with Him, had been revealed in the Old Testament. In the gospels, we find our Lord applying this truth in a very definite way to the twelve apostles. He tells them that "in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory," they who had followed him "shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" {Matt. 19:28}. This, as is evident, only applies to the apostles. The Savior speaks of a wider distribution of power and dignity among His followers in Luke 19. There they are regarded as servants to whom their Master's goods had been

entrusted in his absence; and according to the measure of their faithfulness in the use of these, is the degree of authority conferred upon them at His return. One is made ruler over ten cities, another over five. In the parable of the talents in Matt. 25, each faithful servant, on being approved, is called to enter into the joy of his Lord. It is not simply a donation of delegated authority, but it is participation with his Lord in the joy of the kingdom.

All, these, however, are but hints and preparatory notices -- suggestive indeed of the wondrous truth, that saved sinners from among Adam's ruined race are to share the glories of the great Captain of their salvation, but not declaring this truth in all its length and breadth and fulness. It is at the close of John's Gospel that the light of this amazing prospect begins to beam fully upon us,

. . . the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 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 hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:22, 23).

In this passage, Jesus distinctly declares that the glory given to Him He has conferred on His disciples; and that, in consequence thereof, the world is yet to know that the Father has loved them even as He has loved Jesus. When Christ's people are seen by the world in the same glory as Christ Himself, it will be known that they are the objects of the same love.

In the epistles we have numerous assurances to the same effect. We are told of the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17).

"God is faithful," it is said, "by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ"; that is, to participation or partnership with Him (1 Cor. 1:9). Even our vile body is to be "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). When He appears, we are to appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). We are said to be "called . . . to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12). Such are some of the divine testimonies to this glorious truth. But there is one, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which demands more lengthened consideration. True that it is not the Church, as now united to Christ in heavenly places, that is there presented; -- that is, it is not the Church in this character. The saints who compose the Church are regarded, in Heb. 2, rather as Christ's brethren than as His body. The unity treated of is that of the family rather than that of the body. Still it is unity with Christ.

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren {Heb. 2:11}.

But let us consider the passage as a whole.

It was God's revealed intention from the first, that this whole lower creation should be under the dominion of man.

13. *The Prospect* 2:111

. . . have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Gen. 1:28).

Such were God's words to Adam. It was in responsibility to his Creator, that Adam was placed thus at the head of this lower creation. He quickly failed. Deceived by the enemy, he betrayed himself, and the creation over which he was set, into the enemy's hands. But was God's purpose of subjecting the earth to man's dominion frustrated or set aside? No; Psa. 8 testifies of a "Son of man" who is to inherit all the dominion confided at the first to Adam.

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas {Psa. 8:4-8}.

Here we have evident reference to the original gift of authority to Adam; but it is the Son of man, made a little lower than the angels, to whom the language is here applied; with the significant addition, moreover, of the words -- "Thou hast put all things under His feet. Now, these words are quoted again and again in the New Testament -- quoted in such a way as leaves no room for doubt as to the One who is here in view. One of these quotations is in Eph. 1:22, and has been already considered; another is in Heb. 2. The apostle is instructing us, that unto the angels God hath not put in subjection the world to come,<sup>14</sup> but to man. Then he quotes from Psa. 8 the very language we are considering, and proceeds to apply it to Christ:

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. But now [says the apostle] we see not yet all things put under him [that is, they are so in God's purpose, and as to Christ's title, only we see not yet the actual accomplishment] **but we see Jesus**, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour {Heb. 2:8, 9}.

Jesus is the One made a little lower than the angels, under whose feet all things (in title and divine purpose, though not yet in fact) are put. He is the heir of all the dignity and dominion entrusted to Adam, and of which Adam proved himself so unworthy. Christ is the Second {last} Adam, THE MAN, to whom the world to come is to be put in subjection.

But how was this title to universal supremacy over the earth to be made good? Through Adam's sin this supremacy had really (however covertly it might be) passed into the hands of the usurper; and in the righteous displeasure of God against man's sin, Satan was permitted to hold and to wield the power of death against creation and its fallen occupants. How was he to be dispossessed? The mere exercise of power, however unlimited, would not meet the exigencies of the case;

for the glory of God's holiness and majesty had to be vindicated in the scene where they had been so deeply dishonored. *Redemption is the only key to unlock this mystery.* The Seed of the woman was eventually to bruise the serpent's head; but first, by the serpent, must His own heel be bruised. The Second Adam is, as we have seen, to have universal dominion; but first we see Him, Jesus, for the suffering of death made a little lower than the angels. What gives to His sufferings and death their infinite efficacy, is, that while really man, and the Son of man, He is also the Son of God. He is the One whom God has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. He is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. When by Himself He had purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Here we find what glorious titles are His, by virtue both of what He is essentially, and of the atoning work He has accomplished. Surpassing mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of man. He whom angels worship is made a little lower than the angels. The Maker of all worlds takes part of flesh and blood. He who upholds all things by the word of His power, "tastes death for every man."<sup>15</sup> How was this? What need could there be for so amazing a transaction? Hear the answer --

For 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 {Heb. 2:10}.

The glory of God required it. "It became him." Not only is Christ THE MAN to whom the world to come is in divine purpose subjected; -- there were many sons to be brought to glory; -- and it was only through the sufferings of the Captain of their salvation that this could be effected. The second Adam was to resume all that the first had forfeited. But all had to be bought back *by blood*, ere it could be taken back *by power*. Could the blood of a mere man, or of any mere creature, avail for this? Impossible! But the Second Adam is God manifested in the flesh. Hence the efficacy of His blood. Hence the wonders it has achieved. Sins purged; the devil, who had the power of death, subdued and overthrown; the victims of the ceaseless fear of death delivered; the many sons brought to glory; Christ manifested as the first-born among many brethren; and the habitable earth to come, the millennial earth, put in subjection, not to angels, but to man, yea, to this glorified Son of man, and the many sons which He shall have brought to glory, -- such are some of the results flowing from the humiliation and sufferings and death of Him who is both Son of God and Son of man. May our hearts be more familiar with them, and with Him the trophies of whose victory they are!

Passing over the various anticipations of their reign with Christ expressed by the heavenly saints in Rev. 1 and 5, as well as the vision of it described by the apostle in Rev. 20, we may pause for a moment in view of another vision, narrated

14. By this phrase we are not to understand an undefinable state of existence after death, as it is commonly supposed to mean. The expression is one that literally means "The habitable earth to come."

15. Or, "everything," as the Greek word might properly be rendered.

by the same inspired pen, in Rev. 21:9-22:5. It is a vision of the glory of the Church in its connection with the millennial earth.

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 show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife {Rev. 21:9}.

The marriage of the Lamb had been previously witnessed of in Rev. 19:7. Now, while preparing under the hand of her Divine Fashioner, the Holy Ghost, the Church is said to be

. . . espoused to one husband, that she may be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ ({see} 2 Cor. 11:2).

The passage just referred to in Rev. 19 celebrates the accomplishment of the union.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready {Rev. 19:7}.

The latter part of Rev. 19 shows us heaven opened, and the Rider upon the white horse coming forth to judge and make war, and tells us that

. . . the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean {Rev. 19:14}.

The fine linen is declared, in v. 8, to be "the righteousness of saints." It is evident, therefore, that the Church, and no doubt all the risen saints, are meant by "the armies which were in heaven": but as thus following, or attending Christ to judgment, they are not spoken of as His Bride, neither are they so designated in Rev. 20. They are said to be kings and priests, and they reign with Christ; but other saints, as we are assured, will share this kingly and priestly character with those who compose the Church. The vision of Rev. 21:9-22:5 is restricted to the Church, "the bride, the Lamb's wife." It is to behold her that John is summoned by the angel. And what did he see?

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God {Rev. 21:10, 11}.

The description follows. It is not to consider it in detail that it is now referred to; but to call attention to it, as presenting the peculiar place of the Church in glory, both in relation to Christ as His Bride, and to the millennial earth in connection with which it is here presented. Observe, it is as the "Bride, **the Lamb's wife**," we see it here. It is not as the Bride of the King, but the Bride, the Lamb's wife. She, who through grace has known and loved Him in His rejection; she, who has partaken of the character and sorrows of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and who was dumb as a sheep before her shearers, opening not his mouth; she is manifested in glory as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. And it is particularly sweet to notice, that the only influence she is represented as exerting *in this character* on the millennial earth is a gracious and beneficent influence. She is represented as a city; of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are both the light and the temple, and in which is the throne of God and of the

Lamb. The spared nations are said to walk in the light of this glorious city, and the kings of the earth, we read, do bring their glory and honor into it. From the throne of God and of the Lamb proceeds the river of life, by which grows the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Thus, all the connection with the earth which the glorified Church will have in this character of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," is one of light, and healing, and beneficent influence. There will indeed be righteousness maintained by power during the millennial period; but it would seem that the earthly Jerusalem will be the special instrument in maintaining this (compare Psa. 45 and Isa. 60:12). The relation of the Church, fair witness and full expression as she will then be of the exceeding riches of God's grace -- specially associated with Christ as the Lamb rather than as the King, though of course she will reign with Christ -- her relation to the scene will, in harmony with this her character, be one of love and goodness rather than of retributive righteousness, or repression of evil by power. Christ's relation to the earth in that day will be of both these characters. The earthly Jerusalem (and, it may be, those risen and glorified saints who do not form part of the Church) will be specially <sup>16</sup> associated with Him in the one character of rule -- that of righteousness; the Church in the other -- that of grace.

The last view we have of the Church in Scripture is where her attitude and desire, as the Bride of Christ are expressed in those memorable words --

. . . the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

Assuming that it is to Christ, the Bridegroom, that the first invitation is addressed (and to whom should the Bride say, Come, but to the Bridegroom?) what a view does this passage afford us, of the proper attitude, and desire, and hope of the Church! As actuated by the Spirit, she cries to her Lord and Bridegroom, Come. She calls on any who may hear -- individual saints, really part of the Church, but not knowing as yet the Church position and relationship -- to join in the cry. But then, as already indwelt by the Spirit, and set to testify the grace of her absent Lord, she invites any who are athirst, yea, and whosoever will, to come to those waters of life and refreshing, which flow so freely from the Head, through the members, to any poor thirsty souls who may be drawn to Jesus by the ministry of reconciliation with which she has been entrusted. The Church, as here presented, has but one object -- Christ. Whether she invites Him to come, or invites poor, parched, and thirsty souls to come to Him, He, He alone, is her object. But this may well lead us to consider, a little more minutely and attentively, the responsibilities of the Church, connected with, and flowing from, all that has

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16. *Specially* -- not exclusively; for while we know that restored Israel will be "as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass" (Mic. 5:7), we are equally sure that those who compose the Church, the Bride, will, with all the risen saints reign with Christ, and so share in the exercise of His righteous rule. It is what *specially* characterizes each that is treated of above.

now been passing under review. The Lord grant us a lowly spirit and a tender conscience, in turning to this practical view of the subject.

One remark it may be requisite to make, to prevent misapprehension. While it is impossible that any but those who are vitally united to Christ, as His body, by the Holy Ghost, should live and walk as becometh the Church, the responsibility to walk thus may be shared, and is shared, by all who profess to be the Church. None but those who have really been quickened and raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him, can manifest the heavenly spirit and walk suited to such a position. But, then, this is the position of all true Christians; and whole nations, alas! profess to be such, and thus place themselves under responsibility to live and act according to this profession. How unspeakably solemn, in this point of view, is the present state of the professing world -- of what is popularly designated Christendom! As to all who really compose the Church, the fact of their being part of it -- that is, of their being one body and one spirit with Christ -- makes their final salvation sure: still, what cause for shame, and humiliation, and self-reproach, have all such, that there should be such a total failure to manifest the real place, and portion, and character, and object of the Church. It is not being less guilty than one's brethren, that one ventures to give expression to such thoughts. Far from it. But is it not our place to ask ourselves -- the place of all who really know the Savior -- Are we fulfilling the end for which we have been called of God into such nearness to Himself?

What is the first great responsibility of the Church? Surely it is to keep herself for Christ! Is she not betrothed to Him as His Bride? Has He not loved her, and given Himself for her, that He might present her to Himself, a glorious Church, unspotted, and without wrinkle or blemish? When, and where, is this presentation to take place? Where is the One to whom she is betrothed, the One who has loved her, and washed her in His own blood? Ah, He is not here, but in heaven. Rejected by the earth, the right hand of God is where He waits, till His enemies are made His footstool. But is it only for the subjugation of His foes that He waits? No; He has gone to prepare a place for His Church, His bride; and He waits for the moment when He is to present her to Himself unblemished and complete.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me {John 17:24}.

Is such the language of our Lord? Enthroned above all height, the object of heaven's deepest homage, His heart still yearns to have with Him, and beside Him, in the glory, the Church that He has purchased with His blood! And what is the response, my brethren, which He receives from us? Heaven, where He is owned and worshipped, suffices not for Him till we are there, to behold His glory and to share His blessedness. But does it not often seem as though earth would satisfy us? Stained though it be with the blood of Jesus, characterized though it be, to this hour, by the haughty, scornful rejection of His claims, the contemptuous neglect of

His dying love -- how do our treacherous hearts still linger amid its delusive scenes! What a fearful power there is in its false glitter and glory to arrest our attention and to detain our hearts! Alas! for us, to make such returns to our Heavenly Bridegroom for all His self-consuming, self-sacrificing love to us.

What is the Church's place? How the Holy Ghost provides an answer to this question, in the yearnings of the heart of the apostle over the saints at Corinth, who had been the fruit of his ministry and the seal of his apostleship!

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2).

Could any language more touchingly express the deep, devoted, single-hearted affection for Christ, and weanedness from all else, which constitute the only fitting response to the love wherewith He has loved the Church in espousing her thus to Himself? Ought even a converted world, if He were not personally present in it, to satisfy the heart of the one who is thus espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ? How do the laborious efforts, even of sincere, devoted Christians, to show that what is before us is a spiritual millennium, without Christ's personal presence, make manifest the condition into which the Church has sunk! Can anything but her Lord's presence satisfy the heart of the faithful Spouse? Then see the effect of this our departure in heart from the true scriptural hope of the Church as the Spouse or Bride of Christ. Adopting for our object, as the Church at large has done, the rectification of the world in the absence of *its* rightful Ruler, and *our* Lord and Bridegroom, we naturally avail ourselves of all the means and influences within reach to bear upon our object; and hence the strange, the anomalous sight, of the professed Bride of an earth-rejected Lord, possessing, using, and seeking still further to possess and use, the appliances of worldly rank, and authority, and wealth, and learning, and popular influence, to hasten on, as is affirmed, the epoch of the world's regeneration. The Church forgets her own calling, to wait as a desolate, widowed stranger in the world whence her Lord has been rejected, and where He is still dishonored and disowned; and soon, instead of thus keeping herself for Him, she is found in guilty dalliance with the world whose hands are yet stained with His blood! She proposes, indeed, to convert the world; but it is the world that has converted her. To comfort her and sustain her heart amid rejection by the world, her absent Lord assures her that when He reigns she shall reign with Him -- that when He triumphs she shall share His triumph. But alas! the world holds out the bait of present power, present influence, present glory; yea, and consents to adopt Christ's name, and allow, and even patronize, an outward, superficial regard for that name, as an inducement to the Church to enter into the unholy compact. And has she accepted the unhallowed proposals? My brethren, has she not? We know that the false Church says, (and, alas! to what an extent the true is mingled with the false,) "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" {Rev. 18:7}. Let us never forget that it was in the true Church the mystery of iniquity began to work; and how soon it had



assumed this character of self-glorification and living deliciously, contented and at rest in the present state of things!

Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you (1 Cor. 4:8).

That is, the apostle longed for the time to come when, as saints, they should really reign with Christ; for then, he knew, he should reign with them. But until then he was contented with his Master's portion here. And if, at so early a period he could say to the Corinthians, with how much more emphasis might he now have said to us,

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised {1 Cor. 4:9, 10}.

If, my brethren, he could institute such a contrast then, between the results of faithfulness to Christ in himself and the other apostles, and the commencing indications of departure from Christ in the worldliness of the Corinthian saints, what could he have said to us in the present day? Who so realized as the Apostle Paul what the true place of the Church is, in fellowship and union with Christ? And what was the present result in his earthly condition?

Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day {1 Cor. 4:11-13}.

If the opposite of all this among the Corinthians called forth from the apostle such a pathetic warning --

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you {1 Cor. 4:14} --

what must he have said to us, I would again inquire, in the present day? If these things were not written to shame *them*, they surely do shame *us*! The tide of worldliness which then was setting in has since rolled on with such resistless force -- it has so swept away all the old landmarks, and effaced every vestige of the Church's separation from the world -- that now, saints are diligently taught to use every lawful effort to improve their circumstances, and raise themselves in the social scale; while he is deemed the best Christian who seems to approach the nearest to the practically giving Him the lie who said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" {Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13}.<sup>17</sup>

The Church, Christ's Bride! Nay, more -- the Bride, the *Lamb's* wife! What affinity is there in spirit and character between the Bridegroom and the *professing* Bride? He took the lowest place on earth: she seeks the highest. He was the poorest man on earth: she rolls in wealth. He lived for His

Father's glory, and it is her place to live to Him; but she lives, alas! to herself. His life was one of dependence on His Father; her dependence is on the world. He pleased not Himself; she lives in pleasure, and is dead while she lives. He never resented one of the ceaseless injuries and insults He received: when reviled, He reviled not again; she, without scruple, wields the world's power to maintain what she calls her rights, and often, alas! to inflict the most grievous wrongs:

. . . in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth (Rev. 18:24).

My reader may perhaps be saying, "Ah, but it is of Rome that you are again speaking; and what has Rome, or Romanism, to do with Christ and the Church?" Dear reader, it is of mystic Babylon that the pen of inspiration uses the words just quoted; and no doubt Romanism is the principle part of that which mystic Babylon represents. But it is not the whole: and even so far as it is what we are to understand by Babylon, has my reader forgotten that all the blood shed by papal Rome has been shed in the name of Christ? What, you ask, has Romanism to do with Christ and the Church? Does not Romanism embrace the greater part of what professes to be the Church? How, then, in considering the responsibilities of the professing Church, as measured by the calling of the true, can Romanism be left out?

But is it Rome alone that, under the name of Christ, and the profession of being His Church, His Bride, unites herself with the world that has rejected Christ, and uses the world's power to enforce her rights and avenge her wrongs?

. . . he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth {Isa. 53:7}.

And the Church, as we have seen, is the Bride, the *Lamb's* wife. And think of the perfect grace in which the true Church stands -- consisting, as it does, of sinners saved by grace, and saved after such a sort as to be placed nearer to God's throne, and to the Father's heart, than any creatures besides; -- saved thus,

That in the ages to come he might shew what is the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus {Eph. 2:7}!

Think of this, and of the way in which we are perceptively taught, both in the gospels and in the epistles, to manifest this grace -- preferring the loss of both coat and cloak to the suing for the recovery of either -- going two miles with any who compel us to go one -- when one cheek is smitten, presenting the other also -- never being overcome of evil, but always overcoming evil with good. When man's utmost hatred was expressed in the crucifixion of God's Son, God's utmost love was manifested in taking out of the world a number of its guilty inhabitants, cleansing them by the precious blood which had thus been shed, quickening them with the very life of the risen and ascended Savior, and forming them by the Holy Ghost on earth to be the Bride, the *Lamb's* wife, when all in heaven and all on earth shall bow the knee to Jesus, and every tongue confess Him Lord. Is not this grace? perfect, infinite

17. Only think, as one instance, of the title of a pamphlet, by a popular Nonconformist minister, "How to Make the Best of Both Worlds"!

grace? And what has the Church to manifest, or exemplify, but grace? But is this her character? I speak not now of Romanism, but of what bears the name and sustains the responsibilities of the Church in countries where Romanism is not predominant. Is it grace, or retributive righteousness, which holds together the very framework of society in these so-called Christian countries? Yea, and let me ask further, Do individual Christians generally, scruple in the least either officially to administer retributive justice, or to use it for their own defence? "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" {Luke 12:14} said our blessed Lord. And again, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" {Luke 9:56}. He stood thus the fair, bright, perfect witness of His Father's grace. He has left His Church in this world as a witness of His own. How do we practically bear the testimony?

In treating thus of the responsibility of the Church, one is obliged to regard both the true and the false, the real Church and the professing body. The Church was left here, God's assembly upon earth, to be the witness, in patient, suffering grace toward the world, and in true single-hearted affection and fealty to Christ, of all that she will be manifested to be in power and glory, when the marriage of the Lamb having taken place, and the Lamb Himself being enthroned, the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, shall take her place as the vessel of His glory, and the channel and dispenser of healing and light and blessing to the millennial earth. This twofold blessedness, of the most intimate union with the Lamb, and of the efficacious ministration of grace to the world, will be made good in full power and glory in the Church in the coming dispensation. She was morally, by the power of the Spirit, to have maintained and manifested both characters of blessing during her sojourn on the earth. Has she done so? Is there anything which does so at this hour? Where is God's assembly or Church at this moment? Is it the great professing body, including Romanism, and all else that ostensibly bears the name of Christ? Is that the holy, elect, unspotted Bride of Christ? My readers know well that the thought cannot be entertained for a moment. Where is the Church, then, the Bride of Christ? Are we to be referred to the individual saints, dear to Christ, scattered throughout the professing body, or standing apart from it? Most gladly may all such be owned, as those who really compose the Church, the body of Christ. But where do they exist *as a body*? Where are they manifested as incorporated by the Holy Ghost, and actuated and inwrought by Him? Why do I ask these questions, my brethren? That we may all see to what a low estate we are reduced, and humble ourselves before God. Surely this becomes us all. The body of Christ, as it respects its actual existence before God our Father, has not ceased to exist, and cannot cease to exist. All the living members will be found in the Bride, the Lamb's wife, when manifested in glory. Not a stone of the holy Jerusalem will be wanting, or out of its place then. Meanwhile, as a witness for Christ on earth, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, where is now the body, the Church? Let our consciences weigh this question well. The Lord grant us to take the place of unfeigned

humiliation in His presence.

If we view the Church in its completeness as the body of Christ, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and think of its ultimate blessedness and the display of the glory of God therein, we are assured that it is impossible for these to fail. Christ is yet to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. The great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, will to eternal ages make manifest the exceeding riches of God's grace, as well as the glory of His manifold wisdom, unfailing faithfulness, and almighty power. The final result is in His hands, and cannot fail.

If we view the Church as a body or assembly on earth, placed here in responsibility to manifest Christ, and its union with Him by the power of the Holy Ghost indwelling it, and working in it, we find two things. First, those who do really compose the Church, who are vitally united to Christ, have totally failed in this responsibility; and there is in consequence, no such manifestation of Christ, and of our union with Him, as there ought to have been. Secondly, those who do really compose the true Church, are mixed up with a vast professing body, which, in assuming the name and privileges of the Church, has become responsible for manifesting its true character and destiny; but which, alas, so far from this, has so apostatized from Christ and become so wedded to the world, that nothing but judgment awaits it. The true saints, those who really compose the Church of God, will all be changed at Christ's coming, and with the departed saints caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Judgment will afterwards fall on the false professing body which will be left on earth -- that judgment the certainty of which has been already considered in a previous paper, on "The Doom of Christendom."

What remains, then, but that we humble ourselves before the Lord, and prayerfully and diligently search His word, and wait on Him, to learn how He would have His people act in the solemn emergency of the present hour? May His light shine clearly on our path! May we have grace to take our true place before Him, and faithfully use, at any cost, the light He may in His grace afford! And may the assured certainty of the speedy return of our blessed Lord both comfort our hearts, and induce all holy watchfulness and circumspection in keeping our garments unspotted from the world!

## Chapter 6

### *Israel in the Past and Present*

It has been remarked, in *The Doom of Christendom*, that “when Christendom, the wild olive, shall have been for its non-continuance in God’s goodness cut off, the natural branches are again to be grafted into their own olive tree; and that, as far as human instrumentality is to be employed in that work, they are to be the instruments of subduing the whole world to Christ’s sway.” We hope, ere long, to present the Scripture-proof of this to our readers.

But first, it may be well to glance rapidly along the current of Scripture-testimony as to Israel’s calling and past history. Israel’s importance, as the center of God’s earthly arrangements, is most forcibly expressed in the well-known passage, Deut. 32:8-10,

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.

The division of the earth was in the days of Peleg (see Gen. 10:25). Peleg preceded Abraham by several generations. Nevertheless, “when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance,” that which formed the central and controlling thought in His arrangements, was His foreknowledge of the number of the children of Israel. Israel was dear to Him above all the other nations, -- “his portion, and the lot of his inheritance.” The nations were to be both placed and governed in relation to Israel; and hence, in this primary appointment of the bounds or limits of their respective dominions, all was settled with reference to Israel. Could anything more emphatically declare the pre-eminent place which Israel occupies in divine counsels touching this earth -- its government -- and its inhabitants?

There are many Christians who seem to suppose that we have nothing in Scripture but what bears immediately on the question of individual salvation. Now this is a great mistake, and serious in its consequences, however pious and gracious those may be who are under its influence. It results from not sufficiently recognizing the great end God had in view in all His actings and in all His dispensations. This end is not our salvation, important as that may be, and surely is to us. God’s end is His own glory; and it is in Christ that all His glory is manifested and accomplished. It is true that in the accomplishment and display of His glory in Christ the salvation of all who, through grace, believe in Him is made sure. Still, the salvation of such is not God’s *final* object, but a means of

promoting it. *His object is to glorify Himself in Christ!* In doing this, He saves us, blessed be His name! by His sovereign and almighty grace; but it is important that we should be able to distinguish between the end God has in view, and the means (momentous as these may be in themselves) by which He effects His design. This is important for many reasons, -- and among others, for this -- that God’s object embraces many things besides the salvation of His people. In glorifying Himself in Christ, He not only saves forever all who, from the beginning to the end of time, are the subjects of His grace, but He reveals Himself in a wondrous variety of relations to Christ, to mankind at large, to creation, to particular portions of the human family, yea, in some instances, to single individuals. Abraham and David are remarkable examples of this. Then there is the whole subject of God’s government of the world. Christ Himself is the center of divine counsels and the subject of all Scripture; but God made Israel the center of His earthly government.

In consequence (as another has said), even the profane history of nations centers round it. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, all contend for Israel’s land, are known in connection with it, or actually get their full imperial position and character at the time they acquired possession of it -- I do not say *by gaining possession of it* -- but at the epoch at which they did. Though clouds of dark traditions, scarce pierced by modern researches, hang over all the rest of the nations, and obscure their history while revealing their existence, in the neighborhood of Israel all is light. The light of Israel’s history is shed on all the nations around them. It is preserved almost with modern accuracy, when a few fragments scarce rescue from entire oblivion other ancient histories. We have to disentomb the remains of the Thebes and the Ninevehs to get at the history of their ancient monarchs, and to know their dynasties; while, by God’s providence, that which gives some historic data to the glories of Mizraim and Ashur, confirms in its detail that of which we have already the minutest particulars in Israel’s authentic history. We find, in pictures yet fresh on the lore-covered walls of the country of the Pharaohs, the very kinds of overseers over the Jews making their bricks, of which Moses speaks in the book of Exodus. Modern research alone has given the place and importance to those countries which the Scriptures had already assigned them.<sup>18</sup>

18. “The Irrationalism of Infidelity” {by J. N. Darby}, Groombridge and Son.

The immediate occasion of the call of Abraham seems to have been the prevalence of idolatry in those early ages of the world. While those survived who had witnessed the deluge -- or indeed those who had held intercourse with such as had -- we may well suppose that the fear of another such interposition of God's power in judgment would have a strong hold on men's minds. Satan, finding probably that it would be vain to attempt to eradicate these fears of supernatural agency, succeeded in turning them to his own account by inducing men to substitute for the true God, whom they traditionally knew, a host of imaginary deities who began to take God's place in their minds, as the objects of their homage and their dread. Satan himself, under this disguise, became the object of worship. These dupes of superstition and idolatry might not be aware of this; but Scripture tells us, that

. . . the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God (1 Cor. 10:20).

The history of all this, as to the moral process by which it was brought about, we have in Rom. 1:21-25. When men generally had thus given up God for idols, "God gave them up" to all the well known horrors of paganism. Three times in the passage just referred to, we have this expression, -- "Wherefore God also *gave them up*" (v. 24). "For this cause God *gave them up*" (v. 26), "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God *gave them over* to a reprobate mind" (v. 28). It was from amid this mass of idolaters, that Abraham was called. When God "gave men up" to the delusions they had chosen, He did not leave Himself without witness among men.

And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood [*i.e.*, the river] in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac" (Josh. 24:2, 3).

Four hundred years and upwards elapsed before Abraham's offspring were manifested as a nation. This was not till their redemption out of Egypt; and with that event and those which immediately succeeded -- the passage through the wilderness, and their entrance into Canaan -- their national history, properly speaking, begins.

Two, things must be obvious to every serious reader of the Old Testament. First, the nation of Israel was designed to be a standing testimony against idolatry -- a testimony to the unity of God, and to the fact that Jehovah is the one true God. Secondly, Israel was designed to be a specimen of the happiness -- the prosperity -- of a people living under the immediate government of Jehovah. As to the first point, need I quote such Scriptures as the following? --

I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me* (Ex. 20:2, 3).

Hear, O Israel: *The LORD our God is one LORD* (Deut. 6:4).

. . . therefore *ye are my witnesses*, saith the LORD, *that I*

*am God* (Isa. 43:12).

As to the second point, consider such scriptures as these:

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land . . . For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people (Lev. 26:3-6, 9-12).

All this was conditional indeed on their obedience. So also are the blessings promised them in Deut. 28. But the following passage is prophetic:

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places (Deut. 33:26-29).

Hear the words of David also,

And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt? For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God (1 Chron. 17:21, 22).

Not to multiply quotations, I give but one out of many which describe the effect upon the nations of Israel's future restoration:

And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it (Jer. 33:9).

Such being God's objects in His dealings with the nation of Israel, let us now consider a little the way in which He has acted to bring them to pass. First of all, we find that He made choice of Abraham as the father of this people, and to him He made unconditional promises that his seed should possess the land of Canaan for an inalienable inheritance. These promises He even confirmed to him by an oath. He repeated the promises to Isaac and to Jacob. It is to be observed, moreover, that promises were made to Abraham that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him (Gen. 12:3) and

in his seed (Gen. 22:18). That Christ was descended from Abraham, the Holy Ghost has been careful to note, at the beginning of the Gospel by Matthew. The Apostle Paul explicitly applies to Christ the term "Abraham's seed."

. . . He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one,  
And to thy seed, which is Christ (Gal. 3:16).

This may be supposed by some to nullify any special application of the promises to Abraham's seed according to the flesh -- that is, to the nation of Israel. But surely it has no such meaning or intent as this. It simply shows that, whether the subject be Israel's special privileges and blessings as promised to Abraham, or the participation of Gentiles in the promise that in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed, it is in Christ, the true seed of Abraham, that all will be fulfilled. All nations were not blessed in Abraham, or his seed, while the seed were under the law. The promised Seed had first to come. The true Isaac had not only *in intention*, but *in fact*, to be offered up. He had to be received back, not "*in a figure*," but *in reality*, from the dead, ere this promise could be fulfilled. The extension of the Gospel to us, sinners of the Gentiles, is in part the fulfilment of this promise: it waits its full accomplishment, when Christ, *the true seed*, shall be known and confessed by Israel, *the natural seed*. The proof of this will fall under the second head of our present inquiry. I only notice the principle here. Gal. 3:16 is supposed by many to set this principle aside; and it would scarcely have been fair to quote the passage, as above, without noticing what some have thus alleged respecting it.

The promises to the fathers were unconditional: so were all the dealings of God with the nation of Israel, in redeeming it out of Egypt, and conducting it in grace as far as to Mount Sinai. There the law was given, the people having consented to receive it and promised to keep it, as the condition of their continued blessing. With what result I need not inform my readers. Their dancing round the golden calf, which Aaron had made for them to worship, was but the beginning of a course of disobedience and rebellion which characterized them throughout. God had long patience with them, and bore with their evil ways, introducing first one principle and then another, on which He could graciously exercise His long-suffering towards them. The varied institutions and agencies in which these principles of God's ways were embodied were all typical of better things to succeed. The tabernacle, with its priesthood, its sacrifices, and its services -- the judges and the prophets who were raised up from time to time, as well as the royal dignities and authority of David and his offspring, all sustained this double character. Each, for the time being, was a link between God and the nation; while all were shadows of good things to come. Priesthood, royalty, and prophecy, were the three great institutions, by which God maintained His connection with Israel. The latter, indeed, could scarcely in strictness be termed an institution, as prophecy was not secessional, but dependent on the sovereign actings of God in grace, who raised up prophets, and sent them according to His own will. It is affecting to notice, how each institution became in man's hands corrupt, powerless for good, and even at times positively active in evil. When the nation had begun to depart from God, after the death of Joshua, and God visited them with

one chastening after another, judges were raised up, by whom God delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, and governed them -- generally throughout the life-time of the judge. But for the whole of this period, the abiding, visible link between God and the people, was the tabernacle at Shiloh, with the priests who ministered there. In the days of Eli and his two sons, the priesthood itself became totally corrupted, and God not only gave the people into the hands of the Philistines, but put an end to the order of things which he had instituted at Shiloh. The ark was taken; the priests were slain; Eli, their aged father, fell down and brake his neck; and the wife of Phineas expired, naming her son, to whom she was giving birth,

. . . Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband (1 Sam. 4:21).

It is of this crisis in Israel's history, that the Psalmist writes thus:

For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand (Psa. 78:58-61).

It was not long, indeed, before God vindicated His own name, and compelled the Philistines to restore the ark. But the ark and the sanctuary were never re-established at Shiloh; and everything was in an unsettled state till the son of Jesse was raised up to the throne. After he had been used of God in subduing Israel's enemies all around, he brought up the ark in triumph to Jerusalem; and there, in the temple reared for it by his son, it found a resting-place during the days of the kingdom.

It was in the counsels of God from the beginning, that royalty should be established in Israel, and that He whom we know as the blessed Heir of all things -- David's Son and David's Lord -- should, amid all His other glories, sit

upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice . . . for ever (Isa. 9:7).

This was the purpose of God from the beginning; but the due time for its disclosure had to arrive ere it was made known. From Moses to Samuel, the government of Israel was a pure theocracy -- God was their king. He raised up officers, indeed, such as Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and the Judges, by means of whom He administered the government of the nation; still there was no king, but "the King eternal, immortal, invisible" {1 Tim. 1:17}. In the law itself, however, God had provided for the event of a king being placed over the nation, and directed both who should be appointed (him "whom the LORD thy God shall choose" {Deut. 17:15}) and how he was to conduct himself when he had been placed upon the throne (see Deut. 17:14-20). All this was anticipative; and, like all God's gracious provisions for man's need, its application was reserved, till man's sin afforded the occasion for its actual introduction. It was

Israel's sin, in the days of Samuel, to ask a king -- thereby rejecting the Lord from being their king; and Saul, the first king who reigned over them, was an answer in judgment to their request: --

I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath (Hos. 13:11).

It was with David that the kingdom, according to God's thoughts and counsels, began. He was the "man after [mine] God's own heart" {Acts 13:22}. With him God made a covenant. Some things in this covenant were conditional; others were unconditional. Of his son, who was to succeed him on the throne, God said,

If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men (2 Sam. 7:14).

So far the covenant was conditional. But it is immediately added,

. . . my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee {2 Sam. 7:15}.

Nothing was to cause the total forfeiture of God's mercy and favor by the house of David. However his sons might fail, and whatever chastening they might in consequence endure, nothing should interfere with the fulfilment of God's covenanted mercies.

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever {2 Sam. 7:16}.

It is well for us distinctly to bear in mind this two-fold character of the covenant with David. On the one hand, there were pledged and secured to him, and to his seed, an unfailing house, and an inalienable kingdom. On the other hand, if any of his offspring should commit iniquity, the transgressors were to be chastened with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. In either case, it is with the *house*, and the *throne*, of David, that Israel stands or falls.

The conditional provisions of the covenant soon came into requisition. Solomon, the first of David's successors on the throne, so departed from God in his old age, that some strokes of the rod were inflicted even during his lifetime. Immediately after his decease, ten tribes were rent away from the house of David. Even then it was said,

. . . unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there {1 Kings 11:36}.

Conditional promises are made to Jeroboam, the first king of the ten sundered tribes -- *but conditional promises only*. The whole communication to Jeroboam concludes with the remarkable words,

I will for this afflict the seed of David, **but not forever** (1 Kings 11:36-39).

David's seed had now come under the rod of the covenant; and we see little afterwards but its inflictions, and the multiplied and multiplying iniquities, which, notwithstanding all the

patience with which God bore with them, brought these inflictions upon the guilty nation, and its more guilty kings. The history of the ten tribes is one dark picture of evil, without a single relieving feature, from beginning to end. At last, the whole kingdom of the ten tribes is carried away captive, by the king of Assyria (2 Kings 17). The kingdom of Judah still continued a while, under the government of the house and the throne of David, and the mercies which God had pledged to that favored line.

But, even in Judah, one king arises after another, of whom there is the emphatic record -- "and [he] did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father" {e.g. 2 Kings 16:2} These are the exact words used of Ahaz, in whose reign evil made such rapid strides, that we begin to find, in prophecies written during his reign, and those which succeeded, predictions of utter desolation against Jerusalem, and the land, and its inhabitants. It was even a little previous to his reign, that Isaiah had the vision of the Lord's glory, of which he writes in ch. 6 of his prophecy. At the close of that chapter, he is instructed that judicial blindness should fall upon the nation; and when he anxiously inquires, "Lord, how long?" the answer is:

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 (Isa. 6:10-12).

Still, it is intimated that a remnant should be preserved for ultimate blessing.

It is from this epoch that prophecy, in the sense of its having been recorded and preserved for us in the Scriptures, properly dates. It embraces three leading themes. First, the prophets dwell on the wickedness of the people then around them, and call them to repentance, with all its practical fruits, promising mercy from the Lord if the people will but hearken, and presenting various motives to influence them to do so. Secondly, foreseeing the rejection of their message, and the consequent hardening of the people in iniquity, they predict the judgments of God which were to overtake them. They generally begin with those judgments which were then at hand, and pass on to the final judgments, which are to precede or attend the second coming of Christ. Thirdly, they predict the coming of Christ. But, as His first coming to suffer was an event still future when they wrote, we find them, just as we might expect, blending together in the same prophecy predictions which relate to His first coming, and predictions which relate to His second; and that often, without any intimation in the passage that He would come more than once. Then, besides, they seldom treat of the coming of Christ without passing on to its glorious results, in the overthrow of the nations, which have been the Lord's rod to punish Israel, and the introduction of His glorious reign, in which Israel, restored and saved, is to be pre-eminent among the nations, and the seed of blessing to the whole earth. Such is prophecy. How gracious of God to introduce such a light for any poor feeble ones who really trembled at His word, when the darkness of apostasy and rebellion was so rapidly overspreading the scene, and when the gloom of approaching judgments was beginning to darken the horizon.

It was in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and by means of him, that the long-threatened judgments began actually to be inflicted. The house of David had, for the time being, utterly corrupted itself, and the nation was given up to captivity. The throne of David was not transferred to another Israelitish line, as that of Saul had been transferred to David. That could not be. But the throne of David was nevertheless cast to the ground; the royal family, and most of the inhabitants of the land, were made captives and transported to Babylon; and the city and temple were entirely overthrown.

Three things have characterized the condition of Israel ever since the epoch just referred to, which did not attend any of the previous chastisements which had befallen them. One is, the loss of all that marked and manifested the presence of Jehovah among them. It has not been a temporary, short captivity of the ark among the Philistines, terminated by their being compelled to return it, with every token of profound homage to the power of Him whose throne and dwelling-place it was, but a removal of the glory from Jerusalem, and the earth, altogether. Ezekiel, who prophesied among the captives by the river of Chebar in Chaldea, saw in vision the departure of the Shekinah, or cloud of the divine presence and glory, first, "from off the threshold of the house" (Ezek. 10:18), and then from the city altogether.

And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city (Ezek. 11:23).

The prophet Hosea bears testimony to Israel's condition, thus denuded of all that outwardly marked the presence of God among them, and declares that it should be of long continuance.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim (Hos. 3:4).

Secondly, God has disowned them as His people.

Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi [that is, not my people]: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God (Hos. 1:9).

In all their previous calamities, they had still been owned of God as His people, and He had owned Himself to be their God. This was what constituted, in fact, the great distinction between them and other nations. But this was now in judgment set aside.

Thirdly, God's throne at Jerusalem -- the throne on which He had placed David and his sons -- being overturned, royal power was conferred of God on the chief of the Gentiles. It was not simply, as before, that the incursions of surrounding nations were permitted as a chastening for Israel's sin, but the whole order of God's government of the earth was changed. He had dwelt between the cherubim, in the temple at Jerusalem, and governed Israel by His laws, blessing or chastising them according to their ways, and dealing with the surrounding nations according to the course they pursued with regard to Israel. Now, Israel was given up -- abandoned -- and supreme power on the earth was bestowed on the king of Babylon. He did not inherit the throne which God had set up

at Jerusalem; but that throne being, for Israel's incorrigible wickedness, overturned, Nebuchadnezzar was made chief over the nations, universal dominion being confided to him of God.

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. Thou art this head of gold (Dan. 2:37, 38).

The three features just mentioned have characterized Israel's state to the present moment. The return from Babylon, in the days of Cyrus, Ezra, and Nehemiah, did not reverse or cancel one of them. There was no return of the glory -- there was no remission of the sentence, "Lo-ammi, not my people"; and there was no setting aside of the dominant power of the Gentiles. To what end, then, was the return from Babylon, after the seventy years' captivity? A most important question, and deserving of the most serious consideration.

My readers may have noticed in Scripture, that all the visitations of the divine displeasure on Israel, down to the point to which we have traced their history, were mainly on account of idolatry. 1 Sam. 7:3 and Psalms 78:58 prove this decisively as to Shiloh; the whole history proves it as to the kingdom of the ten tribes; and, as to Judah's captivity, let the following passages decide:

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched (2 Chron. 34:24, 25).

Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. 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. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand (2 Chron. 36:14-17).

Thus it is evident, that the special sin for which these judgments overtook the nation of Israel, was that sin of idolatry, the prevalence of which, among the early inhabitants of the earth, was the occasion of Abraham's being called out from the mass of mankind. Israel was destined to be a special standing testimony against idolatry, and to the unity of the true God -- Jehovah -- who had deigned to call them His people, and to call Himself their God. When they themselves became incorrigible idolaters, what remained, but that God

should give them up to judgment and desolation, as He did? They had ceased to be, by the exclusive maintenance of His worship, a witness for the true God. He now made them an involuntary testimony, by the judgments with which He visited them, and by which they have been pursued to the present day!

He had indeed promised, by Jeremiah, that there should be a return from the Babylonish captivity at the expiration of seventy years. We are all aware that this return took place. But, precious as was this touching proof of God's faithfulness and mercy to the few who returned to Jerusalem, and to the land of their fathers, there was not then, and there never has been since, a restoration of the nation at large to the blessings forfeited by their fathers' sins. They were but very few who did return; the mass of the nation remained in Babylon, and the countries where they had been scattered. The ten tribes never returned at all. There was indeed a second temple erected; but no ark of the covenant was enshrined within its holy of holies; and there was no Shekinah of glory as the sign of the presence of Him who once dwelt between the cherubim. The restored captives had renewed possession of the land; but it was not by the tenure of an unconditional gift from God, but by permission of their Gentile masters. The sentence, "not my people," still rested upon the nation; and so distinctly was this marked, that (as has been observed by others) in the three prophecies which were written after the return from Babylon, God never addresses them as His people. There are predictions *that in days yet to come they shall be so called*; but in the way of actual address to the then existing inhabitants of the land, God does not so own them. This is surely a circumstance deserving our most grave attention.

There can be no doubt, that the great design of the return from Babylon at the end of the seventy years' captivity, was, that Israel might be in the land when the hour arrived for Christ's appearance among them. All the divine counsels as to Israel, just as with regard to everything besides, have Christ for their center. He is the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises were made. He is the Son of David, the hope of Israel, and of David's house. It was to Him, and the stability of God's purposes in Him, that all the unconditional part of the covenant with David referred. Everything in the whole course of God's dealings with Israel had been steadily pointing onwards to Him. All the typical persons, places, offerings, and acts, celebrated in Israel's history or enjoined in Israel's laws, were but shadowy representations of Him. Of Him the prophets had largely spoken; of Him the psalmists had sweetly sung. There were indeed mysterious indications, both in types, and psalms, and prophecies, of His coming in humiliation -- of His coming to suffer and to die. Looking back on the past, in the light of New Testament revelations, all this seems clear enough to us. And, doubtless, it ought to have been clear to them. *Faith would have made it so*. But, alas! it was to be demonstrated, by the result of Christ's coming, as well as by all previous dealings of God with man, that neither faith, nor love, nor anything according to God, is native to the heart of man, -- poor, fallen, sinful, rebel man. Yea, it was to be shown, that with every advantage that the Jew possessed, after all the cultivation bestowed on him of God, for so many centuries, even his heart, when fairly tested by the mission of

Christ, had nothing in it to respond to "the grace and truth" which "came" by Him. This is a humbling view of the subject, and a deeply practical one, dear reader, for our own souls. But it is a view fully presented to us in the word of God.

The great object of Christ's coming was, beyond doubt, to accomplish redemption, and thus lay the basis for all the subsequent actings of God in grace, whether, at present, with regard to the Church gathered out of all nations, or, by and by, with regard to the nation of Israel, and the entire population of the millennial earth. Christ's death was, besides, as we are assured, the ground on which, anticipatively, God had saved individuals from the beginning. But let me again remind my Christian readers, that the measure of what is revealed in Scripture is not what was needful for our salvation, but what God was pleased to do, and to make known, for the display and accomplishment of His own glory in Christ. And it was for His glory, not only that Christ should die to put away our sins, but that this should be at a time when it had been made fully manifest that less than this would not meet the desperate necessities of our ruined state. There was a "fulness of time," at which "God sent forth his Son" {see Gal. 4:4}. It was "in due time" that "Christ died for the ungodly" {see Rom. 5:6}. Let us remember, also, that both in His life and death Christ had relations to Israel *nationally considered*. Caiaphas prophesied (and we are told "he spake not of himself") "that Jesus should die *for that nation*" {see John 11:49-52}. And, while the death of Christ is thus the meritorious ground of all the abundant blessing and prosperity which are yet to be Israel's portion, in days to come, its perpetration, regarded as man's deed, was the crowning act of Israel's national iniquity; and this is the ground on which judgment has been executed upon them, by means of all the calamities which have since befallen them.

We have seen how, for their sins in general, and for the sin of idolatry in particular, they have been under God's righteous judgment, and the victims of Gentile oppression, ever since the days of Shalmaneser and Nebuchadnezzar. But the prophecies abound with predictions of their final and complete restoration, and of interminable blessing, to be enjoyed by them when so restored. These predictions associate the restoration of Israel with the coming of Messiah, and their penitent reception of Him as their long-promised Deliverer and King.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power (Psa. 110:3).

Psa. 118 treats largely of their deliverance and subsequent prosperity and joy, and represents them as exclaiming, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD" {Psa. 118:26}! Isaiah represents them as saying,

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 (Isa. 25:9).

Again,

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee (Isa. 26:8).

In another passage, the Lord Himself is represented as saying,



For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early (Hos. 5:14, 15).

In the next verses they are represented as saying,

Come, and let us return unto the LORD; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up {Hos. 6:1}.

Many -- perhaps it might be truly said *most* -- the passages which foretell Israel's restoration, foretell also this humbled, penitent state of the nation at the time of its accomplishment. In the Gospels we find Christ presented to the Jewish nation -- His person, His miracles, His ministry, the circumstances of His birth, everything, in short, to the minutest detail, corresponding to the prophecies of their Messiah; and the nation is thus put to the test as to whether it is in the penitent, humbled state, in which these prophecies represent it to be, when Messiah is received and the nation restored. Alas! my readers are aware of the result. While certain prophecies were fulfilled in His being thus presented, the people, in their blindness and unbelief, fulfilled other prophecies in rejecting and crucifying their Messiah and King. They saw "no beauty" in Him "that they should desire Him" {see Isa. 53:2}. He had to say, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain" {see Isa. 49:4}. They "smote the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" {see Mic. 5:1}. "They parted His garments among them, and cast lots upon His vesture" {see Psa. 22:18}. "They pierced His hands and His feet" {see Psa. 22:16}. Such was the result of this last trial, to which this favored nation of God's choice was subjected. "Away with him! crucify him, crucify him" {see John 19:15}! was the wild, infuriate outcry, with which they answered all the tender tones of love in which He had besought them to know the day of their visitation!

Reader, there is something more than prophetic light in what we are now considering -- there is instruction for our souls of the most solemn and wholesome character. We see here what man is: what *we* -- *what you and I* -- *are!* The nature which expressed itself thus, in rejection of Christ by Israel, is the nature which we ourselves possess. There is no more preparedness in our hearts to receive Christ than there was in Israel's heart. If we have received Him, it is because grace, sovereign grace, has wrought in us the disposition to receive Him: even as the same sovereign grace will yet produce in Israel the state of heart which was found so totally wanting when Christ came at first. "Oh, to grace how great a debtor" is the language of each one whose heart grace has touched. Such will be Israel's confession by and by; but first they had -- and they still have -- to taste the bitter consequences of refusing the One, mighty to save, on whom their help had been laid.

On God's part, all was ready when Christ was here. He was the Seed of Abraham and the Son of David -- the Prophet like unto Moses, whom God had promised to raise up unto His people -- the One who was to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" {Psa. 110:4}. His people were, it is true, in an abject, degraded state. An Edomite was on the

throne; and he ruled by Cæsar's permission, or rather by the power of Cæsar. Cæsar's superscription was on the coin with which all their commerce was transacted; and there was scarcely a badge of national degradation which they did not wear. The royal lineage was so reduced in circumstances, that the mother of its last-born heir -- the true heir -- was unable to procure accommodation in the inn on her way to be taxed by the Gentile stranger. The Son of David was born -- in David's city indeed, but -- in a stable, with the manger for the cradle of His earliest infancy, in the land and in the world over which He is yet to reign in glory. But there He was; and the question arose, Was the nation ready to receive Him? Ah! if it had been. Would it not seem as though the Savior Himself indulged the thought of what might have been, even then, had the nation been prepared to receive Him? How else are we to understand His broken words? --

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 {Luke 19:41, 42}.

"If thou hadst." He says not what would have been had this been so -- and it is not for us to supply the ellipsis. We may not speak where He was silent. But is it doing so, or is it taking any liberty with Scripture to suggest, that while His words were interrupted by His tears, His musings were on what would have been, or might have been, had that city, so much beloved, known the day of her visitation? But she did not. The things belonging to her peace she had no eye to discern; and weeping, as the Savior did, over her folly and unbelief, with all the dismal consequences which were about to ensue, He could but acquiesce in their justice, though His tears proclaim what it cost Him to contemplate the desolation of the city where His throne ought to have been planted, and where universal hosannas ought to have hailed Him as "the King that cometh in the name of the Lord" {Luke 19:38}. "But now they are hid from thine eyes" {Luke 19:42}. Yes; the son of the lord of the vineyard had come, seeking fruit of the husbandmen to whom it had been let out. All previous messengers they had treated with scorn or cruelty; and now they were preparing to cast out of the vineyard, and to slay, the Heir and Lord of all.

This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours {Mark 12:7}.

Nor was it only as seeking fruit that He was thus rejected by those whose place and responsibility it was to have yielded it. He came in grace to gather Israel.

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! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:37-39).

Sovereign grace will yet, as other Scriptures teach us, put this cry into their hearts and into their lips; and then they shall again see their once-despised and long-rejected Lord; but, for the present, they were to suffer the terrible consequences of having set Him at nought.

But judgment is God's strange work. He is slow to anger, and of great mercy. If we see this anywhere, we see it in His dealings with Jerusalem and the Jews. When, after their long rebellion and many sorrows and adversities, the "Healer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in" {see Isa. 58:12}, appeared, and was rejected and crucified, and sentence pronounced upon them, of more terrible woes and calamities than any which they had as yet endured, there was no haste in the execution of the sentence. Nay, more; before it was executed at all, the One whose rejection by the nation was its crowning sin interceded on their behalf. The vine-dresser pleaded for the barren fig-tree, and obtained for it another year, with such added care and culture as it had never received. Jesus prayed, when on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" {Luke 23:34}. What was the answer to this prayer? Forgiveness, after such a sort, and to such an extent, that the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven to proclaim to them full forgiveness, absolute remission, with the full enjoyment of all their forfeited national blessings, if even now they would repent of their enormous sin, and look to Him whom they had rejected and slain. This very plea, "They know not what they do," is what, in other words, the Holy Ghost puts into the lips of Peter, when addressing them, he says,

And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers (Acts 3:17).

It is in immediate connection with these words, that Peter calls on them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out, and the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord;

And [says he] he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:20, 21).

There are "times of restitution of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of all the prophets." All the prophets connect these times with Israel's repentance, and Israel's restoration, and with the coming of their Messiah. He came once, "came to his own," but "his own received him not" {see John 1:11}. Peter, in this very discourse, charges them with having denied the Holy One and the Just, with having killed the Prince of life, whom God, however, had raised from the dead. Then, in the words we are considering, he calls on them to repent and be converted, and promises, though they have rejected Christ, that if they do but now repent, God will send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens had received till the promised times of restitution.<sup>19</sup> And what is this, but the plain declaration of what the Savior intimates in His closing words as He left the temple:

Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord {Matt. 23:39}?

*Till ye shall say.* Does not this intimate that they shall see Him when they do say this? And so Peter assures them, that if they

would repent, God would send Jesus Christ. Of course, it was foreseen that this last offer, like every previous one, would be rejected, and the Church was to be formed during the interval which was to succeed. But so it was foreseen, that Christ would be rejected, when He was here in humiliation; and His death, which is salvation to all who believe, is attributed to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, as well as to the wicked hands by which he was actually slain. Alas! this proffered mercy was rejected. They as stubbornly refused the testimony of the Holy Ghost to an exalted Christ, as they had refused Christ Himself when here in humiliation.

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye (Acts 7:51),

These are the solemn words of Stephen, in his last address to his countrymen, just before they ran upon him, and stoned him with stones till he died. Down to this point, mercy had lingered over Jerusalem, and no testimony had been borne to Christ risen and ascended, save there. Now, the testimony leaves Jerusalem, passing first to Samaria, then to the Gentiles. Philip preaches at Samaria; Peter is sent to Cornelius and his house; and Saul of Tarsus, one of the chief persecutors, is converted, and becomes the apostle of the uncircumcision. Even still, the mercy of God lingers over the Jews; and, throughout the Acts of the Apostles, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" {Rom. 1:16}, is the principle acted upon by those messengers of God's love. Everywhere they preach first in the synagogues; and it is not till rejected there, and generally driven out, that they turn to the Gentiles. The extension of the apostle's ministry to the Gentiles is the last stumbling-block to their national pride and prejudice, and this they cannot brook.

And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live (Acts 22:21, 22).

The Jews,

. . . who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for [which] the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost (1 Thess. 2:14-16).

Wrath has come upon them to the uttermost! First, for their idolatry; secondly, for their rejection of the Lord Jesus, whether here in humiliation, or proclaimed to them as ascended, by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven; thirdly, for their hatred to the mercy now extended to the Gentiles. But grace is yet to triumph, in their full restoration, and in their becoming the seed of universal blessing to the nations of the millennial earth.

19. I need hardly say that this language means, "till the times of restitution" arrive -- not till they expire.

## Chapter 7

### *Israel's Future Restoration*

Our inquiry into Israel's past history and present state conducted us to some of the closing statements of the New Testament on this subject. Their "house left to them desolate" -- their city and temple doomed to utter destruction -- "the kingdom of God taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" {see Matt. 21:43}, while "wrath comes upon *them* to the uttermost" {see 1 Thess. 2:16} -- judicial "blindness" resting upon them as a nation: such are the main features of the state in which, for the present, the New Testament takes its leave of this favored nation of God's choice. It may be well for us, just at this point, to inquire whether the New Testament teaches that this overthrow -- that these calamities -- that this judicial blindness, are all to be perpetual and irreversible; or whether it does not rather intimate, that in the purpose of God a limit is placed to their continuance.

At the close of that long strain of awful denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, which we find in Matt. 23, our Lord declares, that upon Jerusalem should come all the righteous blood which had been shed upon the earth; and then He utters the well-known words quoted in our last,

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! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth [does He say, "for ever"? no] Ye shall not see me henceforth, *till ye shall say*, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord {Matt. 23:39}.

Do not these words imply that the time will yet arrive when Israel shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," and that then, when they do say this, they shall again behold their, till then, rejected and absent Lord? These words, it must be admitted, do not absolutely declare that Israel *will* say, "Blessed is he that cometh"; but, surely, if there were not another passage on the subject in the whole of God's word, the one before us holds out encouragement sufficient to keep alive in the heart the hope of Israel's final restoration. But we shall find passages in abundance which do absolutely predict that which is here conditionally expressed.

If we turn to Psal. 118, from which our Lord quotes these words, we shall find that Israel is there represented as using them *after the Messiah has been rejected*. They are connected in the psalm with the well-known passage, "The stone which

the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner" {Psa. 118:22}. The most superficial reader of Scripture can scarcely be ignorant that this passage is interpreted both by our Lord Himself (Matt. 21:42) and by the apostle (1 Pet. 2:7), of Israel's present rejection of their Messiah, and of God's exaltation of Him while thus rejected. The psalm before us represents Israel as now acknowledging this rejected Stone.

This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.  
This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice  
and be glad in it {Psa. 118:23, 24}.

Then, after a prayer for prosperity, we have the words quoted by Christ in Matt. 23:

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD : we  
have blessed you out of the house of the LORD {Psa.  
118:26}.

Can any one resist the conclusion from these scriptures, when thus collated, that Israel is yet to be restored? Ages before Christ was on earth, the psalmist had been inspired to prophesy that Israel would own the Messiah whom they had at first refused, and that then they should say, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In effect, then, our Lord says, "You are now refusing the Stone, which, when so refused, is to be made the head of the corner. Your house is therefore left to you desolate. But you are yet to acknowledge the Stone which you now refuse, and to own that its exaltation is Jehovah's doing, and marvellous in your eyes. Till then, ye shall see me no more. Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

In one of the other Gospels, our Lord limits the period of Israel's calamities in another way. He predicts the destruction of the temple, so that one stone should not be left upon another; He speaks of Jerusalem being compassed with armies, and of this being a sign that its desolation is nigh; He declares that these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled: -- then He adds,

for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon  
this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword,  
and shall be led away captive into all nations: and  
Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the  
times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (Luke 21:23, 24).

Thus it appears that there is a defined period, termed "the times of the Gentiles," during which Jerusalem is to be "trodden down," and at the close of which it is to cease to be

so.

In 2 Cor. 3:15, we have a brief and passing, but very distinct, intimation, that the judgment under which Israel lies is not final and perpetual. The apostle has been referring to the act of Moses, in putting a veil on his face, and treating it as symbolical of Israel's blinded state. "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart." Such is their condition, "to this day."

Nevertheless [adds the apostle], when it [Israel's heart] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away {2 Cor. 3:16}.

He does not pursue the subject in this passage; it is not the point on which he is expatiating. But these passing allusions to Israel's restoration, as a settled, established truth, with which the reader's mind is supposed to be already familiar, are only the more convincing for their being introduced in this incidental way.

In Rom. 11 we have the subject more fully and formally considered. The apostle has been declaring, with the most unflinching faithfulness, the results of Israel's rejection of Christ. He has been quoting to them the words of Moses,

I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you {Rom. 10:19}.

He has added to these the words of Isaiah:

But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people {Rom. 10:20, 21}.

These quotations from the Old Testament suggest the inquiry, whether this rejection of Israel is universal and permanent -- whether *all* Israel be rejected, and whether those who are rejected are rejected *for ever*. "say, then, Hath God cast away his people?" This is the question considered in the chapter before us. "God forbid!" {Rom. 11:1} is the earnest and almost indignant reply. "*God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew*" {Rom. 11:2}. This answer the apostle proceeds in various ways to illustrate and establish. A few leading points of his argument are all that can at present be noticed.

Having shown that all Israel are not even now rejected -- that he himself was a Israelite -- and that, as in the days of Elias, when there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal,

so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace {Rom. 11:5}.

he proceeds to consider the case of that part of the nation (the mass of it, alas!) who were cast away. He quotes passages, both from Isaiah and the Psalms, as to the judicial blindness to which they are given up. Well, as to these, -- the bulk of the nation, given up thus to blindness, -- is it for ever? "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?" -- that is, fall finally, never to be restored.

God forbid [the apostle again replies]: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to

provoke them to jealousy {Rom. 11:11}.

Now, if one object of the present calling of the Gentiles is to stir up God's ancient people to jealousy -- to produce in them the sense of what they have lost, and the desire for its recovery -- how evident that they, the Jews, are not finally cast off. Nay, more, the apostle argues thus -- that if the effect of Israel's present rejection be the extension of mercy to the Gentiles, the result of Israel's restoration must be something better still.

Now if the fall of them [Israel] be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? . . . For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead {Rom. 11:12, 15}?

Does this look like Israel's being for ever rejected? Further, having shown that for unbelief some of the branches of this olive tree have been broken off, while the Gentile wild olive has been grafted in, the apostle warns us Gentiles, in the language considered at large in a previous paper.<sup>20</sup>

For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell [that part of Israel which is now rejected], severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off {Rom. 11:21, 22}.

Let the reader mark well the words which follow these.

And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: *for God is able to graff them in again* {Rom. 11:23}.

This is not an assertion that Israel shall be restored; but it is a declaration *that if they abide not in unbelief* they shall be restored. But the apostle advances another step, and shows, that if there was nothing incongruous in our replacing them, when they were rejected because of their unbelief, still more likely is it that they will be restored when the Gentiles are cut off.

For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree {Rom. 11:24}?

Thus he proceeds, step by step. Israel's restoration is first *possible* -- "God is *able* to graff them in again." Then it is conditionally promised -- "they, *if* they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in." Then it is highly probable -- "*how much more* shall these be grafted into their own olive tree." Thus it is that the apostle approaches the climax of his argument. And what is it that completes and crowns this climax? *The full, explicit, emphatic declaration of the truth that Israel shall yet be restored.*

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the

20. "The Doom of Christendom; or, Why are the Judgments coming."

fulness of the Gentiles be come in. **and so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written,** There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins {Rom. 11:25-27}.

And if it should be said that this is unquestionably a promise of Israel's conversion, but not of their restoration, let me beg the reader's attention to two things.

First, we have seen before that there is something promised on condition of their conversion -- if they abide not in unbelief, (that is, *if they are converted*,) they are to be grafted in again. *The grafting in again* is their restoration; and so the apostle argues, that if they should be converted, they are sure to be restored. But will they ever be converted? The objection we are considering admits that their conversion is unquestionably foretold -- "*so all Israel shall be saved.*" If saved, then restored, according to the previous reasoning of the apostle. Secondly, the apostle proceeds to say,

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance {Rom. 11:28, 29}.

The nation, beloved on account of the patriarchs with whom God's covenant was made, are still the heirs of all the blessings which in that covenant were made over to them. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." There can be no doubt that it is the "calling" of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which is here referred to; and that the "gifts" in question are those which God bestowed on them and on their seed after them. Did God "call" Abraham to a land which he should after receive for an inheritance? He has not repented of this: He has not changed His mind on the subject. The inheritance still belongs to Abraham and his seed. Did not God bestow the land of Canaan on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by a deed of gift, composed of promises, and confirmed by an oath, a deed of gift defining most accurately the extent of the land bestowed, and the privileges of earthly greatness and prosperity annexed to the possession of it? Assuredly He did: and God has not repented of these gifts. Israel has proved itself unworthy to possess them: and, when in actual possession, the people proved themselves unable to hold what God's bounty had bestowed. But has all this changed God's mind? By no means. It has been the cause of all the judgments which have overtaken Israel -- the cause of their present dispersion, and of the judicial blindness which rests upon them as a nation. But unless God can change His mind, His purpose, as expressed in His "gifts and calling," must yet be accomplished. So unanswerable is the proof which this passage affords of Israel's literal restoration, that the most popular modern opponent of pre-millenarian views makes this remark upon the subject:

If this perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, as respects the *natural* seed, be admitted on the authority of the apostle, it will be difficult, I think, to avoid admitting their *territorial restoration*: the **PEOPLE** and the **LAND** of Israel being so connected in numerous prophecies of the Old Testament, that whatever *literality* and *perpetuity* are ascribed to the one, must, one would think, on all strict

principles of interpretation, be attributed to the other also.<sup>21</sup>

Let us now turn to the Old Testament. I have dwelt thus largely on the evidence afforded elsewhere, because of the tenacity with which some maintain the idea, that unless the doctrine in question can be proved from the New Testament, no proofs from the Old can be considered satisfactory. That the New Testament recognizes the doctrine as true, and even proves it at length, we have now surely seen. But the natural place for the treatment of such a subject is the Old Testament. Israel and the earth are as properly and distinctively the leading subjects of the Old Testament, as the Church and heaven are of the New. And let it never be forgotten, that the Holy Ghost is as much the Author of the one as of the other, and that the contents of both are equally and absolutely true. The Lord grant us true subjection of mind to His holy word.

First, let us glance at the terms of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to which the apostle evidently alludes when he says that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land (Gen. 12:7).

This was when Abram first passed through the land of Canaan, in obedience to God's call. In the next chapter, we find that when Lot had separated from him, the Lord said unto Abram,

. . . Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. . . . Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; *for I will give it unto thee* (Gen. 13:14-17).

This promise is afterwards made the subject of a covenant:

In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites (Gen. 15:18-21).

Then again, when Abram's name was changed to Abraham, God says to him,

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, *all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession*; and I will be their God (Gen. 17:8).

To Isaac it was said,

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father (Gen. 26:3).

To Jacob, in like manner, when he journeyed through the land, -- his pilgrim staff his only companion by day, and the stones of the place his pillow by night, -- to Jacob it was said,

21. "{David} Brown on the Second Advent."

. . . I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed (Gen. 28:13).

These are not the whole of the passages in which God's promises to the patriarchs, as to the possession of the land by them and their seed, are recorded. These promises were never in any sense fulfilled to the patriarchs themselves. Never, save for a very short time in Solomon's day, were they in any sense fulfilled to Israel; and how could Israel's possession of the whole territory, for a little while under Solomon's reign, be the complete accomplishment of promises which declared that they should possess it *for ever -- for an everlasting inheritance*? True it is, that their sins, and above all, their rejection of Christ, have caused them, for the present, to be dispossessed of their inheritance. But it is in view of this very state of things, that the apostle predicts their ultimate conversion, and declares that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Clearly then these promises to the patriarchs, and their seed, remain to be fulfilled. It must be equally clear, that in order to their fulfilment Israel must be restored.

But we are not left to inferences, however clear. Passages without end declare in the plainest terms, that after Israel's long dispersion and many calamities, it is, as a nation, to be restored. It is not in the New Testament alone, that the present dispersion and sufferings of this people are foretold. We have seen how they are foretold in the New Testament, and the limits which are there assigned to their continuance. But the Old Testament had long before predicted these calamities; and their continuance is as distinctly limited in the Old Testament as in the New.

Can anything exceed, in fidelity, the prophetic description of Israel's past and present state contained in Lev. 26? After threatening them with many inflictions during their continuance in the land, their long dispersion is thus foretold:

And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation . . . And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land . . . And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth . . . And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up {Lev. 26:31-38}.

Awful, however, as these predictions are, and dreadfully as they have been fulfilled, can we gather from the chapter in which they are recorded, whether or not these judgments were to be perpetual? Ah! there is a door of mercy, and of hope, set before this down-trodden and afflicted race! Speaking of those that are left of them in their enemies' lands, God says,

The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: *and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity*. . .

because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the LORD {Lev. 26:43-45}.

How sweet this assurance of final mercy, at the close of all the richly-deserved punishment the nation has undergone! Mercy too, according to the covenant with their ancestors -- a covenant which, the Lord declares, He will not break.

In Deut. 28 and 29 the predictions of Israel's captivity, and dispersion, and extreme sufferings, are even more detailed and minute than in Lev. 26. Towards the close, the nations are represented as inquiring, in utter astonishment,

. . . Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger {Deut. 29:24}?

Disobedience, and idolatry, and violation of the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, are assigned as the causes of these judicial inflictions; and the men into whose lips this answer to the inquiry is put, are represented as saying,

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: and the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day {Deut. 29:27, 28}.

Why do I quote these words? To show how far these predictions of judgment on the nation extend; and that they include its present dispersion and afflictions. What follows the language just quoted?

And it shall come to pass, *when all these things are come upon thee*, the blessing *and the curse*, which I have set before thee, and *thou shalt call them to mind* among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the LORD thy God . . . *that then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity*, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and *gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee* {Deut. 30:1-3}.

And, as though this general promise of restoration was not sufficient, -- as though it were foreseen that some one of the outcasts might suppose he was too far off from the land, too isolated from his brethren -- it is added,

If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers {Deut. 30:4, 5}.

This promise of restoration to the land is connected, moreover, with the promise of spiritual renewal.

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live {Deut. 30:6}.

Still further, the restoration and renewal of Israel, here foretold, are to be attended by the infliction upon their enemies of the curses so long endured by themselves.

And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee {Deut. 30:7}.

Let the reader remember that this prophecy was spoken and written before the nation had entered the land -- that it spans the whole extent of their history, denouncing on them in case of their disobedience all the multiplied, innumerable woes which have actually overtaken them -- that the epoch of their promised restoration is "when all these things have come upon them" -- that the restoration promised is to be so complete as to embrace "any who may be driven out to the utmost parts of heaven" {see Deut. 30:4} -- that it is connected with their complete conversion -- and that it is associated with the transfer to their enemies of the woes till then endured by themselves -- let the reader bear all these things in mind, and then let him say whether it be possible to doubt the futurity of the restoration here predicted, or to question whether the faithfulness of God be not pledged for its accomplishment.

A passage from the song of Moses next demands our attention. God reveals to Moses how His people will sin against Him and break His covenant, and says,

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them {Deut. 31:17}.

It is in anticipation of all this that Moses is directed to write this song, respecting which it is said,

And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed {Deut. 31:21}.

In this song Moses pathetically expostulates with the people, as to the sins which he foretells they will commit, and faithfully predicts the calamities which will, in consequence, overtake them. He represents the Lord Himself as speaking, and what is it He declares? He speaks of hiding His face from the people, of kindling a fire in His anger that shall burn to the lowest hell, of heaping mischiefs upon them, and spending all His arrows upon them. He threatens them with hunger, and burning heat, and bitter destruction.

The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs {Deut. 32:25}.

But is there to be no termination to these calamities? Ah yes!

I said, I would scatter them into comers, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this {Deut. 32:26, 27}.

And how is this to be prevented? By Israel's deliverance when at the last extremity, and by the judgments of God's hand

being transferred from them to their adversaries.

For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. . . . If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy {Deut. 32:36, 41-42}.

How completely God's judgments are to be removed from Israel, and inflicted on their Gentile oppressors, we see in the next verse:

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people {Deut. 32:43}.

How evident that this prophecy is as yet unfilled! Whatever partial restorations of Israel there may have been in the past, this entire transfer of God's judgments from them to their adversaries is what has never taken place. We shall find it a marked feature in most of the prophecies of their future restoration.

A remarkable instance of this we have in Isa. 14:1, 2:

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over oppressors.

Surely this is a prophecy which has never yet been accomplished. A few captives did indeed return from Babylon by permission of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, the Persian kings: but Nehemiah, who lived and wrote in those days, leaves us in no uncertainty as to what the position of this returned remnant was.

Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress (Neh. 9:36, 37).

Surely this was not possessing their former rulers, for servants and for handmaids, or ruling over their oppressors. Nor has there ever yet been a page in Israel's history, on which anything like a fulfilment of Isa. 14:1, 2, could be recorded. No; it remains to be fulfilled. God's word cannot fail; and as it is certain that this part of it has not yet come to pass, it is equally certain that it will hereafter be accomplished.

Before examining other predictions of Israel's restoration, I would present my readers with a number of passages from the Old Testament, which plainly declare that God has put limits to the continuance of Israel's calamities. Many of them,

like those already considered, predict the transfer of these calamities to their enemies.

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 (Isa. 40:1, 2).

Whatever be the epoch to which the fulfilment of this prophecy may have to be assigned, the prophecy itself clearly intimates that there is a defined limit beyond which Jerusalem's desolations are not to continue. A moment approaches at which it can be said "that her warfare is accomplished," and her iniquity is forgiven. Again,

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out. There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up {Isa. 51:17, 18}.

How affecting this figurative representation of Jerusalem's extremity of anguish!

Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over (Isa. 51:21-23).

Can any question be entertained for a moment as to the futurity of the events here foretold? We have a similar passage in Jer. 30:

Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, *yet will I not make a full end of thee*: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished {Jer. 30:10, 11}.

We have, in connection with this, the same declarations as to Israel's adversaries as in all the previous passages.

Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD (Jer. 30:16, 17).

These are but a few out of many passages which bear unequivocal testimony to these two points -- that Israel's overthrow and rejection are limited in their continuance; and that when Israel ceases to suffer the inflictions of God's wrath, these inflictions will fall upon those who have been the rod in His hand, for the chastisement of His people Israel.

Let us now glance at a number of direct testimonies to Israel's future restoration, noticing the distinctive features of each passage as it rises for consideration. We have not to read far in the prophetic page before we arrive at a prediction of this event -- a striking prediction, which associates it, as many others do, with those "approaching judgments" which formed the subject of one of our earlier numbers.

Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of Hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: *and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning*: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed (Isa. 1:24-28).

We learn thus, that the future restoration of Israel is connected with the great crisis which is so fast approaching, in which God will interpose in power to settle His long-pending controversy with His rebellious creatures. "Ah," is His language, "I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies."

The next passage I would quote is a very remarkable one.

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 a 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 (Isa. 11:11-16).

I have quoted the whole of this long passage on account of its exceeding importance. The reader has it now before his eyes, and can refer to it for the proof of the following remarks.

1. "*That day*," in which all these things are said to come to pass, is the period of the overthrow of Antichrist, and the introduction of Christ's glorious reign. The whole of the chapter, down to v. 11, is the proof of this.

2. This is a "second" restoration of Israel. So that, whatever may be alleged as to Israel's having been once restored in Ezra's and Nehemiah's day, this is declared to be the "second time" that the Lord sets His hand to



recover His people.

3. It is from an universal dispersion that they are to be thus recovered.

4. This future restoration embraces both Israel (the kingdom of the ten tribes) and Judah.

5. When this restoration is effected, the rivalry and enmity between these divisions of the nation cease for ever.

6. It is connected with the cutting off of their adversaries: "the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off."

7. The nations occupying the regions once peopled by the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, and so designated by these terms, *or probably even the descendants of these ancient races themselves*, are to have part in these solemn transactions.

8. There are to be divine interferences with the order of nature, similar to those which characterized the departure of Israel out of Egypt, in days of old.

How manifestly are all these things taught in the passage before us! How manifest, also, that the fulfilment of the prophecy is yet to come!

The last particular in the passage just considered, namely, the divine interference with the established order of nature, seems to be set forth in another passage on the subject -- Isa. 27:12, 13:

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.

The former part of this quotation would seem to refer to the same extraordinary interposition of God's power, as is foretold in Isa. 11:15, 16. Then, in this passage we are also instructed that the re-gathering of Israel will extend to all the scattered individuals of that distinguished race -- "gathered one by one." "The great trumpet," moreover, is to be blown, and this, the sounding of the true jubilee blast, is to be the signal for Egypt's outcasts, and those ready to perish in Assyria, to return and worship the Lord of Hosts at Jerusalem.

Should the reader be surprised at these intimations of supernatural convulsions, in connection with Israel's restoration, let him call to mind the extraordinary interposition of God's power, when Israel was redeemed from Egypt several thousands of years ago. I am not forgetting how far the spirit of infidelity has infected even many true Christians, who seem to think that the age of miracles has so entirely passed, that there will never again be any supernatural deviation from the established order of things. "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," is already in many hearts and on many lips. But how express is the testimony of

Scripture, that this order, which to reason and unbelief seems so unalterable, will again be solemnly interrupted. One of the passages that we have been examining declares that it is to be "like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." But another, about to be cited, goes beyond this, and affirms that Israel's future restoration will so far exceed in wonder the ancient exodus from Egypt, that this last named will no longer be remembered -- that is, in comparison with the other.

Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers {Jer. 16:14, 15}.

And as though anticipating the question of unbelief, How can these things be? it is added,

Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks {Jer. 16:16}.

Here also we find that there is a defined limit set to the chastisements they are to endure; and that it is when this limit has been reached that the Lord will turn their captivity, and forgive and restore them, as all these prophecies declare He will.

For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes. *And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double*; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things" (Jer. 17:14-18).

How happy to find that, as in our individual salvation, the grace that blots out all our sin is the grace of Him who has observed and taken knowledge of it all, and provided for its being justly and holily forgiven, in visiting it all on the head of our sinless, holy, divine Substitute, so that grace reigns *through* righteousness, *not by setting it aside*. In like manner, Israel, when restored and forgiven, will have no fear of anything being called to mind, or brought to light, which had not been noticed when forgiveness was bestowed! "*For mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face!*" Those very principles of God's character and ways which are now known to faith (and to faith only) as the foundation of the soul's peace, and the secret of its practical victory over sin, will, by and by, be conspicuously displayed in the open, manifested dealings of God with Israel and with the earth. It is thus that, in the words immediately following those which have been quoted, we find the Gentiles learning, by this display of God's character in His ways towards Israel, to turn from their idols to the true God.

O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself,

and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is THE LORD {Jer. 16:19-21}.

I am aware that in this remark I am anticipating, in some degree, a future branch of our present inquiry: but the remark is so naturally suggested by the passage under review, that it could not be withheld.

Jer. 30 has been already quoted in proof of two points, namely, that Israel's desolations are limited in their duration, and that when they come to a close, their enemies will be visited with equal, or even greater calamities. But the predictions of Israel's restoration which this chapter contains are so express, and they descend to particulars so minute, that we may well bestow upon them a little further attention.

Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it {Jer. 30:2, 3}.

And as though to guard against the spiritualizing mode of interpretation, which would explain away such prophecies, in the attempt to apply them to the Church and to Christianity, we are told, "And these are the words that the LORD spake *concerning Israel and concerning Judah*" {Jer. 30:4}. They are not words concerning something else figuratively represented under the names of Israel and Judah, but words spoken by the Lord (solemn thought!) *concerning Israel and concerning Judah*. And what are those words? Not to quote again those already considered, hear what follows:

. . . because they called thee an Outcast, saying This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. Thus saith the LORD; Behold I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small {Jer. 30:17-19}.

How precise and how emphatic is this testimony.

At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of *all the families of Israel*, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:1).

No longer Judah owned, while Israel or Ephraim (that is, the ten tribes) is cast off, but the Lord declaring Himself the God of *all the families of Israel*. No longer "Lo-Ammi -- not my people," written upon them: "they shall be my people." God remembers His ancient love to Israel.

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee {Jer. 31:3}.

It is in all the freshness, and unfailing power and constancy of this love, that the Lord now takes up Israel again.

Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and

shall go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things {Jer. 31:4, 5}.

And when Israel, even the ten tribes, are thus restored, there is none of the old hostility to Judah, none of the old reluctance to own Jerusalem as the place where God has put His name.

For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God {Jer. 31:6}.

The chief of the nations are called on to sing with gladness for Jacob, and to publish the praises of the Lord who restores them. For,

Behold," says the Lord, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, [all their hardness of heart will then have been removed,] and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn {Jer. 31:8, 9}.

Nor let it be supposed that these touching declarations of God's interest in His people, and care over them, at this epoch of their approaching restoration, are intended for their own comfort alone. *Universal attention is called to the subject*. All nations have witnessed Israel's downfall, and long and complicated afflictions, and all nations are called on to observe God's mercy in their restoration.

Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he {Jer. 31:11}.

Then, let me ask my reader, whether anything can surpass the beauty of the description which follows -- a description of the results of this restoration of Israel? Ah, when God does in His word condescend to sketch a scene of earthly prosperity, (connected, of course, with spiritual blessing,) none can group the objects, or combine the colors, or mingle the light and shade, as He does!

Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all . . . and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD {Jer. 31:12, 14}.

What a picture! The full heart overflowing in songs of praise, where praise has so long been silent, in the height of Zion -- the goodness of the Lord the attractive center around which all are gathered, and to which all flow together -- every expression of this goodness, even in present plenty -- the good things of this life no longer a snare to the heart, but the possession of them combined with spiritual fertility to the full

-- sorrow excluded for ever -- young and old, virgin and married wife, joining to evince their cheerfulness and delight -- sorrow and mourning only mentioned as being past, and mentioned thus to mark the contrast between past and present; the whole picture closing, as it begins, with the goodness of the Lord -- *there* as recorded in songs of praise, *here*, as satisfying the souls both of the people and of the priests!

It is in Israel, restored Israel, that this picture is to be realized, and more than realized. Israel's is an earthly calling. When under law, they failed to fulfil the conditions on which was suspended the continued enjoyment of earthly blessing; and hence they failed to retain possession of it, even when, in Joshua's and Solomon's day, God had bestowed it so largely upon them. When, in days to come, grace shall restore and save them, and when they shall stand in grace, no longer holding their blessings on the tenure of their own obedience, their blessings -- the blessings distinctive of their calling and position -- will still be earthly. Ours is a heavenly calling. The Church is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Saints now have no portion on earth save to share the rejection of their Lord; and the proximate object of our hope is not Christ's coming to gather Israel and restore all things, but to receive us to Himself in glory; in which glory we shall appear with Him when He appears, and reign with Him when He reigns -- Israel and the earth being happy and at rest under the joint reign of Christ and His glorified saints -- His body -- His Bride.

This is our hope. May our hearts be true to it! If they are, everything that God has been pleased to reveal, as to the scene of glory and blessing which heaven and earth united shall present to His eye, in the coming "dispensation of the fulness of times," must be interesting to our souls. May we indeed find it so!

Further inquiries as to Israel and the millennial kingdom will demand our attention. May we be divinely prepared for them, and find them fruitful, as a means of truly building us up in Christ!



## Chapter 8

### *Israel's Restoration Introductory to Millennial Blessedness*

Before we enter on the direct consideration of this subject, it may be well to observe, that there are predictions in the Old Testament of an event long since accomplished, viz., the return from Babylon of a remnant of the Jews after a captivity of seventy years. Some, who have not examined the subject, suppose that all the predictions of Israel's return refer to this event: or, if they meet with any which cannot possibly be so explained, they interpret them as applying in a spiritual sense to Christianity, or to the Church of God as it exists on earth, during the present dispensation. For the sake of any of my readers who may be perplexed by these thoughts, I would here mention a number of marks, by which the student of the prophetic word may distinguish the predictions which relate to Israel's future restoration from those which were fulfilled in the return from Babylon, in the days of Cyrus, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

(1) There are many passages which predict the restoration of *all the tribes* -- of Israel, as well as of Judah -- and the union of the whole in one nation, in their own land. At the return from Babylon, it was but a few Jews, properly so called, who were restored. The ten tribes have never returned; and the vast majority even of the Jews remained in the places where they had been carried captive. All predictions, therefore, of a *universal* restoration, must yet remain to be fulfilled.

(2) One passage at least (Isa. 11:11), speaks of a "second" restoration of Israel. This could not be the return from Babylon, which was but the *first* restoration. What other has there been since that time? Must not then the *second* restoration be one yet to come?

(3) Where miraculous events are foretold in connection with Israel's restoration, it must be a future one that is treated of. No such events attended the return from Babylon.

(4) Where it is declared that the nation shall be *converted* as well as *restored*, there can be no question that the restoration is a future one. Were the Jews converted at the return from Babylon?

(5) Many passages declare, that after the nation of Israel is restored, they shall not fall any more into sin, or see trouble any more. Can these passages apply to the return from Babylon? Has not their great, their crowning sin -- and have not their heaviest calamities -- been since that event?

(6) Where the restoration of Israel is declared to be connected

with the utter and final overthrow of those who have hated them, and trodden them down, it must be a yet future restoration which is foretold. No such overthrow of all their enemies was connected with the return of the Jews from Babylon.

(7) The prophecies of Israel's restoration which were written after the return from Babylon, cannot be in any way construed to refer to that event. Such are the predictions of Zechariah and Haggai; and such also are those contained in the New Testament.

(8) Those predictions of Israel's return which connect it with the coming of Christ, must refer to a yet future restoration. We all know that no restoration of Israel took place in connection with Christ's first coming; and the return from Babylon was not connected either with His first coming or His second.

(9) Where Israel's restoration is associated, in prophecy, with the introduction of millennial blessedness, it must be obvious to all, that it is a future restoration which is foretold. The Millennium did not commence with the return from Babylon. Alas, it has never commenced even to this day!

This brings me, however, to the definite subject of this paper -- the connection between the restoration of Israel and the introduction of millennial blessing. The Scripture proofs of this connection have to be laid before my readers. This cannot be done without gathering from Scripture still further instruction as to the fact itself of Israel's restoration. Ample proof of this fact was exhibited in our last; but the subject was far from being exhausted. Further light will unavoidably be shed upon it in the prosecution of our present inquiry.

The writer by no means forgets that many strong and deeply-rooted prepossessions of many of his readers are likely to be enlisted against the doctrine which he seeks to establish from the word of God. The idea is so generally entertained that Christianity as it now exists is to spread universally, and that the world is to be converted by the blessing of God on means now in operation -- that one cannot be ignorant of the strong resistance which a contrary doctrine is sure to encounter in many minds. Then, besides, there is not only our natural fondness for opinions generally entertained by others, and long held by ourselves, but there is, in this case, to be encountered, all the force of our natural unwillingness to plead guilty to a solemn charge, and to acquiesce in the justice of a sentence

which sets us aside and replaces us by others. But let me entreat my Christian readers to consider that a doctrine cannot be proved true by the number of its adherents, or by the length of time during which it has been generally received. Much less is a doctrine true because it is soothing to ourselves or palatable to men in general. The one, only, infallible test of the truth of any doctrine is, What saith the word of God? It may be a view long held and fondly cherished by us; or it may be a doctrine newly presented for our consideration; the great, the all-important question in either case, *and in every case*, is, What saith the Scripture?

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them {Isa. 9:20}.

It is to this word, and to this alone, that our present appeal is made. The Lord grant to us, that we may have grace to abide by its divine and unfailing decisions.

Rom. 11 has already been twice under review. First, we considered its solemn testimony to the now inevitable excision of the Gentile professing body -- of Christendom. Secondly, we listened to its assurances as to the natural branches, that God is able to graff them in again; and that, when the wild, Gentile branches are broken off, they, the natural branches, *shall be graffed again* into their own olive tree. Let us now, a third time, hearken to the testimony of this same chapter, as to the results of this amazing change.

Now if the fall of them [the Jews, the natural branches] be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; **how much more their fulness** {Rom. 11:12}?

Again,

For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, *what shall the receiving of them be*, **but life from the dead** {Rom. 11:15}?

Could any evidence be more decisive than this? Does not the apostle here admit, what every one may perceive, that the present setting aside of the Jews has been the occasion of the extension to us Gentiles of the blessings of Christianity? Their fall has been thus the riches of the world, their loss the riches of the Gentiles, their casting away the reconciling of the world. The ministry of reconciliation, with all its attendant and consequent blessings, has come to us through the cutting off of the natural branches. Their rejection of Christ, on account of which they are for a time rejected, has been the occasion of His being proclaimed as the universal Savior. But if the Gentiles -- the world -- have profited thus largely by Israel's *fall*, what will be the result of Israel's *restoration*? -- the result to the Gentiles -- to the world? What will it be but still greater blessing -- life from the dead? Such is the reasoning of the Holy Ghost in this wondrous chapter. How clear, then, that universal blessedness will not be introduced by the perpetuation and extension of the present Gentile dispensation, but by the restoration of Israel, when Christendom has been cut off for its non-continuance in God's goodness? No wonder that, in view of all this, the apostle should say,

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;

that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved {Rom. 11:25, 26}.

Inattention to this revealed mystery has had the effect which the apostle dreaded in case it had not been revealed. It was disclosed lest we Gentiles should be wise in our own conceit; and we have become so, through our neglect or misapprehension of what has been revealed. Instead of seeing that the continuance, in our hands, of the ministry of reconciliation, depended on our continuance in God's goodness; instead of confessing that we have not continued in it, and that so there is nothing before us, *on earth*, but the cutting off of the whole Gentile professing body, while the receiving of the natural branches is to be the harbinger and dawn of universal blessing; instead of seeing this, and meekly bowing our heads and adoring the grace which makes sure to the true believer a heavenly glory far brighter, a heavenly portion far richer, than that forfeited on earth by our sad unfaithfulness, in which we have shared the responsibility of the whole of Christendom, and on account of which judgment is at the door; instead of seeing this, and going softly, as became us, we have indeed become wise in our own conceits; we have fancied that Israel was set aside for ever, and that to Gentile Christians was entrusted, -- yea, and that by Gentile Christians instrumentally should be accomplished, -- the conversion of the world: in a word, that the Millennium itself should be but the universal spread and dominion of Christianity as it now exists. How we should have been preserved from all these vain conceits, had we but paid reverent regard to the mystery here disclosed to us by the apostle! The end of apostate Judaism was judgment. The end of apostate Gentile Christianity will be judgment also. But just as blessing came to us, when judgment fell upon the Jew, so when judgment falls on Christendom, blessing will be restored to Israel: and Israel's restoration will be still fuller blessing to the world than any which it has had in the present dispensation; it will be as "life from the dead"! Dear reader, can you prayerfully and impartially peruse the chapter on which we are meditating, and not see that this is its doctrine throughout?

If any one should inquire how this is to be reconciled with the statement, that it is "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" {Rom. 11:25} that partial blindness has happened to Israel; and that it is then when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, that all Israel is to be saved, this is the reply: -- the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles *cannot mean the conversion of all the Gentiles*, inasmuch as the previous part of the chapter itself speaks of fuller blessing to the Gentiles -- to the world -- through the reception of Israel than through its fall. If all the Gentiles have been brought into blessing prior to the restoration of Israel, how can this event, and its effects upon the Gentiles -- upon the world -- be thus spoken of, and in this chapter too, by the apostle? We must not suppose that one part of Scripture contradicts another; and this would be to suppose that one verse contradicts another in the same chapter!

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** {Rom. 11:12}?

Could the Holy Ghost have said this, if all the Gentiles were to

be converted prior to Israel's conversion and restoration? Impossible! We are compelled therefore to seek for another meaning of the phrase "till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And whether we possess spiritual intelligence to give the true meaning of the phrase or not, it requires but little to see with certainty, that such a meaning as would contradict the testimony of God in the former part of the same chapter cannot be entertained for a moment.

My own conviction is, that the phrase is best explained by reference to the words of James,

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name (Acts 15:14).

When God has accomplished this work, the fulness of the Gentiles will be come in. And, without going into the detail of the passage at present, I would notice how beautifully James' words illustrate the whole doctrine of Rom. 11. Having quoted from Simeon as above, James proceeds thus,

And to this agree 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. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world {Acts 15:15-18}.

We must not suppose that the apostle is rigidly quoting the words of Amos, as having their full accomplishment in the fact stated by Simeon; or, that when he says, "To this agree the words of the prophets, After this, I will return," etc., he would intimate that Amos had been treating of the fact stated by Simeon, and that it was in reference to this fact the words "after this" were used by Amos. No; he quotes both Simeon and Amos, to justify, in a general way, the reception of Gentile and Jewish believers on equal terms. But, then, he does more than this. Himself full of the Holy Ghost, and speaking by inspiration, he recognizes that "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"; and taking this wide, comprehensive survey of God's ways, he himself, with the perfect wisdom of the Spirit, adjusts the words of Amos to those of Simeon, so as to exhibit the general order, the grand outline, of God's dispensations. First, God's taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name. Secondly, and after this, the building up of the tabernacle of David, and the repairing of its ruins. Then, thirdly, the residue of men seeking after the Lord, *and all the Gentiles* upon whom the Lord's name shall then be called. Can we fail to trace here the general correspondence of this testimony of this testimony of James, with that of Paul in Rom. 11? The one speaks of God's taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name; the other, of salvation having come to the Gentiles by the fall of Israel. The one speaks of the prostrate tabernacle of David being reared up afresh; the other of the natural branches being grafted in again, and of all Israel being saved. The one speaks of the residue of men then seeking after the Lord, *with all the Gentiles*; the other of the receiving of Israel being as life from the dead -- of Israel's fulness bringing far more abundant blessing to the Gentiles -- to the world -- than Israel's present setting aside. How harmonious

these divine revelations! And how establishing to the heart to trace this harmony, and see how one scripture illustrates and confirms another.

In turning to the Old Testament, the natural repository of divine instruction on such a subject as the one before us, I would, for the sake of convenient reference, and the easy testing of all that may be advanced by the word of God itself, arrange in numbered sections the evidence adduced. And let me beg my readers, above all things, to examine the Scriptures for themselves. Take nothing on trust from any one, but "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" {1 Thess. 5:21}.

(1) It is well worthy of remark, that the very first mention of the Lord's reign in Scripture is when Israel is first manifested as a nation on the banks of the Red Sea. It has been noticed that

when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance . . . he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel {Deut. 32:8}.

Israel was God's great central thought in these providential arrangements. This was prior, not only to Israel's existence as a nation, but even to the call of Abraham. Israel was not manifested as a nation till the epoch of the redemption out of Egypt. Numerous and continually increasing as the people were, they were but Hebrew slaves of the Egyptians, who kept them in bondage. By judgment on the Egyptians -- judgment from which they, the children of Israel, were delivered by the blood of the Passover -- they were redeemed out of the land of Egypt. Pharaoh and his hosts, who essayed to follow them through the crystal avenue, were drowned by the returning waves: and it is in the song of triumph in which Moses and Israel celebrate the overthrow of their oppressors, that we have the first mention of the Lord's reign.

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, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. **The LORD shall reign for ever and ever** {Ex. 15:17-18}.

Thus we find that the earliest prophetic announcement of Jehovah's reign associates it with Israel's occupancy of their land, and Jehovah's residence among them, in the sanctuary established by His hands.

(2) The Lord did actually reign over Israel from their redemption out of Egypt till the days of Samuel. He not only reigned by that unseen providence in which, as we know, He governs all worlds, and superintends the affairs of the whole universe; but in such a sense, that instead of Israel's having a king like the nations around them, *they had the Lord Himself for their king*. His laws were those by which the nation was governed; and the entire administration of them was by officers of His appointment. **He was king**. All the functions of royalty, which in other nations were exercised by human monarchs, were in Israel exercised by the Holy One, who dwelt unseen between the cherubim in the most holy place. All the surrounding nations, too, were dealt with by Him according to two principles, both of which had respect primarily to Israel. On the one hand, when Israel was obedient, God gave them the ascendancy over surrounding nations; while, on the other hand,

He used those nations to chastise Israel in case of their disobedience. It was in the midst of Israel that He dwelt; it was over Israel that He reigned; but surrounding nations were dealt with by Him according to the relations in which they stood to Israel. All this continued till Samuel's day, when, as my readers are well aware, the children of Israel rejected the Lord from being their King, and desired a king like the nations round about.

(3) The change which ensued on the circumstances just referred to, has been already considered in the paper on "Israel in the Past and Present." We saw there how God took occasion from Israel's sin to introduce what He had purposed from the beginning, namely, royal power in the hands of David and his Seed. We saw, too, that in the covenant with David there were conditional promises, which his mere human offspring might and did forfeit by their unfaithfulness; but that there were also unconditional promises, made sure in Him who is at once David's Son and David's Lord: that He is the heir of all the unfailing power and glory promised to David's house. We traced, moreover, the sin and rebellion which led to the overturning of David's throne, the Lord's throne on which David and his offspring had been placed, and saw that there was no re-establishment of this throne at the return from Babylon. The true Heir of it was born and presented to Israel, (or the Jews, to speak more strictly) but they crucified their King, and rejected the message of mercy through His blood when He had ascended on high, and the Holy Ghost had been poured out at Jerusalem. It is thus that they are still under wrath, and have even heavier inflictions to endure, at the very close of this long period of tribulation, than any which they have yet endured. But we have seen how amply Scripture foretells their restoration in days to come: no fewer than nine marks have been given, which distinguish this future restoration from the only one which has ever taken place, the return from Babylon; and we are now considering the proof afforded by Old Testament prophecies, that the Millennium, or universal kingdom of Christ, is to be introduced, in connection with this restoration of Israel in days to come. The points thus mentioned are recapitulated thus, that the reader may better estimate the force and application of the prophecies about to be quoted.

(4) There is another point of which it is well to be reminded. It has been largely proved in previous papers, that it is by desolating judgments on the wicked, that the Millennium is to be ushered in; and, in our last, we saw that when the period of Israel's dispersion and tribulation terminates, the cup of trembling is to be taken out of Israel's hands, and put into the hands of their enemies and oppressors. Now, we shall find these things most intimately connected in prophecy. The judgments by which the Millennium is introduced, are emphatically those judgments by which God punishes and destroys Israel's enemies and oppressors, and are connected thus with Israel's restoration. We shall find a whole class of passages which inseparably link together these three things: -- Israel's restoration -- judgment on their adversaries -- and the introduction of millennial blessing. Let us examine one or two of them.

The passage in which the very words occur which have

just been cited, is one of the most remarkable of this class.

Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over. Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean . . . How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bring good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God (Isa. 51:21-52:10).

Will any one dispute, that when the Lord makes bare His arm *in the eyes of all the nations*, and *all the ends of the earth see the salvation of God*, the Millennium will have arrived? Are not these words used by Christians continually, as expressive of their anticipations of millennial blessing? How does the passage before us show that it is introduced? *By Israel's restoration, and the transfer to their Gentile oppressors, of the cup of bitterness they have so long had to drink.*

Another passage of this class we have in Joel 3:

For, behold, in those days, and in that time, *when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations*, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, *and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel*, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land {Joel 3:1-2}.

This, one would suppose, is explicit enough. The epoch treated of, is that at which the Lord shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem; the divine declaration is, that at that epoch the Lord will also gather all nations; and the object for which He determines thus to gather all nations, is to plead with them for Israel, His people and His heritage, which they have so sorely oppressed. This great gathering of all nations is further treated of in the same chapter. After a few intervening verses, we have these words:

Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong {Joel 3:9-10}.

In such a strain of solemn irony does God challenge His adversaries to the battle. He calls on them to summon all their forces, and to muster all their strength.

Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and



gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD {Joel 3:11}.

Here, in this last clause, it is the prophet that speaks, invoking Jehovah's interposition to judge the assembled hosts. Nor does He turn a deaf ear to the appeal.

Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision {Joel 3:12-14}.

And what is to be the issue of this mighty crisis, in which God thus pleads the cause of His people Israel, and executes judgment on their Gentile oppressors? Who can read the remainder of the chapter, without perceiving that it is a prophetic description of millennial times? And who are they that occupy the foreground in the picture? *Restored Israel and Jerusalem*.

The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim {Joel 3:16-18}.

Can there be a doubt, in view of this whole passage, that Israel's restoration and God's judgment on the Gentile oppressors of that race, are events that will usher in millennial times?

(5) Not only does prophecy reveal, that, as a matter of fact, the events which will usher in the Millennium, are the restoration of Israel, and the judgments with which, at Christ's second coming, the apostate Gentiles will be visited; it also declares that restored Israel will be instrumental in subjugating the world to Christ's sway, and in filling it with blessing. The Scripture evidence of this will be found in three classes of passages. First, those which speak of the moral effect on men's souls, of God's wonderful interposition on Israel's behalf. Secondly, the passages which set forth Israel's positive action, as the instrument of God's righteous judgments. Thirdly, the passages which foretell the exercise, by restored Israel, of a more genial, beneficent influence on the other nations of the earth. Space will not allow of more than a brief selection from each class.

1. As to the moral effect on men's souls of Israel's restoration, and the stupendous interpositions of Divine power with which it will be accompanied, let us glance at Isa. 12. The whole chapter is the sequel to that remarkable prophecy of Israel's restoration, which the previous chapter contains, and which was considered so fully in "Israel's Future Restoration." The connection between the two chapters is marked in the opening words of the one before us.

And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me {Isa. 12:1}.

Such is the introduction to this majestic anthem, in which restored Israel is to celebrate the forgiving mercy of Jehovah, her Redeemer. Consider what follows, a verse or two further on:

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD, for he hath done excellent things: **this is known in all the earth** {Isa. 12:4-5}.

Jehovah's doings in the restoration of His ancient people, are not only to be celebrated by themselves, but in so celebrating them they are represented as recognizing that they are *universally known* -- "known in all the earth."

The passage quoted and examined at some length in "Israel's Future Restoration" (Jer. 16:14-21) is to the same effect, but it goes more into detail as to the actual effect produced on the nations. It is the passage in which we are told that Israel's redemption out of Egypt shall be eclipsed by their future restoration; the passage in which we are told of many fishers who shall fish them, and many hunters who shall hunt them, from the mountains, hills, and holes of the rocks. And what is to be the effect of this mighty interposition of God's power?

O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; **and they shall know that my name is Jehovah** {Jer. 16:19-21}.

From the call of Abraham, he and his offspring, the nation that sprung from his loins, have been God's chosen witnesses that there is but one God, and that Jehovah is He. Israel, as we saw, entirely failed in this testimony, and hence their subjugation by the Gentiles, and their long captivity and dispersion. The Church's testimony, as we have also seen, is of another character. It is a testimony to the perfect grace in which she stands, and the accomplished redemption in which that grace has been manifested towards her. It is as Father that she knows God, through Jesus, by the Holy Ghost; and it is as Father, in all the grace of that wondrous name, that she is called to make Him known. But when the Church has been translated to the glory in which she is to be manifested with Jesus, and the sentence of utter excision has taken effect on that which falsely bears the name of the Church, God will resume His dealings with the earth, and it is then that idolatry will cease from among men. Israel, the chosen witness to God's unity, shall become such indeed and of a truth. God's power and glory shall be so displayed in Israel's restoration, and so displayed before all, that the Gentiles shall cast away their idols as profitless things; and thus shall be accomplished the word on which we are meditating,

Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I

will cause them to know mine hand and my might; **and they shall know that my name is Jehovah.**

Another remarkable passage is Jer. 33:9. It is introduced as follows, and the reader may see in this, its moral connection with the passage just examined.

Thus saith Jehovah the maker thereof, Jehovah that formed it, to establish it; **Jehovah is his name** {Jer. 33:2}.

The passage proceeds to treat of Jerusalem's restoration, and of Judah and Israel's return.

And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, . . . whereby they have transgressed against me {Jer. 33:7, 8}.

And what is to be the effect on the nations?

And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it {Jer. 33:9}.

In Israel's restoration and conversion, and in all the earthly blessing with which this event shall be succeeded, there shall be *even to the senses of mankind* such a display of God's being, and power, and faithfulness, -- yea, and of His abounding grace, in pardoning and blessing thus the guilty nation who stained their hands with Messiah's blood, -- that all the nations of the earth shall hear, *and shall fear and tremble* for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity, that Jehovah procures to the nation and city of His choice!

Passage upon passage in Ezekiel bears the same testimony.

And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; **and the heathen shall know that I am Jehovah**, saith the Lord GOD, *when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes*. For I will take you from among the heathen, [it is thus this mighty and world-wide impression is to be produced] and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land (Ezek. 36:23, 24).

This passage needs no comment -- it speaks for itself. So also another passage in the same chapter.

And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it {Ezek. 36:35, 36}.

Then again, in Ezek. 38, after predicting the incursions and overthrow of Gog and his hosts,

Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, **and they shall know that I am Jehovah** {Ezek. 38:23}.

Testimonies such as these might be greatly multiplied: but surely these place it beyond question, that the great moral effect, upon all nations, of Israel's restoration will be, that Jehovah, the one true God, will become universally known.

2. There are many passages which foretell that Israel will be actually employed in executing God's judgments on the

obstinately wicked and rebellious. This is a work in which the saints of the present dispensation could not, at least while in their earthly condition,<sup>22</sup> be employed. The present is a dispensation of pure, perfect grace, and the Church's place that of treading in the steps of Him "who, when He suffered, took it patiently," and on the cross exclaimed,

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do {Luke 23:34}.

But just as certainly is there a dispensation of *righteousness* to succeed the present dispensation of *grace*. And as Abraham was used to execute judgment on the confederated kings, as Israel was used to destroy the guilty inhabitants of Canaan, and as David was raised up of God to subdue the wicked nations round about Israel, so will Israel again be used as one of God's instruments in executing judgment on the wicked -- in executing those judgments by which, as we have seen so largely, Israel's enemies will be overthrown, and the millennial period introduced. I shall content myself with little more than barely quoting a few plain passages in proof of this. In Psal. 149, one of the closing prophetic hallelujahs of the book, we read,

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King {Psa. 149:2}.

It is of Israel, therefore, that the Psalm treats. The saints of whom it speaks are Jewish or Israelitish saints. And of them it says,

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 {Psa. 149:59}.

What fearful consequences have resulted from misapprehending and misapplying such a scripture as this! How has the sword thus been put into the hands of those whose only testimony and service should have been one of pure, patient, unresisting love and grace, the reflection and expression of the grace in which God has abounded toward us, *requiting His enemies by the gift of His only-begotten Son for their salvation!* But such a passage as the above is not to be disregarded, however manifestly inapplicable to ourselves it may be. There are to be those who will be used thus as instruments of God's retributive righteousness; and it is to restored Israel pre-eminently that this place is assigned. Turn to Isa. 41:14-16:

Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

22. It is indeed a part of their future portion, when glorified with Christ, to be employed in the execution of judgment. (See Rev. 2:26, 27.)

This is figurative language; but can there be any doubt that the execution of judgment is that which the figures employed express? See also Mic. 5:7-9:

And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

Nor is this mere human warfare, undertaken from human motives, and conducted for selfish, worldly ends. Israel will be but the instrument in God's hand of executing His judgments on the wicked.

And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard (Mic. 5:15).

No wonder that when it is God acting by them thus it should be said in Mic. 7:15-17:

According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee.

How emphatic, too, is Zechariah's testimony, or rather, God's testimony by Zechariah:

When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south (Zech. 9:13, 14).

Again,

And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them (Zech. 10:5, 6).

In Zech. 12 we read of Jerusalem being made a cup of trembling to all the people round about, and a burdensome stone for all people. Then, in v. 6:

In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

Finally, in Zech. 14:14, we are told, "And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem": and the reader must recollect that this is in the midst of a chapter which treats of the final conflict, in which the Lord Himself shall come, attended by all His saints, and which is to issue, as the chapter itself informs us, in the blissful period in which

the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one LORD, and his name one (Zech. 14:9).

3. Let not my readers, however, suppose that the execution of judgment on the nations, and the moral effect of God's interposition thus, are the only ways in which restored Israel will be instrumental in subjugating the world to the dominion of Jehovah. There are passages which clearly foretell the exercise by Israel of a more genial, beneficent influence -- an influence by means of which the whole world will be filled with blessing. In Isa. 25:6-8 we read:

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.

There can be no difficulty as to what is meant by "this mountain." The only mountain mentioned in the context is Mount Zion. The previous chapter treats of the awful judgments by which the earth is to be desolated. The last verse of the chapter declares:

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 {Isa. 24:23}.

There is no mention of any other mountain till in the words just quoted, in which we are told that, "in this mountain" the Lord of hosts shall make a feast unto all people; and that "in this mountain" the face of the covering and the vail spread over all nations is to be destroyed. The removal of the universal darkness under which men labor, and their ample refreshment, set forth under the figure of a feast, are both to take place in connection with "this mountain." It is from "this mountain" that those influences are to go forth which are to enlighten and refresh the inhabitants of all lands.

In Isa. 27:6, we have further evidence in the testimony of a passage, if possible, still more unmistakably plain and to the point. In the closing verses of Isa. 26 God invites His people to enter into their chambers, and shut their doors, and hide themselves as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

For, behold, [says the prophet] the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain {Isa. 26:21}.

Isa. 27 begins with these words, "In that day," etc., thus plainly showing that the two chapters form but one prophecy, and identifying the events predicted in the one with the epoch so solemnly portrayed in the close of the other. and what is it to which this solemn epoch of judgment is introductory? This is the answer:

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** {Isa. 27:6}.

Surely this is a testimony explicit enough! Paul tells us that the

natural branches are to be grafted in again; Isaiah himself informs us in Isa. 6, after foretelling Israel's judicial blindness, and the long-continued desolation of the land,

Nevertheless, there shall still be in it a tenth, and it shall return and shall be to be consumed, as the oak and the teil tree, which being cut down have still the trunk (or the rooted stump); thus the holy seed shall be their stock,<sup>23</sup> {Isa. 6:13}.

and here, in the passage before us, the holy seed, having been preserved through the judgments, are spoken of as taking root, while the prophet declares that, as the result, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Surely this testimony would be decisive if no other could be produced.

But there are many. Scripture bears one testimony throughout, let it be uttered by ever so many voices, or recorded by ever so many pens. Turn to Hos. 2. Bear in mind that there are two ways in which the nation of Israel is viewed. It is sometimes viewed according to the divine purpose, and then, as we know, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance: Israel is still beloved for the fathers' sakes; and there remains, as in the passage last quoted, a rooted stump, from which the most luxuriant verdure and abundant fruit are yet to spring. But Israel is often viewed in respect to God's actual manifested government, and then, as we know, the nation is for the present set aside, and Lo-Ruhamah -- not having obtained mercy and Lo-Ammi -- not my people, are written upon it of God. This is the light in which Hosea views the subject. Accordingly, the figure employed, is not that of fresh life and beauty and fertility from an old rooted stump, but it is the figure of an entire new beginning, *a sowing of seed*. But what is the seed? Let the prophet answer. Speaking of Israel as an unfaithful wife, and portraying the unexampled love with which her dishonored Lord not only receives her, but woos her to return to Him, He says,

Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, [matchless grace!] as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt . . . and in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely {Hos. 2:14, 15, 18}.

Is it not of millennial times -- times of universal peace and safety -- that all this is spoken?

And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. **And I will sow her unto me in the earth;** and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my

people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God {Hos. 2:29, 21-23}.

Let us consider this. "In that day," -- the day of Israel's restoration -- "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens." Now we know from the New Testament that in that day "the heavens" will be occupied by Christ and His glorified saints. Jehovah will hear the heavens. "And they shall hear the earth." Christ, in whom all things both in heaven and in earth will then be gathered, will be the One to whom prayer shall be addressed from all on earth, even as it will be through Him and His glorified saints, that blessing will be universally administered. "And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil." No want, no scarcity, then. The voice of complaining will have ceased to be heard in the streets. Creation's universal groan will have been hushed; yea, it will have given place to universal hymns of gratitude and praise. "And they shall hear Jezreel." Now Jezreel, as scholars tell us, means, "the seed of God"; and this interpretation of the word is confirmed by what immediately follows: "*And I will sow her unto me in the earth.*" Who is it that is thus spoken of? There has been but one subject treated of in the chapter, to which this feminine term can apply -- Israel, under the figure of an unfaithful wife, whose restoration has been so affectingly foretold. It is of her that it is said, "I will sow her unto me in the earth"; she is the "Jezreel," "the seed of God," from the sowing of which this harvest of universal blessing is to spring; and if there wanted confirmation of this, it is in the next words: "And I will have mercy upon her [mark this, the same word "her"] that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." Sentence of "Lo-Ruhamah," and "Lo-Ammi," had been, in Hos. 1:6, 9, pronounced upon the nation. This sentence is to be reversed; and its reversal is to usher in the glorious period of which this magnificent prophecy treats.

There shall be one unbroken chain of blessing, from the throne of Jehovah, the great source of all, down to the enjoyment by mankind of all the blessings of this life: and the place in this wondrous chain filled by restored Israel is that of Jezreel, the seed of God, sown *by* Jehovah, and *to* Him, in the earth, and filling, as we learn from the passage previously considered, the face of the world with fruit. Jehovah -- the heavens occupied by Christ and the Church in glory -- the earth -- restored Israel, or Jezreel, the seed of God -- universal blessing on the earth, even to abundance of corn, and wine, and oil, while war and violence are at an end, and

the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together {Isa. 40:5}!

Praise, eternal praise, to Him who alone doeth wondrous things! Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.

23. This is said to be a more exact rendering of the Hebrew than we have in our English version.

## Chapter 9

### *The Great Prophetic Question: Is the Millennium, or Christ's Second Advent, to be Expected First?*

This is, in truth, the Great Prophetic Question. All other questions as to prophetic interpretation may be regarded as subordinate to this one. Nearly all serious Christian people are agreed in expecting a long period of universal peace and blessedness on earth -- a period which, from its being stated in Rev. 20, to be of a thousand years' continuance, has come to be popularly termed the Millennium. All Christians expect, moreover, a second coming of Christ -- a real, personal return, as Judge, of that blessed One, whose first coming was not to judge, but to save. But when does this second coming of Christ take place? Does He come to introduce the Millennium? or does the Millennium first take place, and Christ come only at its close? This is the great question to which our attention is now to be directed.

It is undeniable that Scripture represents the world's condition at the time of the second advent of our Lord, as one of utter carelessness and security on the one hand, and of great wickedness on the other. I shall quote no scriptures in proof of this, but such as are admitted by all to apply to the actual, personal coming of Christ.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:26-30).

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape (1 Thess. 5:2,3).

. . . the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days

scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (2 Pet. 3:3-10).

No one will deny that these passages refer to the actual coming of Christ; and they are but a specimen of the way in which Scripture uniformly speaks of the condition in which the world will be found, when "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" bursts upon it. We are aware of the answer made to this, by our brethren who deny that the advent is pre-millennial. They endeavor to account for the world being found in such a condition at that day, by the prediction of Rev. 20, that a great defection will take place, and a wide-spread rebellion arise, after the close of the thousand years. We shall not at present discuss this point. We hope to give that passage a full consideration at a future stage of our inquiries. We only for the present beg the reader to observe what is admitted by those who view the subject in that light. In whatever way they may account for it, they admit, first, that wickedness and carelessness will characterize the world when Christ comes. Secondly, that the Scripture account of the world's condition at that epoch would not apply to its condition during the Millennium, when "the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth, as the waters cover the sea." Now what we have to do is to prove from Scripture *that no such period as this intervenes*. It is admitted, as matter of fact, that the world was wicked when the New Testament was written. It is admitted, as undeniably predicted in God's word, that the world will be wicked when Christ comes. We shall prove to you, dear readers, that, according to the prophetic teaching of the New Testament, *this will be the condition of the world from apostolic times till the coming of the Lord*.

The first proof we adduce is our Lord's parable in Luke 19:11-27. The occasion of its being spoken is thus explained to us:

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Now, without going into any lengthened disquisition on the

phrase "kingdom of God," we may safely assume that it is here used to express the people's expectation of Messiah's reign -- "the kingdom" which "the God of heaven" was to set up, according to Dan. 2:44 -- and that whenever a period shall arrive characterized by universal righteousness and peace, then the kingdom of God will surely have appeared. There were those who thought it was about to appear immediately, when Christ was making His last entry into Jerusalem. The parable before us was spoken to correct this mistake. It begins as follows:

He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return {Luke 19:12}.

No one can question that the nobleman represents Christ Himself. And can there be any doubt as to the kingdom which Christ has gone into heaven -- the far country -- to receive? Can it be any other than that of which Daniel speaks?

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 (Dan. 7:13, 14).

But not only had the nobleman to go into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom; *he had to return ere the kingdom could appear*. "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, **and to return**." It is thus as though the Savior had said, "You are expecting that the kingdom of God, the long-looked-for reign of Messiah, shall immediately take place. But I have to leave this world, and go into heaven, there to be invested with universal dominion, and I have then to return to this earth, ere the kingdom you are expecting can appear." But this is not the whole of the parable. The nobleman is represented as entrusting ten pounds to his ten servants; that is, a pound to each, during his absence. He says to them, "Occupy till I come." We have their conduct in this stewardship delineated, and also the conduct of the enemies of the nobleman, his citizens, throughout the period of his absence. We have the several issues of their conduct also, when he does return. But not a word throughout the parable of any thing like the subjugation of his foes, or the establishment of his kingdom, till after his return. "His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."

Be it remembered that our anti-millenarian brethren admit that this parable spans the whole period from the first to the second advent of Christ. The words, "Occupy till I come," are referred, and must, without obvious violence to the meaning of the text, be referred, to the second, personal coming of Christ. At the close of the Millennium we are sure that instead of *receiving for Himself* a kingdom, He will *deliver up* the kingdom to God, even the Father, which He shall have previously received, and over which He shall have reigned. But here, it is on His receiving the kingdom that He

returns: "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, *having received the kingdom*." The parable thus affords a two-fold proof that it is at the commencement, not at the close, of the Millennium, that Christ's second advent takes place. First, the parable connects the return of the nobleman with his having received the kingdom; secondly, the whole period of his absence is characterized by the varying conduct of his several servants, in respect to the charge entrusted to them, and the continued enmity of his citizens, who are represented throughout as sending after him the haughty and insulting message, "We will not have this man to reign over us." It is his coming that abases their pride, and brings upon them the destruction which their rebellion has deserved. It is his coming that brings to each servant the suited recompense of his conduct in the stewardship confided to him. The Millennium itself is the kingdom, which appears not till these things have come to pass.

Our Lord's discourses in Matt. 13 constitute the second proof of our position, that no Millennium of blessedness intervenes between the first and second advent of Christ. A full exposition of the chapter we would not here attempt. We must be satisfied to glance at the more prominent points, as they bear on the question before us. The chapter contains seven parables, spoken by our Lord Himself, to illustrate "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." There was to be a kingdom, even while the king was rejected -- while the nobleman was in the far country. But it was to be *a kingdom in mystery*; and the solution to the disciples of this mystery, or rather of these mysteries, of the kingdom of heaven, is the object of our Lord in these parables. When "the nobleman" has "returned from the far country, having received the kingdom," there will be no further mystery; the kingdom will "appear," will be manifested then. But now that He is absent, these "mysteries of the kingdom" have their existence. What are they? Let us glance at the reply which the chapter affords.

It is with the well-known parable of the sower going forth to sow that the chapter opens. Does it sanction the thought of any universal harvest from the seed sown? Alas! it is but a small portion indeed that brings forth fruit; and even where the seed is not entirely lost, the increase is varied -- in some thirty, in some sixty, and only in some a hundred-fold. As for the remainder, the fowls devour it, or the thorns choke it, or for want of nourishment, by reason of the rock that underlies the surface, the sun scorches and withers it. Is there any intimation here of the arrival of a period marked by the "universal diffusion of revealed truth, the universal reception of the true religion, and unlimited subjection to the scepter of Christ"? <sup>24</sup> Can this opening parable of Matt. 13 be in any sense descriptive of a period so characterized? But on proceeding to the next parable, that of the tares and wheat, we

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24. These words are quoted from Dr. David Brown, one of the most popular writers of the anti-millenarian school, who gives seven distinctive features of the Millennium as he anticipates it. Besides those above named, he specifies "universal peace, much spiritual power and glory, the in-bringing of all Israel, the ascendancy of truth and righteousness in human affairs, and great temporal prosperity."

shall find the case stronger still. Here Satan himself becomes a sower, and tares are found mingled with the wheat, which had actually sprung up, and given promise of an approaching harvest. We are not left to discover the interpretation of this parable for ourselves: the Lord interprets it for us.

He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world (κόσμος); the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world (αἰών, age); and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world (αἰών, age). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall 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. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear {Matt. 13:37-43}.

Such is the divine explanation of this parable of the wheat and tares. Reviewing the parable itself in the light of this authoritative interpretation of it, we beg our readers to observe that the tares are not mere wicked men, as they are born into the world, and grow up in it in their unconverted state. It is a total mistake to suppose that all mankind, save God's children, are tares. The tares represent a distinct class of wicked men, *covertly introduced by Satan amongst God's people*, just as the tares were secretly sown by an enemy where the good man had sown good seed. They are those agents and children of the wicked one, by the admixture of whom with the children of the kingdom Satan has succeeded in corrupting Christianity itself. And where it is said, "Let both grow together till the harvest," it is not simply that unconverted men are to continue on the earth till then, but that this fearful work of Satan, by which he has succeeded in corrupting Christianity itself, is of such a character that it cannot be undone, its effects cannot be neutralized, till, at the end of the age, the Son of man sends forth His angels to "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." The chapter, as far as we have now considered it, discloses two fearful characters of power exercised by Satan throughout the era of which the chapter is descriptive. The one is his unbroken power over the hardened, darkened heart, on which, as the seed by the wayside, the word only falls, for "the wicked one to catch away that which was sown." The other is his power (through the unfaithfulness, alas! of those who slept when they ought to have been on the watch) to introduce evil where the Son of man had already wrought good; in other words, to corrupt Christianity. When, then, it is said, "Let both grow together till the harvest," it is the definite prediction, that not only shall Satan hinder the success of the Gospel with those in whose hearts his blinding power has never been interrupted; but also that Christianity, once corrupted, shall, as matter of fact, continue so till the harvest. Now all our readers are aware what the corruption of Christianity has been -- how vast a system of consummate fraud and wickedness Satan has succeeded in palming upon mankind under the name of

Christ. And is this to remain till Christ comes at the end of the Millennium? What sort of a Millennium would it be? It is in vain for our anti-millenarian brethren to confound things which so widely differ. Could a period marked by "the universal diffusion of revealed truth, the universal reception of the true religion, unlimited subjection to Christ's scepter, universal peace, much spiritual power and glory, the in-bringing of all Israel, the ascendancy of truth and righteousness in human affairs, and great temporal prosperity" co-exist with the corruption of Christianity represented by the sowing of the tares? Judge whether "the ascendancy of truth and righteousness in human affairs" can have for its illustration, or can co-exist with that which is illustrated by, the incapacity of the servants to undo the mischief which an enemy of their master has wrought! And then, when we remember how soon Satan did sow his tares -- how soon he succeeded in corrupting Christianity; when we remember to what this corruption has grown, and how it continues, according to our Lord's prediction, to this day -- when we see before our eyes such a matter-of-fact comment on our Lord's words, "Let both grow together" -- and remember that this corruption is to continue "till the harvest" -- when we bear in mind that the parable thus forbids all thought of the setting aside of this master-piece of Satan's craft and enmity, till judgment shall accomplish what no other agency could effect; how evident that there can be no Millennium until the harvest! And as our brethren allow that it is at the harvest the personal return of the Lord Jesus takes place, how evident that there can be no Millennium till after that event.

If it be said that the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven point to a universal diffusion of the truth, we reply, in the first place, that they cannot contradict other parables, *and interpretations of parables*, in the same chapter. They are not themselves interpreted by our Lord; and to set our thoughts of what they mean against our Lord's explanation of what the others mean, would surely never commend itself to any who reverence God's word. Secondly, we admit, that the rapid and extensive growth of something is represented by the parable of the mustard seed, -- that the equally wide and silent diffusion of something is represented by that of the leaven: but where is the evidence of *universality* in either case? Neither parable contains a word to suggest the idea of the whole earth being overshadowed by the mustard tree, or the whole world being morally penetrated by the leaven. With regard, indeed, to the latter, while it does penetrate to every part of the sphere within which it works, the description of that sphere suggests the idea of limitation rather than of universality. An analogous symbol is used to represent a local church, or assembly (see 1 Cor. 5:6, 7); but surely three measures of meal would never be the figure or symbol of the whole world. Thirdly, we have no difficulty in admitting that it is the growth of Christianity, of what man sees and knows as such, that is set forth to us by the growth of the mustard seed to a mighty tree. But let it never be forgotten, that the Christianity which thus grows and spreads is a Christianity which has been, according to the doctrine of the previous

parable, already corrupted. And is the Millennium to be introduced by the universal spread of a corrupted Christianity? Is it to be characterized by the universal prevalence of a Christianity thus corrupted? Then, fourthly, one would think that to a spiritual mind, familiar with the phraseology of Scripture, and especially with the language of symbols employed therein, the very figures used in these parables would suggest the idea of corruption. One of them, that of the leaven, is used throughout the word of God as the uniform appointed symbol of corruption. "The leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" -- "the leaven of malice and of wickedness" -- "the old leaven" -- are phrases which must instantly occur to the mind of even a superficial reader of the divine oracles; while the warning, that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and the exhortation, "Purge out the old leaven," would scarcely awaken in the soul thoughts in anywise kindred to that of the universal spread of the Gospel. And, be it remembered, that when the apostle enjoins the removal of the *old* leaven, he does not bid us put in the *new*. His words are, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, *that ye may be a new lump*, as ye are **unleavened**" (1 Cor. 5:7). And should it be said that in some of the sacrifices under the law, leaven was ordained to be used, and that the prophet Amos says, "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven" (Amos 4:5), the answer is, that all this *confirms* instead of *contradicting* our position. Where Christ, and His perfect work, were set forth by an offering, as in the Passover, leaven was most strictly forbidden. Where the participation with Christ of the imperfect human worshipper, to whom evil (however unwillingly) adheres, is what a given offering typifies, *there*, AS THE SYMBOL OF THIS EVIL, was the leaven to be used. Such were the sacrifices of peace offerings, and the offerings of thanksgiving referred to by the prophet Amos. No leaven was to be burnt on God's altar. Indeed it may be safely affirmed, that if in Matt. 13 the word leaven is to be understood, as many insist that it should be, of the Gospel, *it is the only instance in Scripture in which it is used to symbolize any thing but evil*. Passing strange, if that which is the unvarying symbol of evil throughout all other parts of God's word should be here employed by our blessed Lord to set forth the Gospel of His grace, and its universal spread!

With regard to the parable of the mustard seed, it is true that the figure of the growth of a mighty tree would not of itself suggest the idea of corruption; but it is not simply this that constitutes the figure in this parable. It is growth of a great tree from that which is the smallest of all seeds: and it is the circumstance of its branches affording shelter to "the fowls of the air," -- another figure very significantly employed in a former parable in this same chapter. The force and bearing of both these points will soon be evident.

"The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" are the subject of this chapter; and the four parables at which we have glanced unfold to us the following strange, mysterious features of this kingdom, which only has its existence in this mysterious state during the absence of "the nobleman" -- the rightful king -- in the "far country" to which he has gone. (1) There is the "mystery" that the same seed, scattered by

the same hands, should produce such varying results; as well as that seed *so good*, and sown by one no less than the "Son of man," should in so small a proportion of cases bring forth fruit to perfection. This is surely mysterious; and the part played in this by the enemy -- "the fowls" -- is to devour the seed which falls by the wayside. (2) We have the "mystery" of its being permitted that tares should be sown among the good seed, and of their growing together till the harvest. The part of the enemy in this is to sow the tares. (3) There is the "mystery" of that which when sown is "the smallest of all seeds" becoming a tree: in other words, of Christianity, which in its origin was little and despised among men, becoming great and glorious in the earth. What greater mystery could there be, than that the religion which commenced by the death of Christ as a malefactor, should come to be associated, *and invested*, with all the dignity, and wealth, and power, and magnificence of this world? How could there be a greater mystery, we ask, unless it be this, that by means of this marvellous change, "the fowls," whose first work was to devour the seed ere it took root, should find shelter in the branches of the tree which commenced by the sowing of the seed? Satan's first work, was to prevent the spread of *true* Christianity by catching away the seed. His second, was to corrupt Christianity by sowing tares. His third, to use the Christianity thus corrupted, as a more effective engine for the accomplishment of his designs, than any he had before possessed. (4) We have the mystery of all this work of Satan being effected by a process as silent and unperceived as that of the working of leaven in three measures of meal. Surely there is nothing in all this to awaken, but everything to forbid and preclude, the expectation of a Millennium before the coming of Christ.

Before proceeding to another and distinct branch of evidence, we would consider a little further the subject of "the harvest," examining it in the light of several other Scriptures in which the same figure is employed. The Lord says that "the harvest is the end of the world";<sup>25</sup> it is admitted, that the advent of Christ takes place at "the harvest." Some indeed contend that the Millennium is included in the age which precedes the harvest; but we have seen how the chapter before us, if seriously examined and impartially weighed, makes this completely incredible. "The harvest" is what terminates this present mysterious state of things, in which wheat and tares grow together, in which the leaven is permitted insidiously to work, and in which the gigantic tree, springing from the least of seeds, affords lodging and sustenance to the fowls of the air. "The harvest" brings all this to an end. But there are other passages in which this figure of "the harvest" is employed. Let us turn to them, and see whether they identify this epoch with the commencement, or with the close, of the

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25. "The harvest is the end τοῦ αἰῶνος," *the end of the age*. This is a different word from κόσμος, or *world*, where it is said "the field is the world." The latter denotes the actual world, as in such phrases as "the foundation of the world"; the former has reference to duration, and means "world" just in the sense in which "the age" is "the world" morally considered.



Millennium. In Joel 3 we read, "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe" {v. 13}; and in Rev. 14:

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, and having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped {Rev. 14:14-16}.

Have we anything in the context of these passages to indicate the epoch at which they will receive their fulfilment? We have. We shall find distinct proof, in each case, of its being connected both with the Lord's coming, and with the introduction of the Millennium. In Joel, it stands associated with the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, and with the gathering of all nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat; "For there," says the Lord,

will I sit to judge all the heathen round about {Joel 3:12}.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel {Joel 3:14-16}.

Thus we find many of the most remarkable signs and circumstances of the Lord's second advent, associated in this passage with "the harvest" of which it speaks. But is it not at the end of time -- at the epoch of the judgment of the great white throne? By no means. The Lord Himself says, it is "in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem"; and that which succeeds this majestic prediction of "the harvest," is the prediction of the Lord dwelling in Zion, of Jerusalem being holy, and strangers passing through her no more, of the mountains dropping new wine, and the hills flowing with milk -- in a word, of the Millennium. "The harvest" terminates the present, and introduces the millennial age.

As to Rev. 14, compare the verses quoted with Rev. 19:15 and 20:1-6, and you will find "the harvest" connected both with the coming of Christ, and the commencement of the Millennium.

Will the reader now return to Matt. 24 and 25? Our object is to prove from these passages that there will and can be no Millennium prior to the coming of the Lord. The proof afforded by these chapters is this, that they manifestly fill up the whole interval between Christ's departure and His return, with events of such a character as show it to be an impossibility for the Millennium to intervene. One feature of millennial blessedness is admitted to be, "the in-bringing of all Israel." Now these chapters, stretching from the time at which our Lord spake to the time of His personal return, predict nothing as to Israel for that whole period, but scattering and tribulation and distress. No one can find any

opening in these chapters, between the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ for "the in-bringing of all Israel," and their participation for a thousand years in the blessings of the millennial reign.

Matt. 23 closes with our Lord's words to the Jews as He left the temple for the last time,

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord {Matt. 23:38, 39}.

As He leaves the temple, His disciples come to Him to show Him the buildings of the temple. His reply to them is,

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 {Matt. 24:2}.

Here was the intimation to them, that a time would arrive when the Jews should nationally say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"; at which time He would return, and they should see Him again. Here was the prediction also, of the utter destruction of the temple they so much admired. When they had reached the mount of Olives and were sat down there, His disciples privately inquired of Him respecting these things.

Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [or age, αἰὼν] {Matt. 24:3}?

Their inquiry evidently relates to the two points just noticed. "When shall these things" -- the overthrow of the temple and its buildings -- "be?" and "what shall be the sign of thy coming?" -- that is, when the nation shall see Him again, and say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." With this coming, the disciples identify the "end of the age" -- a well-known prophetic epoch, and one as to which they had been instructed of the Lord in Matt. 13. "The harvest is the end of the age." They do not ask, what is the sign of thy coming? and what else the sign of the end of the age? They evidently understand that His coming and the end of the age are at the same time, and it is after the sign of its arrival or approach that they so anxiously inquire.

It is of importance to remember, that our Lord's intimation as to the Jews seeing Him again is not that they should see Him, or that He would come, in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the temple, but that they should see Him when they say, "Blessed is He that cometh" -- that is, at the epoch of their national conversion. Jerusalem was to be destroyed; the temple was to be overthrown; but neither the Lord nor His disciples connect the prospect of His return with these events. Our Lord connects it with Israel's conversion; the disciples, with the end of the age: "what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

Does, then, our Lord, in His reply to the disciples, give the least intimation of any period prior to His coming, of which one feature should be "the in-bringing of all Israel"? and other features -- "the universal diffusion of the true religion," and "great temporal prosperity"? Let us see. He

speaks of delusions and false Christs, and warns the disciples to let no man deceive them. They are to hear of wars and rumors of wars, but they are not to be troubled: all these things must come to pass, *but the end is not yet*. Nation is to rise against nation; famines, pestilences, earthquakes, are to take place: and these are but the beginning of sorrows. Persecutions were to follow; the disciples were to be afflicted and killed, and hated of all nations for Christ's name. Many were to be offended and to betray one another; false prophets should arise, and deceive many; the abounding of iniquity should cause the love of many to wax cold; he that endureth to the end should alone be saved; the Gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; *and then shall the end come* {see Matt. 24}. Such is the outline from our Lord's lips of what should occur up to the end of the age. Is there any intimation of a Millennium? of a period of universal blessing? Why it seems like a studied accumulation of all that is opposite to this! Wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions, apostasies, delusions, false prophets; the Gospel, indeed, preached universally for a witness to all nations, but -- iniquity abounding and love declining -- so that it is only he who *endureth to the end* that shall be saved! Surely there is nothing that resembles a Millennium here!

It should be asked, Where, in all this, is the Lord's answer to the disciples' question as to the overthrow of the temple? we can only reply that if there be an answer at all it must be in what He says (vv. 6, 7) of wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, etc. We do not say that this is the answer, or that He gives an answer to that part of their inquiry.<sup>26</sup> If there be an answer, this seems to be its only place. And it may be noted that Christ does say here, that "the end is not yet," and "all these are the beginning of sorrows." At v. 14 we reach the end, and from v. 15 onwards, our Lord speaks of details which He had not specified in the general outline. Let us now turn to these details. We quote a long passage here, that it may be before the reader's eye, and that he may thus be the better able to appreciate its force.

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 let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened {Matt. 24:15-22}.

Here we pause to remark, that it cannot be of the destruction

of Jerusalem by the Romans long ago, that our Lord speaks. He quotes from the prophet Daniel, and speaks, as Daniel had long before written, of a time of tribulation unequalled by any other. Turn to Dan. 12:1, and you will find that this time of unequalled trouble is not when Jerusalem is destroyed and the Jews dispersed, **but when they are delivered**.

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. 12:1, 2}.

We entreat our anti-millenarian brethren to look fairly at this passage. Does it not speak of a time of trouble unequalled by any that has preceded it? Does it not declare *that at that time* Daniel's people shall be *delivered*, not *destroyed*? How, then, can our Lord be speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, when He says that there shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, **no, nor ever shall be!** If the tribulation unequalled by any before it, *or any after it*, took place eighteen centuries ago, when Jerusalem was destroyed, how can Daniel speak of a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and say that *at that time his people shall be delivered*? Unless we make Daniel and our Lord flatly and irreconcilably contradict each other, we must allow that it is of the same unequalled tribulation that they speak, and that it did not take place at the destruction of Jerusalem, but that it is yet to come to pass, when Daniel's people, the Jews, are to be delivered.<sup>27</sup> Let us now proceed with our Lord's words.

Then [at this yet future time of unequalled tribulation,] if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false

27. An attempt is made by Mr. B. C. Young, in his "Short Arguments about the Millennium," to set aside the force of the above texts. "A comparison," he says, "of two portions of God's word, where a like phraseology is found, will show the fallacy" of the argument -- he means the argument above stated. "Of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, we find it written, 'He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him *among all the kings of Judah*, nor any that were before him' (2 Kings 18:5). Of Josiah, a successor *in the same kingdom*, it is recorded, 'And like unto him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul . . . neither after him arose there any like him' (2 Kings 23:25)." On these passages Mr. Y. reasons, to show that if the texts quoted above prove there can be but one unequalled tribulation, these two passages prove that Josiah and Hezekiah were the same man! He then says, "The truth appears to be, that the language is hyperbole, with perhaps a proverbial cast. It is a strong mode of expressing the severe troubles of the several times, and the unusual piety of the two kings." But what resemblance is there between the two cases? Neither passage quoted by Mr. Y. contains any prediction at all; the others are prophecies in the strictest sense of the word. Besides, there is no real discrepancy between the two passages from 2 Kings; no, nor any such appearance of it as to render requisite a resort to hyperbole by way of explanation. It is not for the same qualities that the two kings are said to be unrivalled by any before or after them. One is said to be so for *his trust in God*, which had surely been tried as in the case of no other king of Judah; the other for the heartiness with which *he turned to the Lord*. Each was unequalled in his own line of excellence; so that there is nothing whatever in the two passages thus put together, on which to frame such an argument as that resorted to by Mr. Y. The texts on the unequalled tribulation remain untouched, as a proof of that for which they are adduced.

26. There is undoubtedly an answer to this question in Luke 21, but this we hope to consider hereafter.

prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be {Matt. 24:23-27}.

There will be no need to go into the desert to seek Him, or to the secret chambers to find Him out. When He comes, “every eye shall see him.” Sudden as the lightning’s flash, and overwhelmingly manifest to all, as is that phenomenon, shall be the coming of the Son of man. The Lord grant to our readers to find mercy of the Lord in that day!

But *when* is this coming of the Son of man? Does our Lord give any clue as to the time of His return? Yes, He does. He fixes neither day nor hour, but He gives us a mark which demonstrates, with something like mathematical certainty, that it must be prior to the Millennium. Hear His words:

Immediately after [not a thousand years or more, but *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 {Matt. 24:29-30}.

There has been but one time of tribulation spoken of by our Lord. We have seen that He declares it to be unparalleled by anything before it, or anything to succeed it. We have seen, too, how a comparison with Daniel demonstrates that this time of unequalled tribulation is *future*, not *past* -- that it is when the Jews are *delivered*, not when Jerusalem was *destroyed*. We now see how our Lord declares that *immediately after* the tribulation of those days, the sun is to be darkened, the moon to withhold her light, the sign of the Son of man to appear in heaven, and the tribes of the earth to mourn, when they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Could there be a demonstration more complete than this, that the is pre-millennial? We have used the word mathematical, and we do so advisedly. It is self-evident, that an epoch which by its very nature can occur but once, cannot be both before and after any given event. There can be but one time of tribulation such as that of which our Lord speaks; Daniel speaks of such an one at the time when his people shall be delivered; and our Lord says, that immediately after this tribulation there shall take place first the signs of His coming, then the event itself. We have thus the certain proof that Christ’s coming here spoken of *did not take place* at the destruction of Jerusalem -- that it *will take place* Daniel’s people are delivered; or, as the Lord Himself says, just before the commencement of this discourse, *when they shall say*, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” We all know that this is not at the close, but at the commencement, of the Millennium.

We have thus anticipated the only objection that our anti-

millenarian brethren urge against this view of the chapter, and shown it to be utterly untenable. They say that the coming of the Son of man in v. 30 is a mere figure of speech, and represents the interposition of divine power in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans many centuries ago. But though the fallacy of this has been shown already from the chapter itself, it may be well to examine it a little further. It may be well to examine each reference to the coming of the Son of man throughout this discourse of our Lord to His disciples. The discourse extends through Matt. 24 and 25; and the coming of the Lord, or the coming of the Son of man, is mentioned in it ten or eleven times, besides the evident allusion to it at the close of Matt. 23. Now our brethren must understand a figurative coming in all these places, or else they must understand a figurative coming in some of them, and a personal, actual coming in the rest. Let us take it either way. Is it said that the expression is to be regarded as figurative throughout the discourse? What! where it is said, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory,” are we to understand a mere figurative coming there? Is that which is represented by the coming of the Bridegroom a mere figurative coming also? When it is said, again and again, “Watch therefore,” and, “Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh,” is all this merely figurative? Is there no personal, actual coming of Christ referred to in passages like these? Why, these are the passages admitted by all to refer to the actual coming of Christ to judgment; and if they are not to be so understood, where is there a passage in the Bible that does foretell that event? One of these passages, that at the commencement of the parable of the sheep and goats in Matt. 25, is understood by our opponents themselves to predict the personal coming of Christ to judgment; and they argue from it to prove that it must be after the close of the Millennium, and identical with the judgment of the great white throne! No; there is no one who can seriously contend that the expression, “coming of the Son of man,” is to be understood figuratively throughout this discourse.

(1) If, then, it be asked, Why may we not understand the phrase figuratively in Matt. 24:30, and literally in other parts of the discourse? this is our reply -- That to suppose our Lord using a given phrase ten or eleven times in one discourse *literally*, and that then in the same discourse, without any note of His using it in any different sense, He should once employ it *figuratively*, is to suppose Him speaking in such a way as was calculated to deceive; and this, we are sure, is what our brethren would dread to impute to our blessed Lord, as much as we should ourselves.

(2) No one can say as to the verse in question, that the language employed is weaker than in the rest, or that circumstances of solemnity announced in other instances are wanting here. *There is more of solemnity in the announcement of Christ’s coming in this and the preceding verse than in any other mention of it in the whole discourse.* Let the reader compare them for himself and judge.

(3) As to the particular sense sought to be fixed upon v.

30, namely, that “the coming of the Lord here announced is just His figurative coming to judge and destroy Jerusalem,” that is, by means of Titus and the Roman army, the following considerations prove it inadmissible altogether. First, our Lord’s intimation of His coming again, which suggested the disciples’ inquiry, and gave rise to the whole discourse, connects that coming, not with the destruction of Jerusalem, but with the Jews’ conversion. “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh,” etc. They did not say this when Jerusalem was destroyed. Secondly, the disciples connect the coming of Christ, not with the overthrow of the temple, but with the end of the age. The end of the age did not arrive when Jerusalem was destroyed. There were to be wars and rumors of wars, but the end, says our Lord, is not yet. The Gospel was to be preached in all the world, and then, He says, shall the end come. Now if the coming of which our Lord here discourses be at the end of the age, it could not be at the destruction of Jerusalem. Thirdly, the coming of the Son of man announced in Matt. 24:30 is declared by our Lord Himself to be “*immediately after the tribulation of those days*” -- a tribulation which we have seen the prophet Daniel declares to be, not at the destruction of Jerusalem, but at the deliverance of his people. Daniel’s people were not delivered at the destruction of Jerusalem. Fourthly, if Daniel’s testimony could be set aside (which, however, must not be), if it could be conceded (which yet cannot be) that the time of tribulation unequalled by any other before or after it, is what was connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, still it would not establish the sense sought to be put upon v. 30. If the unequalled tribulation was that inflicted on the Jews by Titus, how could it be *immediately after* the tribulation of those days that Christ’s “figurative coming to judge and destroy Jerusalem” took place? According to this, it was this figurative coming of Christ *that brought the unequalled tribulation!* How, then, could the coming be after the tribulation? Allow that the unequalled tribulation is that of the Jews in days to come, and that they are delivered by Christ’s coming, it is then plain enough how the coming is *immediately after* the tribulation of those days. Such is the meaning of the passage, written upon it throughout as with a sunbeam, and the marvel is, how prejudice itself can understand it otherwise. Fifthly, it is of this same coming, with its connected events, that our Lord goes on to speak in the remainder of the discourse. Having given the parable of the fig-tree showing by its leaves that summer is nigh, He says,

So likewise ye, when ye shall see *all these things*, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till *all these things* be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of *that day* and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be {Matt. 24:33-37}.

Let the reader observe the words, “these things” and “that day,” and how our Lord identifies thus the coming of the Son of man in v. 30, with the coming of the Son of man in v. 37. So also to the end of the chapter. It is of the same event He

speaks throughout, connecting the next chapter with it by the words, “**Then** shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,” etc. *It is of one event He speaks throughout.* If, in v. 30, He speaks of His “figurative coming to judge and destroy Jerusalem,” it is of the same “figurative coming” that He speaks, when He likens it to the flood in the days of Noe, when He illustrates it by the parables of the evil servant, the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and goats. There is not a single intimation of His ceasing to speak of one event, and of His turning to another. Unless our anti-millenarian brethren are prepared to make all these treat of a figurative coming to destroy Jerusalem, they must give up this as an interpretation of v. 30. The more closely this discourse is examined throughout, the more incontestable is it, that it is a personal coming which our Lord foretells, and that it takes place neither at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor at the end of the Millennium, but at the commencement of that period of Israel’s restoration and of universal blessing.

We are well aware, that the argument by which our brethren seek to neutralize all those now presented to the reader, is, that our Lord says (Matt. 24:34), “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” But does it not occur to you at once, dear reader, that “all these things” must include more than this alleged “figurative coming” of Christ to destroy Jerusalem? It must at any rate include the unequalled tribulation, *immediately after which* the coming of the Son of man takes place. If then you are determined to take the words “this generation” as denoting the race of men then alive, when our Lord delivered this discourse, see what you do: -- you set Daniel and our Lord in hopeless opposition to each other. You make the one say, that this unequalled tribulation is when Jerusalem was destroyed, while the other says that it is to be when his people, the Jews, are delivered. Any interpretation which makes Scripture flatly contradict itself, cannot be the true one. Nor is there the slightest pretext of any necessity for such an interpretation here. Here are two statements of our Lord Himself. One is couched in language which cannot possibly admit of any sense but one:

For then shall be great tribulation, *such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

There are not two ways in which you can understand or interpret these words. They defy misconstruction. Daniel’s words are equally plain, determining that this unparalleled tribulation is at the deliverance, not at the dispersion, of His people and the destruction of their city. Now here is another statement of our Lord, namely, “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” This statement is *in itself* susceptible of being variously understood; it is capable of more than one meaning; we must therefore adopt such a construction of it as agrees with those other declarations which cannot be understood but one way. Now, if you regard it as meaning that our anti-millenarian brethren allege it means -- namely, that those living when our Lord spake, would see the fulfilment of all these things, you interpret it in opposition both to Daniel and our Lord. “This generation,”

therefore, *does not mean the race of living men then existing on the earth*. But, again, among the “all these things” which were to be fulfilled, there is “the gathering together of the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (see Matt. 24:31). Now, interpret this as you may, no one can pretend that this was “fulfilled” within the lifetime of those who heard our Savior speak. What, then, is the meaning of “this generation”? Our reply is, consult any good dictionary of your own language, and you will find that the primary meaning of the word “generation” is not that of a single succession of men, but that of *a race*, or *a people*; and in this respect our own language corresponds exactly with the Greek, from which the expression is translated. This is admitted by our opponents, but they say that it is forced and unnatural to understand the word in this confessedly primary sense here. But where is the proof of this? Here is a prophecy commencing with a prediction of the destruction of the temple; it proceeds to testify of wars, pestilences, famines, earthquakes, and, finally, of a time of tribulation unequalled by any before or after it -- tribulation so great, that unless its continuance were shortened, *no flesh could be saved* {see Matt. 24}. What is there unnatural, what is there forced, in understanding our Lord to say, that notwithstanding all these multiplied, complicated, unparalleled distresses, the generation, the race, the nation of the Jews, should not pass, till all these things be fulfilled? Could anything be more natural than for our Lord to say this, in view of all that He had said before? Could there be a more simple, natural construction of His words? We think not. Besides, this interpretation of the words “this generation,” makes the whole discourse harmonious with itself, and with all other Scripture: and if so, it leaves the whole discourse what it undoubtedly is -- an unanswerable proof, among many, many others, that the actual, personal, second coming of Christ is at the commencement, not at the close, of the millennial period.

In nothing, perhaps, is the perfection of God’s word more remarkably displayed, than in some of those minute coincidences, on the one hand, and points of contrast on the other, which entirely escape the notice of a superficial reader. For instance, the general correspondence between Matt. 24, 25, Mark 13, and Luke 21, is obvious to all. Each contains, in substance, the memorable discourse delivered by our Lord to His disciples on the mount of Olives, when He had left the temple for the last time. But Matthew’s report of it is much more full and detailed than either of the others; Mark’s is the least copious of the three, and so far as it goes, most closely resembles that by Matthew; while Luke’s, omitting much that Matthew’s contains, furnishes some particulars which it has not pleased the Holy Ghost to record by either of the other evangelists. But there is one difference between Matthew’s account and the other two, which suggested the above remark as to the perfection of Scripture. The disciples’ question in Matt. 24:3, is thus stated, “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?” The other evangelists, in stating the question, omit all reference to Christ’s coming or the end of

the age. “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things shall be fulfilled?” is as Mark states it. “Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?” is the form in which Luke records it. How is this? Why do they not give the reference to Christ’s coming and the end of the age? The reason is obvious, if we do but carefully read the entire context of the passages. Matthew gives, in chapter 23, the denunciation by our Lord of the scribes and Pharisees and lawyers, and of the entire generation which received its character from these classes of persons; closing, as our readers will remember, with the solemn words,

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

As He goes out, uttering these words, the disciples show Him the buildings of the temple, and He predicts their overthrow. Now nothing can be more evident, than that the disciples had both these subjects in view in their question as stated by Matthew; nor could anything be more natural than for Matthew, having narrated what gave rise to both branches of their question, to state that question in full as he does. *The other evangelists omit what suggested one half of the question*, and they very naturally, *in stating it, omit that part of the question itself*. Neither in Mark nor Luke is there anything as to the Jews seeing our Lord no more until they shall say, “Blessed is he that cometh.” The only occasion of the disciples’ inquiry, which could be gathered from these evangelists, is the prediction that not one stone of the temple, or its buildings, should be left upon another; and accordingly their inquiry, as stated by Mark and Luke, relates to this prediction alone: “When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things shall come to pass?”

In Luke 21 we have our Lord’s reply to the question as to the overthrow of Jerusalem and its temple. But so far from confounding this, as so many commentators do, with His own predicted return, or the signs which precede it, He carefully distinguishes the one part of the subject from the other, confirming thus, in the most powerful manner, the pre-millenarian argument drawn in our last from Matt. 24. There is no explicit reference in Matthew to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. In the chapter before us, there is; but instead of identifying it, as so many do, with what they designate “the figurative coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven,” the Lord places it *at the beginning*, and His own actual coming *at the end* of those “days of vengeance” which were to fall upon the Jews; but He foretells nothing as to the Jews but vengeance and woe, and nothing as to the nations but evil, between the date of this discourse and His coming in the clouds of heaven. How then can a Millennium intervene? And as it is admitted that there is to be a Millennium, how incontestable that it is *after*, and not *before*, the second advent of Christ. But let us examine the passage.

From Matt. 24:8 to 20, our Lord predicts, in general terms, that wars and commotions should occur, that false Christs should appear, that nation should rise against nation,

and that there should be earthquakes, famines, pestilences, as well as fearful sights and great signs from heaven. That all these things came to pass in connection with destruction of Jerusalem is fully declared by Josephus himself, the Jewish historian. But our Lord forewarns His disciples, that prior to all these things, they should be persecuted, and brought before kings and rulers for His name's sake; and He exhorts them in patience to possess their souls. In v. 20 He thus speaks:

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh {Luke 21:20}.

Here is the explicit reply to the only part of the disciples' question which Luke records. Jerusalem being encompassed with armies was to be the sign of its approaching desolation. He proceeds:

Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written

all the terrible predictions of wrath and judgment upon Israel

may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations {Luke 21:21-24}.

Thus far, all clearly refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and to the calamities preceding it, attending it, or following immediately upon it. And now let the reader mark well the next words,

And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*. And there shall be,

When? Clearly, at the epoch just indicated, namely, the close of the times of the Gentiles

signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory*. And when these things [the things thus foretold as connected with the close of the times of the Gentiles] begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh {Luke 21:24-28}.

A prayerful, impartial consideration of these solemn words can hardly fail, as we judge, to confirm to the reader's mind the conclusions already drawn from the corresponding chapter in Matthew's Gospel. Some of the features peculiar to the passage before us, each affording additional evidence of our main position, or else neutralizing objections commonly made to it, we may now proceed to specify.

(1) In that part of this passage which undeniably treats of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, there is no mention either of "the abomination of desolation," "the time of unequalled tribulation," or "the coming of the Son of man." According to the anti-millenarian interpretation of Matt. 24,

all these should be found here, connected with this unquestioned prediction of Jerusalem's overthrow by Titus. *But none of them are thus found*. We read simply of "Jerusalem compassed with armies" as a sign that "the desolation thereof is nigh."

(2) The passage before us places the destruction of Jerusalem at the commencement of those "days of vengeance" which must surely run their course ere the Millennium can arrive. If the Millennium is to be distinguished by "the in-bringing of all Israel," as we saw in our last is admitted by our brethren, there can be no such period, until these "days of vengeance" on the Jews are brought to a close.

(3) These "days of vengeance" are represented as coeval with "the times of the Gentiles." "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

(4) The "tribulation" of which Matthew speaks, "such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," must be the very closing part of the "days of vengeance" or "the times of the Gentiles." Daniel's definite assurance that "at that time" his "people shall be delivered," makes it *impossible* that it can occur at an earlier epoch.

(5) Our Lord's discourse, as reported by Luke, while it omits any specific mention of the unequalled tribulation, does predict that at the close of the times of the Gentiles there shall be

upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth {Luke 21:24, 25}.

This surely corresponds with Matthew's account.

(6) While Matthew foretells the signs of Christ's coming, and the coming itself, as "immediately after the tribulation of those days," Luke says, "And **then** shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Thus Luke connects the coming of the Son of man, not with the destruction of Jerusalem, but with the close of the days of vengeance on the Jews, and the termination of the times of the Gentiles.

(7) As though to preclude the possibility of interpreting all this of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, our Lord says, "And when these things" (evidently distinguishing between "these things" which mark the close of the days of vengeance, and *those other things* which were to betoken their commencement) "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was surely no sign of approaching redemption!

(8) The reader will recollect our Lord's parable in ch. 19 of this Gospel {Luke} -- a parable spoken to correct the idea that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. We have already seen how it is the return of the nobleman, having received the kingdom, which alone introduces it. Now look to vv. 29-31 of the chapter we are considering {Luke 21}. Not only were "these things" to be the tokens of "redemption being nigh," but of "the kingdom of God being 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 in what sense could the kingdom of God be nigh at hand when Jerusalem was destroyed? The kingdom of God, in its mysterious state as it exists at present, had already come long before the destruction of Jerusalem. In this sense it could not be spoken of as then nigh at hand. In the sense of its open manifestation in millennial glory, it will be nigh at hand when these presages of Christ's second coming begin to come to pass.

(9) Our Lord says here, as in Matt. 24:

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled {Luke 21:32}.

but as the word "all" must include everything mentioned in the preceding verses, and as the close of the times of the Gentiles is one of these, it is self-evident that He cannot use the term "this generation" as denoting those who were then alive. The times of the Gentiles are not yet run out, and the generation, therefore, of which the Lord speaks has not yet passed. It is the race, the nation,<sup>28</sup> of the Jews, which He thus designates.

(10) Finally, that it is of the day of His own personal coming that our Lord speaks, is evident from the closing exhortation of the chapter.

And 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 them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man {Luke 21:34-36}.

How could the destruction of Jerusalem come "as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth"? No; it is of His own actual, personal return, at the close of the times of the Gentiles, that our Lord speaks; and the whole discourse demonstrates that this must be at the commencement of the Millennium. Our Lord divides into two parts the period between His delivering this discourse and His return in glory. *Both divisions are so filled up as to preclude the possibility of an intervening Millennium.* Read what He says of the period stretching from the time when He speaks to the destruction of Jerusalem; read His description of the period from Jerusalem's overthrow to His own return: and if wars, commotions, earthquakes, famines, pestilences -- fearful sights and great signs -- delusions and persecutions -- Jerusalem encompassed with armies, and its desolation accomplished -- if Jerusalem trodden down, the times of the Gentiles running out their course, perplexity and distress of

nations, men's hearts failing them for fear; if these things betoken a Millennium, or can possibly exist along with it, then may a Millennium be expected ere the Lord returns! But if, as is obvious, these things are incompatible with millennial rest and blessedness, then there can be no Millennium till the coming of the Son of man in a cloud with power and great glory. Our Lord speaks of these things, and of nothing else, from His going away to His coming again. Then, further, He links with His coming again the redemption of those who look for Him and the coming of God's kingdom; while He warns all in the most solemn terms to beware lest that day come upon them as a thief. May His warnings and His encouragements alike sink deep into our hearts!

Ere passing to another branch of evidence, we would ask our readers, Could any interpretation but the one now presented have occurred to your minds, if for the first time you had been considering the chapter before us? Is it not what the plain, obvious meaning of the words would suggest? Why, then, put another construction upon these words? Be assured if our views make it requisite for us to impose upon passage after passage some other sense than that which would naturally and at once occur to us as its simple, evident meaning, our views themselves should be regarded with suspicion. Our own deep conviction is, that Scripture alone, soberly and prayerfully studied, would lead no one to anti-millenarian views. Christians generally were pre-millenarian for the first three centuries. It was when Christianity began to receive the patronage of the world, that the simple, obvious sense of the prophetic testimonies began to be explained away. Christians of the present day become early initiated in anti-millenarian views, and are in danger of turning to Scripture for arguments to sustain them, without having fairly addressed themselves to the inquiry, whether the views themselves have been derived from Scripture. Never let us forget, that the primary question in any case is not, What construction can the words of Scripture be made to bear? but, What is the impression which Scripture itself would at once produce on a simple, unbiassed mind? No one, by the mere perusal of Matt. 24 and Luke 21, would be led to think of a "figurative coming of the Son of man to destroy Jerusalem." The Lord grant to us the spirit of disciples, coming reverently to God's word to hear and learn what He says to us therein, not to exercise our minds in trying what variety of meanings its language may be made to bear.

There can scarcely be a passage more immediately and evidently bearing on the question, whether Christ's second advent be pre-millennial or post-millennial, than Acts 3:20, 21:

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Here the apostle informs the Jews of a certain epoch until which the heaven must receive or retain Jesus Christ. And what is the epoch named? "*The times of restitution of all things.*" Until those times the heaven must receive our Lord. But when those times arrive, Christ will assuredly return. God

28. The Greek word here rendered "generation" is elsewhere translated "nation." See Phil. 2:15: "A crooked and perverse nation," and the cognate word γεννημα is frequently thus applied -- "Generation of vipers," etc. The kindred Hebrew word is in many instances thus used. Parkhurst observes, "Generation" is also taken for men of like quality and disposition, though neither of one place nor age. "God is in the generation of the righteous" (Psa. 14:5). We have also, "the generation of the upright," "the generation of those that seek him," "the generation of his wrath," etc.

will send Him. This is what the passage before us affirms.

The importance of this passage is felt by our anti-millenarian brethren, and earnestly do they endeavor to show, that it favors their view of the subject. Many, perhaps most of them, contend that the word here rendered "restitution" means also "fulfilment" or "accomplishment," and that it ought to be so rendered in this passage. Their argument would then be, that if the heavens are to receive Christ till the fulfilment of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, it must be till after the Millennium, as the Millennium is clearly included among the "all things" thus foretold. But supposing this rendering of the word could be allowed, (which yet cannot justly be) does not the reader at once perceive that the argument proves too much for those who produce it? If the heavens receive or retain our Lord, till all things are fulfilled which the prophets have spoken, then must it be, not only till after the Millennium, but also till after the universal judgment. Surely our brethren will not contend that the final, universal judgment is no where spoken of by any of the prophets. And yet, if they allow that the prophets have foretold this judgment, and foretold the resurrection, how plain that if the heavens retain Christ till all things are fulfilled which the prophets have spoken, they retain Him till after these events. Thus, if the argument proves anything, it proves not only that Christ will not come to introduce the Millennium, but also that He will not come to raise the dead, or to judge the secrets of men's hearts! An argument which would prove this, is surely altogether unworthy of our regard.

Then again, suppose the word might be rendered "fulfilment" or "accomplishment," what the apostle declares is not (in that case) that the heavens must receive Christ "until the fulfilment," but "until the *times of the fulfilment* of all things which God hath spoken." "Fulfilment" is one thing, and necessarily complete: "*times of fulfilment*" is quite another expression, and denotes the period during which the fulfilment takes place. If, then, the rendering advocated by our brethren could be allowed, the passage would have no such force as they attach to it. It would express a certain lengthened period during which those things which form the burden of prophetic testimony are to be accomplished, "*the times of fulfilment of all things*," etc., declaring that the heavens have received our Lord *until those times*. But surely "*until the times*" does not mean *until the times are over!* That would be until some other times which are to succeed! Suppose the case of a person sojourning at some place noted for its salubrity during the greater part of the year, but unfavorable to health at one particular season, when the east winds prevail. Writing to his friend, he says, "My present place of sojourn will retain me until the times of the east and north-east winds." How would his friend -- how would any one -- understand such an intimation? No one would suppose that he meant to tarry till the times of these winds were past. Every one would understand that he purposed to tarry till these times *commenced* or *arrived*. So in the passage before us, even if we read it as it is contended that it should be read, "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the fulfilment of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth

of all his holy prophets, since the world began," this does not mean, it cannot mean, that the heavens must receive Him till the times of fulfilment of all things *expire*, but until those times *arrive*. And what is the period, let us inquire, which alone could be termed, distinctively and pre-eminently, "the times of fulfilment of all things which God hath spoken"? What can it be, save the Millennium? Whatever isolated predictions may have been fulfilled in periods prior to the Millennium, there can be no doubt on any mind, that if any period is designated in God's word, "the times of the fulfilment of all things," it must be the millennial period, which will really be distinguished by the accomplishment of the great body of Old Testament prophecies. It is evident, therefore, that even if our brethren be right in rendering this word "fulfilment," instead of "restitution," the passage says nothing in favor of their theory, but is decisive against it. It affirms that the heaven must receive our Lord "until the times of fulfilment of all things" -- that is, millennial times. Until those times; that is, surely, until those times *arrive*, not until they *expire*. To suppose the latter, would be to set at defiance all the usages, alike of our own language and of that in which the New Testament was written.

But the word "ἀποκαταστάσις" cannot rightly be rendered "fulfilment." It is correctly rendered "restitution" in our English version, and, as a noun, occurs only this once in the New Testament. But the verb from which it is formed occurs several times, and always in the sense of restoring, replacing, reconstituting. The passages we give below; <sup>29</sup> as also some instances of the use of the word in other writings than the Scriptures. Referring to the note for proof of what we affirm, that "restitution" is the right rendering of the word, we would put it to any of our Christian readers, whether Scripture does not teach us to look for "times of restitution of all things" -- whether these predicted "times of restitution" be not identical with millennial times -- and whether God has not

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29. The author of the *Horæ Apocalypticæ* {E. B. Elliot}, whose scholarship none will question, says, "Κάταστάσις means the actual state, condition, or constitution; and, consequently, ἀποκαταστάσις must most naturally mean a new and different constitution of things, generally by restoration to what it was originally."

For Scripture examples, I may refer to Matt. 12:13, his hand "was restored (ἀπεκατεστάθη) whole, like as the other." Matt. 17:11, "Elias . . . shall . . . restore (ἀποκαταστήσει) all things." Acts 1:6, "Wilt thou at this time restore ἀποκαθιστάνεις again the kingdom to Israel?"

All these are instances of the use of the verb. As to the substantive, which only occurs in Acts 3:19, the same writer observes, "By classical authors the noun and verb are similarly used in the sense of restoration: surgically -- of the setting, or restoration, of diseased or broken limbs; astronomically -- of the sun returning into his old sign in the Zodiac; politically -- of hostages or exiles returning to their country." Instances are given also from the fathers of a similar use of the word.

There can be no doubt, that the translators were guided by the uniform use of the word in rendering it "restitution," and we should never have heard of any other rendering of it, but for its being, as it thus stands, so irrefragable a proof that the Advent is pre-millennial. Our readers, however, will see above, how little is gained for the opposite theory, even if it could be granted that "fulfilment" is the sense of the word. The heavens retain Christ, *not till the fulfilment*, but till "*the times of fulfilment*," which can mean nothing but what is more correctly expressed as "the times of restitution of all things."



indeed spoken of these times “by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began?” Till these “times of restitution” -- till the arrival of these times -- the heavens must receive our Lord; but no longer than this. His return will usher in those times. When He returns, these “times of restitution” will arrive. It is then that Israel will be restored to their own land. The throne of David, so long prostrate, will then be re-established, and He shall occupy it, who is both David’s son and David’s Lord. Israel’s supremacy over the nations will also be restored. The curse will be removed; creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption; even the brute creation, shorn of their ferocity, will sport together, and yield willing subjection to an infant yoke (a little child shall lead them); while Satan, expelled from the earth, and forcibly restrained, will have his murderous rule replaced by that of Christ and His heavenly saints; heaven and earth no longer hostile and divided, as they have been since the fall, but “all things in heaven and in earth gathered together in one, even in Christ.” These will be “times of restitution” indeed! And until these times arrive, but no longer, the heavens must receive our Lord. His advent ushers in this blissful, glorious era. May our hearts adore Him while exulting in the blissful prospect!

Finally, the whole context of the passage, when collated with other Scriptures, confirms the sense of it here given. The Lord had said in Hosea’s prophecy, speaking of the nation of Israel,

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early (Hos. 5:15).

Our Lord Himself had said, “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” {Matt. 23:39}. Unnumbered prophecies connect with Israel’s repentance and restoration the universal deliverance and blessing of creation and of the earth. The Jews having rejected and crucified Christ, and He having risen and ascended into heaven, Peter is here, by the Holy Ghost, still proclaiming to them the mercy which they had hitherto scorned, and urging upon them the repentance with which Hosea, our Lord, and indeed all the Scriptures, connect their restoration and the introduction of universal blessing. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, and that <sup>30</sup> 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 heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” {Acts 3:29-31}. How evident that “the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” and “the times of

restitution of all things,” until which the heavens must retain the Lord, are one and the same; and that they are identical with those millennial times -- those times of universal blessing -- which all Scripture links with Israel’s repentance and restoration. Repent, says the apostle, that these times may come. We have already seen, in previous papers, that when Israel does repent these times will come. The passage before us declares, that when they come the Lord will come; that the heavens must receive Him till then, but that then He shall be sent from heaven. Nothing can be more complete or decisive than the testimony of this passage to the doctrine of Christ’s pre-millennial advent.

In turning to 2 Thess. 2 as our next proof of this doctrine, it may be well to remind the reader, that in the first epistle the coming of Christ is referred to *in every chapter*; and so referred to that no doubt can be entertained by any one as to what kind of coming is treated of. It is, confessedly by all, the actual, personal, second coming of Christ to which 1 Thessalonians so often refers.

To this subject the apostle returns in the first chapter of the second epistle. “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,” etc. {2 Thess. 1:7}. This, all will agree, is the second personal appearing of Christ. “When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” {2 Thess. 1:10}. This also, none will deny, refers to the personal coming of Christ.

The second chapter begins thus:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him {2 Thess. 2:1}.

Is not this also the personal, actual coming of the Lord Jesus? This would, doubtless, be allowed by most.

The apostle proceeds to speak of the idea that the day of Christ <sup>31</sup> was at hand, and assures the Thessalonians that it could not come unless there was “a falling away first,” and “the man of sin” were revealed. He reminds them of what he had before told them, that there was something withholding or hindering the revelation of this “man of sin,” and that what was then hindering would hinder until it should be removed;

and then [says he] shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy *with the brightness of his coming* {2 Thess. 2:8}.

Now is this another kind of coming altogether from that which he has mentioned so immediately before? Throughout the first epistle, and three times already in this, he has named the coming of Christ. In all these instances, it is confessed that he speaks of the actual, personal advent of our Lord. He has not changed his subject. So far from this, he beseeches the Thessalonians at the commencement of this second chapter,

30. The word ὅπως occurs upward of fifty times in the New Testament, and is never, save in this instance, rendered “when.” “*That*,” is its undoubted and uniform import. “*That* the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:35). “*That* thou mightest be justified in thy sayings” (Rom. 3:4), etc., etc. Whitby, Vitringa, Lightfoot, Doddridge, Rosenmuller, and almost all critics and expositors, whether of millenarian or anti-millenarian views, admit what we have here affirmed.

31. There is a difference between “the coming” and “the day of Christ {day of the Lord},” which we hope to point out hereafter. Further, the word used by the apostle is not “at hand,” as in our version, but “present.” But this point also we hope fully to examine ere long.

“by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him”; and then, in the same paragraph, in the unfolding of the theme which he thus introduces, he speaks of “that Wicked, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy *with the brightness of his coming*.” Can it be, dear reader, another kind of coming he speaks of here? Would it not be doing the utmost violence to Scripture to suppose such a thing? Could we understand any other book, if it were to be interpreted on such principles as would authorize an interpretation of Scripture such as this? Suppose a mere human author to write two treatises, the latter intended to throw further light on the subject of the former. Suppose that a certain term or phrase is used more frequently than any other in these writings, and that up to a certain point it is used always in one fixed, determinate sense. Suppose that it had been thus used twelve or thirteen times without one exception, and that is acknowledged by all who read the writings in question. There is, however, a fourteenth instance in which the phrase occurs. There is no intimation on the part of the writer that he uses it in a different sense: there is nothing in the immediate context to require that it should be understood differently. Nay, so far from this, it is used in the usual sense at the commencement of the paragraph in which it again occurs in the instance supposed. Now, what could be thought of any one who could contend in a case like this, that the phrase is to be understood in a different sense the fourteenth time of its occurrence, from that in which it is used in all the previous instances? Would it not be seen that his mind was warped, and that, for some reason or other, he did violence to the sense of the writer? And if we should shrink from thus reflecting on the consistency of a mere human author, ought not reverence for the word of God to make us still more fearful of attributing such obscurity and inconsistency to it?

The case before us is even stronger than the one just supposed; and it is stronger if the original be consulted, than if we read simply our excellent English translation. The word rendered “coming” in 2 Thess. 2:8 is “παρουσία” {*parousia*}, and the sense of this word will best appear from the invariable rendering of it in those passages where it is not *the Lord’s* coming that is spoken of, but where it is used in reference to others. The list we give below.<sup>32</sup> Let the reader judge, after referring to the passages, whether an actual coming, or presence, be not in each instance the meaning of the word. The only passage as to which doubt could arise in the mind of any one is the last; and there the doubt would not be as to the *coming* being actual, but *as to that which comes*.

32. “I am glad of the *coming* of Stephanas” (1 Cor. 16:17).

“God . . . comforted us by the *coming* of Titus” (2 Cor. 7:6).

“And not by his *coming* only” (2 Cor. 7:7).

“But his bodily *presence* is weak” (2 Cor 10:10).

“That your rejoicing may be more abundant . . . by my *coming* to you again” (Phil. 1:26).

“As ye have always obeyed, not as in my *presence* only” (Phil. 2:12).

“Even him, whose *coming* is after the working of Satan” (2 Thess. 2:9).

The meaning of the word “παρουσία” is as evident in it as in all the other passages. It is used seventeen times in the New Testament with reference to the coming of Christ.

But this is not the whole of the case. There is another word used in this passage. It is not only said, “whom he shall destroy by his coming,” but “by the brightness of his coming.” Now the word here rendered “brightness” is “ἐπιφάνεια”; it occurs five times besides in the New Testament; and its force may be judged of by the list of passages below.<sup>33</sup> It is difficult, on any ground save that of the unconscious influence of a theory which pre-occupies the mind, to account for any one being able calmly and prayerfully to consider the evidence now before us, and yet resist the conclusion that the coming of Christ, of which the apostle treats in 2 Thess. 2:8, is an actual personal coming. No reason can be assigned for regarding it as such in every other reference to the subject in both epistles, while in this solitary instance it is regarded as a figure of speech. In that case, we should have no marks left by which the meaning of the sacred text could be determined -- or, indeed, the meaning of any writings on any subject whatever.

Assuming it, then, as settled, that it is the second personal advent of Christ of which the apostle treats, we proceed to inquire, what is the testimony of this passage as to the period of the advent, whether it be before or after the Millennium? What says the apostle? Having adverted to the idea which was gaining ground among the Thessalonians, that “the day of Christ is at hand,” or present,” he thus proceeds:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:* even him, 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. 2:3-10}.

Now, is there here any opening for a Millennium before the second advent of our Lord? The apostle speaks of the commencement, progress, and close of a certain period. It had commenced when he wrote. Its close is at the coming of

33. “Until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:14).

“By the *appearing* of our Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 1:10).

“At His *appearing* and kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1).

“Unto all them that love His *appearing*” (2 Tim. 4:8).

“Looking for that blesses hope, and the glorious *appearing* of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

Christ. And what is it that intervenes? A Millennium? No; he speaks only of the continuance of evil, and of its progress from the incipient state in which it existed even then, to that maturity of daring wickedness which is exhibited in “the man of sin.” The day of Christ cannot come, except a falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed. Well, but may there not be a Millennium brought about by the gradual spread of the Gospel, and this falling away come after that? No, for the apostle says “the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” The evil had already commenced. There was indeed a hindering power, and one which was for a time to continue. “He who now letteth {hinders} will let, until he be taken out of the way, and then” -- yes, what then? A Millennium? No -- “*then* shall that Wicked be revealed.” Well, but may he not be revealed, and have his day, and the Millennium follow, and then the Lord come at the close of it? No, that cannot be; for it is by the second advent of our Lord, by the brightness of His coming, that “that Wicked” is to be destroyed. Thus are we guarded by the apostle as to both the beginning and the end of this period. The Millennium could not be at the former, for the mystery of iniquity was working then, and was to work till it issued in the revelation of the man of sin, “that Wicked.” It cannot be towards the end of the period, for “that Wicked,” the man of sin, exists to the end, and the period closes with his destruction by the brightness of Christ’s coming. Thus are we shut up to the conclusion that there can be no Millennium between the time at which the apostle wrote and the second coming of Christ. The mystery of iniquity, the falling away, the revelation and blasphemies of the man of sin, fill up the whole period; and if there is to be a Millennium, it must be after the second coming of our Lord. *It cannot be before.* The only way of evading this conclusion is to say that the coming of Christ, by the brightness of which “the man of sin” is to be destroyed, is not His actual, personal, second coming. But this we have shown to be doing violence to Scripture, and adopting a principle of interpretation which, if carried out, would rob all language of any fixed, determinate meaning, and render it impossible to decide what is the import of any statement made by any writer, on any subject whatever. Surely we must not adopt such a principle in the interpretation of God’s holy word!

We add one more remark. If it should be said, that “consumed by the spirit of his mouth” means “a gradual weakening of the anti-Christian power by the spread of truth,” we reply, that even if this were so, it would not affect our conclusion in the least. “The man of sin” must not only be *weakened*, but *destroyed*, before there can be a Millennium; and he is *destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s coming*. But then, to *consume* is not to *weaken*. “Ἀναλίσκω,” the word here translated “consume” strictly means -- to take away, to destroy. It is the word used in Luke 9:54, where the disciples ask our Lord if they may command fire to come from heaven and *consume* the Samaritans. Surely it means no gradual weakening there, but utter and sudden destruction. Neither does the expression, “spirit of his mouth,” signify the Gospel, or the gracious influences of the Spirit. “Πνεῦμα,” the word translated “spirit,” has for its primary meaning -- wind, air in

motion, a breathing, breath; and this is doubtless its sense in the passage before us: “whom the Lord shall consume with the *breath* of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” {see 2 Thess. 2:8, JND transl.}. A reference to Job 4:9, and 15:30; Isa. 30:28, 33; also Isa. 11:4, will show that this phrase is expressive of judgment on the wicked, not the saving operation of the Spirit of God.

We have not space for the consideration of any other distinct branch of positive evidence, such, for instance, as that of the Scripture doctrine of the “First resurrection.” Neither can we at present examine the difficulties and objections commonly urged against the pre-millennial view. Both these topics must be reserved for future examination. At present we content ourselves with suggesting some general considerations, which deserve to be weighed by any who would really ascertain what God has taught on this important subject.

Our attention has been hitherto directed to the question entirely as one of fact; we have been seeking to ascertain whether the positive predictions of the New Testament leave any opening for a Millennium between the days of Christ and His apostles, and the coming day of Christ’s return in glory. We have examined passage upon passage, which expressly fill up the whole interval with the predictions of events of such a character as to be absolutely incompatible with the existence of millennial blessing. We have considered at large one passage, which informs us *until when* the heavens must retain our Lord, and have found that it is “until” millennial times, “the times of restitution of all things.” Now these are not theories claiming to be in harmony with Scripture, but plain, direct testimonies of Scripture itself, as to the matter-of-fact question which has been brought before us. But may we not now fairly ask our readers, supposing the post-millennial theory to be true, how is it that there is no positive Scripture evidence of it, attempted to be brought forward by its most able and zealous defenders? The only passages produced, as positive evidence of the world’s conversion prior to Christ’s return, are, the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, in Matt. 13, the passage discussed a few pages back, Acts 3:21, and another (Matt. 28:19), which we hope to examine in our next. The parables in Matt. 13 were shown to teach the very opposite of the world’s conversion to Christ prior to His return; Peter’s words in Acts 3:21, we have found to bear explicit testimony *for* and *not against* the pre-millennial view; and all we need say at present as to Matt. 28:19 is, that no one can venture to produce it as *affirming* that the world will be converted during the present dispensation. The utmost that our anti-millenarian brethren themselves can say is, that this doctrine may be *inferred* from the passage. The question we would affectionately urge upon these brethren, and upon our readers, is this: If Christ knew that the world was to subjugated to Himself, and the bright, glorious era of millennial blessing ushered in, by means of the evangelistic labors confided to His disciples and their successors, can we suppose that He would have left us to gather this by doubtful inference from the terms of one single passage? Supposing the anticipations of our brethren be just, how are we to account

for the silence of our Lord and His apostles on the subject? The Savior knew well the continual stimulus which would be needed to the prosecution of the evangelistic enterprise, and by other motives He carefully supplies that stimulus. If He knew that the issue would be as our brethren suppose, how is it that He does not explicitly say so, and urge this as an encouragement to patience, and industry, and zeal? Those who expect the world to be converted by the blessing of God on the preaching of the Gospel during the present dispensation, do not fail to urge this anticipated result, as a powerful stimulus to exertion; and they object to the doctrine of these papers, as weakening the hands of God's servants by withdrawing this stimulus. If Christ had been of the same mind as these brethren, would not His instructions and exhortations have borne, in this respect, the same impress as theirs? How is it, we again inquire, that they do not? Read the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, from beginning to end, and leaving aside the three passages we have named, where is there a word from which any one could gather the idea that the writers expected the Millennium to be introduced, as the result of the labors which originated with them in their day? The three passages referred to give no sanction *really* to such a thought. When fairly examined with their contexts, they all decisively give their voices against it. But waiving this for the present, and leaving these three passages aside, we are bold to affirm as to all the rest of the New Testament, that no one could gather from it, that its writers expected the arrival of millennial times prior to the Lord's return. They do not place the prospect of the Millennium before the soul. But we go further, and affirm, without fear of contradiction, that they do place the Lord's coming before the soul. Whether it be exhortations to watchfulness and readiness, as in the first three Gospels, or as comfort under the sorrow of our Lord's absence, as in the fourth, or as the one hope of the Church after it had been formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost, as in the Acts and Epistles, it is the one, great, prominent object throughout, with which the future is filled, and to which the eye of the saint is directed. As addressed to the hopes, affections, and conscience of the saints, or as addressed to the fears of the ungodly, the second coming of our Lord is the one great theme of the New Testament, as regards the future. Reader, is not this the case? How can it be accounted for, if the post-millennial theory be correct? What that theory brings prominently into relief before the soul, the New Testament passes by in silence, save in such references to it as place it evidently *beyond*, and not *before*, the coming of the Lord. What the post-millennial theory places far in the distance, the New Testament brings forward most prominently, and presses continually, in connection with every movement of the renewed affections, and every detail of the Christian's walk. Remember, we only reason thus after presenting numerous positive proofs from Scripture of the doctrine we maintain, that the coming of Christ is pre-millennial, not post-millennial. But having presented these, it is but due to the subject, and due to our readers, to press upon them these inquiries as to how else Scripture could be understood. The Old Testament treats largely of the Millennium, but as shown

in previous numbers, it is always in connection with Israel's restoration and judgment on the wicked. Old and New Testament alike prove that these judgments take place, and that Israel is restored, in connection with the coming of Christ. Every anticipation of millennial blessing in the New Testament either presents it thus, or fully harmonizes with the passages which do so present it. But as the present, not the future, dispensation, is the chief subject of the New Testament, it is Christ's coming which it presents and proclaims throughout; and all its descriptions of the interval which precedes that event are such as exclude the idea of a Millennium prior thereto. Not only have our anti-millenarian brethren to refute all the positive evidence which has been advanced in favor of the doctrine they reject: but, on the ground that their own doctrine is true, they have to account for the total silence of the New Testament regarding it; as well as for its being so written as to suggest at every turn, the imminence of an event, which they maintain to be even now *certainly* at the distance of more than a thousand years!

We add, as a sample of the way in which the New Testament treats the subject of the Lord's coming, and as a passage, moreover, of the deepest practical importance, our Lord's words to His disciples in Mark 13:33-37:

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

What can be more striking or impressive than this passage? Christ's people are represented as servants, whose master has gone on a far journey, having previously made every arrangement for the well-being of his household, giving every man his work, and setting the porter to watch. The time of the master's return is unknown -- but all are to be in constant readiness. By night and by day each one is to be at his post and awaiting his master's return. And lest any private or exclusive application of this should be made, our Lord concludes by saying, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

The Lord grant to us all, that unfeigned reverence for His holy word, and that simple faith in its declarations, to which He has promised the sure guidance of His Holy Spirit. And may He awaken where it exists not, and confirm where it exists, the bright hope of His own return in glory.

## Chapter 10

### *Waiting for Christ; or, The Privilege of the Church to be Always Expecting Her Lord*

No one can deny that the natural, obvious sense of such expressions as “looking for the Savior,” “waiting for God’s Son from heaven,” “looking for that blessed hope,” is that of actual, habitual expectancy of Christ’s coming. Neither can it be called in question that numerous passages of God’s word, if read by themselves, and left to make their own impression upon the mind, would at once be understood as inculcating this attitude of expectancy of Christ upon all who are His. They could not be understood otherwise, if read for the first time, and read with an unbiased mind.

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord (Luke 12:36).

Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7).

Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20).

The Thessalonians had

turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1:9, 10).

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:28).

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:20).

Who can doubt that the natural, evident sense of these passages is, that it is the place of the Church to be continually in the posture of expectation of her Lord’s return? Add to these the passages in which, again and again, the apostle, referring to that event says, “*we* which are alive and remain,” “the dead shall be raised, and *we* shall be changed,” and we see not how the conclusion can be avoided, that the Holy Ghost intended the saints to understand, that within the usual term of human life the coming of their Lord might take place, and they thus, without passing through death, be transformed and glorified.

But while such could scarcely fail to be the impression made by all these passages on an unbiased mind, it is on the

other hand to be admitted, that we are not to read passages, or selections of passages, by themselves, but to consider the complete testimony of God’s word. The word of God is one vast, comprehensive, and consistent whole; and we must not so understand any of the parts of which this whole is composed, as to set them in contradiction to the other parts. Satan could quote an isolated text of Scripture to our Lord; but His reply was, “It is written *again*.” Now it is freely admitted that we ought to hear and to weigh whatever may be urged on this ground of its being written *again*. “The Scripture cannot be broken.” It must be in harmony with itself. The natural, obvious sense of the passages quoted above, and of many kindred passages, is what we have seen it to be, *if taken by themselves*. But if any should urge that other passages exist, *imperatively requiring* that these should be understood with some restrictions or limitations, we are surely bound to give such scriptures the fullest consideration; and should they be found to have the meaning and force attributed to them, we ought surely to be subject thereto, and in the light of the latter passages correct our primary and mistaken apprehensions as to the former. The Lord grant to us that we may have nothing to maintain but His truth and His glory; and may He give us true subjection to His word in everything.

There are those, then, who affirm, that “if the one set of passages, taken by themselves, might seem to imply that Christ might come *to-morrow*, or *any day*, even in apostolic times, there are whole classes of passages which clearly show that the reverse of this was the mind of the Spirit.” What are those passages or classes of passages? We are told in reply that they are “those scriptures which announce *the work to be done*, and the extensive *changes* to come over the face of the Church and of Society, *between the two advents*.” Now this is very intelligible language, and, supposing it to be sustained by scripture quotations, very convincing also. *If there are scriptures* announcing work to be done, and changes to transpire, which *obviously* and *necessarily* required the lapse of more than a lifetime, or as has been said by some one, “*of many life-times*,” ere the second advent should take place,

then clearly the passages which speak of waiting and looking for that advent, would have to be understood in some modified sense. *But where are such passages to be found?* Let us examine such as are produced: but let the reader carefully note the words we have just used, and used advisedly. Any passages to be really applicable, must predict intervening events which *obviously* and *necessarily* required a lengthened period for their accomplishment. It is to no purpose to quote predictions, which, as a matter of fact, have been fulfilling for centuries. The question is, Are those predictions so expressed that Christians in apostolic times could be assured that centuries would be required for their fulfilment? Are they so expressed as to intimate *to them*, with the measure of knowledge then possessed by them, that the return of Christ could not take place during their life-time on earth? If there be such, let them be produced; yea, and let them be received, and have their full weight on our souls. But let us carefully examine each one that is brought forward.

One passage most commonly produced is that in which our Lord says to the eleven,

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 alway, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20).

Some of our readers may probably wonder what bearing this passage can have on the question before us. It is, however, the passage of all others in the New Testament, pleaded by anti-millenarians, not by one merely, but by most, as proving that the world had to be evangelized ere Christ could return. But how is it alleged that it proves this? First, the command to teach all nations is quoted, as in the margin, “disciple,” or “make disciples of all nations”; and then it is argued, that if Christ sent His apostles to disciple all nations, and promised, that in doing this He would be with them to the end of the world, or age, the inference is to be drawn, that prior to the end of the age, and prior therefore to Christ’s return, the nations were all to be evangelized or made disciples. It is contended, that the command to disciple all nations implies a promise that all nations shall be disciplined within the era to which the command applies -- that is, within the present age, which all agree comes to a close at Christ’s return. This is the argument, and it will be allowed that in stating it we have done it no injustice -- it is stated in its full force. Let it now be fairly examined in the light of other portions of God’s word.

To say the most, then, of this argument, it is an *inference*. It is not contended that our Lord *says* that all nations shall be made disciples ere He returns: but this inference is drawn from His command to go and disciple them. But is this a *necessary* inference? Do the Savior’s words *evidently* and *indisputably* imply what is deduced from them? We think not; and it seems to us that but a slight examination of kindred passages will make it evident that this is not the case. The eleven were sent to disciple all nations. This is granted; but what is the meaning of this language? Does it mean more than that this was to be their object? To

refer to similar passages, was it not the object of John the Baptist’s mission, “that all men through him might believe”?

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, *that all men through him might believe* {John 1:6, 7}.

Are we to understand from this, that the actual effect of John’s mission would be, that all men certainly would believe in Christ? Are we to be told here also, that the command to John to go on this specific errand implied a promise that he should succeed? No one imagines this for a moment. He was sent to afford adequate ground for faith and opportunity of believing, to all to whom his mission actually extended. But no one thinks of inferring from the words, either that all men were literally to hear John the Baptist’s testimony, or that all who did hear it would certainly believe in Christ. Then as to the mission into the world of our blessed Lord Himself, we have the statement, and that from His own lips,

God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; *but that the world through him might be saved* (John 3:17).

Does this mean that the actual effect of Christ’s mission would surely and inevitably be the salvation of the whole world? Who could suppose this? If any one could, we have the refutation of such a thought in the next verse but one,

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil {John 3:19}.

God sent His Son into the world, as Christ sent His disciples to the nations, that the world through Him might be saved. But in actual result, the greater part of the world is condemned for the rejection of all this light and love, whether in the person of the Son of God, or in the ministry of His disciples. Again, as to the design of His own discourses, and especially of that one in which the words occur, our Lord says, “But these things I say, *that ye might be saved*” (John 5:34). These words were spoken to the very persons of whom, in the same discourse, He says, “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” {John 5:40}. Can anything be clearer, than that language such as we are considering is used to express, *not the actual, certain result of a mission or testimony, but the end to which it is directed*, and which would follow, supposing it to be received?

What may seem a case, not more in point but in some respects more exactly parallel, is the commission entrusted to Paul, as described by him in Acts 26:15-18.

And he said, . . . I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, *unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*

The points of parallelism between this passage and the one in Matt. 28, will at once strike the reader, as well as the way in which it illustrates our argument. Were the words in Matt. 28 from the lips of Jesus *risen*? Those in Acts 26 were from the

lips of Jesus *glorified*. Did the one commission extend to all nations? The other extended to “the people (that is, Israel), and to the Gentiles” -- all nations in the strictest sense. Were the eleven sent to disciple all nations? Paul was sent “to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” Did the commission to the eleven to disciple all nations imply, as is contended, a promise that all nations should be disciplined? Then surely the commission to Paul, to turn both the Jews and the Gentiles from darkness to light, equally implied a promise that he should succeed in doing this. Does the reader exclaim, that such a thought is out of the question? Assuredly it is so; but then there is really no better foundation for such an inference from Matt. 28 than from Acts 26. If it is out of the question in the one case, it is equally so in the other.

The difference between the two passages is this: the commission to Paul was evidently a personal one, and the mind at once perceives that there could be no such thing as a promise implied, that Paul himself individually should convert all the Jews and all the Gentiles. In the other passage the mind becomes confused as to the parties to whom the commission is given, and also as to those with regard to whom it was to be fulfilled; and it is in this confusion that any apparent force of the argument sought to be drawn from it consists. We would ask our brethren, who make such an inference from the command to disciple all nations, to whom do you suppose the promise you think implied in it was made? Were the eleven disciples themselves to disciple all nations? This would not be alleged in their case any more than in that of Paul. And does our Lord say anything to intimate that they would have successors in their work? Not a word. For anything the passage proves to the contrary, they were to be employed discipling all nations till the end of the age, and their Lord assures them of His presence with them in the work till the end of the age arrives. We know now, that the work left unfinished at their death has been taken up and carried on by others, who have for their comfort the same assurance; but there is no more intimation that the world should be actually disciplined before the end of the age arrives, than that Paul should within his lifetime turn all, both Jews and Gentiles, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

We would ask again, who are the “all nations” that the eleven were commissioned to “disciple”? The expression must mean either the then living nations of that day, or the successive generations of all nations since that time, or the whole population of the earth at some given and yet future epoch. Take either of these alternatives, and the inference attempted to be drawn from the passage will be found equally inadmissible. Were they the then living nations of the earth? Then clearly there was no such promise of discipling them, as is said to have been implied in the command. *The then living nations were not disciplined*. Were they all the successive generations composing “all nations” till the end of the age? *Neither have these been disciplined*. Were they the nations of the then known earth, or did the expression include all the nations of those regions and continents since discovered, or the population of those countries which have since been

colonized? If the former, there would be nothing incredible to the apostles, in the extending of their labors to the limits of their commission within the term of their natural lives, and the termination of those labors by the arrival of the end of the age. If the latter, they could not be hindered expecting their Lord, by the thought of the Gospel having to be preached to nations, of the existence of which they were not aware. The only remaining alternative is, that by “all nations” is meant the entire population of the earth at some yet future epoch, and this is the sense in which it is actually understood by those who use it as an anti-millenarian argument. But, then, if this be the sense in which the expression is to be understood, the question at once arises, whether the inference attempted to be drawn from this passage be in harmony with *actual testimonies of Scripture on the subject*. There are numerous testimonies of Scripture as to how and when the period of universal blessing will be introduced; and there are numerous and decisive declarations which prove that this will not be before the return of Christ. These testimonies have been already in part presented to our readers; and until these testimonies are set aside, the only conclusion to which we can come with regard to the objection under consideration is this, that *it consists in setting a doubtful, unnecessary, unauthorized inference from one single passage, against the plain, copious, decisive testimony of numerous passages of God’s holy word*.

If it should be urged that in Matt. 28 our Lord speaks of “all power being given unto him in heaven and in earth,” and that from this we may infer the absolute efficiency of the mission with which, in the same sentence, He charged the eleven, saying, “Go, disciple all nations,” here is the reply. In John 17:2, where our Lord evidently speaks as in spirit beyond the cross, and does speak moreover of what was to be actually and efficiently accomplished, these are His words, “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life,” -- not to all nations, but -- “to as many as thou hast given him.” “Power over all flesh” perfectly corresponds to “all power both in heaven and on earth.” But where the latter expression is used, the Savior is sending His disciples on their public mission, and describing the end to which it is directed, and so He says, “Disciple all nations.” Their mission was to all nations, and the object of it to make disciples. But where the actual result is described, where eternal life is said to be given, though the power is just as extensive, “power over all flesh,” the absolute efficiency is restricted to a class -- “to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

We now turn to another Scripture, which has been often adduced as affording proof that the Lord could not have intended His people to be habitually, from the time of His departure, expecting His return. We refer to Matt. 13 -- a portion which has been thus used, not only by anti-millenarians, but by many who, believing believing Christ’s coming to be pre-millennial, do not see it to have been always the place and privilege of the Church to be expecting it. The objection necessarily assumes diverse aspects as urged in support of these different views. It may be well to examine it

on all sides.

By the former class of expositors it is in substance urged, that "according to Matt. 13, a world-wide kingdom was to be formed, and to continue till the end of the age; that Christianity, under the figure of the mustard seed, was to grow and increase, until, as a great tree, it should overshadow the world; that like leaven, working its way through the mass of human society, it should at length leaven the whole." It is asked "whether any intelligent Christian in apostolic times could rise from the study of these parables with the persuasion that the whole world might be thus overshadowed, thus leavened, thus externally subjugated to Christ, and the second advent arrive all in his own lifetime, or even in many lifetimes." <sup>34</sup> Such is the reasoning of one school of prophetic interpretation; while others, who see nothing of the world's conversion in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, do still regard the chapter as so foretelling a lengthened process of corruption, as by its very language to preclude any in apostolic times from actually waiting and looking for the coming of Christ.

In answer to the objection as first stated, we shall not reproduce here the arguments advanced when Matt. 13 was considered at length. We only now urge that the objection overstates the contents of the chapter. The chapter states, indeed, that the field in which the seed was sown was "the world," and that both wheat and tares were to grow together till "the harvest" at "the end of the age." <sup>35</sup> But the chapter does not speak of "the formation of a world-wide kingdom before the end of the age." Sowing seed *in the world*, and the continuance of the crop till the time for reaping it, is one thing: "the formation of a world-wide kingdom," as though the whole surface was to be sown, and yield a crop, is another. The former is what the chapter presents; the latter is a human idea, sought to be identified with the terms used in the chapter, but really and essentially distinct from them. So as to "the mustard seed" and "the leaven." The chapter does affirm that the seed would become a great tree, and that the fowls would shelter in it; but it does not say that the tree would "overshadow the world." The leaven was, according to the chapter, to leaven the "three measures of meal"; but the chapter does not say that these "three measures" mean "the world," and it is mere assumption to reason from it as though they did mean this. Matt. 13 does not affirm that the world will be converted prior to Christ's coming. It teaches, as already proved at large, (see "The Great Prophetic

Question,") the very opposite. The anti-millenarian argument from this chapter is based on the assumption that the chapter says what it does not say, and the conclusion thus arrived at is in direct contradiction to what the chapter does declare.

The objection, as put by those who admit that the advent is pre-millennial, deserves a fuller consideration. It is easy to see how a Christian, looking back on the dreary course of centuries, in which the corruption foretold in this chapter has been in progress, may suppose that Christians in apostolic times would necessarily look forward to some such protracted period, as requisite for the fulfilment of our Lord's predictions. In that case they obviously could not have lived in the habitual expectation of Christ's coming. But what is there in the chapter itself to have produced such an impression on the minds of the disciples, or of Christians in apostolic days? That the parables were so spoken, and so written, as to find their actual fulfilment in what has gone on for centuries, is beyond doubt. But it is here that God's perfect, infinite wisdom is manifested. While the fulfilment of the predictions has really occupied centuries, the predictions themselves were so expressed as not to suggest the inevitable postponement of the Lord's coming at any part of the period which has elapsed. Look at the chapter in question. First John the Baptist, and then our Lord Himself, had preached the kingdom of heaven. The ideas necessarily awakened in Jewish minds by its announcement, were those of the kingdom long and oft foretold by their prophets in days of old. But the Jews were not ready for this kingdom; they were even then rejecting their Messiah, and ready to consummate His rejection by putting Him to death. It is on this ground, as breaking all natural links with Israel according to the flesh, that He instructs His disciples as to the character of that anomalous period which was to intervene between Israel's rejection of their Messiah and His return in glory. It is in "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" that He in this chapter instructs them. Now this very character of mystery, stamped on the period spanned by these parables, would prepare the disciples for its being brought suddenly to a close. Then as to the parables themselves, what is there in them necessarily to suggest the thought of continuance? How very early in the apostolic age were the disciples surrounded by circumstances so far fulfilling what these parables foretold, as not to find in them any necessary obstacle to their expectation of Christ's coming? A sower went forth to sow -- this began to be accomplished by our Lord Himself while here, and was still further fulfilled by the disciples. An enemy sowed tares among the wheat. Can any one read the Acts, or the Epistles, and not see ample evidence that this had been already done when they were penned? The servants were not to pluck up the tares -- both were to grow together till the harvest; and, at the harvest, angel-executioners of judgment were to do the work prohibited to the servants. Was there anything here to suggest delay? From the terms of the parable no one could gather that the sowing of the seed, the ripening of the crop, and the reaping of the harvest, would not all be accomplished in one generation. We know that it has been otherwise, and the terms of the prediction are in perfect accordance with the

34. {David} Brown on the Second Advent.

35. It may be well to guard here against a use often made of this passage, as though it taught the impossibility of exercising church discipline. Church discipline is not the subject of Matt. 13, and in fact belongs to an entirely different category of ideas. The Church is the sphere for the exercise of church discipline, and disowning that a person belongs to the Church is the utmost extremity to which discipline can be carried. The field is "the world," and what the passage asserts is the continuance *in the world*, as matter of fact, of the results of Christ's work as a sower, and of Satan's work in the same character, till the end of the age. Popery does pretend to root up the tares by delivering excommunicated persons to the civil power; but separation from evil, or church-discipline, is no attempt to root up the tares.



fact as it has transpired; but there was nothing in those terms to suggest that at any point in the past history of Christianity, the whole might not be wound up in a very short period indeed. The mustard seed was to become a great tree; and we admit (see page 81) that it is the growth of Christianity (previously corrupted, alas!) that is thus symbolized. But the passage does not define how great the tree was to become; and we have abundant evidence that within the lifetime of the apostles Christianity had made rapid progress, and spread through extensive regions. Paul speaks, in writing to the Colossians, of “the word of the truth of the gospel, which,” he says, “is come unto you, as it is in all the world” (Col. 1:6). In the same chapter he speaks of “the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven.” We have no idea that by this language is meant literally that every creature had then heard the Gospel. Still, it is language which could not have been used had there not been already a very wide diffusion of the good news. And when we think of the narrow limits of the then known world, the evangelist using the expression, as he does, of the Roman Empire alone (see Luke 2:1); and when we remember that within the apostles’ lifetime the Gospel had certainly extended throughout the Roman Empire; it is evident that the predicted growth of the mustard-tree could present no hindrance to their continual expectancy of Christ. And if it should be replied, that we ourselves have taught that the parable sets forth, not only the growth of Christianity, but the growth of a Christianity already corrupted and become worldly in its character, we can only answer, that elements of worldliness and corruption were, alas! but too soon introduced; and when once there, they kept pace with the spread of that into which they had been introduced. If all Asia heard the word of the Lord from Paul’s lips (see Acts 19:10), he had to write ere long to his beloved Timothy,

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me (2 Tim. 1:15).

And if he and his fellow-apostles were kept from worldliness, and the first freshness and energy of their love to Christ and zeal for His glory maintained by the power of the Holy Ghost, how deeply had he to lament the declension which was taking place among the converts to the faith. There were many, of whom he had to write weeping, because they were the enemies of the cross of Christ, minding earthly things (Phil. 3:18, 19). So that even as to the worldly elements introduced into Christianity, and so corrupting it, in proportion as it outwardly grew and strengthened, the parable of the mustard seed was so far fulfilled in apostolic days, that no one could say the end might not even then be close at hand: there was nothing in the parable to interfere with the habitual expectancy of Christ, which is the proper posture of the Church.

By Christians generally the difference is little estimated between the known world of apostolic days and the world as known in modern times. One whole hemisphere, and vast regions in the other, have been discovered since the Scriptures were written; and the spread of the Gospel in modern times has been so connected with geographical discoveries, and

European colonization, that it is difficult to say whether, *setting these aside*, the lapse of eighteen centuries has done more for the spread of Christianity than was accomplished in its early days. We say *setting these aside*; for evidently, on our present question, they have no bearing or influence whatever. Christians of the apostolic age could not be expecting the fruits of modern discovery and emigration ere their Lord could return: it is impossible that these could interpose between their souls and the immediate hope of Christ’s coming. And granting that from our Lord’s commission to His disciples, and from such parables as those in Matt. 13, they might anticipate a wide diffusion of the gospel within the regions then known, and which to their apprehension constituted “all nations -- the world,” Scripture affords ample evidence that such a diffusion actually took place in their own day, as might well satisfy them that nothing further *necessarily* and *inevitably* intervened between them and their hope. And then, as to all the intimations of evil being introduced among themselves, we have declaration on declaration in the epistles that this had already commenced.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work (2 Thess. 2:7).

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 (1 John 2:18).

THE antichrist had not yet come; but the time had come, the last time, the era which was to be characterized by His coming: and already there were many of his spirit and character, many antichrists, by which the saints were to know that the last time had commenced. We cannot conceive a more decisive proof of the Lord’s gracious solicitude that nothing should interpose between the souls of His people and the hope of His own coming. True, antichrist was to come, and he had not yet actually appeared; but the saints were not therefore to conclude that Christ’s coming must needs be a long way off. There were already many antichrists, by which they were to know that it was the last time. There is, however, one passage as to the coming of the antichrist, which, more than any other, is relied on, as proving that the immediate hope of Christ’s coming was not to be cherished by the saints. It is regarded as their stronghold by those who maintain that the certain occurrence of intermediate events was revealed in the word, and that Christians were warned against the idea the Christ’s coming might be any day. It is to 2 Thess. 2 we refer; and as it is important that such a passage should have the fullest possible consideration, let us glance at the whole doctrine and bearing of both epistles, and then examine the argument for delay sought to be drawn from the second chapter of the second epistle.

It is worthy of notice that the Gospel was introduced to Thessalonica by the Apostle Paul himself. “For three sabbath days,” we are told, “Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ” (see Acts 17:2, 3). But while thus preaching Christ, in His death and resurrection, it is obvious from what

follows that he had not omitted to speak of Christ's coming kingdom and glory. Many, both Jews and Greeks, believed; of the latter, indeed, a great multitude; and in the midst of their labors, the apostle and his companions were interrupted by a tumultuous assault on the house where they lodged. Jason, who had entertained them, was drawn before the rulers; and the gist of the accusation against them was such as to show the prominent place which Christ's kingly glory must have had in the preaching of the apostle.

These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decree of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus {Acts 17:7}.

No doubt it was a perversion of their words to accuse them of any opposition to Caesar, or rivalry of his power; but it is evident that they must have borne a decided testimony to the kingdom and glory of Christ. Their labors, however, were cut short by the hand of persecution, and it appears from Paul's first epistle that he had been driven away before he had communicated to them all that was in his heart to have ministered among them. The bearing of this on the doctrine of the epistles, and on our present question, will soon be evident to our readers.

In turning to the two epistles, nothing can be more manifest than that the coming of Christ is the central doctrine in both. The apostle thanks God for them, remembering without ceasing, not only their "work of faith," and "labor of love," but also their "patience of hope," in our Lord Jesus Christ. And as to what their "hope" was, he leaves no room for doubt. "Ye turned to God from idols," is his language, "to serve the living and true God; *and to wait for his Son from heaven*" {1 Thess. 1:9, 10}. He does not chide them for being in this attitude of soul, or tell them of a number of events which must necessarily occur ere their hope can be realized. No, he states it as their proper, normal condition, as part of that to which they had been converted, by the mighty power which had attended his preaching among them. He reminds them of what he had suffered when with them, comforts them under the continued pressure of trial, expresses the yearnings of his heart after them; and, though hindered by Satan once and again from returning to them, he finds refuge for his soul in the prospect of re-union with them, and full joy in them all, at the coming of Christ.

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ **at His coming?** For ye are our glory and joy {1 Thess. 2:29, 20}.

This closes chapter 2. In 2 Thess. 3 he explains to them his solicitude about seeing them again. He had been so anxious on their account as to send Timotheus, and had been greatly comforted by the report brought by him on returning, of their faith and charity, and of their desire to see the apostle. What a burst of holy affection follows.

For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your

faith {1 Thess. 3:9, 10}?

Blessed as had been their reception of the Gospel, precious as had been its fruits among them, and abundant as was the joy of the apostle over them, there was still something in which he was anxious to instruct them; and as he was hindered seeing them, to teach them by word of mouth, he communicates in the next chapter, the truth which they still lacked. He commences by saying, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren" (2 Thess. 4:13). Surely it is the lacking truth which he is now about to minister to their souls. And what is it he imparts to them? Some corrective to their too ardent hopes of the return of Jesus? Something to cool down their expectations, and cause them to look for a train of intervening events? Far from it indeed. They were already waiting for God's Son from heaven, and he rejoiced over them that they were. In each chapter, thus far, he has treated of Christ's coming, connecting it with all their affections and joys, as well as with his own, and connecting it, besides, with the issues of a holy, obedient, devoted walk. And it is as to Christ's coming that he is about more fully to instruct them; not, however, to abate their expectation of it, but to place it more fully, because more intelligently, before their souls.

As to themselves, their one hope was Christ's coming; and they, at least, as will be admitted by all, were waiting for it, as though it might be any day. But while waiting thus, some had been removed from their midst by death; and they do not seem to have apprehended that their departed brethren would be raised to participate in their joy at the coming of Jesus. It is on this point the apostle now instructs them. Concerning them which were asleep, they were not to sorrow, as others who had no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, [marking it thus as a new, special, revelation], that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [or go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord {1 Thess. 4:14-17}.

Thus does the apostle seek to perfect what was lacking in their faith. Already they knew that the Son of God was to return from heaven, and that on His return He would reign over the kingdom promised to Him of old. It was for this they had been waiting from the day of their conversion. Now they are told that their sleeping brethren are to have part in the glory of that coming kingdom; and that so far from losing anything by having departed, their resurrection will be the first event connected with the descent of the Son of God. The risen saints, and those who are alive and remain, are then to be caught up together. The meeting-place is to be in the air. Such are the additional truths contained in this transcendently important passage. Surely there is nothing here to place in the distance the hope of Christ's coming. "**We** which are *alive* and *remain*," placed in contrast with "*them* which are

asleep," would suggest anything rather than the *necessary* inevitable lapse of centuries ere it be possible for that event to transpire! The language used can only correspond with the firm persuasion that we *may*, and with the desire that we *should*, be alive when the Lord Jesus shall descend.

But this is not the whole. After comforting the Thessalonians, and exhorting them to "comfort one another with these words," he proceeds to say,

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you {1 Thess. 5:1}.

They had need to be instructed on the points just handled -- the resurrection of the sleeping saints and their translation with those who are alive, to meet the Lord in the air -- these were new truths, of which they had till now been ignorant. But of the times and the seasons there was no need to write to them. Why?

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape {1 Thess. 5:2, 3}.

Here we enter upon another subject. The descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, and the translation of the Church to meet Him there, is one thing. The day of the Lord, and its coming upon the ungodly as a thief in the night, is another thing. The one is all brightness and joy; the other is all gloom, and darkness, and terror. The Thessalonians had to receive a new, fresh revelation through the apostle, to acquaint them with the former: with the latter they were already acquainted by means, doubtless, of the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as by the ministry among them of the apostle and his companions. "The day of the Lord" is a phrase of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, and always refers, we believe we may say with confidence, to the execution of judgment on the earth. In its full sense, it doubtless implies the yet future day of the Lord's actual presence to execute judgment on the wicked, and to establish by power His own rule over the earth. It may be used in some instances of remarkable interpositions of God in judgment, where the Lord's actual presence is not included in the meaning of the phrase. Still, in such instances we have types and specimens of what "the day of the Lord" is, in its full, absolute sense. And wherever it occurs, it will be found connected with judgment.

The day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low (Isa. 2:12).

Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come (Joel 1:15).

the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains (Joel 2:1, 2).

Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it? (Amos 5:20).

The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth

greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness (Zeph. 1:14, 15).

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch (Mal. 4:1).

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5).

Such is the force of this expression in the Old Testament. In the New, it is of like import.

For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day (Luke 17:24).

Noah and the flood, Lot and the burning of Sodom, are referred to; and it is said:

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 21:30).

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, speaks of "that great and notable day of the Lord." Our Lord Himself warned His hearers to "take heed lest that day should come upon them unawares" {see Luke 21:34} "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:35). We need not give further evidence as to the meaning of the phrase "the day of the Lord." In all these passages, as in the one in 1 Thess. 5, it points to the execution of sudden and overwhelming judgments on the wicked, introductory to the establishment by power of Christ's earthly kingdom. How marked the contrast between the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, which is presented to the Thessalonian saints as the consummation of all their hopes, and this "day of the Lord," which is to come "as a thief in the night," on the whole world of the ungodly. True, they are but different stages of the one great event, the coming of the Lord; but in their character how distinct! In the one case the Lord descends into the air; in the other His judgments fall on the earth. In the one case the Lord comes to gather His saints; in the other to smite His foes. And the saints are instructed as to the one, that they may know assuredly that they are exempt from the terrors of the other.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness {1 Thess. 5:4, 5}.

Already, in our hopes and destinies, and in the spirit of our minds, children of the day, ere the day actually bursts on the sleeping world, drunken with its carnal joys, we shall have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and we shall be with Him when His appearing affrights and overwhelms His foes. Such is the doctrine of this first epistle. May it be written indelibly on our hearts, and exert there all its consolatory and sanctifying power.

Between their reception of the first and the second

epistle, the deceiver had been at work. Either by leading them to misconstrue the first epistle, or by means of another forged epistle, he had succeeded in perplexing them, as though this “day of the Lord” had actually arrived. The persecutions under which they labored had evidently continued, and become fiercer and hotter, and they had begun to confound these troubles with “the day of the Lord,” as though it had really come. No wonder that they should be troubled by such a thought, when they had once entertained it. To be still in unchanged bodies, not having met the Lord in the air, and their departed brethren still in the grave, while, as they supposed, the terrors of the day of the Lord actually surrounded them, it is no marvel that they were shaken and troubled. All the apostle’s arguments in the second epistle are directed against this mistake. In the first chapter, he shows them the difference between their present troubles and persecutions, and those overwhelming troubles which are to characterize “the day of the Lord.” *Now* it is the saints who are in the trouble; *then* it will be the world. *Now* the saints suffer at the world’s hands; *then* the world will be punished by the Lord’s hand.

So that we ourselves [he says] glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day {2 Thess. 1:4-10}.

Thus does he fortify their souls against the terror and distraction sought to be inflicted upon them. Why be distracted as though “the day” had come? *You* now have trouble, and *the world* has rest. When “the day” comes, *the world* will have tribulations and *you* shall have rest. The day will not come till the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, and then it is to be glorified in His saints -- in you -- and to take vengeance on His adversaries.

In 2 Thess. 2 he expressly refers to the delusion sought to be practised upon them.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is [present] {2 Thess. 2:1-2}.

We render this word “present,” and not “at hand,” and for this reason: the word is ἐνέστηκεν, it occurs in the New Testament seven times, and five times it is rendered “present.” Rom. 8:38, “nor things *present*.” 1 Cor. 3:22, “or things *present*.” In these instances it is the more remarkable for being used in contrast with “μέλλοντα,” or “things to come.” 1 Cor. 7:26, “the *present* distress.” Gal. 1:4, “this *present* evil world.” Heb. 9:9, “a figure for the time then *present*.” In 2 Tim. 3:1, “This know

also, that in the last days perilous times *shall come*,” the meaning is obvious to all. It is not that when the last days have arrived, perilous times shall afterwards come; but that in the last days there shall be perilous times, that is, they shall be *present*. When the last days are present, the perilous times are also *present*. Such being the evident meaning of the word six times out of the seven that it occurs in the New Testament, why translate it otherwise in the seventh? especially when in this, its own proper and only sense, it so entirely harmonizes with the whole doctrine of both epistles? It is on this passage, mistranslated thus, that so many found their arguments for the inevitable delay of the Lord’s coming. They say that the apostle reproves the idea that the Lord’s coming was at hand. The answer is, No, it is not of the Lord’s *coming*, but of *His day*, that he writes; and it is not the idea even of “the day” being “*at hand*” that he rebukes, but the idea that it was “*present*” -- that it *had actually come*. And he guards them against this delusion in two ways. He beseeches them “by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him,” not to be shaken or troubled, as though the day were present. The coming of Jesus, and our gathering together to Him in the air, is the Church’s portion: the day comes upon the world. He beseeches them by the one not to be distracted about the other. The day cannot burst with its terrors on the world till the saints have been gathered to the Lord Jesus in the air. Then he further shows that “the day” cannot come till there come a falling away first (literally, the apostasy), and that man of sin be revealed -- that wicked, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. It is on the man of sin that the judgments of the day of Christ first fall. It is by the epiphany, of His coming, or presence, that the man of sin is destroyed. Clearly, then, “the day” cannot come till the man of sin has come. But the apostle does not say that **Christ** cannot come till then. He distinguishes between “the coming (παρουσία) of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and “the brightness (ἐπιφάνεια) of His coming (παρουσία).” It is His παρουσία that gathers the saints in the air. It is the ἐπιφάνεια of His παρουσία that destroys the man of sin. The day commences with the ἐπιφάνεια of Christ’s coming -- that is, with His appearing to the world. The day therefore comes not till the man of sin has come. But we have no warrant to say this of the παρουσία of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him. That may be any day, any hour. Nothing that has been considered presents any necessary obstacle to that. May our hearts be ready for it!

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Amen.

## Chapter 11

### *Ecclesiastical Corruption and Apostasy*

The subject of our last paper was “The Privilege of the Church to be always expecting her Lord.” It was our endeavor to show, and we trust we succeeded in showing, that the hope of the Church is not dependent on the course of events on earth. Several passages, regarded by many Christians as predicting the *inevitable* occurrence of important intervening events, or even the necessary lapse of ages ere Christ could return, were considered at length, and shown to have no such force or intention. The commission to the eleven (Matt. 28:18-20) was thus examined, and the inference sought to be drawn from it in favor of the inevitable postponement of Christ’s coming, shown to be not only without foundation, but contrary to numerous express testimonies of Scripture elsewhere. The parables in Matt. 13 unfolding “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” were also examined; and we saw that early in the apostolic age these mysteries had been so far evolved, as that no one could conclude on their account, that the coming of Christ must necessarily be delayed. We examined at length the two epistles to the Thessalonians; and while we found that the English translation of 2 Thess. 2:2, *does seem* to affirm that “the day of Christ was not at hand,” we saw this to be a mistranslation, and that the notion opposed by the apostle, was not that of the *nearness* of the day of Christ but that of its actual *presence*. They were not to be troubled as though the day of Christ were *present*. Then finally, we saw how the apostle distinguishes between the παρουσία (coming) {parousia} of Christ, when the saints, whether raised or changed, shall be translated to meet Him in the air, and the επιφανεία {appearing, JND} of His coming, by which the man of sin is to be destroyed. The latter cannot be till the man of sin is come. The former is not dependent on any series of events on earth. The completion of Christ’s body, the Church, according to the counsels and good pleasure of the Father, is all for which it waits. It is this which is the hope of the Church. For this we are to wait continually. The Thessalonians were converted to this waiting posture of heart. The apostle waited for it as the epoch of his full joy in them as the fruit of his labor in the Lord. They supposed indeed that their departed brethren would be excluded from this joy, but he assures them that it will be otherwise. The dead in Christ shall rise first. Along with those waiting on earth, these risen saints shall meet the Lord Jesus in the air. He takes care to maintain in their souls the posture of present expectancy, by saying, “We which are alive and remain.” How easy to have said “they” if it had

been certain that centuries would intervene! They needed no instruction as to “the day.” It was for the world; and they knew that on the world it would come suddenly as a thief in the night. When deceivers had troubled them as though “the day were present,” the apostle varies not his doctrine. He repeats to them that the day and its terrors are for the world; the coming of the Lord Jesus and our gathering together to Him, the portion of the saints. He beseeches them by the latter to dismiss all distracting thoughts of the former. And while keeping thus the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ before their souls as the immediate hope, he further instructs them as to “the day,” that it cannot come, till the man of sin has come, on whom the first stroke of the threatened judgments of that day is to fall. Blessed be God, for the harmony of Scripture throughout. It does not contradict in one place what it affirms in another. It does not exhort us, in a multitude of passages, to be always waiting and looking for our Lord, and then, in some other solitary passage, caution us against this posture of heart. It instructs us indeed as to the course of the world, and the progress of evil within the professing body, and the judgments which are to overtake both; but it never, in instructing us thus, interposes aught between our souls and the one, proper, heavenly hope of the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, and our gathering together to Him there. It is happy thus to recur to that which is our own proper hope, ere entering on a subject, necessary indeed to be considered, but calculated to solemnize rather than to gladden our hearts; namely, the predicted progress of evil on the earth -- the steps by which human iniquity and Satanic corruption reach that height of daring rebellion against God, which provokes the interposition of His wrath. We “wait for his Son from heaven,” “even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.”

Two great forms of iniquity constitute the subjects of prophetic warning. Ecclesiastical corruption and apostasy is the one; the open revolt of the civil power against God is the other. These two, though thus distinct, are nevertheless most intimately connected with each other; and as it is ecclesiastical corruption which takes place, and paves the way for the open revolt of the kings and nations of the earth against God and against His Christ, it is well that it should be first considered. It is, moreover, what immediately bears on ourselves, as being God’s merciful warning against the forms of evil which are around us, and to the seductions of which we are

continually exposed.

In one of our earlier papers attention was called to the solemn warning of the apostle, that if the Gentile professing body continued not in God's goodness, utter excision was what awaited it; and we endeavored in that paper to show, by an appeal to history and to facts, that Christendom has not continued in God's goodness, and that nothing therefore remains for it but to be "cut off." Our present object is to trace what the New Testament foretells as to the course of the dispensation, as well as to notice what it records of the incipient workings of evil even before the volume of inspiration came to a close.

The parables in Matt. 13 having been frequently referred to already, we only now produce that of the wheat and tares, as being the earliest divine intimation that Christianity would, as matter of fact, be corrupted. The supineness of the servants affords opportunity to the enemy to sow tares, where good seed had been already sown. The evil once introduced would, in effect, be only removed by judgment at the end of the age. "Let both grow together till the harvest" is the solemn rejoinder to the servants' request to be permitted to gather out the tares. "The harvest" alone shall bring to an end the effects of the unwatchfulness of the Lord's people, and of the malicious activity of Satan.

Matt. 24:48-51 sounds the note of warning, not indeed as a positive prediction of what would be, but as depicting the awful consequences of what might be.

But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Impressive as is this warning, it is, as we have seen, conditional; but the opening parable of Matt. 25 positively foretells the slumber and declension among Christians which have actually taken place. While the Bridegroom tarries, all the virgins, wise as well as foolish, slumber and sleep. It is only the cry raised at midnight, "Behold the bridegroom cometh," which awakens the slumberers. They awake, moreover, to the discovery by some of them -- a discovery terrible to those immediately concerned -- that their lamps are expiring, and that it is too late to obtain a fresh supply of oil. "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not," is the awful reply of the Bridegroom, when, the door having been shut, these foolish virgins ask for entrance. Solemn testimony this, to the character of a vast amount of Christian profession; and equally serious as to the forgetfulness by true Christians as well as mere professors, wise virgins as well as foolish, of that which is the true object of Christian watchfulness and expectation. May we not remark, too, dear reader, ere leaving these earliest predictions of corruption and decline, how the expectation of Christ's return is here treated as the test of the condition of His people? It is when the evil servant begins to say in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," that he begins to smite his fellows, and to riot with the drunken. It is

the expectation of the Bridegroom that leads the virgins to go forth, with lighted lamps, amid the night of this world's darkness, to meet the One whose coming will introduce them to the light and gladness of the marriage feast, while all else are left to the *outer darkness*, no longer relieved even by the torches of the waiting and expectant virgins. During the tarriance of the Bridegroom, they exchange their outside, journeying, expectant attitude, and the diligent, vigilant care of their lamps, for the indulgence of repose *within*. "*Go ye out to meet him,*" is the cry which accompanies the midnight announcement of the Bridegroom's speedy arrival. Sure token that having *gone forth* to meet him at the first, *they had returned within doors* to enjoy their slumbers undisturbed. Ah, dear reader, it is the living hope of the Bridegroom's coming that separates the saint from this evil world, and makes him a watcher, with girded loins and well-trimmed lamp. It was as this hope declined that Christians got settled down in the world, slumbering in ease and self-indulgence. It is the revived hope of Christ's speedy coming, necessarily connected now with a note of warning, which again produces any manifest separation from the world. God grant that none who read these pages may awake to see their lights go out, and seek in vain for oil, when the Bridegroom Himself has come, and the door is shut!

At the time these parables were spoken, the Church had not been formed. It was in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus that the foundation of the Church was laid. The building of it on that foundation commenced at Pentecost. Christ died "to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad." The Holy Ghost is the gathering power.

By one Spirit [says the apostle] are we all baptized into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit {1 Cor. 12:13}.

What a spectacle of love, and unity, and power, did the Pentecostal Church present! Some of the strongest barriers of human selfishness, those which consist in distinctions of rank and wealth, melted away before the presence of the Holy Ghost, who testified in power the ascension and heavenly glory of that Jesus, who but a few weeks before had been put to death. Pardoned through His blood, and actually, vitally, one with Him in glory (though they might not as yet be instructed in this feature of their calling) all mere human, earthly distinctions vanished,

and all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need (Acts 2:44, 45).

It was not that selfishness in some coveted or claimed what others possessed, -- but that love in each one thought of others rather than of himself, and thus all freely ministered to the extent of their entire possessions. Bright, happy days! We may well linger over the divine record of this earliest period of the Church's history.

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great

grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need (Acts 4:32-35).

Such was the Church -- such was Christianity at the commencement. Look around, dear reader, on all that now bears these names, and say whether the gold has not become dim, whether the most fine gold has not been changed!

Scarcely has this picture of the original blessedness of Christianity been placed before us by the pencil of inspiration, ere that pencil has to trace the dire workings of the enemy, whose object is to mar the perfectness, and spoil the beauty of the scene. Covetousness, desire of religious reputation, and actual falsehood in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, -- carnal preferences and partialities on the one side, or else evil surmisings on the other, in the case of the alleged neglect of the Grecian widows, soon -- alas! how soon -- tell the tale of human weakness and Satanic craft. Grace provides indeed for the emergency, and Stephen, one of the seven deacons appointed on the occasion, attains the honor of being Christ's first martyr. Philip, another deacon, bears the gospel beyond strictly Jewish limits, going down to Samaria, and preaching Christ with great power and blessing there. Those scattered by the persecution go everywhere preaching the Lord Jesus; Saul is converted, and raised up to be the apostle of the Gentiles; and the Church begins to learn and manifest its association and oneness with a rejected and heavenly Christ, where Jew and Gentile, bond and free, are unknown distinctions. But though Christianity assumes thus its earth-rejected place; through blessing, wider in its range, and more absolutely heavenly in its character, ensues on the decline and scattering of the Pentecostal Church at Jerusalem; never do we find the blessing so unmixed, so free from every active element of evil, as in those first, bright, happy days described in the early chapters of the Acts. And as to the scene of the widely extended and successful labors of the apostle Paul, we find him, ere those labors close, expressing, in the most affecting terms, what he knew would follow on his departure. In his farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, he says,

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:29, 30).

The incursions of evil from without, and the development of evil within, formed the substance of Paul's anticipations, as to the place which had been the theatre of such abundant blessing, and where all Asia had heard from his lips the word of God.

Turning to the epistles, we find intimations in the very first of the existence already of such grievous wolves, and of such schismatic teachers, as those against whom the Ephesian elders had been warned.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye

have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:17, 18).

At Corinth divisions were rife; discipline was neglected; brother was going to law with brother, and that before the unjust; Christian liberty was abused, to the entanglement of weak consciences; the supper of the Lord was the scene of scandalous disorders; the very gifts of the Spirit were used for display instead of edification; and, to crown the whole, there were some who even affirmed "that there is no resurrection of the dead." Such were the disorders which called forth from the pen of Paul the First Epistle to the Corinthians. This epistle seems to have been made a great blessing to them; and, in the second, the apostle acknowledges the depth and reality of their repentance. But though on the whole they had faithfully cleared themselves, there were still many amongst them concerning whom the apostle had the worst forebodings.

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: and lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed (2 Cor. 12:20, 21}.

How evident that the enemy had been diligently at work, and that at Corinth, at least, the tares were already plentifully sown.

The Churches of Galatia were in a state of corruption still more serious. The very foundations were being sapped. "False brethren, unawares brought in," had been but too successful in introducing the fundamental principle of apostasy, namely, that of justification by works. These false brethren had bewitched the Galatians. Having "begun in the Spirit," they were now seeking to be "made perfect by the flesh." The apostle "stood in doubt" of them. He was "afraid, lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain." Nothing could be more touching than his solicitude on their account -- nothing more tender than the terms in which he expostulates with them.

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice {Gal. 4:19, 20}.

Nor can there be more salutary instruction for us, dear reader, in our day, than that afforded us by the importance which the apostle attaches to the error which had gained such a footing among the Galatians. Well did the apostle know, that any thing joined with Christ, or added to Him, for justification before God, was the virtual overthrow of Christianity. Circumcision, and appointed feasts, and new moons, had all been of importance under the law; they had been made so by divine appointment for Israel. But now that Christ had come and had suffered, for the Galatians to turn to these Jewish shadows was just as though they had returned to the idolatry from which they had been converted.

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years (Gal. 4:8-10).

With the apostle, Jewish ordinances and pagan rites all stood on one level. They were “weak and beggarly elements.” Would that his warning voice might reach the souls of many, in these days of return to ordinances by numbers who, like the Galatians, had clean escaped therefrom! Christians of Protestant England, and of the nineteenth century! if Paul feared that he had lost his labor because the Galatians were turning thus to ordinances, what is to be said of the so-called Christianity around us? Romanism is avowedly a system of ordinances. Half Jewish they are, and half pagan; with designations borrowed either from Christian truth, or from history, real or fictitious. But what of the multitudes on their way to Romanism, who lay full as much stress on ordinances as Romanists themselves? The Lord, in His mercy, awaken His people to a sense of the dangers which surround them.

In the Epistle to Philippi, we have affecting notices of the evil which the apostle saw coming in. On the one hand, he says of Timothy:

For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's* (Phil. 2:20, 21):

and on the other, he says of certain persons,

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:18, 19).

Self was becoming thus the center, and earthly things the object, of numbers who bore the name of Christ. Such notices of the character of the evil which had begun to work in the Church, are of the deepest interest: as well as the contrast furnished by the context of the passage last quoted.

For our conversation [citizenship, *πολίτευμα*] is in heaven; *from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ* {Phil. 3:20}.

Ah, this is the grand security against apostasy! “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” {Matt. 6:21; Luke 12:34}. Just as the servant, when he says in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming,” begins to indulge himself and oppress his fellows; so here, when the Church ceases to realize that **heaven** is the place of its inheritance and privileges and titles, and the descent of the Savior from heaven its hope, its own things -- earthly things -- become its object, and in minding them, it becomes the enemy of the cross of Christ.

The danger treated of in Colossians, and against which the apostle most earnestly warns them, is that of

philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ {Col. 2:8}.

They were not to be beguiled of their reward by any man, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he had not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head {Col. 2:18, 19}.

How easy to discern here the germs of the whole system of evil which has since been developed. It is under fairest pretensions of humility, that men have interposed, or sought to interpose, between the head and members, not only the officious services of an elaborate hierarchy on earth, but the mediation of saints, and the worship of angels in heaven! It was against the beginnings of all this that Paul so warned the Colossians. It was in view of these perils, which then threatened, and which have since desolated the Church, that he underwent the agony he describes.

For 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 {Col. 2:1}.

Alas! where are now the Pauls to bear thus on their hearts in living sympathy the state of the whole Church before God?

The well-known prediction in 1 Tim. 4:1, claims a place here.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth {1 Tim. 4:1-3}.

One can scarcely fail to discern here the grand lineaments of popish error. The evil foretold is characterized as a departure from the faith, so that it is the introduction of error where the truth has been believed and known, where “the faith” has been held. Seduction, untruth, and hypocrisy, are its grand features; a seared conscience, impenetrable by the truth, its fearful accompaniment; enforced celibacy, and ascetic privations, its fair pretensions, by which it gains a character for sanctity among men. Who can question the fulfilment this passage has already received, and is still receiving, in the prodigious delusions of Romanism?

The Second Epistle to Timothy is full of instruction as to our present mournful subject. It is written from the verge of a martyr's grave, beyond which the writer looks by faith to “that day” in which “the Lord, the righteous judge,” would give to him “a crown of righteousness” {see 2 Tim. 4:8}. Nothing daunted by the death which he knows to be at hand, and undismayed by the far deeper trial of having to witness the growth of evil within the Church itself, he writes to his son Timothy, exhorting him “not to be ashamed of the testimony of their Lord,” but, on the contrary, to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” {see 2 Tim. 2:1}. He does not conceal from him the defections which were taking place; neither does he flatter him by false hopes of a better state of things previous to the Lord's return. Nay, it is the progress of evil he predicts.

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be



turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes {2 Tim. 1:15}.

This is what had come to pass. As to what would ensue,

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, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof* (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

How characteristic and how solemn are these last words? Those which precede might serve, alas! for a description of mankind at almost any period, as, in fact, they are used with very slight differences in Rom. 1 to describe the state of the Gentile world ere the light of the Gospel dawned thereon. What gives point and emphasis to the traits here enumerated, as a characteristic description of “the last days,” is, that they are all found in connection with “*a form of godliness.*” All the evils native to the heart of man, rampant and uncontrolled, but still sought to be sanctioned by “*a form of godliness.*” Such were Paul’s anticipations of any future on which his son Timothy might calculate on this side the coming of the Lord.

It was not that Timothy was to be discouraged. No; but that all his confidence might be placed upon, and all his hopes directed to, that which the sure progress of evil in the world and in the professing Church, would never be able to move or to touch. The apostle can faithfully apprise this young evangelist of the worst that was to ensue, because he has a refuge to commend to him (a refuge and a hope already known to him), above and beyond the whole sphere in which the evil has its existence and its power. “Evil men and seducers” were to “wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” {see 2 Tim. 3:13}; the time was to come when they would “not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts,” would “heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and” would “turn away their ears from the truth, and . . . be turned to fables” {see 2 Tim. 4:3, 4}; but all these things were to be so far from discouraging Timothy in his work, that it is in full view of them that Paul says,

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine {2 Tim. 4:1, 2}.

The epistle to Titus is not without its characteristic notice of the evils which were springing up among those who bore the name of Christ, or which were pouring in upon them from without. Hebrews, also, as is well known, was written to guard the saints against the judaizing tendencies of the times; and it is in that epistle those awful warnings against apostasy are contained which have caused such exercise of soul to almost every true believer in Christ. But in 2 Peter we have predictions as distinct and solemn as those already quoted from Paul’s epistles.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily

shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

The description which follows, of these false teachers and of their destruction, with that of their dupes and victims, is most fearful.

But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time {2 Pet. 2:10-13}.

Still it is evident that whatever depths of moral debasement may be reached by those in whom these predictions were to be fulfilled, there is some kind of religious pretension kept up.

Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings *while they feast with you*; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice, forbade the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever (2 Pet. 2:13-17).

1 John we pass by for the moment. It will require to be considered along with 2 Thess. 2. But Jude demands our immediate attention. The inspired penman of this epistle was giving “all diligence to write of the common salvation,” but found it needful instead of expatiating on that happy theme, “to write and exhort” the brethren, that they “should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints” {see Jude 3}. The need for such exhortation arose from “certain men” having “crept in unawares” -- “ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” {see Jude 4}. He gives example after example of the destruction of apostates, angels as well as men, and traces the apostasy of Christendom, from its beginnings with those ungodly men who had even then crept in, to its overthrow by the coming of the Lord, “with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” {see Jude 14, 15}. It is deeply interesting to notice the three-fold character of evil which Jude attributes to these apostates. What a progress

in iniquity does it disclose!

Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core {Jude 11}.

Natural evil, that is, self-righteousness and murderous cruelty, "the way of Cain," -- ecclesiastical evil, teaching error for reward, and so corrupting men's souls, "the error of Balaam," -- and open revolt, "the gainsaying of Core," -- such are the stages in this downward course.

The seven letters to the Churches in Rev. 2, 3 present further instruction as to our present subject, of the most interesting character. Viewing them, first, as literally addressed to the then actually existing Churches of the seven cities whose names they bear, they disclose to us the serious extent to which evil had even then already progressed. Love declining at Ephesus; those who held the doctrine of Balaam at Pergamos; Jezebel, with all her seductions and impurities, at Thyatira; a lifeless form at Sardis; and in Laodicea such loud and boastful pretensions, along with a state of lukewarmness so loathsome to Christ, that He is about to spue them out of His mouth -- such is the last view we get in scripture-history of the actual state of the then professing Church of Christ. Five out of the seven churches selected to be thus addressed have now been enumerated; the other two are exceptions. Poverty and persecution at Smyrna, and, at Philadelphia, the faithfulness of a feeble few whom the Lord delights to own and to commend, are the only exceptions, and scarcely sufficient to relieve the gloom which rests on the whole scene, as presented to us historically in these seven epistles.

But if such be the aspect of these chapters, viewed historically, what is to be said of their contents when regarded in a prophetic light? That they were intended to bear a prophetic meaning, as well as to have an historical application to the seven local churches to which they were addressed, can scarcely admit of a doubt when everything bearing on the question is considered. Think of the mystic character of the book in which they are found -- a book so symbolical from the first chapter to the last, that if these two chapters are not to be so viewed, they constitute the only exception. Think of our Lord's own words in introducing this chapter --

*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches (Rev. 1:20).*

Think of the number seven, and of its use in the Apocalypse throughout -- seven churches, seven stars, seven candlesticks, seven angels, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven last plagues. Think of the eminently symbolic language of these addresses to the Churches -- "the synagogue of Satan," "Satan's seat" "the doctrine of Balaam," "that woman Jezebel," "the key of David," "the New Jerusalem." Above all, think of the important place assigned by our Lord to these chapters, as one of the three divisions of the book: "Write," He says, "the things which thou hast seen (Rev. 1), and the things which are (Rev. 2, 3), and the things which shall be

hereafter" (Rev. 4 and onwards). How can we think, in view of these things, of limiting the sense of ch. 2, 3 to the application of their statements to the literal seven churches of Asia of that day? or even to this, along with the moral application to individuals afterwards? The number seven, when used symbolically, is always universally understood to express completeness or perfection: and surely we are warranted in the belief that these seven churches were selected as affording in their respective states, and in the encouragements, exhortations, warnings, or threatenings addressed to them, a divinely-perfect or complete view of the condition of the professing body from John's time onwards, as long as anything exists on earth which can be addressed as even a nominal Church of Christ. The end of it is to be spued out of Christ's mouth.

Viewed in this prophetic aspect, what we find in the addresses to the churches in Rev. 2, 3 is as follows: -- The commencing decline in the apostolic age, as expressed in that to Ephesus -- the leaving the first love. Persecution from without, used of God to stay the progress of declension within. This is Smyrna, and would embrace the period from John's day to Constantine -- the period of the ten persecutions of the Roman Pagan Empire; perhaps the very number ten referred to in the "tribulation for ten days" which Smyrna was to endure. From the establishment of Christianity by Constantine the downward course is rapid. The throne of the world is no less Satan's for the public profession of Christianity; but his tactics have changed. The roaring lion is exchanged for the serpent, the adversary for the deceiver. The doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to allure Israel to their ruin, when he could not obtain the Lord's permission to curse them, was held at Pergamos. Balaam's artifice, so successful against Israel, was that of seducing them to unlawful alliances with the daughters of Moab. Spiritual uncleanness -- the alliance with the world of that which professed to be Christ's spouse -- was the evil taught at Pergamos, and which represents the corruption ensuing so rapidly on the civil establishment of Christianity. Thyatira is still a further stage. There, "that woman Jezebel" has established herself as a prophetess; and while seducing Christ's servants to evil, she has children of her own, who owe to her all their religious character and standing, and whose end the Lord declares in those solemn words, "I will kill her children with death." Space, too, had been given to Jezebel to repent, and she had repented not. It is the Popery of the dark ages -- idolatrous, persecuting, and, Jezebel-like, practising its wickedness under a religious disguise. It and its children are left to the judgment which is to overtake it, when Christ shall smite the nations with a rod of iron. Any true saints meanwhile ("the rest in Thyatira") are comforted by the prospect of Christ's coming as "the Morning Star," and are charged to "hold fast" till He comes. Sardis is what the world, as well as the Church, knows as Protestantism -- the abiding, visible effects before man's eye which have followed upon the glorious work of the Spirit of God at the time of the Reformation; and which, while orthodox in its creed, "having a name to live," is really in a state of spiritual death. We put it to the consciences of

our Christian readers, whether, leaving Rome aside, and looking at the national Churches of Christendom, and the great professing bodies which have branched off from them, this be not a solemnly accurate portraiture of their state? True saints there are:

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments {Rev. 3:4}.

Christ fully owns all such. But as to the Protestant part of Christendom as a mass, what is it but the world under a Christian name and profession? And being in reality “the world,” Christ threatens it with His coming in the character in which His coming is to overtake the world.

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee {Rev. 3:3}.

Philadelphia is the faithfulness of a feeble remnant, who, in the presence of a great professing body, designated “the synagogue of Satan,” and subjected to its scorn, has “a little strength,” and “keeps Christ’s words,” and does not “deny his name”; and keeping thus “the word of Christ’s patience,” is to be “kept from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” {see Rev. 3:7-12}. Laodicea is the last state of the professing body upon earth; a state characterized by high pretensions and self-sufficiency, but so utterly nauseous to Christ that He declares,

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth {Rev. 3:16}.

The threatening first addressed to Ephesus, is, after the most marvellous long-suffering, executed on Laodicea. But the terms of this solemn sentence would not imply more than the utter rejection by Christ of that which bears His name on the earth. What becomes of it, when so rejected, is the subject of other portions of the prophetic word.

We turn now to 2 Thess. 2, where the apostle is guarding the saints against the idea “that the day of Christ was present.” He first assures them that this could not be, by reminding them of “the coming (the παρουσία) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him,” {2 Thess. 2:1} which must necessarily precede “the day of Christ” {the day of the Lord, JND} -- the period of the execution of judgment on the world. He then argues, that “the day” cannot come

except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God {2 Thess. 2:3, 4}.

Here we have the distinct predictions of a falling away, literally, “the apostasy”; and also of the revelation of the man of sin. Paul had told them of these things when at Thessalonica, and they knew thus what it was that was withholding the revelation of this man of sin.

For the mystery of iniquity, [says the apostle] doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed,

whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming {2 Thess. 2:7, 8}.

Thus we have three things: -- the mystery of iniquity, which was even then working, only there was a hinderer which would continue to hinder until taken out of the way; the apostasy; and the revelation of that Wicked, or the man of sin. Without at present attempting to interpret these expressions, it is sufficiently evident from what is said of the last, that it is to him John refers in his first epistle:

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 (1 John 2:18).

The mystery of iniquity was already working: there were many antichrists, morally resembling “the antichrist” of whom they had heard, but whose coming was delayed by the hinderer, then, as now, untaken away. As to what distinguishes the antichrist, or the man of sin, John’s testimony is, “He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son” {1 John 2:22}. The open, utter denial of the Father and the Son is to be the mark of him whom we have seen elsewhere described as “opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or worshipped.” Whether these features of “the antichrist” can consist with any profession of Christianity, however nominal and empty, is a question on which we do not now enter, but which we would suggest for the consideration of our readers.

One thing, however, is evident, that the working of “the mystery of iniquity” continues so long as the unnamed hinderer remains, and that it is not until he is taken out of the way, that the man of sin is *revealed*, that “the antichrist,” properly so called, appears. With regard to this mystery of iniquity, which was already working in Paul’s day, there is one point to which, in closing, we would invite attention. There are in the New Testament, three mystic women treated of as symbols of evil; and these three appear to us to indicate three stages in the progress of ecclesiastical corruption. The first is the woman in Matt. 13, who “took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” Is not this the commencement of the evil? the first introduction into the unleavened mass of those corrupting principles, of the existence and working of which in apostolic times we have seen such ample and varied proof? It was then “the mystery of iniquity” began to work. Then we have, in Rev. 2:20, “that woman Jezebel,” symbolic, as we have seen, of Romanism as a system, established and bearing children amid that which had once been the Church of God. Jezebel was not a daughter of Israel, but a Zidonian princess, in marrying whom Ahab, king of Israel, disobeyed the law of God; and it was for her sake that he went and served Baal, and made a grove, and did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him, and, in short, “sold himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.” Jezebel was the instigator of all this, and the ruthless, heartless persecutor of God’s people. Still she could use God’s name, and proclaim a fast, and pretend great horror of blasphemy, and this even at the very time when, by treachery and false witness, she was perpetrating the murder

of Naboth of Jezreel. Such is the divinely-selected symbol of popery! Reader, is not the awful picture drawn to the life?

But there is a third mystic woman, who is introduced to our attention in Rev. 17, and who is described as “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication” {Rev. 17:1, 2}, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk. The apostle sees her as “a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” {see Rev. 17:3}. This woman is

arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead [says the apostle] was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration {Rev. 17:4, 5}.

Such is the last view Scripture affords us of corrupt Christianity -- papal, no doubt, as to that which mainly fills the scene, but not exclusive of anything under other names, which shares the papal spirit and character. This woman is not a harlot merely, but the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth! Jezebel may symbolize her as a corruptress and mother of children *within*: but to set forth her seduction of *the nations*, and the pomp and magnificence of her rule, she is shown to us as here, seated on the beast, arrayed in gorgeous apparel, with her golden wine cup in her hand, with which she makes the earth's kings and inhabitants drunk. And she is in the height of glory, when the vengeful stroke descends.

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her {Rev. 18:7, 8}.

One difficulty as to this interpretation must not be passed over. Babylon the great, forms the subject of two chapters in the Apocalypse. It is from chapter 17 we have chiefly quoted, and if it stood alone there could be no difficulty in recognizing ecclesiastical corruption, of which Rome is the head and center, in the woman there described. “Drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” {Rev. 17:6}, would of itself establish this interpretation. But in Rev. 18, when the fall of Babylon has been declared, we find all the merchants, and shipmasters, and sailors bemoaning her downfall; and the entire description in chapter 18 suggests the idea of a vast maritime, commercial power. This, as is well known, Rome is not, and here is the difficulty to which we refer. But we have only to suppose the extension of Rome's influence over those regions in which she once reigned paramount, and the difficulty vanishes at once. We say not that this will be accomplished; but our sad abuse of the light and blessings of the Reformation on the one

hand, and the present aspect of religious society in these countries on the other, make this solution of the difficulty very far from being improbable.

Into the details of Babylon's overthrow we cannot now enter. They connect our present subject with the past and future history of the fourth Gentile monarchy. This again will be found to link itself with the prophetic history of the Jews' return to their own land, and their re-establishment there. The antichrist, the man of sin, will be found connected with corrupt Christianity as having paved the way for him, and prepared men's hearts to receive him. It has always been so. Religious corruption sears the consciences of those who are its agents or its dupes; while, by its manifest hollowness and hypocrisy, it outrages the natural conscience of the spectators, and provokes them to discard religion altogether. If one might borrow an illustration from profane history, where could a more striking one be found than has been furnished in modern times by the first French Revolution? Popery had ruled there with an iron hand for centuries, immolating its ten thousand victims, and loosening, by means of its absurd superstitions and immoral practices, all the bonds of moral and religious obligation among the masses of the people. It was thus they were prepared for the infidelity of the Encyclopædists, and for the unmeasured horrors of the Revolution. Terrible specimen, on a somewhat contracted scale, of what is yet to transpire throughout the western professing world! The mystery of iniquity, the apostasy, and Babylon the great, prepare men's souls to “worship the beast” when his deadly wound has once been healed, and “the dragon” has conferred upon him “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” The antichrist will be connected thus with the last of the four Gentile monarchies in its final form, as revived and energized by Satanic power. The Jews, having returned to their own land in unbelief, will be found (with the exception of a godly remnant) in league with this daring enemy of God, and will suffer under his iron rod. The epiphany of Christ's coming will destroy “the man of sin,” and overwhelm his guilty and infatuated adherents with utter, desolating judgments. The remnant of Jews spared through these troubles will, with the spared nations, form the germ of the population of the millennial earth. Over these Christ and His glorified saints will reign. But we again remind our Christian readers, that it is for the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, and our gathering to Him there, that we wait. This first stage of the Lord's coming is dependent on none of those things we have been considering. It may be at any hour, any moment. All else may occur between it, and the epiphany of His coming, by which the man of sin is to be destroyed.

The Lord keep us waiting for Himself, in holy separateness from all that leads onwards to that whirlpool of destruction in which the wicked shall then be overwhelmed.

## Chapter 12

### *The Last Days of Gentile Supremacy*

Many of our readers are no doubt aware that the words translated “Gentiles,” whether in the Old Testament or in the New, simply denote “nations.” Any distinctive use of these words must therefore have commenced when God had selected one nation, Israel, from among the rest, to be peculiarly His own. Israel thus became the one nation, owned, protected, and blest of the Lord; while all others began to be designated “the nations,” or “Gentiles,” as distinct from the one thus favored and chosen of God. All that is written in the Old Testament, whether of Israel or “the Gentiles,” may be referred to as illustrative of this remark.

“Gentile *supremacy*” commenced with Nebuchadnezzar. Until his times, Israel had been the center, and Jerusalem the seat, of God’s government of the surrounding nations. The kings of David’s line were the last responsible agents of this divine government; but this government, so far from being confined to Israel, extended to all the nations which were in any way connected therewith. When the conduct of God’s people or of their kings was such as to be approved by Him, He subjected all the surrounding nations to their sway. When, on the other hand, they walked disobediently, He used the surrounding nations to chastise them. Still, His throne was at Jerusalem; and it was not until the defection of Judah and its kings from their allegiance to God had become complete, that Jerusalem was given up to be utterly destroyed. The princes and nobles of the land were carried into captivity, the city was overthrown, and Ezekiel, prophesying among those captives who had first been removed, beheld in vision the glory of the Lord depart, first “from off the threshold of the house” (Exek. 10:18), and then “from the midst of the city” (Ezek. 11:23). The symbol of the divine presence, which, from their redemption out of Egypt, had never (save for a little season in Samuel’s day) forsaken them, thus entirely departed, and Jerusalem ceased to be the place of Jehovah’s throne. The whole order of things consequent on His dwelling at Jerusalem was set aside, and universal supremacy was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and first great chief of the Gentiles. It was with him that “the times of the Gentiles” began.

“Gentile supremacy,” from its commencement to its termination by the just judgment of God at the coming of the Son of man, is the subject of Daniel’s prophecy. Dan. 2 and 7 span the whole period from Nebuchadnezzar to the coming of

Christ in judgment; while the other chapters fill up the outline by presenting either the moral features which characterize the Gentile powers, or the prophetic detail of their actings, and of God’s dealings with them in judgment at the close. It is to Daniel and the book of Revelation we have specially to look for instruction as to our present subject. The difference between them is, that Revelation treats of the “last days of Gentile supremacy” as linked with and following upon the long course of corruption in the present dispensation, and the utter apostasy of Christendom; while Daniel treats of the same period in connection with the destinies of his own beloved nation, the Jews. The Lord grant to us becoming solemnity of spirit in examining the testimony of both.

In Dan. 2 the divine communication is to Nebuchadnezzar himself; but to him in such sort that it is of no avail to him, till recalled to his memory and interpreted by the prophet. God thus makes manifest that the knowledge of His secrets is with His people, the godly but poor and despised remnant of Israel; but, at the same time, He puts the Gentile monarch under the full responsibility of knowing at whose hands he has received the power and authority of which he is possessed. The substance of the communication made to the king and interpreted by the prophet, is so well known and so generally understood that it needs no comment here. Three of the Gentile powers represented by the image, are declared in this and other chapters of Daniel, to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece; while Rome is demonstrated to be the fourth by a passage of the New Testament, which speaks of a decree of the Roman emperor, “that all the world should be taxed” (Luke 2:1). Now, as there were to be but four universal empires, and as the first three are specified in the book of Daniel itself, it is evident that the only one besides spoken of in Scripture as universal must be the fourth. It is, moreover, introduced in Daniel 11 under the name of Chittim, where the ships of Chittim are represented as taking part in the struggles between the kingdoms into which the Grecian empire was to be divided. Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome are almost universally admitted to be the four monarchies symbolized by the image in Dan. 2. Any contrary opinion is so glaringly absurd as not to require discussion.

The leading features of this important prophecy are as follows:

(1) It is as “the God of heaven” that God acts in bestowing

power upon the Gentiles. As "God of the earth" His throne was at Jerusalem, and will be when He again makes Himself known thus. But His earthly throne being set aside, for the iniquity of those who had been the responsible depositories and agents of His authority, He now acts as "God of heaven," in bestowing authority on the Gentile monarch.

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. Thou art this head of gold {Dan. 2:37, 38}.

(2) It would appear to be in this immediate reception of it from the God of heaven, that the superiority of Nebuchadnezzar's power consisted. Gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron mixed with miry clay, are the elements which composed the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. The deterioration is most marked, but it is not in the *strength* so much as in the *value* of the metals; the fourth kingdom, indeed, is represented by that which breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things. Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, received his power by direct and absolute gift from God; the other monarchs succeeded to it, or became possessed of it, in the course of providential circumstances, but not in this direct manner.

(3) The Gentile kingdoms are here seen as a whole. As expressed by another, "It is neither historical succession nor moral features with respect to God and man, but the kingdoms all together forming, as it were, a personage before God; the man of the earth in the eye of God -- glorious and terrible in his public splendor in the eyes of men." <sup>36</sup> So true is this, that in the prediction of the final overthrow, while the blow falls on the toes of the image, it is the whole image which is broken to pieces, and scattered like dust, -- the iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold, all partaking in the overwhelming destruction. Gentile power, symbolized by the image, continues from the days of Nebuchadnezzar till the epoch at which it is thus utterly overthrown and destroyed.

(4) It is when Gentile supremacy exists in its last form that its destruction ensues.

. . . a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image *upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces* {Dan. 2:34}.

This final blow falls not on the head of gold, the silver breast, the belly and thighs of brass, no, nor even on the legs of iron, but on the feet of iron and clay. This, of itself, proves that the smiting of the image is not the introduction and gradual spread of Christianity, as many have supposed, but an infliction by divine power when the fourth empire is in its divided and mingled state. It existed in full unity and power for centuries after Christianity commenced.

(5) There is but little said in this chapter of the second and third empires. That which is put in prominence is the truth revealed respecting the first, which received its dominion direct from God, and the fourth, in the last days of which the whole

fabric is to be set aside and not a trace remain. On this last subject the prophecy is even more copious and detailed than on the first.

(6) There is a fifth kingdom, represented by the "stone cut out without hands," which at its introduction forcibly overturns and destroys the Gentile monarchy, and takes its place.

It does not act by a moral influence that changes the character of the object on which it acts. It destroys that object by force. It is God who establishes it and gives it that force. The stone does not gradually increase in size to displace the image. Before it extends itself, it destroys the image. When it has become great -- it is not merely a right given by God over men, it fills the whole earth -- it is the exalted seat of a universal authority.

"We may observe," says the writer whose words we quote,

that it is not God destroying the image in another way to establish the kingdom. The kingdom which He is establishing smites the feet of the image as its first act. It is the outward and general history of that which, by God's appointment, took the place of His throne and His government in Jerusalem, and which had gradually degenerated in its public character with respect to God, and which at length comes to its end by the judgment executed by the kingdom established of God without human agency. The kingdom of Christ, which falls on the last form of the monarchy formerly established by God, destroys the whole form of its existence, and itself fills the world. <sup>37</sup>

Dan. 3-6 records the history of past events; but it is a history prefaced by the chapter we have been considering, and followed by others, full of prophetic details as to the same general subject; and whether we regard this connection of chapters 3-6, or the contents of the chapters themselves, it is difficult to resist the conviction, that they are designed to inform us of the moral character of the Gentile powers which constitute the theme of the whole book. They furnish specimens, so to speak, of what Gentile dominion would always be. Idolatry and persecution in Dan. 3 -- the pride which attributes everything to self, instead of glorifying God, and which, in effect, reduces its subject to a brutal condition; in Dan. 4, hardness of heart, open revolt, and insensate mockery of God and His worship; In Dan. 5 and 6, the deifying of man, and enforcing, on pain of death, submission to his blasphemous pretensions, are the moral features by which Gentile power is characterized throughout. No wonder, when its iniquity is full, and the ulterior purposes of God are ripe for development, that it should become the object of utter and overwhelming judgment.

Dan. 7 presents us with further predictions of this judgment, as well as of the final character of evil which becomes the occasion of its execution. We have here, under other symbols, the same four monarchies which in chapter 2 are represented by the image. Four great beasts come up from the sea. It is not here the gift of authority by the God of heaven, but the rise of these kingdoms, as matter of history, from the unformed tumultuous masses of mankind, represented

36. *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* 2:414.

37. *Synopsis* 2:417.

in prophetic language by “the sea.” Rev. 17:15 sufficiently establishes this to be the import of the symbol.

The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Babylon is figured by the first beast, which resembles a lion with eagles wings. Medo-Persia is represented by the second like unto a bear, and it raised up itself on one side; and [it had] three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and they said thus unto it: Arise, devour much flesh {Dan. 7:5, JND}.

The third beast, Grecia, is like a leopard with four wings of a fowl, and four heads: the well-known symbols of the fourfold division of the Grecian empire after Alexander’s death. It is to the fourth beast, however, the Roman empire, that attention is chiefly called; and further, there is one particular in the representation of this on which the prophet’s attention seems to be specially concentrated, as to which he makes anxious inquiries, and with regard to which he receives fuller instruction. But let us turn to the details.

First, we have the vision of the fourth beast which the prophet beheld.

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 {Dan. 7:7}.

The same pen from which we have already quoted presents, in more forcible language than we can command, the substance and import of this vision, --

The features of the fourth beast are clearly drawn. It is strong exceedingly; it devours and breaks in pieces, and tramples the residue under foot. It has not the same character as the preceding monarchies. It has ten horns; that is to say, its strength was to be divided into ten distinct powers. Strength and a rapacity which spare and respect nothing, appropriating everything, or trampling it under foot without regard to conscience; such are morally the characteristics of the fourth beast. Its division into ten kingdoms distinguishes it as to its form. The uniform simplicity of the other empires will be lacking to it.<sup>38</sup>

While the prophet is earnestly contemplating the horns of this fourth beast, a great change takes place among them.

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 a man, and a mouth speaking great things {Dan. 7:8}.

The reader will bear in mind that we are occupied with the same subject as (in Dan. 2) is illustrated by the legs and feet of the image. The legs were iron -- the feet and toes, part of potter’s clay and part of iron. Then, Dan. 2:42-44 treat of the toes distinctively.

And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry

clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. *And in the days of these kings* [the kings or kingdoms represented by the ten toes] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.

Now the horns in Dan. 7 correspond to the toes in Dan. 2; and both chapters show that it is in this final state -- when the strength of the kingdom has been divided into ten powers, and when, according to chapter 2, the power originally derived from God has not only deteriorated from gold to iron, but is attempting to ally itself with something of an entirely different nature, potter’s clay -- it is in this final state of the fourth kingdom that God sets up a kingdom which smites, overturns, and demolishes the whole fabric of Gentile power, taking its place and filling the whole earth. The modern attempts, throughout what was once the unbroken undivided Roman Empire, to unite monarchical with popular influences in what are called constitutional governments, can hardly fail to occur to the mind on perusing this prophecy. It is not intended by this remark to imply any censure on this or that mode of government. Such is not the province of the Christian. We simply note in the prophecy that which is given as the distinguishing form of Gentile power in the last stages of its existence. Moral characteristics are given elsewhere. Neither would we intimate that the ten toes can as yet be distinguished. A passage in Revelation, to be considered by and by, forbids such a thought. To return to chapter 7: it supplies us with particulars omitted in chapter 2. We have here indeed ten horns, as in the other case ten toes; but while the prophet considers the horns, there comes up among them another, an eleventh horn, and its actions are such as soon to absorb the attention of the prophet. It is a little horn, a power small and insignificant in its beginnings, but three out of the ten fall before it, plucked up by the roots; it is characterized by extraordinary sagacity and intelligence, having “eyes like the eyes of man”; and its boastings and pretensions are most loud and overbearing -- it has “a mouth speaking great things.” A session of judgment ensues.

I beheld till the thrones were set, <sup>39</sup> 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 {Dan. 7:9, 10}.

The chapter does not inform us where this session of judgment takes place; but all the effects of it which the prophecy records are upon the earth.

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 {Dan. 7:11}.

While such is the terrible end of the fourth beast, its existence and its dominion terminating together by the overwhelming

38. {Synopsis 2:429-30}

39. Not “cast down.” Nearly all scholars agree in the correctness of the rendering given above.

judgment which overtakes it, it is noted by the prophet that with the three former kingdoms it had been otherwise.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time {Dan. 7:12}.

The dominion of Babylon ceased on the night when Belshazzar was slain. The dominion of Persia ceased when it was overthrown by the first Grecian king. The dominion of Greece was first divided into four, and then taken away as one after another of these Grecian monarchies fell before the Roman legions. But there has always been, and is still, a kingdom of Persia. So is there now a kingdom of Greece. It is in this way that these beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives prolonged. Not so the fourth Roman beast. "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" {Dan. 7:11}. Utter destruction is its doom. What is said, however, of those beasts which had their dominion taken away and their lives prolonged, sheds light on the statement in Dan. 2, that the whole image perishes when the blow descends upon its toes. Till then their lives are prolonged; but they, as well as the fourth kingdom, perish by "the stone cut out without hands." Every vestige of Gentile power disappears; and the monarchy of the whole earth is transferred to the One whom we know as having been despised and rejected of men, numbered with the transgressors, crucified between two thieves! He alone is worthy! Eternal blessings to His name!

The transfer of dominion to this blessed and adorable One is the subject, in the chapter before us, of a distinct vision.

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 {Dan. 7:14}.

Can there be any doubt that the Savior had this prophecy in mind when He said to the high priest,

. . . nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26:64)?

"God hath spoken once," says the psalmist; "twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Psa. 62:11). There is but One who has with perfect faithfulness owned this. Adam received power from God, and quickly betrayed both it, and himself, and the creation over which he was placed, into the hands of the deceiver and usurper. Noah received of God the power of the sword, but soon by his intemperance subjected himself to the mockery of his son, more guilty than himself in proclaiming the degradation he should have covered. God himself reigned in Israel, till the nation in its folly asked to have a king. Saul, the king of the nation's choice, though he received at God's hands his throne and scepter, disobediently used them for self-aggrandizement, and perished on the mountains of Gilboa. "The man after God's own heart" did indeed truly -- but, alas! he did not *perfectly* and *always* -- own this foundation-truth. He did receive his kingdom at God's

hands alone, nor was he actually installed in it, till he had been tested again and again whether he would take possession of it by his own energy, or wait God's time. In all this he was a type of Him, who, though his son, he, in spirit, calls his Lord. But David did get weary of the path of faith, and would have revenged himself, had sovereign grace not interposed (see 1 Sam. 29:8). And when on the throne, in one instance at least, his heart did get lifted up (see 2 Sam. 24); and in another, he did use his power for the gratification of his lusts. His offspring inherited his throne. The first who succeeded to it, in his old age turned to idols. Jeroboam, made king over the ten tribes which were in consequence rent from David's house, set up golden calves, and one after another of his successors sank deeper and deeper in iniquity, till the ten tribes were carried away out of the land. David's house corrupted itself more and more, till the wrath of the Lord arose, and there was no remedy. Then followed the Jewish captivity and the times of the Gentiles. God established Nebuchadnezzar's throne at Babylon, and bestowed on him a grant of power almost, not quite, equal with that made to Adam. Have the holders of Gentile power, from Nebuchadnezzar downward, been any more true than others to the principle that "power belongeth unto God"? Alas! the answer is before us, and much that is still worse remains to be considered. Gentile power has, throughout, proved itself hostile to God, and disdainful of His claims: it will in the end be found in open revolt against His authority, and claiming for itself the homage due to Him alone. One there has been on this earth, the blessed Heir of all things, entitled to dominion by every possible claim, and having almighty power to enforce His claims, but who, having become man, and having taken thus the servant's place, the place of subjection and dependence, never swerved from it for a single moment. All the kingdoms of the world were offered to Him by Satan, on condition of His falling down to worship him. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was His reply: "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" {Luke 4:8}. The multitude would have taken Him by force, and made Him a king; but the modern and blasphemous doctrine that "the people are the only legitimate source of power," had no place in His heart. When He perceived their designs, "he departed again into a mountain himself alone." No, He had come in humiliation and obedience to glorify God in this world of sin and pride, and nothing could turn Him aside from the lowly, self-renouncing, self-sacrificing path on which He had entered. What the Holy Ghost witnesses of Him as priest, is as true of Him in His kingly character. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest." He waited till the Father's time should arrive for investing Him with His royal as well as with His priestly dignity. "Power belongeth unto God," and this He owned in every step of His life below. Nay more, it is in obedience that He has sat down at the right hand of God. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" {Psa. 110:1}. So writes the psalmist. "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" {Heb. 10:13}. Thus writes the apostle. In Dan. 7:13, 14, the passage on which we were meditating, the decisive moment has arrived. Human iniquity has reached its height in the blasphemies and revolt of the little horn; the judgment is set, the books are opened; one like the Son of man



is brought to the Ancient of days, and there is given to Him dominion and glory and a kingdom -- everlasting dominion -- a kingdom never to be destroyed.

These visions of the future awaken in the prophet the deepest solicitude to understand their import. His desire is granted. "So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things" {Dan. 7:16}. First, he receives a general explanation of the whole matter.

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever {Dan. 7:17, 18}.

This is the substance of what the visions were to disclose. Four great monarchies were to succeed each other, and at the end of these the saints of the Most High were to take the kingdom. Observe here that the explanation goes beyond the visions themselves. The visions had represented the reception of the kingdom by the Son of man; but here we find that it is to be taken and possessed by the saints of the Most High. But Daniel yearns for still clearer and fuller understanding.

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast . . . and of the ten horns . . . and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows {Dan. 7:19, 20}.

Not only does the prophet seek a fuller explanation of these details; he gives a fuller statement than previously of what he had observed in this little horn.

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom {Dan. 7:21, 22}.

Thus we are informed of what had been omitted before, the war of the little horn against the saints; a war in which he prevails against them, till the coming of the Ancient of days brings his blasphemies and persecutions to an end, and the saints whom he had trodden down have judgment given to them and take the kingdom. The answer received by Daniel is very express. He is told that the fourth beast is the fourth kingdom, and that it should be diverse from all others, devouring, breaking down, and treading in pieces.

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings {Dan. 7:24}.

This is very plain. The fourth kingdom should first exist in its unity and strength; then afterwards ten kings (or kingdoms) should arise in it, and after these another, the little horn, who should subdue three out of the ten.

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 [the times and laws] shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time {Dan. 7:25}.

Here we have several features of this little horn's career. His daring blasphemy against the Most High, his persecution of the

saints, his impious interference with times and ordinances, and the space for which these latter -- no doubt Jewish times and Jewish laws -- should be given into his hand. His power is to continue for three years and a half.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end {Dan. 7:26}.

Everything then will be reversed.

. . . 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. 7:27}.

Blessed conclusion of the whole matter!

We turn now to Revelation. Other passages in Daniel will demand examination; but there are two chapters in Revelation so intimately connected with those we have been considering, as to claim our immediate attention. The first is Rev. 13. Two symbolic beasts are there described. The first rises out of the sea, as did Daniel's four beasts; and between this one in Rev. 13 and the fourth beast in Dan. 7 there are points of identity amply sufficient to show that it is the same beast which both symbols represent. There are, at the same time, many additional features brought out in this later communication from God. The Apocalyptic beast, just like that in Daniel, has ten horns; but in Rev. 13 it is represented with seven heads as well as ten horns. The horns are crowned, and upon the heads are names of blasphemy. We are not told in Daniel to what species the fourth beast in resemblance belonged; in Rev. 13 he is seen as combining in himself the features of the three beasts which represented the three former empires -- a leopard in its general appearance, but feet like those of a bear, and a lion's mouth. The swiftness of Grecian conquest, the weight of Persian oppression, and the majesty of Babylonian greatness, all found in this fourth great and terrible empire *in the special form in which it is beheld by the prophet of Patmos*. Further, we have here the source of its greatness and its strength.

. . . and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority {Rev. 13:2}

"The dragon" is explained in the previous chapter to be that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world {Rev. 12:9}.

He is represented as being cast out of heaven, and it is said by those in heaven,

Woe to the inhabitants 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 {Rev. 12:12}.

That short time is shown by v. 14 to be the very period to which Dan. 7 limits the reign of the little horn. Rev. 13:5, moreover, gives the same period in months, forty and two months, as the period of the power of the beast in the peculiar form in which that chapter describes him. Is it not evident from these considerations, that the subject of Rev. 13 is not the Roman Empire during its entire existence, *but that empire in its last form*, when the ten horns have made their appearance, and when the dragon, cast out of heaven and come down to earth, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short

time, uses that time in giving to this beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority"? Further, one of the seven heads, treated of in this chapter for the first time, is seen wounded as it were to death; but the deadly wound is healed, and all the world wonders after the beast. Here is the renewal, and apparently by Satanic power, of a form of government under which the Roman Empire had once existed, but which had passed away. Now, on its re-appearance, the whole world is filled with admiration and awe. Worshipping the dragon and the beast, they say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him" {Rev. 13:4}? The moral identity between vv. 5-7 and what is said of the little horn in Dan. 7, can scarcely fail to strike any mind. Here, however, the picture is darker than in the Old Testament. We have the full extent of his power brought out to view.

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 {Rev. 13:7, 8}.

In view of a delusion so awful and wide-spread, how seasonable the warning, "If any man have an ear, let him hear"!

The remainder of Rev. 13 is occupied with the description of another beast, coming up out of the earth -- Christ-like in its power ("two horns like a lamb"), but dragon-like in its speech. This second beast is a kind of prime minister of the other, exercising all the power of the first beast in his presence, and causing the earth and the dwellers therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. It is by miracles that he is able thus to deceive. It is said of "the man of sin, that Wicked," in 2 Thess. 2 that his "coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," and of this second beast in Rev 13 we are told,

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of all men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast {Rev. 13:14}.

Ah, dear readers, these are no mere pretended miracles, such as abound in Romanism, but real prodigies, which, at a time when God shall send upon men strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, it will be permitted that this instrument of Satan shall produce. None will be deluded by them but those who would not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved; but how fearful to think of a time fast approaching, when the very miracle which in Elijah's day attested that Jehovah is the true God, shall be permitted to be wrought by Satanic power, to induce men to worship the beast, to whom Satan will have given his power, and his seat, and great authority.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed {Rev. 13:15}.

Awful alternative! On the one hand,

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall

drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation (Rev. 14:9, 10);

and on the other hand, the second beast has power, as we have seen, to cause that as many as will not worship the image of the beast shall be killed. Death in this world, or damnation in the next, will then be the dread alternative! Reader, if you have not yet fled for refuge to Christ, delay not a moment longer! God grant thee, while the day of salvation lasts, repentance unto life!

"The beast" is but a secondary subject in Rev. 17, "Babylon the great" being its distinctive theme. Still her connection with the beast is such, that the latter is necessarily brought prominently to view; and we have a multiplicity of details presented which are not found elsewhere. The judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and by the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk -- this is the subject of the chapter. John is carried away in the spirit, and sees

a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns {Rev. 17:3}.

The identity of this beast, both morally and in external form, with that of chapter 13, and the fourth beast in Dan. 7, is thus evident. But here a woman is seen sitting on the beast. The Church, be it remembered, though betrothed to Christ, has never yet been married to Him. When, therefore, that which assumes to be the Church forms unholy alliances with the earth's kings, and corrupts and intoxicates the earth's inhabitants, her sin is described, not as the infidelity to her husband of a married woman, but as the unchastity of one who should have kept herself as a chaste virgin for Christ. Jerusalem, which had been married to Jehovah, is always charged by the prophets with adultery. It is not this sin but fornication which is charged on Babylon. And whether we regard this her unchaste character -- her name, expressive of the attempt at unity and uniformity, on which God wrote confusion -- her imperial state, arrayed in purple and scarlet color -- her riches, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls -- her enchantments, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations (idols, see 1 Kings 11:5-7) and filthiness of her fornication -- her effrontery, having her name written on her forehead -- whether we consider these things, *or her cruelty, drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus* -- what doubt can there be that she symbolizes that huge system of fraud, violence, idolatry, and persecution, which has for so many centuries, under the name of Christ, held the reins of empire in the Roman earth, and been supported by its resources? When John saw her, he wondered with great admiration. The angel undertakes to tell him the mystery, not only of the woman, but "of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." Let us listen to his explanation; and the Lord give us understanding in His word!

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: 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 {Rev. 17:8}.

The characteristics of this Roman beast are, that at some given epoch it can be truly said of it, that it was, that it is not, and yet that it shall thereafter exist; but as to this future existence, it is to be by ascending out of the bottomless pit; and its end, is to go into perdition. Moreover, it is when the beast has thus ascended out of the bottomless pit, that all whose names are not in the book of life wonder at it, and follow it. Apply this to the Roman empire. Once, as all know, it was. Then, as one firm, consolidated empire, it ceased to exist. But it has not passed off the stage forever -- it is to exist again; and when it does so exist, it will have ascended out of the bottomless pit -- the dragon will have given to it his power and seat and great authority. The future and last form of the fourth great Roman empire is to be purely Satanic, and perdition is its certain doom, and the doom of all who acknowledge its claims. But further particulars are afforded.

The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth {Rev. 17:9}.

No one can question that both in Daniel and Revelation "beasts" symbolize kingdoms or empires. Must not then the heads of beasts represent the government of those empires or kingdoms? The seat and center of government may be a king, an emperor, a dictator, a popular assembly, or what not; but if a beast be a kingdom, the head of that beast is surely the governing, controlling power. Now this Roman beast was to have seven such heads, or forms of government. They are also said to be mountains, and every student of Scripture knows that a mountain is the emblem of authority. Of these seven heads, or forms of government in the Roman empire, we are told,

five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space {Rev. 17:10}.

When this explanation was given to John, five of these forms of government had already fallen: one, which we know to be the imperial, existed. Thus we have six. Another, the seventh, was yet to come, but when it came, it was to continue but a short space. This decides that it cannot be, as many have thought, Popery. When the relative and proportionate duration of seven forms of government is in question, to suppose that the one which lasts longest of any, is spoken of as continuing but a short space, is to do violence to every principle of sober judgment and interpretation. What this seventh head is we do not undertake to say. <sup>40</sup>

But there is an eighth head. As in Dan 7, the prophet first sees ten horns, and then another little horn come up among them, and that little horn thenceforth becomes the great final actor in the scene, so here there are seven heads, which are

explained as we have seen; but then we are told,

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition {Rev. 17:11}.

After the seventh head, which continues but a short space, has passed away, there is to be yet another head, or form, or mode of government. It is to be "of the seven" as being the re-appearance of one of those which had previously existed, and yet it has this fearful distinction from the seven, which really constitutes it the eighth, namely, that it is from beneath. The resuscitated Roman empire, with a head or government politically resembling one of the previous seven, but really deriving his power, and seat, and great authority from the dragon, ascending thus out of the bottomless pit, -- this resuscitated Roman empire, we say, will so take its character from this eighth head, will be so absolutely actuated and controlled by him, that in the passage before us they are completely identified -- "The beast that was, and is not, *even he is the eighth*," that is, the eighth head, "and goeth into perdition." Remarkable as is this mode of expression, the meaning is not difficult to perceive. The revived Roman empire under its eighth, its Satanic head, is so identified with and characterized by that head, that they are spoken of as one. It is the Roman empire in this view of it that the passage represents to us.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast {Rev. 17:12, 13}.

We beg the reader's attention to these words. Dan. 2 speaks specifically of the toes of the image, and intimates thus that the last state of the fourth monarchy would be this tenfold division of its power. Dan. 7 speaks of the ten horns, and of the little horn which plucks up three, and the actings of which so pervade and characterize the beast, as to become the occasion of judgment being executed, not on the little horn alone, but on the beast as a whole. In Rev. 13 we have the ten horns, and here also. But here we have the important information that they are ten kings who had received no kingdom in John's day, and who do not receive power as kings till the beast, that is to say, the Roman empire under its eighth headship, receives power. "They receive power as kings *one hour with the beast*." No wonder then that such uncertainty should have attended all attempts to define the ten Roman monarchies. They only exist as such after the resuscitation of the Roman empire. And now mark the character and actings of these ten kings. "They have one mind, and give their power and strength unto the beast." They are subsidiary kings, distinct from, and yet entirely and willingly subject to, the beast.

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled {Rev. 17:16, 17}.

Such is the doom of Babylon, and such are its executioners. The world itself, which the false Church has succeeded in corrupting, will recoil against its corruptress. The ten kings,

40. We may mention what others have suggested, that in the new arrangements which followed the downfall of the late French Emperor, no one took the title of "the king of Rome," which had been held by the German emperors till his day, but which he had appropriated to himself, or given to his son. It has not existed since. His rule was certainly unique in character, and continued but for a short space; but we merely mention this as a suggestion which may deserve to be weighed by our readers.

and the beast to whom they give their power, will be her destruction. It has been the habit to interpret all these things of Popery: and God is our witness that it is no desire to screen or palliate the evils of Popery, which makes us reject such a theory. Babylon doubtless symbolizes Popery; not Popery *alone*, but *chiefly*, we may surely say. But the more certain we are of Popery being symbolized by the great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations, the more certain it appears that Popery cannot be represented by the beast, which first supports and then destroys her, or by its eighth head, in whose days that destruction takes place. The little horn in Dan. 7, the man of sin in 2 Thess. 2, the beast whose deadly wound has been healed in Rev. 13, and the beast coming up out of the bottomless pit in Rev. 17, are all identified by marks both moral and historical, too plainly to be easily mistaken. It is the anxiety to fix on Romanism the brand of being so represented, which has doubtless led to the persuasion so many hold, of its being the subject of these scriptures. But do any of these symbols present us with a blacker picture than that of Babylon the great? And do we not need to beware of supposing that there is but one type of human evil? one product of Satanic skill and power? Popery, with every other form of ecclesiastical corruption, will be overthrown by the letting loose of man's violence, under the direction of that eighth head to which Satan will have given his power. But the agents of Babylon's downfall are not less wicked than Babylon herself. If God puts it into their hearts to fulfil His will as the providential agents of her destruction, it is from no love to God, or love to Christ, that they thus act. So far from this, we are told, "These shall make war with the Lamb." They, and the beast to whom they give their power, are the final adversaries of Christ. That which has falsely borne His name, borne it only to cause it to be blasphemed, will be given up to these ten kings to destroy; but when they turn to make war against the Lamb Himself, another destiny awaits them.

The Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful {Rev. 17:14}.

It is the Church, the saints, who will be with Him when He comes forth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty (see Rev. 19:14). And what, dear Christian readers, should be the course of those whose hope it is to be with Christ ere those final sorrows on earth commence, and to be with Him when He comes forth to destroy His adversaries? Ought we not to be with Him in the spirit of our minds, and with Him in our testimony, and with Him in the whole tenor of our walk, even now? There are two great currents in human affairs, on the bosom of which the great mass of mankind are thoughtlessly drifting onwards. Both end in destruction. The one in the destruction which awaits the harlot at the hands of the beast and his ten confederate kings: the other in the destruction which awaits these last enemies of Christ, at the moment of His appearing. What has the child of God to do with either? Nothing. His place is to live Christ -- to confess Christ -- to wait for Christ -- to suffer with Christ -- if need be, to die for Christ -- assured that ere the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world arrives, Christ will have come to receive His saints in the air, and that so when the last conflict

comes, his only relation to it will be that of being in the train of Christ's glory, when He shall come to tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

What a solemn light does this whole subject shed on what Scripture calls "the course of this world"! Many have supposed that the fourth empire having been nominally Christianized, its character had undergone an essential change, and that, in consequence, Christians might now interest themselves in its politics, and occupy themselves with its affairs. What a total mistake! Ancient Babylon might establish the worship of Bel and Nebo, -- the Persian monarchs might enforce the more subtle idolatry of the east -- Greece and Rome might both bow down to Jupiter and his hosts of inferior deities, -- and the latter might, after a time, depose these and adopt, as it did a religion compounded of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, -- *the character of Gentile power remains unchanged throughout*. More modern nations may have come even more fully under Christian influences, and the attempted mingling of the iron and the clay in these very countries may have given, nay, *has given*, an opportunity to Christian people of all classes in society to mix themselves up with worldly politics, to an extent impossible in earlier times. But let not the Lord's people be deceived. The sitting of the woman on the beast has not made the latter any less a beast: and the scriptures we have been considering show us that under its eighth, Satanic head, with its ten confederate kings, this beast will unseat its rider, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. But is it a Christian's place to take any part in movements tending towards this result? Surely not. His citizenship is in heaven. His place is, as a stranger on earth, to yield hearty and unfeigned subjection to the powers that be, wherever it can be rendered without disloyalty to Christ. Then, it is his place to suffer, and take it patiently. But as to wielding this world's authority, or taking part in this world's politics, a Christian has no more to do with such things than Christ Himself had. The end of all Gentile politics, whether national or international, Protestant or Popish, progressive or retrogressive, -- the end of all Gentile politics is the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The Lord keep His people from all the currents which lead on to such a vortex. The saints will indeed be there, but it will be as coming forth from heaven in the train of the mighty Conqueror. He is our portion, His descent into the air our hope, and when He appears we shall appear with Him in glory.

The Lord bless these meditations and inquiries to the separating His people more and more from every form and character of evil, to wait only and patiently for Him.

## Chapter 13

### *Israel in the Approaching Crisis*

Half the Bible, or more, relates to Israel. The inspired records of their origin, the detailed history of God's patient, gracious dealings with them in the past, and the prophetic pencillings of what awaits them in the future, form the largest portion of the Old Testament: while, even in the New, Israel is far from being overlooked. The Gospels, in declaring the wonders of the incarnation and of redemption, record the accomplishment of these wonders in Israel's land, and among Israel's sons; the Acts disclose to us the lingerings of divine mercy over that favored race; and by the first of the Epistles we are expressly instructed that, solemn as is the darkness which now reigns over Israel, it is but for a time --

blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved {Rom. 11:25, 26}.

The Old and New Testament both forbid the self-conceit and self-exaltation which would abuse God's signal mercy to us "sinners of the Gentiles," so as to make it a reason for slighting or disregarding God's covenanted mercies to the earthly people of His choice.

Neither Israel nor the Church, however, can be rightly regarded as the final object of God's ways. That object is the glorifying of Himself in Christ. Christ is the center of all His counsels, the object of all His ways. But Christ has relations to Israel as well as to the Church; and while it is beyond doubt that His relations to the latter are unspeakably more tender and intimate than His relations to the former, there is no need that the one should cast the other into oblivion. In its place each is perfect. If the Church knows Christ as her Head and Bridegroom, Israel is yet to know Him as "Jehovah her righteousness," and as "the King that cometh in the name of Jehovah." If Christ be the Hope of the Church, as He surely is, there is yet to be a remnant of Israel, who, amid the tribulations of the approaching crisis, and under the oppression of the great adversary, shall invoke and expect the advent of their Messiah; and who, when Christ shall have appeared to their joy and to the confusion of their enemies, shall be able to say,

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee {Isa. 26:8}.

But it is the same Jesus who is *their* Messiah, and the

Bridegroom of *our* hopes. Need we any other motive to interest us in all that is revealed as to Israel's destinies? And while, as we have seen in previous papers, Scripture bears ample testimony to the fact of Israel's restoration, and to its national pre-eminence and glory in the millennial period, the testimony of inspiration is not less decisive as to Israel's part in the fearful crisis which immediately precedes the dawn of millennial blessing. The nation's part in the solemn scenes to which we now refer is depicted in prophecy with a faithful hand; while, as to the godly remnant of Israel in those coming days, large portions of Scripture portray the exercises of their souls, and indicate the depths of trouble and of anguish through which they will be brought, and out of which they will emerge -- some, by a martyr's death and resurrection, into the heavenly glory of Christ and His ascended people; others, by the appearing of Christ and the overthrow of His enemies, into the triumph and gladness of the earthly department of Christ's glorious kingdom.

(1) It will be readily recollected by our readers, how, in a former stage of our inquiries, we found that Israel's dispersion and calamities overtook them at different epochs and on different grounds. It was for idolatry that the ten tribes were carried away into a captivity from which they never returned. True, it was for this and its attendant sins that Judah also was some time after given up to Nebuchadnezzar, and it was then the sentence "Lo-Ammi, not my people," fell upon the entire nation. But instead of Judah being left entirely and permanently in the lands of their captivity, as the ten tribes were, it is universally known that a portion returned; and though always afterward subject to a Gentile yoke, these returned captives (Jews, properly so called) were permitted to dwell in their own land, to rebuild Jerusalem, and to observe the worship of the true God, according to the directions of the law of Moses. It was among their descendants that Christ made His appearance when He came in humiliation; and it was for their sin in rejecting Him that they were given up to the Roman sword, and to all the sorrows of their present long dispersion. "The cup of trembling" was then put into their hands, and "the dregs of that cup" they have yet, alas! to "wring out." The ten tribes, distinctively denominated Israel, or Ephraim, having had no part in this crowning sin of the Jews, will not partake of those special troubles in the land by which, in addition to all that they have suffered, this sin will

receive its appointed punishment at God's hand. Down to the very moment of their deliverance by divine power, at the coming of Christ with the clouds of heaven, the Jews nationally will suffer the inflictions of God's righteous displeasure -- these inflictions, as we shall see, being the heaviest at the very close. The ten tribes will be restored in another way, and under totally different circumstances. But let us first consider what is predicted touching the Jews.

(2) It may be well to cite a few passages which treat of the time immediately preceding Israel's deliverance, as one of the deepest trial and distress.

For thus saith the LORD, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 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 (Jer. 30:5-7).

This passage needs no comment. Equally explicit is the following:

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 be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book (Dan. 12:1).

In the well-known passage in which our Lord quotes these words, speaking of a time of tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world, He adds, "no, nor ever shall be." And, as though to give us the deepest possible impression of the awful character of that period, He says,

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened (Matt. 24:21, 22).

Our readers will remember what it is that terminates this time of unparalleled distress.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened . . . 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 (Matt. 24:29, 30).

So immediately is the coming of the Son of man in judgment preceded by this time of unequalled tribulation.

(3) We have many intimations in Scripture that a portion of the Jews will return to their own land in a state of unbelief; that they will form alliances there with the wicked rulers of the Gentiles; that they will be by them deceived and oppressed; and that thus this tribulation, unequalled even in all their eventful history, will befall them. Isa. 17 and 18 though in figurative and what might at first sight seem obscure language, bears important testimony on this subject. Ch. 17 commences with the burden of Damascus. In v. 4 the prophet turns to Israel and God's dealings with that people. The epoch to which the prophecy relates is one at which "the glory of Jacob" is to be "made thin, and the fatness of his

flesh" to "wax lean." The diminution of the people is so great that those who survive are compared to "gleaning grapes," or the "two or three berries left in the top of the uttermost bough after the shaking of an olive tree" {Isa. 17:4, 6}. Those who do thus survive are represented as looking to their Maker, instead of to the altars which their own hands had made -- as having respect to the Holy One of Israel, instead of to the groves and images which were once the objects of their idolatrous homage. Such is to be the issue of these closing troubles. But, then, we are led back, as it were, to the troubles themselves, and that which brought them upon the nation.

and there shall be desolation. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shall set it with strange slips: in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow {Isa. 17:9-11}.

The people are here seen, as of old, depending upon themselves and their own natural resources, forgetting God, and seeking fruitfulness by their own endeavors. "A harvest of sorrow in the day of desperate sorrow" is all the fruit this husbandry yields. We then find a passing glance at the instruments of their final distress; and the sudden overwhelming destruction of these enemies of Israel is foretold.

Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing [or thistle-down, see margin] before the whirlwind. And behold at eventide trouble; and before the morning he is not. *This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us* {Isa. 17:12-14}.

How evident from all this that the returned Jews will still be acting in a spirit of self-righteousness and self-dependence, for which they will have to pass through all the desolation caused by the rushing of the nations and peoples like the rushing of many waters; that in their extremity of trial God will arise to their deliverance, and rebuke their enemies; and that the overthrow of these enemies will be so sudden, that at evening-tide the trouble will be at its height -- in the morning those who have caused it will be nowhere to be found! Such is Isa. 17.

(4) Isa. 18 seem to go again over the same ground, entering more into detail, and furnishing some particulars not previously made known. Some maritime nation, distinguished as such by the expression "that sendeth ambassadors by the sea," is represented as taking Israel under the wing of its protection. Israel is spoken of as a nation "scattered and peeled," "a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!" {Isa. 18:2} Now that this alliance is formed between this outcast, exiled race, and the maritime power of

which the chapter treats, universal attention is demanded. Mighty events are at hand when this comes to pass.

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye {Isa. 28:3}.

But signal though this be of the commencement of a crisis in which all are interested, and to which all are summoned to pay attention, God Himself does not, as yet, openly interfere.

For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest {Isa. 18:4}.

Events are not yet quite ripe for divine interference; but they are represented as the objects of divine attention. The verse just quoted is somewhat differently rendered by scholars.

For thus saith the Lord unto me: I will sit still (but I will keep my eye upon my prepared habitation) as the parching heat just before lightning, as the dewy cloud in the heat of harvest.

The passage suggests thus the idea of that awful season of deathly stillness and oppressive heat, which precedes the bursting of some dreadful thunderstorm. "Not a gleam of sunshine breaks for a moment through the sullen gloom; not a breath stirs; not a leaf wags; not a blade of grass is shaken; nature seems to be numbered"<sup>41</sup>: all seems at a stand and in suspense. It is thus the Spirit of prophecy has seen good to portray to us the short season during which the Jews, aided by some powerful maritime nation, are re-settling in their own land. The mass of them are still in a state of unbelief, and go through terrible trials ere the moment of deliverance comes.

For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them {Isa. 18:5, 6}.

They are represented thus as morally unchanged, since the day when God complained of them as His vineyard, which produced wild grapes alone. Now, however, the sour grape is not allowed to ripen. The sprigs and branches are prematurely cut down, and the beasts and fowls feed upon them. In other words, these returned Jews again suffer, and that most severely, at the hands of the nations, whose rushing was foretold in the previous chapter. But this is the last, short-lived triumph of the nations over Israel. We have seen how suddenly and utterly they are to be overthrown when God rises up to judgment; and the chapter before us concludes by foretelling that

In that time shall the present *be brought unto the LORD of hosts* of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, *to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the*

*mount Zion* {Isa. 18:7}.

These troubles, caused by their sin, are to issue in their complete deliverance, and in their being brought to the Mount Zion *as a present to the Lord of hosts*.

(5) But we are not left to an outline of the subject such as this. Many details much more minute are supplied by the prophetic word. Two statements of our blessed Lord Himself may well receive consideration here. To the Jews He says:

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 5:43}.

In this passage the Saviour speaks conditionally. He does not affirm that another will come in his own name, but that if one should thus come, he would be received by the Jews. From other scriptures, however, we are fully assured that there is one to come in his own name, constituting thus the awful contrast to the lowliness of Jesus, who came in His Father's name, but whom, for that very reason, the Jews would not receive. There is one yet to come, having "a mouth speaking great things, whose look is more stout than his fellows" {see Dan. 7:20}; one who is described as opposing and exalting himself

above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God {2 Thess. 2:4}.

This one, whose coming we saw in our last to be "after the power of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," is to number among his adherents, not only those nominal Christians on whom

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 {2 Thess. 2:11, 12},

but also a large proportion of the Jews who will have returned in unbelief to their own land. In them will be fulfilled that other word of Christ -- not conditional, like John 5:43, but an absolute prediction of what will come to pass.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. **Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation** (Matt. 12:43-45).

These last words emphatically declare the prophetic application to the unbelieving Jewish nation, of the parable drawn by our Lord from the case of a poor demoniac such as He describes. Doubtless there were individual instances of the kind; but the end for which our Lord delineates this one was to furnish prophetic instruction as to what should befall the

41. Faber.

guilty generation of the Jews.<sup>42</sup> The “unclean spirit” of idolatry which had always infested Israel till the Babylonish captivity, seemed from that epoch to have “gone out” of his house. When Christ was on earth there was nothing of the idolatry of Manasseh’s or Zedekiah’s day. The house was “empty,” “swept” of many an outward abomination, and “garnished” with fairest appearances of piety and zeal. But the “unclean spirit” could still say of it, “my house.” The stronger than the strong man armed had not forcibly dispossessed him. He was on earth, and in Israel’s land, and proving, by unnumbered glorious works, His superiority to Satan’s power, and His readiness to dispossess him. But Israel would not receive Him. They said He did not “cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils.” It was this utter rejection of Christ, as expressed in this awful, daring blasphemy, that drew forth from His lips the words on which we meditate. Portentous words! The unclean spirit of idolatry is yet to return, taking seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and, as with the demoniac, so with the wicked, unbelieving, Jewish “generation,” “the last state is worse than the first.”

(6) Is it not to this that the prophet refers in Isa. 28:15, where he speaks of the rulers at Jerusalem making a “covenant with death,” and an “agreement with hell”? There are several marks by which it is evident that this passage is a prediction of what is yet to occur. First, it foretells events which were to be subsequent to the laying in Zion for a foundation, “a tried stone, a precious corner stone,” on which whosoever believed should not make haste (see v. 16). The events predicted were to be subsequent to Christ’s first coming. Secondly, these events are connected with what is termed by the prophet, “The overflowing scourge,” an expression clearly pointing to the awful judgments of the final crisis. Thirdly, if it should be urged that the “covenant with death” and “agreement with hell” took place when the Jewish rulers united with the Roman power to crucify our Lord, and that “the overflowing scourge” refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, we should be far from affirming that there is no allusion in the prophecy to these events. Acts 4:25-27 is undoubted authority for believing that the confederacy against Christ was then formed, which Psa. 2 declares will be judged and overthrown when Christ, having received “the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,” shall “break them with a rod of iron,” and “dash them in pieces like a potter’s

vessel.” But whatever reference there may be in the passage before us to this confederacy of the Jews with the Roman power eighteen hundred years ago, the prophecy reaches on to the yet future and rapidly approaching crisis. The power of the resuscitated Roman Empire, under its eighth Satanic head, will be dominant in Jerusalem when the Jews are again found there as the recognized people of the land: and as their fathers united with the Roman power to crucify the true Christ, they will unite with it to accredit and follow the false Christ, the Antichrist. The One who came humbly in His Father’s name they would not receive: the one who comes proudly in his own name they will receive. Under his wings they will put their trust.

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, . . . judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it {Isa. 28:14-18}.

So awful is the visitation, that it is described as follows:

From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; *and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report* {Isa. 28:19}

The remainder of the passage demonstrates the futurity of these events, and that they take place in connection with that great crisis of human affairs when “the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” {Isa. 26:21}.

For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act {Isa. 28:21}.

The prophet then warns his readers:

Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts *a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth* {Isa. 28:22}.

The judgments of that coming day (however the land of Israel and the surrounding countries may be their special focus and center) extend to the whole earth. They are universal in their range.

(7) The next passage to which we invite attention, is one in which we shall find further instruction as to this “covenant with death” and “agreement with hell.” It is Dan. 9:24-27; and we would beg the reader, ere proceeding, to turn to the passage, and read the whole chapter, noticing particularly these closing verses. Daniel had understood from books that the seventy years which had been declared by Jeremiah to be

42. Would not this use of the word “generation” illustrate and confirm the explanation of it (see page 86) as used in Matt. 24:34? It supplies, moreover, what we ought to have noticed in our remarks on the latter passage, the moral element which entered into our Lord’s use of the word. Not only was the Jewish nation not to pass till the things treated of should be fulfilled, but the Jewish nation *morally characterized as it then was* -- “this wicked generation” -- should not pass, etc. When the predictions of Matt. 24 are fulfilled, the “generation” in this moral sense of the word will pass away, but not till then. It will then be succeeded by a “generation” of an entirely different character. “A seed shall serve him; *it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation*. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this” (Psa. 22:30, 31). See also Psa. 102:18, and compare Deut. 32:5, 20.



the assigned limit of the Babylonish captivity were now expiring, or had expired; and he set himself by prayer and fasting to seek the Lord his God on behalf of his beloved country and nation. It is of consequence to observe that it was not as to Christianity, or the Christian Church, that Daniel's sympathies were aroused and his supplications poured forth. It was as to his own nation and Jerusalem, the beloved city of his fathers. At the close of his prayer, so simple, so touching, so earnest and importunate, he informs us,

And whiles I was speaking, 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, . . . the man Gabriel, . . . being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation {Dan. 9:20, 21}.

He brings to the prophet intelligence from God as to the subject of his deep solicitude.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people 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 {Dan. 9:24}.

As Daniel's prayers, so this prophetic answer by an angel's lips, referred to Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city -- "Seventy weeks are determined upon *thy* people, and upon *thy* holy city." It is of all importance to bear this in mind.<sup>43</sup>

"Seventy weeks are determined," etc. As to whether they be weeks of days or years, the context, with other scriptures, must determine. We need not say that the whole passage proves that they are "weeks of years" which are treated of. There were seventy weeks of years, that is, four hundred and ninety years, determined upon Daniel's people and upon his holy city. Within this prophetic period all the events enumerated in v. 24, just quoted, were to be accomplished, and

accomplished on Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. Such is the general, comprehensive statement of the whole burden of the prophecy, with which Gabriel's communication opens.

"But how is this?" asks the reader. "Israel's transgressions are not yet finished, their sins are not yet made an end of, they are not yet reconciled, or brought to own the Lord as their everlasting righteousness. The veil is yet upon their hearts, though far more than four hundred and ninety years have elapsed since Daniel's day." Most true is all this,<sup>44</sup> and yet most satisfactory is the solution of the difficulty afforded by the remaining verses of the prophecy. Seventy weeks were determined for these ends on the prophet's people and on his holy city, is the general statement of v. 24. The remaining verses distribute these seventy weeks into three distinct periods.

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: 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 {Dan. 9:25, 26}.

So far, all is clear. There was to be a period of seven weeks, forty-nine years, during which the wall and the street of Jerusalem should be rebuilt. Ezra and Nehemiah record the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. From the close of this shorter period of seven weeks, another was to be reckoned of sixty-two weeks, making, with the former, sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. At the close of this second period, Messiah was to be "cut off, but not for himself." The marginal reading of this latter clause, preferred by most scholars, is, "and shall have nothing." At the close of sixty-nine weeks, Messiah, who had come in fulfilment of all the promises to Israel, was cut off, and had nothing. Instead of sitting on the throne of His father David, and reigning in peace over the house of Israel and over the whole earth, He was crucified between two thieves, and had none of the earthly dignities and glories to which, as Israel's promised Messiah, He was entitled. *We know*, indeed, that His death has secured other and more glorious ends, and that hereafter it will be found to have been the indispensable basis even of Israel's enjoyment of the blessings of their Messiah's reign. But Christianity and the Church are not in view in this prophecy of Daniel: and as to *his* people and *his* holy city, which alone are regarded here, instead of Messiah being welcomed as such, and entering on the promised glories of

43. On this subject the following extract may not be unwelcome: -- "During these seventy weeks, God is in relationship with Israel, the power of the Gentiles existing at the same time. We know from scripture that the restoration of Jerusalem took place under the reign of the Gentiles, as well as the whole course of the sixty-nine weeks which have assuredly passed away. The seventy have all the same character in this respect. It is only at the end of the seventy that pardon is granted. Whoever may be the instrument of establishing the covenant, the fourth beast will be at that time the ruling power of the Gentiles, to whom God has committed authority. It is very important, if we would understand the seventy weeks, to remark this state of things -- the Jews restored, the city rebuilt, but the Gentiles still occupying the throne of the world. The seventy weeks have their course only under these conditions. It must be well understood that it is the people of Daniel who are meant, and his city, which are to be re-established in their former favor with God. The longsuffering of God still now waits. The Gentile power has already failed in faithfulness; Babylon has been overthrown; by means of intercession the Jews provisionally restored, and the temple rebuilt. The seventy weeks had very nearly elapsed when Christ came. If the Jews, and Jerusalem, in that her day, had repented, all was ready for her re-establishment in glory. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could have been raised up, as Lazarus had been. But she knew not the day of her visitation, and the fulfilling of the seventy weeks, as well as the blessing that should follow had necessarily to be postponed. Through grace we know that God had yet more excellent thoughts and purposes. Accordingly all is here announced beforehand" (*Synopsis of the books of the Bible* 2: 448).

44. In accepting thus the statements made in the supposed objection, we would not be understood to question for a moment that in another sense the most important prediction in the passage has been fulfilled. Undoubtedly Christ has made an end of sins, has made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness; and faith knows this and rejoices in it, whether such faith be found in Jew or Gentile. But Daniel's subject is the application of these things *to his people* and *to his holy city*. We all know that when Israel is restored it will be under "the new covenant." Now no covenant is valid until the blood of a victim has been shed. Christ's blood, the blood of the new covenant, has, blessed be His name, been shed. But to Israel nationally that blood has not been yet applied, and it is of its national application that Gabriel treats.

His reign, He was, at the end of the sixty-nine weeks, "cut off, and had nothing." Thus we reach the end of the second period; and between it and the third, or last, period into which the seventy weeks are divided, events are foretold which belong to none of the three periods. The prophecy is as follows: "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end therefore shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined" {Dan. 9:26}. Messiah being rejected by His own people, the Jews, nothing remained but that they should for a length of time endure the consequences of their sin. These consequences are depicted to us in the words just cited. "The prince that shall come" is not the Messiah. Messiah had come and been cut off. Neither is it "the prince" himself who destroys the city and the sanctuary. Who the prince is, we learn when we come to the events of the last week. It is his people, the people of the yet-future prince, who destroy the city and sanctuary. All know that it was by the Romans Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed; but "the prince" is not Titus, who commanded the Roman armies, but some yet-future head of the Roman empire. From the destruction of the city and sanctuary, there should be nothing but desolations to the end of the war. Daniel's "people" and "holy city" are entirely set aside. Christianity fills up the interval, which has already lasted eighteen centuries; but with these centuries Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks has nothing to do. Jerusalem is not *our* holy city. For the present, Jerusalem in the thoughts of faith is no more holy than any city of the Gentiles. But it is equally true that she is holy in both her recollections and her prospects. The seventy weeks were determined upon Daniel's "people" and upon his "holy city": and whenever the seventieth week shall commence, it will be Jerusalem and the Jews who will be again in question before God.

And he [that is, "the prince that shall come"] shall confirm [see margin] a covenant with many for one week: 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 {Dan. 9:27}.

Here we have the "covenant with death," and the "agreement with hell" on the part of the Jewish rulers. Re-established in their land, under the protection of "the prince that shall come," the eighth, Satanic head of that people who long ago destroyed the city and the sanctuary, it is with him that they, the Jews -- that is, the mass of them -- will enter into an alliance for seven years. Their worship being restored, their sacrifices and oblations (vain sacrifices and oblations of wickedness) will again smoke on their altars. But in the midst of the week, "the prince" will break his covenant with this guilty race; he will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. In our last, when contemplating this same personage under the symbol of the little horn in Dan. 7, we saw, that he will "think to change times and laws," and how they are to be "given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Now this is precisely the same length of time as will elapse from the middle to the end of the last week. It is the

same as the "short time" in Rev. 12 after the dragon is cast down from heaven. The beast, also, to whom the dragon then gives "his power, and his seat, and great authority," and whose deadly wound has been healed, has power "given to him to continue forty and two months" <sup>45</sup> (Rev. 13:5). This beast, whose worship, as we saw, is to be enforced on pain of death, will surely claim to be worshipped at Jerusalem. It is thus that "the prince" will break his covenant with the Jews and abolish their sacrifices. "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The margin reads, "upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator." Either rendering substantially gives the sense. The word "abominations," in Old-Testament language, means idols; as, for instance, "Chemosh" is termed "the abomination of Moab"; and "Milcoln," the "abomination of the Ammonites" (1 Kings 11:5, 7). The word rendered "overspreading" literally means "wings," which in Scripture suggests the idea of protection. "The shadow of his wings." "Under his wings shalt thou trust." These passages show the use of the word. "For the protection of idols he shall make it desolate." Thus does the Jewish nation, which refused to be gathered under Messiah's wing when here, seek protection in the end under the wing of him who sets himself above all that is called God or worshipped. It is in consequence of this that the last waves of tribulation pass over them, -- "he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The last state of that "wicked generation" is indeed "worse than the first".

(8) In Dan. 8 we have the prophetic description of what seems to be another enemy and oppressor of the Jews in the last days. We would express ourselves with diffidence on this subject, aware of the difficulties which beset the interpretation of the chapter, and of the way in which the most enlightened and competent students of prophecy differ in judgment with regard to it. A few suggestions, however, we would submit to the reader.

In the first place, it is evident that whoever may be the one symbolized by the "little horn" of chapter 8, he has his origin, not in the Western part of those regions embraced by the symbol of "the image" in Dan. 2, but in the Eastern. He rises not from the Roman but from the Grecian empire; or rather, from some one of the four kingdoms into which the Grecian empire was divided. The reader will remember here, what was noticed in our last number as to Dan. 7:12, that after the imperial authority of Babylon, Persia, and Greece was destroyed, the existence of each, as a separate kingdom, was still prolonged. The first eight verses of Dan. 8 set forth the wars between Persia and Greece, which should issue in the triumph of the latter, speedily to be followed, however, by its own division into four kingdoms. These are represented by four notable horns on the he-goat, which appear in the place

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45. All these prophetic periods express, in different forms, a duration of three years and a-half.

of the first great horn, when it has been broken. In Dan. 8:9 we begin to hear of a “little horn” coming forth from one of these four, “which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.” Palestine is doubtless denoted by the last expression. This “little horn” magnifies himself also against (margin) the prince of the host, and from <sup>46</sup> (margin) him the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the place of his sanctuary is cast down. It is further represented as “casting down the truth to the ground,” and we are told that “it practised and prospered.” The duration of its actings, or rather of the period which ends by the sanctuary being cleansed, is stated to be “two thousand three hundred days.” All this the prophet saw and heard in a vision. He anxiously seeks for the meaning of this vision, when Gabriel is again sent to instruct him. It is with Gabriel’s explanation that we have most to do, as bearing most immediately on the subject before us.

And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be {Dan. 8:19}.

Who can doubt that “the last end of the indignation” points to the very closing period of Jewish tribulation? “the end” for which there is a “certain appointed time”? “The ram” is then explained to be Medo-Persia; “the rough goat,” Greece; and the “great horn,” the first Grecian king. We hear of its partition into four, and then we read,

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand {Dan. 8:23-25}.

On these words it may be remarked that,

(1) It is “in the latter time” of the four kingdoms into which Alexander’s was divided, that this prediction is to have its accomplishment. We are far from affirming that these words would not in a true sense apply to Antiochus Epiphanes, of whom this whole prophecy of “the little horn” is often explained. It was in “the latter time” of the four Grecian kingdoms, *as at first constituted*, that Antiochus reigned; and undoubtedly his actings in Jerusalem and Judea strikingly correspond with much here foretold of “the little horn.” But when we remember that Gabriel came to show Daniel what should be “in the last end of the indignation” against the Jews -- for so only can we understand the words; when we bear in mind that Egypt now exists as a separate kingdom, and Greece likewise; and when we recollect that nothing is more

probable than that the wars or the diplomacy of our own or future times may yet produce, as distinct kingdoms, Syria and Thrace, the other two partitions of Alexander’s empire; we cannot resist the conviction that “the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full,” is a yet future time; and that the “king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences,” is one who is yet to “stand up.”

(2) His power, though mighty, is “not by his own power.” He is a delegate or representative of another, from whom his authority is derived. He is thus, as well as by his eastern origin, distinguished from the great chief, the eighth head of the revived Roman empire. He bears thus a closer resemblance to the second beast in Rev. 13 than to the first.

(3) It is among “the mighty and holy people” -- those whom Daniel would understand by these words -- the Jews, that he practices and prospers, and he is represented as destroying them.

(4) Policy, craft, extraordinary intelligence, and peaceable professions, are the weapons by which he chiefly succeeds, though he be at the same time of “fierce countenance” and a “wonderful” destroyer. All this suggests thoughts of the two-horned beast of Rev. 13, with lamb-like power and dragon-like voice, who exercises all the power of the first beast before him, or in his presence, that is, as his delegate, and who does great wonders, deceiving the dwellers on earth, and causing them by his miracles and his power to worship the image of the beast.

(5) In the end he stands up against the Prince of princes, and is broken without hand. One cannot but be reminded by this language of the end of the second beast of Rev. 13, or “false prophet” of Rev. 19. He is, with the beast, “cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Still, we do but suggest these points of resemblance to our readers, without affirming anything as to the identity or otherwise of the prophetic symbols in question. {This little horn is the final King of the North, not the second beast.}

(6) In the latter part of Dan 11, we have still further instructions as to what will befall the Jews in the latter days. Syria and Egypt were the principal kingdoms among the four into which the Grecian monarchy was divided; and they have a special place on account of their connections with the Holy Land, Palestine always belonging either to the one or the other. The former part of chapter 11 is occupied with the prophetic history of these two powers, under the names of “the king of the north” and “the king of the south”; a prophecy so exactly fulfilled that infidels have alleged that it must have been written since the events! In v. 30, we find introduced into the scene another power, the Western or Roman power, here spoken of as “the ships of Chittim.”

For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he [the king of the north, Syria] shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of

46. The importance of this marginal reading, which is decidedly preferred by some scholars, is, that if correct, the passage does not attribute the taking away of the daily sacrifice to the “little horn,” but speaks of its being taken from the prince of the host.

strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate {Dan. 11:30, 31}.

This would not seem to be the passage quoted by our Lord in Matt. 24:15: it is, as we humbly judge, Dan. 12:11, to which He refers, as immediately connected with the time of unequalled tribulation, which tribulation is to be immediately followed by His own coming in the clouds of heaven.<sup>47</sup>

From Dan. 11:30, 31, which would appear to have had their fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes, to Dan. 11:35, we have predictions of what would occur during the long period of Jewish desolation, which will only terminate with "the time of the end"; and then in v. 36, we suddenly hear of a person styled "the king" -- not "the king of the north," or "the king of the south," but "the king." In two other passages solemn mention is made of some one under this title.

And thou wentest to **the king** with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell {sheol} (Isa. 57:9).

For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for **the king** it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it (Isa. 30:33).

The Assyrian has been the subject of the verses immediately preceding this; and it might be thought, at first sight, that "the king" means the king of Assyria. No doubt Tophet is ordained of old for him; but for "the king" also, thus suddenly introduced, as in the passage we were considering (Dan. 11:36), this doom is prepared.

And **the king** shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.

He is then said not to

regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women [the Messiah] nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all {Dan. 11:37}.

The moral identity of this with 2 Thess. 2 is too obvious to require comment.

But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things {Dan. 11:38}.

The beast will be worshipped, and his image, if all other worship be displaced and prohibited, to make room for this.

Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them [his idolatrous agents] to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain {Dan. 11:39}.

Such is the protection the Jews receive by means of their "covenant with death," and their "agreement with hell." The

rest of the chapter details movements and counter movements of the kings of the south and of the north, and predicts the end of one of the contending powers in the Holy Land. But, however there may be more agents than one in these closing scenes, and whatever difficulty may be felt in assigning this passage definitely to the one and that to the other, there are moral links which show with sufficient clearness that they are, in general, the same sad scenes of rampant, triumphant evil, energized by Satan's power, which are portrayed to us. One, such as 2 Thess. 2, or the passages in Revelation, may present those scenes in their connection with apostate Christendom; another, such as Dan. 7, may depict them in reference to the open revolt against God of Gentile power; and others again, such as we have now been examining, may treat of them in connection with Jewish apostasy. The scenes and actors are *morally* identified in the most solemn way throughout. The special theatre and seat of operation may be the Western Roman Empire in its last form; or it may be the Holy Land and the surrounding Eastern countries; but whether it be the one or the other, it is the same terrific character of utter, daring, blasphemous opposition to God which we behold in each case. Self-exaltation, self-will, the deifying of man, and the enforcement of his worship, along with the setting aside and trampling down of everything, whether divine or human, which stands in the way -- such are the moral features of the approaching crisis! Such are the heights of daring rebellion against God for which the world, whether Jewish, Gentile, or nominally Christian, is fast ripening! The Lord grant that our hearts may be solemnly impressed with that which He has thus revealed. And may we, in the spirit of our minds, and in our daily walk, be by faith in Christ and communion with Him, more and more separated from the course of this world, the final issues of which God has thus deigned for our warning to set before us.

The first verse of the following chapter must on no account be omitted.

And at that time [observe these words] 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. 12:1}.

Happy conclusion of the dreary scenes we have been called to contemplate! May our meditations on those scenes be blest to us; and may we be prepared by God's grace for the inquiries which yet remain.

47. On this point, as on some others of detail, the reader will find the present edition somewhat differing from the former. We trust the change is the fruit of clearer light on the matters in question.

## Chapter 14

### The Spared Remnant

The word “remnant” is well known to signify “the residue,” or “that which remains” of anything with regard to which it is used. In Scripture it is very frequently employed to designate the faithful, godly portion of a people, more especially of the Jewish people, or nation of Israel, after the nation generally had apostatized from God. Prophecy leaves no room for doubt, that there will be such a portion, or remnant, amid the scenes of matured evil and terrific desolation in which the nation at large will yet be involved, ere the moment of final deliverance arrives.

Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small *remnant*, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah (Isa. 1:9).

Such is the prophet’s acknowledgement, in view of the unnumbered calamities which even in his day had overtaken the nation on account of their sins. Still “the Lord of hosts had left a very small remnant.”

*The remnant* shall return, even *the remnant* of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet *a remnant* of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness (Isa. 10:21, 22).

Here it is evidently of “the remnant” in yet future days that the prophet speaks. It is as obviously to a yet future “remnant” that the following passage refers.

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 the islands of the sea (Isa. 11:11).

The same may be said of Joel 2:32; 3:1, 2.

For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in *the remnant* whom the LORD shall call. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel.

It is here in manifest connection with the last great crisis in the land of Israel, that mention is made of “*the remnant* whom the Lord shall call.”

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 (Mic. 4:7).

This passage depicts to us the triumph of *the remnant*, when the crisis of their sorrows and of the nation’s final calamities is

past.

*The remnant* of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies (Zeph. 3:13).

Here it is their moral character which is the subject of the prophetic pen. In the New Testament the apostle quotes Isaiah’s words: --

Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, *a remnant* shall be saved;

and there can be no question that he refers these words for their fulfilment to the brief coming crisis in Israel’s history.

For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth (Rom. 9:27, 28).

He acknowledged, however, the existence of *a remnant* in his own day.

Even so then at this present time also there is *a remnant* according to the election of grace (Rom. 11:5).

These passages may suffice to show the sense in which the appellation “the remnant” is ordinarily used in Scripture. It is often employed of other nations besides Israel, as, for instance, “the remnant of Syria,” “the remnant of Ashdod,” “the remnant of the Philistines”; and it is sometimes applied to other subjects. Matt. 22:6, is an instance of this kind: “And *the remnant* took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.” In the vast majority of cases, however, the phrase denotes the godly, repentant part of Israel, when the nation at large has utterly departed from God, and especially such a portion of that race in days yet to come. Many scriptures treat of “the remnant,” thus understood, where the expression itself is not used. Indeed, when once the mind is awakened to the fact, it is surprising to find how large a portion of Scripture is occupied with our present subject.

As long as the nation itself so far maintained the testimony and worship of Jehovah, as that He could own it as a whole, we hear nothing of “a remnant.” But when the ten tribes had quite abandoned the worship of Jehovah, and established that of Baal, the Lord not only raised up Elijah as a public testimony to His power and Godhead, but in answer to the complainings of this distinguished prophet, who spake of being left alone, the Lord assured him,

Yet I have left me [reserved unto myself, see Rom. 11:4] seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him {1 Kings 19:18}.

The “seven thousand” were *the remnant* of that day. In Judah,

in like manner, when Uzziah and Ahaz had so grievously departed from God, Isaiah's prophecy began to recognize the existence of *a remnant*, in passages we have already quoted. It was "in the year that king Uzziah died" that the prophet had the vision of the glory of the Lord, recorded by him in Isa. 6 and it is in that chapter, after hearing the sentence of judicial blindness upon the nation -- a sentence to be fulfilled throughout the period of their long dispersion -- he is told,

But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof {Isa. 6:13}.

It is thus during the nation's long, dreary winter, that the remnant -- the holy seed -- are to the nation what the sap of the tree is to its leafless, withered stump. The sap arises afresh as spring advances, and new verdure appears where nothing has met the eye but the barrenness of death; so will the remnant ere long become the living nucleus of the restored and happy and prosperous nation in millennial times. Sad, however, are the scenes, and deep the trials, which await both the remnant and the nation ere that day arrives.

Jeremiah prophesied on the eve of the Babylonish captivity, an event which he lived to witness and record. The sins of Manasseh, who had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, having rendered it impossible for the sentence long before passed on the guilty nation to be repealed, or even to be much further put off, Jeremiah is commissioned to declare the irreversibleness of their doom. Space had been given for repentance. The Lord had again and again, on some signs of contrition being shown, deferred its execution, but now He declares Himself "weary with repenting," and the prophet is charged with the message,

Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth {Jer. 15:1}.

Should they ask, Whither? they were to be told,

Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity {Jer. 15:2}.

The judgment was inevitable, and no intercessions, as of Moses or of Samuel, could turn it aside. The prophet bemoans his lot, to be charged with such a message. It is then that he is comforted by the assurance of mercy to *the remnant*.

The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction (Jer. 15:11).

Jeremiah and "the remnant," of which he was one, were thus distinguished from the wicked, apostate nation. They were to go into captivity, indeed, and be subject to a stranger's yoke, but the Lord would cause the enemy to "entreat" them "well."

Ezekiel, who prophesied a little later than Jeremiah, bears distinct testimony to the preservation of *a remnant* in those days of retribution for Judah's sin. In vision he sees six men with slaughter-weapons in their hands, and another clothed with linen, and a writer's inkhorn by his side. To the latter it is said,

Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof {Ezek. 9:4}.

The others were to go after him, and smite, and not spare; but they were expressly cautioned "not to come near any man upon whom was the mark." The *remnant* was to be spared.

We are not to suppose however, that all who survived the overthrow of Jerusalem, and went into captivity, sustained this remnant-character. Some who survived the destruction of the city were Jeremiah's worst enemies, and perished in their sins by other and subsequent calamities; and as to those who reached the land of the Chaldeans, all were not like Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These, and all who were like-minded with them, formed the true remnant, during the seventy years' captivity. How interesting to observe that these men, though not exempted from the general lot of the nation as to subjection to a Gentile yoke, were yet honored of God as the depositories of His secrets, and the confessors of His name.

At the expiration of the seventy years assigned to the captivity in Babylon, a number of the Jews returned to Jerusalem. There we find *the remnant* in such men of God as Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, and Zechariah. How touching the language of Ezra, when confessing his sin and the sin of his people, in respect to the unholy alliances which had been made with Gentile strangers; he says,

And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the LORD our God, to leave us *a remnant to escape*, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage (Ezra 9:8).

Both in Ezra and Nehemiah, as well as in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, we have full proof even as to the few returned captives in Judea, that "all were not Israel who were of Israel." It was but in a few that the true remnant spirit and character were found; and ere the voice of prophecy was entirely hushed, we find Malachi in the most solemn way distinguishing between the true remnant and the mass of the nation, whether people or priests. As to the latter, the greater part of his prophecy is occupied with detecting and denouncing their wickedness; of the former, the true remnant, he speaks as follows.

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Mal. 3:16, 17).

It is important to bear in mind, that however this may apply, as it surely did, to the remnant in Malachi's day, it is connected in the prophecy with anticipations of "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The reason of this is obvious: *the remnant have one character throughout*. Humble, obedient, separate from abounding wickedness, and heart-broken on account of it, they are comforted whether in past or yet future times by the

prospect of that great interposition of God in judgment, which will at once and for ever break down and set aside the power of wickedness, and which, in so doing, will accomplish the deliverance and usher in the full blessing of the faithful remnant.

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. *But unto you that fear my name, [the remnant] shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye [the remnant] shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts (Mal. 4:1-3).*

This passage deserves the most serious attention of the Christian reader, as distinguishing entirely between the prospects of “the remnant,” and those held out to the believer under the present dispensation. *The deliverance promised to “the remnant” is effected by God’s solemn interposition in judgment on the wicked; an interposition which becomes thus to the remnant the object of their hope; and in the results of which, when it actually takes place, they are represented as partaking.* They are to “tread down the wicked,” who are to be “as ashes under the soles of their feet in that day.” How different is all this from the heavenly hopes of the Church, and the character of grace which attaches to its present relations to a world in which it is entrusted with “the ministry of reconciliation”! But more on this subject at a further stage of our inquiries.

It is deeply interesting to connect the notice of the remnant in Malachi with what we find in the Gospels as to the few who were ready to hail the Messiah on His appearance among men. Malachi refers to the remnant as fearing the Lord, thinking upon His name, and speaking often one to another. The evangelist, having recorded the birth of Jesus and His presentation in the temple, says of the aged Anna, that

she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise to the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2:38).

Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, and their unnamed associates, formed “the remnant” at the time of the Savior’s birth. Of one it is said, he was “waiting for the consolation of Israel”; others are described as “looking for redemption in Jerusalem”; and it is evident that, as in Malachi’s day, they were known to each other, and accustomed to speak together of their common hope. An Edomite was on the throne; the chief priests and scribes were ready to be his confederates in searching for the infant Jesus to destroy Him; the tidings of one “born King of the Jews” troubled the king, and “all Jerusalem was troubled with him”; but in the midst of a state of things so deplorable, there was still a *remnant*, true to the faith, and confiding in the promises of Jehovah. It was of such that the prophet had long before been inspired to write, “They shall be mine,” saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.”

In the remnant at the time of the Savior’s birth there were

doubtless many degrees of spiritual intelligence. Some, like Simeon and Anna, could instruct the rest; while others, such as the shepherds of Bethlehem, seem to have but little intelligence indeed. All who were separated in heart from the abounding hypocrisy and wickedness of the times, and who were looking forward with expectation and desire to the accomplishment of Jehovah’s promises, were, in spirit, the remnant of that day. Such, mainly, were those who became disciples of John the Baptist, and such were afterwards the disciples of our Lord. Whether previously devout, like Nathanael, or suddenly converted by the call of Christ, as Levi the publican, Zaccheus, and others, in hearkening to the words and following the steps of Jesus, they became “the remnant.” With them the Savior graciously identified Himself. When forced by the unbelief of the nation to disown all His natural relations to them, He stretched forth His hands towards 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 (Matt. 12:49, 50).

He immediately afterwards fulfils to His disciples a quotation from Isa. 8:16, 17, which in its original connection evidently refers to “the remnant” during the time of Israel’s national rejection.

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.

These are the prophet’s words, or rather Messiah’s words anticipatively recorded by the prophet’s pen. In Matt. 13 our Lord applies to the nation the sentence of judicial blindness foretold in Isa. 6, and, distinguishing between the nation and His disciples, says,

It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the nation] it is not given {Matt. 13:11}.

He thus “binds up the testimony and seals the law among his disciples.” He owns them as His remnant, and confides to them the knowledge of His Father’s ways.

Few things are more essential to an intelligent apprehension of much that the four gospels contain than to perceive this remnant character of our Lord’s disciples. They were “the remnant” in their day. Doubtless there were higher destinies awaiting them, when once the national rejection of their Lord had been consummated at the cross. The foundation of “the church” having been laid in the atoning death of “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” when God had raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to heaven, the Holy Ghost came down, and the actual formation of “the church” began. No doubt those who had till then been simply Christ’s disciples, and as such the godly Jewish remnant of their day, did then become “the church of the living God,” into which Gentiles afterwards were introduced, both becoming “one body in Christ.” But while such was the place of privilege and dignity in reserve for the disciples, and while a vast portion of our Lord’s instructions were addressed to them prospectively as having, in the counsels of God, to fill this place, they were actually, until the day of Pentecost, “the remnant” of Israel, and were often in this character addressed and instructed by the

Lord. This accounts for many passages in the Gospels which would not strictly apply to the Church as such. The sermon on the Mount, and the prophecy on Mount Olivet, in Matt. 24, 25, may be referred to as containing passages of this description. Matt. 23:3, and Luke 18:3, 7, are also instances occurring at the moment to the mind.

When Christ had been fully rejected by Israel and the earth; when He had not only been by man's wicked hands crucified and slain, but when pardon through His death had been proclaimed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and national blessing and restoration offered to Israel in case they should even then repent and be converted (see Acts 3:19-21); when this testimony had been borne and borne in vain; when the murder of Stephen had as definitely marked Israel's rejection of the Holy Ghost, as the crucifixion of Christ had declared their rejection of Him, all question of the Jewish nation, and of a Jewish remnant, passed into abeyance. The nation was given up to its long and fearful desolations; and "the remnant according to the election of grace" became lost sight of in "the church" of which it already formed a part. For a little while after Pentecost this remnant formed the whole of "the church": then, on the introduction of Gentile believers, "the remnant" formed but a part of the Church, and its Jewish hopes and prospects were absorbed in the brighter hopes and higher calling of the body in which it was merged. As centuries have since rolled on, the Church has become almost entirely composed of Gentiles: any of the natural seed of Abraham who have been turned to the faith of Christ, have, of course, been incorporated with it; and Jewish hopes have in their case been replaced by the prospects peculiar to the Church, as "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." The Church has no earthly portion but that of fellowship with the sufferings of her rejected Lord. These sufferings are her glory; and instead of expecting respite by the execution of judgment on her enemies -- a judgment to be followed by the earthly rest and prosperity of God's earthly people, and of the nations, under the reign of Christ -- instead of expecting this, we say, the Church knows her immediate hope to be the descent of Jesus into the air, and her translation to meet Him there. This is an event which may at any moment occur; an event which introduces her into the full heavenly portion and joy of her Lord. This, however, is a subject already considered; we refer to it here only to remind the reader of the entire distinction between the Church and the Jewish remnant, as to their calling, portion, and hopes. So different are these, the one from the other, that it is difficult to conceive of both being on earth at the same time. Our conviction is that they will not -- that the Church will be completed and caught up to meet the Lord ere the approaching crisis begins. Perhaps it might be more correct to say that the translation of the Church is the commencement of the crisis. But all this we must reserve for future consideration, if the Lord will.

That there will be a godly remnant of Israel in the future crisis, through which the nation will pass, is fully proved by many of the passages quoted at the beginning of this paper. The greater part of those who first return to the land will be entangled in the snares of the great deceiver, and be found in alliance with the last proud adversary of God and of His Christ.

But his triumph will not be universal. There will be some, quickened by the Spirit of God, made sensible by their individual and national sins, and penitentially bewailing them before God, who will refuse allegiance to Christ's foe, and stand apart from the abominations of that awful hour. Of these many will seal their testimony with their blood: the remainder will be preserved throughout that time of tribulation, and be delivered by the coming of Christ with all His saints. Let us first consider the testimony of God's word as to those who will survive -- the spared remnant.

In Zech. 12-14, we surely find ourselves amid the scenes and circumstances of the latter day. One or two passages in these chapters may look back to events long since accomplished; but that the subject of the prophecy is to be found in events yet future, no one can reasonably question. Zech. 12:2, 3, affords evidence to mark with sufficient distinctness the epoch to which the prophecy applies. It is the time when "Jerusalem shall be a burdensome stone for all people"; when all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem {Zech. 12:6}.

Such is the issue of the crisis.

In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem {Zech. 12:8, 9}.

Who can doubt the futurity of the period here indicated? What then is the light shed by the passage on the subject of "the remnant"?

(1) We have their conversion attributed, as conversion always is in Scripture, to the Spirit of God. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications."

(2) We have their repentance, and the solemn occasion for it:

And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn {Zech. 12:10}.

Their fathers said, "his blood be on us and on our children"; now the children perceive who it is of whose blood they have thus been guilty, and their penitence is according to their crime.

In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon {Zech. 12:11}.

(3) It is not a mere burst of popular grief that takes place -- there is deep personal exercise of soul.

And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart {Zech. 12:12}.



12:12}.

So of Nathan, Levi, Shimei, and their families. "All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart" {Zech. 12:14}.

(4) The sin of the nation, thus bemoaned by "the remnant," is washed away.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness {Zech. 13:1}.

We need scarcely explain here, that the opening of this fountain "to the house of David" and "to Jerusalem," must denote the application to them of the benefits of Christ's death. There is no other fountain for sin and for uncleanness. But though eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the death of Christ took place, the application to Israel of its cleansing efficacy, all must admit to be future; and it is of this the passage before us treats.

(5) Zech. 13:2-5 seem to treat of the thorough cleansing that the land will undergo, when the national sin has been thus forgiven; while in vv. 6, 7, we seem to be carried back to the repentance of the remnant as foretold in the previous chapter. Here we get a closer view of it. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced" is Messiah's language in Zech. 12. Here we read,

And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones {Zech. 13:6, 7}.

Not only do "the remnant" discern that it is their Messiah whom they have pierced, but also that their Messiah is Jehovah's fellow -- that the One who was wounded in the house of His friends, is the One against whom the sword of divine justice awoke, when as the sin-bearer He became exposed to its stroke. Thus are the secrets of redemption fully opened to them. But,

(6) it is in the midst of outward trials, -- trials the most overwhelming, -- that they are prepared for these discoveries, and gradually led on to the apprehension of them.

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God {Zech. 13:8, 9}.

The slaughter of two-thirds, while the remaining third are brought through a seven-times-heated fire of tribulation, are the circumstances amid which "the remnant" will be brought to call upon Jehovah's name, and be by Him acknowledged as His people. Finally, it is when these troubles have reached their utmost extremity, that the Lord appears -- that the adversaries are overthrown -- that the remnant are delivered and millennial blessedness introduced. Of these things chapter 14 affords the fullest proof.

We would now turn to another important passage, which, equally with the one just considered, embraces the whole period of the final sorrows of the remnant, and of their issue in the deliverance and full blessing of the nation under the reign of Christ. It is to Isa. 63-66 we refer. The opening verses, which for want of space we must not quote, foretell, in the magnificent imagery of the prophetic style, God's great interposition in judgment at the coming of Christ -- that interposition in which the wicked will be trodden down in the Lord's anger, and all their strength brought down to the earth. At Isa. 63:7, commences a long prophetic strain, in which the writer records "the lovingkindnesses and praises of the Lord," according to all His "great goodness toward the house of Israel."

For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, <sup>48</sup> and the angel of his presence saved them {Isa. 63:8, 9}.

Thus does the Lord identify Himself with the people of His choice. But Israel had been rebellious; and the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, had been obliged to fight against them, and turn to be their enemy.

Verse 10: He is represented, however, as remembering the days of old, calling to mind His ancient mercies to His people. When the Lord's compassions are thus turned afresh toward Israel, we need not wonder to find the hearts of the remnant turning towards Him. Accordingly, from Isa. 63:15 to the end of chapter 64, we have the cry of the remnant in the latter day.

Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained {Isa. 63:15}?

It is with this touching appeal that their cry begins. In the progress of it, evidence the most distinct arises that it is to yet future times this language applies. It is long after the sentence of judicial blindness or hardness has come upon them, for they acknowledge themselves to be under it.

O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear {Isa. 63:17}?

It is subsequent to Israel's rejection, and the extension of mercy, as at present, to the Gentiles, for to this also they seem to refer. In fact, it appears as though (in the remnant, at least) God's present dealings had begun to provoke Israel to jealousy, as the apostle intimates (Rom. 11:11). Speaking of the Gentiles as adversaries, the remnant say,

We are thine: Thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name {Isa. 63:19}.

That this is not a cry which saints of the present period could use, is obvious from its being a cry for judgment, for vengeance, on the adversaries.

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48. This is a most important passage, disclosing to us as it does, in the most touching way, the relations of Christ (Jehovah-Jesus) to "the remnant." It explains to us how, as in the Psalms and elsewhere, language, which in the full extent of its meaning, could only be used by the Lord Himself, is nevertheless used by "the remnant," to express *their* sorrows, *their* confidence, *their* integrity, *their* hopes.

Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence . . . to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence {Isa. 64:1, 2}.

How could the Church, or the sinners saved by grace who compose it, thus ask for judgment on the nations? Yet the repentance of “the remnant” is very deep, and their confessions truly affecting.

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away {Isa. 64:6}.

While such is their sense of their own and of the nation’s sins, they are afflicted at the insensibility of the nation at large. “And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.” They own all that they suffer to be the deserved chastenings of the Lord for their sins: “For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities” {Isa. 64:7}. The pleadings of their souls with God, with which this cry of the remnant concludes, are earnest and importunate indeed (see vv. 8-12). We only give the last. “Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore” {Isa. 64:12}?

The Lord’s answer to this cry is next given. The remnant having rightly identified themselves with the whole nation, as confessing their sins and the sins of their fathers, the Lord first answers roughly, as Joseph did his brethren when they came to him in Egypt. He is found of them that sought Him not, that had not been called by His name. Israel are a rebellious people to whom He had all day in vain stretched out His hands. All their pharisaic services are but a smoke in His nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom {Isa. 65:6, 7}.

But while pronouncing thus upon the nation the sentence of its crimes, the Lord declares His purpose to spare and to bless “the remnant.”

Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: *so will I do for my servant’s sakes, that I may not destroy them all* {Isa. 65:8}.

They are not only to be spared, however, but also to become the nucleus of the nation in millennial times.

And 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 Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, *for my people that have sought me* {Isa. 65:9, 10}.

The remnant, whose cry we heard in the two previous chapters, are to possess the land, when their ungodly Jewish brethren, as well as the Gentile adversaries, have been cut off. We saw,

indeed, in our last number, that both will form one confederacy of evil in those days.

In the verses following, “the nation” and “the remnant,” are distinguished from each other, and alternately addressed.

But ye [the nation] are they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number {Isa. 65:11}.

We saw in our last how the nation, with its chiefs, will be in league with antichrist, making a “covenant with death” and an “agreement with hell.” It seems to be to this that reference is here made.

Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants [the remnant] shall eat, but ye [the nation] shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye [the nation] shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants [the remnant] by another name: that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes {Isa. 65:12-16}.

The remainder of the chapter is a glowing prediction of millennial blessedness.

Isa. 66 returns to the subject of the previous chapter. In our last, it was shown from Dan. 9 that in the closing and yet future week of the seventy to which that prophecy relates, Jewish worship and sacrifices will be restored at Jerusalem. The “prince that shall come” will permit this for the former half of the week, but then he will break his covenant with the Jews, abolish their worship, and set up “the abomination of desolation” in the holy place. It is to this revival of Jewish services and sacrifices that the opening of the chapter before us points.

Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD.

It will not be the rebuilt temple, and the restored Jewish worship, which will be acceptable to the Lord. His sacrifices are of another order. The remnant, whose cry was heard in the previous chapters, are really precious in His sight.

But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word {Isa. 66:1}.

Such is the character of the remnant. As for the nation at large, the Lord utterly repudiates their self-righteous offerings. “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man” {Isa. 66:3}. Such is His estimate of them and of their worship. They have chosen their own ways, and He also will choose their delusions. When

God spake to them by His Son they refused to hear; and now He will not hear them. How solemn! "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" {Gal. 6:7}.

From Isa. 66:5 it is clear that the remnant will not only suffer at the hands of the Gentile oppressor, but also from the hatred of their brethren according to the flesh.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified." It will be under religious pretensions then, as heretofore, that they who are of the flesh will persecute those who are of the Spirit: "but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." As in Zech. 14 so here, it is the Lord's appearing that terminates the sorrows of "the remnant," brings confusion to the adversaries, and introduces the period of Jerusalem's full glory and the earth's full blessedness under the scepter of Christ. Verses 7-9 depict the solemnity and suddenness of the transition; then, to v. 13, the prophet exultingly portrays the blessing and glory which ensue; recurring in v. 14, to the event itself, the coming of the Lord.

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 {Isa. 66:14-16}.

The remainder of the chapter foretells the glory of the millennial reign, and Israel's place of special blessedness and exaltation therein.

Another prophecy to which it is well to direct attention is Isa. 24-27. In it we have repeated notices of the spared remnant. That the prophecy at large refers to the closing crisis, a glance through the chapters will convince the reader. The earth made empty and waste and turned upside down -- people and priest, servant and master, borrower and lender, all alike involved in the wide-spread, awful catastrophe -- the inhabitants of the earth burned, and few men left, -- these must surely mark with sufficient distinctness the period to which the prophecy applies. But what place amid these closing scenes is here ascribed to the remnant?

When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea {Isa. 24:13-15}.

While the fire of God's judgment burns up the earth and its inhabitants, there will be those who will sing for the majesty of the Lord, and glorify Him in the fires.

The latter part of Isa. 24 repeats the predictions of the judgments, and unfolds the happy sequel to them all, in the glorious reign of the Lord of hosts in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients. Isa. 25 gives us the song of the remnant. How it expresses their weanedness from every

earthly confidence, the simplicity of their faith in God's protection, and the vigour of their hopes of the glory to ensue.

For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall {Isa. 25:4}.

This is what they own Jehovah to have been. From this they anticipate their own deliverance by His power, and the universal blessing to succeed, the feast to all people of fat things, and of wines on the lees, well refined. Anticipating this, they sing

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 {Isa. 25:9}.

Such is their confidence, and such are their hopes, while passing through the depth of their distress.

Isa. 26 gives us another of their anticipative songs. They have not emerged from the tribulation, but they count unwaveringly on the Lord's faithfulness to bring them through, and in this confidence they can say beforehand what their songs of deliverance will be.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks {Isa. 26:1}.

This is the key-note of the song. All that follows is in harmony therewith. They call upon the gates to open "that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in" {see Isa. 26:2}. They can look all the intervening trouble in the face, extreme and unutterable though it be; for they are now by faith in their strong city, and can say, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusted in thee" {Isa. 26:3}. Afflicted saint! what a lesson of strong consolation is here. Not only does Scripture comfort us by recording the experience of God's saints in bygone days -- it draws back the veil which hides the future from our view, and disclosing to us the scenes of unequalled tribulation of which our Lord says, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" {Matt. 24:22}, -- unfolding to us those scenes, we say, a voice comes back to us from "the elect" of those yet future, awful days -- and what is the message it conveys? "Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" {Isa. 26:4}. As the fruit of their experience amid those scenes which no mortal pencil can portray, this exhortation is addressed to us. Kept in perfect peace, they disclose to us the secret of their strength, and call upon us to trust in the Lord for ever.

How interesting, in the light of this, their holy confidence, to hear the invitation to them, at the close of this chapter, to enter the hiding places prepared for them;

Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain {Isa.

26:20, 21}.

Noah entered into the ark, and the Lord shut him in: Lot was led by angel-hands to the place prepared for him, ere a drop of the fiery deluge descended on the cities of the plain: the Israelites were directed to keep within their houses, under shelter of the blood on the lintels and the door-posts: and thus will the remnant be called into their chambers, and shut their doors about them, while the final, avenging strokes descend on the congregated enemies of the Lord, and on their wicked associates throughout the whole earth. At a previous stage in these calamities, when they see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, they will find that they have the Lord's directions in Matt. 24:16-18, to flee with all possible haste from Judea into the mountains: but here they are represented as receiving their final summons into the prepared place of safety, when the Lord Himself is coming forth. Matt. 24 exhorts them to flee from their enemies at the beginning of the time of unequalled tribulation. Isa. 26:20, 21, invites them to their chambers when the Lord's coming is about to bring that period to a close.

Isa. 27 after predicting the punishment to fall upon "the crooked serpent," reviews, as it were, and celebrates, the whole course of events. We learn thus, if we may so speak, *the moral* of the whole. The remnant are compared to a vineyard of red wine, and we read, "I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" {Isa. 27:3}. Happy vineyard! "Fury is not in me": it is not in anger that He has dealt with the remnant. Had it been, they must have perished: "Who would set the briers and the thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together" {Isa. 27:4}. No, the remnant are afflicted and tried, that they may learn to trust in Him who chastens them. "Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me" {Isa. 27:5}. The saints who compose the Church have trials deep enough; but they are given to know at the outset "the blood of the cross" as having "made peace"; and it is in the enjoyment of this peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that they are called to pass through trials for the perfecting of God's inward work in their souls. The trials of the remnant, on the contrary, commence while they and the nation still seem to be under God's wrath, and it is in the progress of their trials that light gradually breaks in upon their souls. The whole issues, as so many passages have instructed us, in their full deliverance and joy, both as to their outward circumstances and their spiritual state: "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" {Isa. 27:6}. As to all the trials of the remnant, the prophet asks,

Hath he [the Lord] smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him {Isa. 27:7}?

God's enemies, Antichrist and his confederates, are used of God in chastening the remnant; but it is chastening for their good, and has its limits, while the destruction of those who are God's instruments in this chastening, is final and complete.

In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin {Isa. 27:8, 9}.

When "the east wind" of the enemy's utmost wrath begins to blow, the Lord stays "the rough wind" of His previous chastenings. As is often said, "man's extremity is God's opportunity." So the remnant will find it: and all the trial and anguish they will actually endure, will be seen by them in the end to have been, to purge them from the tin and dross -- "the fruit, to take away their sin."

The chapter closes with a prediction of the gathering, one by one, of all the children of Israel, who may yet, after these troubles, and the deliverance of the remnant, be left in any of the lands of their dispersion.

The ten tribes, whose captivity began long before the first coming of Christ, and who have not to suffer for the sin of crucifying Him, will not be involved in those final troubles of which the Holy Land is the special theatre. They will be restored by the Lord's own hand, and the wicked will be purged out from among them before they reach the land of Israel. "I will bring you out from the people, . . . and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, . . . and I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face . . . And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: *I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel:* and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 20:34-38). It would appear from this that all that portion of the ten tribes which actually enters the land will consist of godly persons brought back by the Lord's own power. It is to this return of the remnant of the ten tribes that Jer. 31:8, 9, refers.

Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Their return would also appear to be in progress at the time the Jews are undergoing their final sifting in the land, their arrival occurring soon after this sifting has been completed. Isa. 49 affords a most touching picture of the effect of their arrival, on the poor heart-broken remnant who survive the desolations at Jerusalem. See vv. 9-19. Nothing can exceed the beauty of those which follow, vv. 20 and 21.

Besides this, there is the restoration of any Israelites who may remain in any of the lands, after the coming of Christ with all His saints. This is what has been already noticed in the latter part of Isa. 66 and which also seems to be the subject of Isa. 49:22, 23, and of other scriptures which want of space forbids us to specify.

## Chapter 15

### *The Martyred Remnant* *With Remarks on the Earthly Calling* *of Israel* *and the Heavenly Calling* *of the Church*

By the martyred remnant we mean those Israelites, who, in the coming crisis, will at first form a part of that Jewish remnant, whose experience and destinies were considered in our last; but who, instead of surviving the final troubles and entering on the earthly blessedness of millennial times, will be called to glorify God by a martyr's death. For those who do thus suffer, a higher destiny than that of the spared remnant is reserved. They will pass through death and resurrection into heavenly joys; and as far as the government of the earth is concerned, they will, in common with the Church and with Old Testament saints, share that glory with Christ. Of all this the ensuing pages will furnish Scripture evidence; but in order that the subject may be clearly presented, it is necessary in the first place to direct attention to the marked contrast that exists between the Church and the remnant: nor can this be understood, unless we apprehend the difference between Israel's earthly and the Church's heavenly calling -- the earthly hopes of Israel, and the heavenly hopes of the Church.

That which, above all else, marks the difference between the Church and Israel, and indeed we may say between the Church and the entire population of the millennial earth, is, that the Church is blessed *in* Christ and *with* Christ: Israel and the millennial nations will be blessed *by* Him and *under His sway*. The Church is Christ's body -- His bride, and participates thus in His exaltation to be head over all things both in heaven and on earth. As the body partakes with the head of all the vital energies by which the whole is actuated, so does the Church even now partake with Christ of His risen life, and receive from Him the anointing of the Holy Ghost: and as the bride participates in all that is possessed by her lord, so is the Church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, to participate in His inheritance of all things. Her oneness with Christ is the great distinction of the Church.

There are many things in which those who compose the Church differ not from saints of other periods, whether past or future. True believers between the day of Pentecost and the descent of Jesus into the air, constitute "the church"; and these, in common with Old Testament saints and millennial saints, are chosen by God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Christ, quickened and regenerated by the Holy Ghost; they

are all preserved by almighty grace, and destined beyond doubt to bear in resurrection the image of the heavenly, even as in nature they have all borne the image of the earthly. In these things the Church differs not from other saints. That which distinguishes the Church is her oneness with Christ.

At that day ye shall know [here, upon earth] that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you (John 14:20).

Of none but the Church could these words be spoken. Of no others could it be said,

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 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 hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:22).

Israel and the nations in millennial times will constitute "the world," who, by seeing the Church in the same glory as Christ, are to know that she is the object of the same love -- loved of the Father as Christ Himself is loved. Israel and the nations will be happy, Israel pre-eminently so, under the reign of Christ and His glorified saints: but no distinction can be more marked, no contrast more striking, than that which exists between the Bride of the Lamb and the nations over which she, with her Lord and Bridegroom, is to reign.

Israel's distinctive calling is to earthly blessings. The proof of this has been exhibited in a previous part of this work. We only now recall the fact to the minds of our readers. Had Israel been obedient, wealth, power, fame, and prosperity, would have been the tokens of God's approval of their ways. By their disobedience, their idolatry, and especially their rejection of Christ, they have come under the inflictions of God's wrath, and that wrath has been manifested against them in all the heavy temporal judgments which have overtaken them. We refer now to God's dealings with them nationally, in His providential government of the earth. As individuals they are, of course, in common with all men, amenable to "eternal judgment"; and, if not saved "by grace" "through faith," that judgment will result in eternal ruin. But it is with God's dispensational dealings that we are now occupied; and Scripture leaves no room for doubt that, in this world, the

wrath of God against Israel has been, is, and will yet be, manifested by the infliction of temporal calamities. Prophecy, on the other hand, proves that God's approbation of Israel, when nationally restored and saved, will be manifested in abundance of temporal prosperity and blessing. Israel's is an earthly calling: and with Israel, consequently, adversity on earth is a token of God's displeasure -- prosperity a sign of His favor and His smile.

The Church having no present inheritance, except as one with Christ in heaven, present earthly trials and sufferings are not to her tokens of divine disapproval. Nay, they are as much her proper portion *with Christ* on earth, as the glory given by the Father to Christ, and given by Him to the Church, is her proper portion *with Him* in heaven. Hence the sufferings of the Church are her glory.

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 (Col. 1:24).

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake (Phil. 1:29).

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death (Phil. 3:10).

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also (Rom. 5:3).

Christ esteemed it His highest glory that God should be glorified in Him in His endurance of the cross (see John 14:31); and the Church, being by the Spirit likeminded with Christ, esteems as her highest glory that she should be "counted worthy to suffer for his name."

Israel's calling and that of the Church being so different, it follows of necessity that their hopes also differ. Christ is the hope both of the one and of the other; but He is the hope of the Church as *the One who will descend into the air*, and receive her to Himself, and to the full consummation of her blessedness with Himself in heaven: He is "the hope of Israel," as *the One who will further descend to the earth*, delivering them from the yoke of the Gentiles, executing judgment on all who have oppressed them, and setting up on the earth His glorious kingdom, of which Jerusalem is to be the center, and in which Israel, forgiven and purified, is to enjoy the most conspicuous, distinguished place. Such are the hopes held out to Israel by the Word of God -- hopes which, in their fulfilment, are inseparable from the execution of utter, destroying judgment on all who exalt themselves against God and oppress His people. "The day of vengeance" on God's adversaries is to be the day of Israel's deliverance, and the immediate prelude to Israel's exaltation and full blessing under Messiah's reign. It is impossible, therefore, for an Israelite, *as such*, to desire or invoke Jehovah's interposition, or Messiah's coming, for the fulfilment of Israel's national hopes, without invoking or desiring judgment on the wicked. The hopes of the Church, on the contrary, are quite unconnected with the thought of judgment on the wicked. She is aware indeed that judgment on the ungodly will ensue on her own removal from the earth: still, that for which she waits is not a state of earthly blessedness which judgment on the wicked is to introduce, but

her own translation from amid the scene of evil to meet her Lord in the air, and to be, "for ever with the Lord." This is a hope which the Church, or the saint, can both cherish and express without a thought of the wicked, or of the judgments to be executed upon them. These judgments succeed, and probably at some distance of time, the descent of Christ into the air; they are not the necessary preliminaries of that event, and that event itself is the Church's hope.

As to the true scriptural hopes of Israel, they are at present in abeyance. So long as the Church is being gathered by the Holy Ghost for her heavenly hopes and heavenly portion, Israel will remain under the judicial blindness which has rested upon that people for eighteen centuries. When the Church has been completed and removed to heaven, and God begins to turn His compassions toward Israel, it is by the remnant only, not by the nation at large, that the true hopes of Israel will be cherished. It is by the remnant that the sins of the nation will be bewailed and confessed -- by them that the coming of their Messiah in judgment and glory will be invoked. The nation, alas! will be as far as ever from having "a broken and a contrite spirit." They will still be justifying themselves and despising others; and instead of desiring or invoking the coming of their Messiah, they will have received as their Messiah "the son of perdition!" Deceived by Antichrist at the first, and oppressed by him afterwards, they will persist in their rebellion against God and in their rejection of Christ; and, as shown in our last, they will themselves aid in persecuting their brethren, the godly remnant, many of whom will suffer even unto death. Those who are thus martyred will at first be undistinguishable from the spared remnant. They will have the same calling, the same exercises, the same trials, the same hopes. It is possible indeed that they may make more rapid progress than their brethren; and as the most faithful and decided are likely to be the first victims of persecution, it is probable that such will be their character. But it is their death rather than their life by which they will be distinguished from their brethren who survive the crisis; and as a martyr's death prevents their sharing the remnant's deliverance and subsequent earthly millennial blessedness, their faithfulness will be rewarded by a martyr's heavenly crown, and in this respect they will resemble the Church itself and be associated therewith. But as to their standing, calling, experience, trials, prayers, and hopes *while on earth*, they have part with their brethren who survive the tribulation, and enter on the earthly blessedness of the millennial reign.

It is well, ere proceeding, to gather up the points we have touched upon, and to present at a glance the differences between the Jewish remnant as a whole, and the Church of God now forming for association with Christ in His heavenly inheritance and glory.

(1) The Jewish remnant, unlike the Church, will recognize the distinction between Jew and Gentile. For the Church this distinction is done away.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but

Christ is all, and in all (Col. 3:11).

But when the Church has been caught up, and the Jewish nation and Jewish remnant are again in question before God, it is evident that the distinction between Jew and Gentile is again in force. Apart from Christianity and the Church, the distinction even now exists. The Jews are given up for their sins to Gentile oppression, and Jerusalem is to be “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” These times will not have quite terminated when the voice of the Jewish remnant begins to be heard. You cannot listen to that voice, whether in the prophets or in the psalms, without finding that it recognizes to the full, what for the Church has no existence, namely, the distinction between Israel and the Gentiles.

(2) Unlike the Church, the remnant does not possess the knowledge of salvation as an existing enjoyment. Salvation, as understood by a Jew, is not simply the salvation of the soul as now known to us, but the restoration to him and to his people of God’s manifested favor and protection. This the remnant cannot enjoy while the mass of the nation are ungodly, and either in league with their ungodly Gentile rulers, or by them trodden under foot. Accordingly, those who compose the remnant are represented in prophecy as using language indicative, indeed, of penitence -- concern for God’s glory -- confidence in God’s promises to their fathers, and in His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- as well as expressive of ardent desires for pardoning mercy and the hope of its being bestowed; and for that very reason their language is incompatible with any present assurance of salvation.

Being justified by faith, we *have* peace with God {Rom. 5:1}.

In whom we *have* redemption through his blood {Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14}.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet . . . who *hath* delivered us . . . and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son {Col. 1:12, 13}.

Such is the language of the Church. With the remnant “have” and “hath” are changed into “shall” and “will.”

He *will* turn again, he *will have* compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou *wilt* cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19, 20).

Our Lord says, speaking of those who received Him on His first appearance,

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life {John 8:12}.

Who is among you [says the prophet] that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God (Isa. 50:10).

Such is the prophetic description of the remnant. Even at a very advanced stage of their experience, when they confess

If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand.

and yet can add,

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be

feared --

even then, it is the hope of forgiveness, not its actual enjoyment, which they thus express. They speak of waiting for the Lord “more than they that watch for the morning”; and the answer by which they are encouraged in this posture of expectancy is,

Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities (Psa. 130:3-8).

(3) The remnant, unlike the Church, regard the sufferings through which they pass as an expression of God’s wrath against their sins. Their sufferings will, no doubt, be extreme. “It is the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be delivered out of it” {see Jer. 30:7}. Of that period our Lord says, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” {Matt. 24:22}. It is in the midst of these unparalleled troubles that the souls of the remnant will be exercised. It is for righteousness’ sake that they will suffer, both at the hands of their fellow-countrymen and of the Gentile oppressors: but being a part of Israel, and having through grace become sensible of Israel’s sin, and of the justice of God’s dealings with Israel, they will regard both their own sufferings and those of the nation as a part of the righteous retribution with which God visits them -- the dregs, so to speak, of the cup of trembling and of wrath, which it is the lot of the nation to drink for their iniquities. His double light, in which their trials may be viewed, gives a very peculiar character to the experiences of the remnant. Sometimes, when their enemies and persecutors are in view, there is the expression of conscious rectitude on the part of the remnant, and an appeal to God to plead for them as sufferers in His righteous cause. At other times, when their own sins and the sins of the nation are under review, there are the most touching confessions of sin, and the acknowledgment that all they suffer is but what they have deserved at God’s hands. Psa. 44 is a remarkable instance of the former. Isa. 59 and Mic. 7 are striking examples of the latter. In the psalm, the remnant, having glanced at the former deliverances which God wrought for Israel, and owned Him as their only present strength or resource, turn to the melancholy proofs of His having forsaken them, and cry,

But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy . . . Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

These are their circumstances. “All this is come upon us,” they proceed;

yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death {Psa. 44:9-19}.

All their sufferings, whether at man’s hands or at the hand of God, have not induced them to forsake God and participate in the fearful idolatry around. Nay, more, it is for their refusal to participate therein that they suffer at the hands of men. All this they plead before God.

If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out?

for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

Then they invoke the Lord's interposition --

Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression? . . . Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake {Psa. 44:20-26}.

Here, evidently, the thoughts of the remnant rest on their sufferings at man's hand for their faithfulness to God; and it seems inexplicable to them that God also should continue to cast them off. In the other passages, the eye of the remnant is upon their own sins and those of the nation, and they can account thus for God's hiding His face. After a fearful picture of the moral state of the nation -- their feet running to evil -- making haste to shed innocent blood -- their thoughts, thoughts of iniquity -- wasting and destruction in their paths -- the remnant are heard to say:

Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness . . . We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; in transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering, from the heart words of falsehood.

That this passage presents the utterance of the Jewish remnant in days to come, is evident from the fact that it proceeds to exhibit the answer to their cry, in the coming of Christ to execute judgment on His adversaries, and commence His glorious reign on the earth (Isa. 59:9-21).

In Mic. 7 there is evinced an equally deep and solemn sense of the evil state of the nation, along with the firm expectation of approaching deliverance, and meek submission meanwhile to the Lord's chastening hand.

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness {Mic. 7:8, 9}.

(4) Unlike the Church, the remnant desire and ask the destruction of their enemies, and exult in the anticipation thereof. It is thus that their promised deliverance is to be effected, and knowing this from God's word, they plead for its speedy accomplishment. This has been already touched upon, and will demand yet further consideration by and by.

(5) While the Church looks forward to heavenly glory, and her introduction to it when she meets the Lord in the air, the remnant anticipate the rest and quiet and blessedness of the earthly department of Christ's millennial kingdom. They are "the meek" who are to "inherit the earth." In Old Testament prophecy, the invariable sequel to the sorrows and trials of the remnant, is the earthly blessing of the nation under Messiah's reign.

In turning to what is revealed respecting the martyred portion of the remnant of Israel, we shall find that there are three books of Scripture -- The Psalms, Daniel, and the Revelation -- which treat specially of this subject. As to Daniel, its testimony may be at once referred to. It so manifestly treats of Jewish subjects, that our readers will naturally look for information there. But as to the Psalms and Revelation, it may be needful, ere quoting them on our present subject, to suggest some considerations as to the general character of their contents.

No book of Scripture, perhaps, is more prized by the believer, or of more real use to him spiritually, than the book of Psalms. No wonder that it should be so. As has been said,

What sorrows, trials, temptations, groans, prayers, meditations, joys, songs, shouts, and praises do we listen to in this wondrous book. It is the seat of the affections, -- the heart, as it were, of the whole inspired volume. And how many exercises of spirit has it awakened in the saints? How has it soothed and raised the hearts of the Lord's people, regulated the motions there, and, like the prophet's minstrel, enabled them to take their easy and happy course again! Such has been, and still is, every day, the gracious ministry, under the Holy Ghost, of this harp of David, this harp of many strings.<sup>49</sup>

These sentiments must find an echo in every Christian's breast. But this is not all. It is not the variety of the contents of this book which alone commends it to the believer. In all this variety there is what continually reminds of Jesus; and this is its great excellence -- the secret of the charm with which it binds to its pages the eye and heart of the Christian.

As has been said again:

How largely has the Spirit of God traced here the ways of the heart of Jesus! His cries, and tears, and praises, His solitary hours, His troubles from man, and His consolations in God, -- all these are felt here in their depth and power. What was passing in His soul, when He was silent as to man, led as a lamb to the slaughter; what they who then surrounded Him did not hear, we listen to in this wondrous book. His thoughts of men, His worship of God, with all the incense of His various and perfect affections, are understood here. The New Testament tells us that He prayed and sung, but this book gives us His prayers and songs themselves. And besides this, the whole mystery of Jesus, from the womb to the throne of glory, is rehearsed here in its joys and sorrows. We trace it as far back as the "volume of the book." We read of Him surrendering Himself before the foundation of the world. The deep silence of eternity is broken by His words, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." And from thence we see Him taking up our nature, hanging in infancy on His mother's breast; then in His life of shame, and grief, and poverty; and in His last sorrows, -- the treason of His companion, the lying of the false witnesses, the deriding of enemies, the spear and the nails and the vinegar, and above all, the forsaking of God. This is all heard and felt here. And then we follow Him in His joys and songs in resurrection, and witness His ascension, and His welcome and honours in heaven. And at last we watch His return

49. *Short Meditations on the Psalms; Chiefly in their Prophetic Character.*



from thence to the judgment of the nations, and to His glorious headship of Israel and the whole earth. All this is told out in the Psalms, not merely, as it were, with pen and ink, but in living lines, in those fragments of the heart of the Lord which this book has gathered up.<sup>50</sup>

No wonder, we may again say, that the Christian should find such refreshment and edification in the perusal of the Psalms.

But while this is true, and our Christian readers can bear witness to it, where is there a Christian who has not met with passages in the Psalms which he felt it impossible to adopt as the utterance of his own heart. The book is generally read as though its prayers and cries, its anticipations and thanksgivings, might properly be adopted by any believer of the present dispensation. As to much contained in the book this is doubtless true: but even those who thus read it, would hesitate to say of the wicked -- yea, of any wicked persons, whatever --

Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them (Psa. 55:15).

Every Christian must feel that the Spirit of God does not lead *him* to such prayers and anticipations as the following:

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth . . . Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked* (Psa. 58:6-10).

Christian reader, are these the anticipations which the Spirit of God leads *you* to cherish? We dare answer for you -- No! You may not, indeed, have seen in other parts of Scripture the solution of the difficulty which such passages present. But you have felt the difficulty, and have wondered how such imprecations can be interspersed among such expressions of fervent, devoted piety as are found in the verses which immediately precede or follow the language under consideration.

And has it never occurred to you, dear Christian readers, that in the gradual unfolding of God's purposes, dispensations have run, are running, and have yet to run their course, so widely different in their character, that what is simple obedience and for the glory of God in one dispensation, may be entirely foreign to the character of another? Abraham's slaughter of the confederated kings -- Moses' breaking of the tables of the law, and execution of three thousand idolatrous Israelites by the swords of the Levites -- Joshua's extermination of the Canaanitish tribes -- and Samuel's hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord -- were all acts of devoted faithfulness, and as such, acceptable to God under the dispensations in which they took place. But what intelligent Christian would think of serving God thus under the present economy? When

the king of Israel sent a captain of fifty to take Elijah, and he, quailing before the well-known power of the prophet, implored him, saying, "Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down"; the prophet could answer him, "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty." The prophet, we say, could answer thus; "And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty" (2 Kings 1:9, 10). All this was in harmony with the spirit and character of the dispensation then existing; but when the disciples of our Lord would have imitated Elijah's example, how did He receive the proposal? "Lord," said they, "wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:54-56). Here is the full proof, that what God sanctions under one dispensation, may be so diverse from the spirit and character of another, as to be the subject of rebuke to those who desire to imitate it.

This principle of the difference of dispensations is the real solution of the difficulty which all feel with regard to the imprecatory passages in the Psalms. Precious as are its contents, and available (as all Scripture is) for the present use of the believer, it is not in applying to himself all that is written there, that the true use of the book will be found. "This book," as has been well observed,

may therefore be, as it ever has been, the companion of the saints, where often almost everything else would have been intrusive and uncongenial. But still, in using it, we should remember, that having the Holy Ghost in us, our experiences are to flow from that . . . What joy of hope, what largeness of understanding, what strength of faith, should be ours! what sense of the divine love, when the Holy Ghost Himself is shedding that love abroad in our hearts! And as this is the due experience of the saints, as far as the book of Psalms reflects the heart of a righteous Jew merely, the saint now has experiences beyond it or beside it. The Psalmist says, for instance, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments," -- the saint now is to prove, that "perfect love casteth out fear," and that he has "boldness in the day of judgment." The Psalmist prays, "Let me not be ashamed of my hope," -- the saint is taught to know that "hope maketh not ashamed." In ways like these, the saint now passes beyond the Psalmist; for we are now, in the strength of the Holy Ghost in us, to seek to walk in the warmer, brighter light of the New Testament. In Psa. 112 all earthly prosperity is promised *absolutely* to the godly man: but the apostle, quoting that psalm (2 Cor. 9:8-11) only states God's *power to give* prosperity, and prays for a measure of it on behalf of the saints at Corinth. So again Peter quotes Hosea: but he does not go on with Hosea, to promise the saints now, as the prophet promises Israel, that they shall have all blessing in the earth -- but he exhorts them to behave as those who are only strangers and pilgrims while they remain on the earth (cp. 1 Pet. 2:10 with Hos. 2:21-23).

All this is perfect in its season, but strikingly intimates a difference in heavenly and earthly calling, promises, and hopes. And the going beyond the book of Psalms in our experiences, is like this going beyond the books of the prophets in our hopes and calling. For the hopes and calling of "the one body in Christ" is the mystery hid from ages

50. *Ibid.*

and generations. Earthly things and earthly people are the themes of the prophets. The full mind of Him who taught them, and who knew the end from the beginning, may at times overflow its proper channel; but still, the earth, its people, its judgments, and its glory are the due theme of the prophets."

Believers, according to the wisdom given them, may differently perceive the notices of the heavenly things in the Scriptures of old. We may expect differences in spiritual discernment. But the Church, which is being gathered for inheritance in heaven as one with the Beloved, is not to be expected to come within the mind of the Spirit in the Psalmist more largely than in the prophets. Saints find their sympathies in this book, and use it for their spiritual comfort, as the words of Jehovah to Moses and to Joshua are used for them by the Holy Ghost in the apostle (see Heb. 13:5). *But the calling and glory of the Church is not the subject of the book.* The Jerusalem of the Psalmist is not that heavenly Jerusalem which is to carry the glory, and to bear the throne by and by, but the Jerusalem of the land of Israel. And the people in this book, generally, are her people, or that remnant in Israel, which the prophecies of Scripture so largely recognize. The prophets again and again tell us the fact, that this remnant will be brought through much exercise of soul. The Psalms give us this exercise itself. So the evangelists tell us of the fact of the Lord being much in prayer and solitude with God, whilst the Psalms give us His prayers and meditations themselves. These simple considerations may easily prepare us for hearing the voice of the true Israel of God in this book. They will, in their day, be led to find in it what will suit the condition of their souls, from the circumstances into which their obedience to God will bring them. For the Spirit of Christ, in full sympathy with them, has indited these Psalms for their use in that day.<sup>51</sup>

These sentiments appear to us of the utmost importance for rightly understanding this precious portion of God's precious book. They afford, in the hands of the Spirit, the true key to unlock its difficulties and to unfold and apply its treasures. Let us now, commending these remarks to the spiritual judgment of our readers, turn to one of the Psalms (79) which undoubtedly refers to the martyred Jewish remnant in days to come.

O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them {Psa. 79:1-3}.

This is not a mere invasion of Judea and Jerusalem by hostile armies -- it is a persecution of God's servants -- of God's saints -- persecution to death -- yea, to the death of such multitudes that we read of their blood being shed like water round about Jerusalem! This could scarcely be the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar -- as we know from Jeremiah that the remnant of that day were preserved and well treated. Besides, the application of this psalm is to an epoch long subsequent to Jerusalem's first desolation. "How long, LORD? wilt thou be

angry for ever" {Psa. 79:5}? is a plea which could not be urged when Israel was just beginning to be visited by God's wrath. "Might it not apply, then, to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and the Roman armies?" To this we answer, No; and that for two reasons. First, the Christians of that day, as is well known, escaped the horrors of the siege by a timely escape to Pella. Secondly, if they had been there and suffered in the siege, or afterwards, they could not have used the language of this psalm, such as,

Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name {Psa. 79:6}.

The prayer of persecuted Christians would have been a prayer for mercy on their adversaries, not for vengeance. "May not the psalm express, then, the feelings of unconverted Jews either at that or some other time?" To this we reply, Do unconverted people, whether Jews or Gentiles, use such language as follows? --

O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake {Psa. 79:8, 9}.

This is not the prayer of unconverted people: and yet it is not to Christianity *as now known to us* that they are converted. Consider their next words:

"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 {Psa. 79:10}.

How different this from "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do": or from Stephen's cry, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Nor is it merely the revenging of blood already shed which they implore: there are those still living, who are in the extremity of distress, for whom deliverance is sought.

Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord {Psa. 79:11, 12}.

It is evidently the cry of the surviving remnant when their brethren have been slain. They ask that the one class may be avenged, that the other may be delivered; and counting on deliverance, notwithstanding the depths of their distress, they anticipate the rest, and triumph which are to succeed.

So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations {Psa. 79:13}.

The psalm we have now examined agrees throughout with all the marks by which we have seen that the Jewish remnant, as a whole, will be distinguished from the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. It shows, moreover, that a large portion of the remnant will be slain as martyrs for God. Their death excludes them from participating, with their brethren who survive, in the earthly rest and blessedness of Messiah's reign. But are they

51. *Ibid.*

losers by this? By no means. A martyr's death is for them the passage to heavenly glory, and to association with Christ when He shall reign over the earth.

Of this we have an intimation in Dan. 7. Our readers will remember the testimony of this chapter as to the character of Gentile rule in its last form, that of the dominion of "the little horn," whose blasphemies bring on the judgment which transfers the dominion of the whole earth from the four Gentile monarchies to which in succession it has been confided, to the Son of man, and to "the saints of the most High." It will be found that in v. 18 the words just quoted are in the margin rendered "the saints of the high ones," -- *i.e.* "the high things, or places." It is really "the saints of the high places" -- the heavenly saints. Of the little horn it is said,

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom {Dan. 7:22}.

It has been common to suppose that the Church is here referred to; and there can be no doubt that the Church will possess the glory of which this passage speaks. But the Church is not the subject of Daniel's prophecy, any more than of the Psalms; and there is no need to confine the title of heavenly saints, or saints of the high places, to the Church. No one can question that Old Testament saints, who lived and died before the Church was founded, or so much as the foundation of it laid, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, will share with the Church the glory of reigning with Christ in His kingdom. And so of the saints whose blood will, in the approaching crisis, be shed around Jerusalem like water. They will be "saints of the high places"; owning the name of the Most High God in heaven, while the earth is yet in the hands of those who deny His claims and attempt to usurp His place. It will be for resistance to such blasphemous pretensions that they will suffer; and though they may not have looked for any portion for themselves above that of being delivered by Messiah's coming, and blessed under Messiah's reign, they will, in result, share the glories of that reign. When the Ancient of days comes, judgment will be "given to the saints of the high places."

We quite admit that if Dan. 7 had been the only passage which treated of the subject, we should have had less confidence in applying its statements to the martyred Jewish remnant. But having seen in Psa. 79 that there will be such a remnant; having found in Dan. 7 that the little horn will "make war with the saints" -- "wear out the saints of the Most High" -- and that at the close of his blasphemous career these saints of the Most High, or of the high places, will "take the kingdom," and have "judgment given unto them"; we turn to the book of Revelation, and there find the full confirmation of what is taught with less precision in the Old Testament. Want of space compels us to leave for an ensuing number the remarks we had intended to make on the book of Revelation as a whole. We must now confine ourselves to the passages in that book, which, as bearing on the subject before us, we are about to present to the reader.

In Rev. 6:9, we have, on the opening of the fifth seal, intimations of a time of persecution, in that the prophet of

Patmos sees

under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

Unlike Stephen, or our Lord, who cried for mercy on their murderers, the martyrs under the fifth seal ask for vengeance, and herein resemble the martyrs of the Jewish remnant, after whose destinies we are now inquiring.

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 {Rev. 6:10}?

Certainly this is more like a Jewish than a Christian appeal. In its place, however, it is perfect, and fully owned of God.

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled {Rev. 6:11}.

Here are saints, martyrs, crying to be avenged on the dwellers on earth, but who are told that they must wait yet a little for the time of vengeance, until certain others to be slain, as they have been, have suffered death.

Rev. 11 affords the prophetic history of the "two witnesses," of whom the Lord says:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth {Rev. 11:3}.

The place of their testimony is Jerusalem; for to what other place does this description apply? --

the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified {Rev. 11:8}.

That Jerusalem was the place of our Lord's crucifixion, we need not affirm; and the *literal* Jerusalem in which our Lord was *literally* crucified is, in Isa. 1:10, "*spiritually* called Sodom." As to its being spiritually called Egypt, the statements made as to the two witnesses show the most marked resemblance between its state, at the time of their testimony, and the state of Egypt during Moses' ministry and Pharaoh's reign. We are well aware that numbers of learned Christian men take the days in this chapter for years, and regard the sackcloth testimony of the two witnesses as symbolical of the testimony borne by the Waldenses and Albigenses, and others, during the dark ages; and who believe, in consequence, that their testimony is long since finished, and that their death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven in the sight of their enemies long since took place! Into the detailed discussion of such views we are not about to enter. But we would put it to those of our readers who are conversant with the history of the dark ages, whether anything in the humble path of Christ's witnesses in those days can be made to correspond with what is here affirmed of the two witnesses?

And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will {Rev. 11:5, 6}.

Let each day be made into a year -- let the two witnesses stand for many thousands -- let the language in which their power and their actings are described be understood as ever so figurative; still, what is there in the past history of the present dispensation to correspond in any degree with the predictions of this chapter? We are bold to answer, Nothing! and more than this, we are bold to affirm, that had there been among the Waldenses and Albigenses anything analogous to shutting heaven that it might not rain, or to causing fire to proceed from their mouths to destroy their enemies, or to smiting the earth with all plagues, they would so far have deviated from the true spirit of Christianity, and failed to be faithful witnesses for Christ. Alas! there was among them sometimes the forgetfulness of that word of Christ, "they that take the sword shall perish by the sword"; but it issued in the fulfilment of Christ's declaration, not in their being proved invincible, as the two witnesses are in Rev. 11 till their testimony was finished. No, the dispensation must be changed, before God's witnesses can rightly act in the spirit, or perform the deeds, attributed to the two witnesses in the chapter before us.

The subject of the chapter is the coming crisis, when the Church has been removed, and the present dispensation of perfect grace has come to a close. God will not yet, indeed, have taken to Him His great power to reign -- but He is about to do so -- and before He does, He raises up these two witnesses to testify in sackcloth at Jerusalem. It is the time of final Jewish and final Gentile apostasy, when the rulers of the Jewish nation will have made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell; when "the prince" of Dan. 9:27 shall have confirmed a covenant with the Jews for the one reserved week of Daniel's seventy weeks -- a covenant which, in the midst of the week, as shown in a previous paper, he violates, and sets up the abomination that maketh desolate. During one part of this week, either the former or the latter half, or a portion of both,<sup>52</sup> the two witnesses prophesy; and God endows them with power to do so, and makes them invincible till their testimony is completed. When it is finished, they are permitted to be slain.

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them {Rev. 11:7}.

The identity of this beast with the little horn of Dan. 7 we have seen in previous papers. The connection of the two witnesses with the Jewish Remnant is too obvious to need pointing out. They are at least a part of that remnant, and of the martyred portion of it. The beast slays them. The dwellers upon earth rejoice to have got rid of them. For three days and an half their dead bodies lie unburied in the streets of Jerusalem, while festivities and merry-making and sending gifts one to another, evince the delight men have in their death. But the triumphing

of the wicked is short.

After three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them {Rev. 11:11, 12}.

Thus we have, as to a part at least of the martyred remnant, the explicit assurance of God's word, that resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, are the destiny that awaits them.

Nor is this all. The beast has other victims of his persecuting rage, whose death is noticed in the book of Revelation. Rev. 12:11, and 13:7, 15 apprise us that there will be such; and in Rev. 15:2 they are seen as a distinct company, standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. These are the remainder, for whose death the martyrs under the fifth seal were told they must wait. What a victory is theirs! -- a "victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." But not only are they presented as a distinct company of victors in Rev. 15, in Rev. 20:4, we find them associated with Christ and His co-heirs, and with their brethren, the martyrs of the fifth seal, in the glories of the millennial reign.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.

The "they" and "them" in this clause, doubtless refer to the great body of the faithful, the saints of all ages, including "the Church" and all the Old Testament saints -- all, in short who are raised or changed at the descent of Christ into the air. But the martyrs of the crisis are not excluded; and lest we should suppose they were, both classes of them are mentioned.

And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.

Compare this with what is said of the martyrs of the fifth seal, and you can scarcely fail to perceive that they are the same. But what of those for whom they were to wait? Ah! the number is now complete.

And [they] which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Our space will only allow us to present to our readers this interpretation of the passages which have just passed under review. Let it be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and the Lord give us understanding of His ways. Considerations, confirmatory of the view here presented, will naturally find their place in our next, which we hope may be devoted to the question of the interpretation of the Apocalypse as a whole.

52. We express ourselves thus on this subject, because of having seen ground to hesitate as to what was expressly affirmed in our former edition, viz. that it is during the first half week that the two witnesses prophesy. The point is one of deep interest for students of prophecy, but it does not in the least affect the general principles of prophetic interpretation, or the general outline of prophetic events as here set forth.

## Chapter 16

### Apocalyptic Interpretation

That which could only be made known to us by revelation from God, can only, when revealed, be understood by us through the teaching of the Holy Ghost. This is true of all that Scripture contains -- emphatically so of its prophetic parts. But if so, it follows of necessity that our study of prophecy must be regulated by what Scripture declares as to the office and work of the Holy Ghost.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private [or self, ἰδίᾱς] interpretation. 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 (2 Pet. 1:20, 21).

Here we have a divine canon for the interpretation of prophecy. As the will of man had no part in its communication at the first, so it has no part in the correct apprehension or use of it now. *Then*, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost -- *now*, believers in Christ learn as they are taught by the Holy Ghost. But if He be the teacher, no prophecy can be of any self-interpretation -- it cannot be understood apart from the entire scope of that which it is the office of the Holy Ghost to reveal and to teach. What the scope and design of His communications are, we are expressly told by Christ Himself.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. *He shall glorify me*: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you (John 16:13, 14).

To glorify Christ, then, is the great office of the Spirit. He was to show us "things to come"; but whether past, present, or future things constitute the matter of His communications, they are *the things of Christ*: "he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." And as they are the things of Christ which He reveals, so also is the glory of Christ the end for which He makes them known: "He shall glorify me." The mention by our Lord of "things to come," which the Holy Ghost had still to reveal, is the more important to our present subject, inasmuch as it can only be to the Apocalypse, and the prophetic portions of the epistles, that these words can refer. We have thus the authority of Christ Himself, that they are *His things* with which the Holy Ghost is occupied in these later prophetic scriptures, and that it is *for His glory* that they are revealed. What a key to unlock the treasures these scriptures contain!

To glorify Himself in Christ is the great end of all God's dispensations. To glorify Christ in the revelation of that which is His, we have just seen to be the office of the Holy Ghost -- an office He does not fail to fulfil in the communication of prophetic truth, as well as of every other branch of truth. "Hence," as another has remarked,

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. If Jerusalem is connected with Christ, with His affections and glory, Jerusalem becomes important, and we have in its connection with Christ, so far as we understand His glory, the key to interpret all that is said of it. Neither the Church, nor Jerusalem, nor the Gentiles, are in themselves the objects of prophecy, still less Babylon, Antichrist, or the like, but Christ. Christ is the center 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 it is by this connection that we obtain the means of understanding what Scripture contains on these subjects. The importance of this principle cannot well be overrated. It is not merely that it unfolds to us the only way of understanding prophecy aright, but it renders the study of prophecy sanctifying instead of speculative. What is learned becomes with the soul a part of Christ's glory, the contemplation of which by the believer is the true secret of his practical sanctification.<sup>53</sup>

Two most important results flow from the facts and principles just considered. First, the value of prophetic truth does not depend upon its application to ourselves. All Scripture is God's gracious gift to the Church, for its instruction and profit; but the Church is not the subject of which all Scripture treats. Abraham was instructed as to what was about to befall Sodom and Gomorrah; but did he prize this instruction the less because he himself and his own affairs were not the subject of it? All Scripture is given to the Church -- to the believer; but if we find in it the history of God's dealings in the past, and predictions of His dealings in the future, with others as well as with ourselves, are we on this account to value these communications the less? God forbid! Christ, not oneself, is the great object throughout: and shall we not prize that which displays His glory, even though it may not be in immediate connection with our poor worthless selves?

53. *The Prospect*: 2:97

Secondly, if the glory of Christ be the object, the things of Christ be the subject, and the Holy Ghost Himself the communicator of prophetic instruction, the Christian cannot be dependent for the possession of it on human learning. A man might possess vast stores of erudition, and be able with ease to quote every page of this world's dark history, and not be in the least better prepared for the study of God's prophetic word.<sup>54</sup> The humble Christian, unable to read the Scriptures in any language but his own, and entirely unacquainted with the details of profane history, may, nevertheless, prayerfully study the prophetic scriptures. Equally with the most learned, he may count on his Father's faithful love to enable him, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to understand and receive what these Scriptures unfold of the diverse glories of Christ, the Son, whether in His relations to the Church, which is His body, or to Israel, the world, and creation, over the whole of which His rule is yet to extend. It is in the establishment of this blessed universal sway, and in the dealings of God -- whether in judgment or in grace -- by which it is immediately preceded, that we have the great subjects of prophecy, and especially of the Apocalypse -- not in those vicissitudes of political and ecclesiastical affairs throughout the last eighteen centuries, with which the pages of historians are filled.

Before furnishing the grounds of this conviction as to the Book of Revelation itself, we would suggest some considerations which bear on the scope of prophecy as a whole.

With the exception of certain solemn judgments on the wicked, and the establishment for a time of His throne in Israel, God's government of the world has, since the entrance of sin, been of a secret, providential character. All things are, indeed, ordered or controlled by divine power; human wickedness is thus checked, and the violence of man's passions restrained; all things are caused to work together for good to God's people; and generally speaking, iniquity becomes, in the long run, its own punishment: but all this is by a mysterious combination and superintendence of events of which natural men know nothing. Faith recognizes it, discerning the hand of God in many things, and confessing it in all; but the world at large neither discern nor own anything but the actual course of events, and the human agencies to which these are attributed. Such is Providence.

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54. "History was not written in heaven; and the attempt to interpret prophecy by history has been most injurious to the ascertaining of its real meaning. When we have ascertained, by the aid of the Spirit of Christ, the mind of God, we have, as far as it be history, God's estimate of events and their explanation. But history gives man's estimate of events, and he has no right to assume that the events he deems important have a place in prophecy at all; and it is clear that he must understand prophecy before he can apply it to any. When he understands it, he has what God meant to give him, without going farther. Of course, where any prophecy does apply to facts, it is a true history of those facts; but it is much more. It is the connection of those facts with the purposes of God in Christ; and whenever any isolated fact, however important in the eyes of man, is taken as the fulfilment of a prophecy, that prophecy is made of private interpretation." *Notes on the Book of Revelation*, p. 24.

One characteristic of this secret providence which God at present exercises is, that it does not interrupt, but, on the contrary, regulates the ordinary course of events. Any marked deviation from this excites attention; and while there doubtless have been many such, sufficiently striking to appear miraculous, or even in fact to be so, the exceptional character of these interruptions does but confirm the distinction on which we insist. Another feature of God's providential government is, that human wickedness, though often checked, always restrained, and sometimes allowed visibly to work out its own punishment, is nevertheless, permitted to continue, and very often, for a season, to triumph. God's people, on the other hand, have to suffer. Inwardly sustained by divine grace, they have to manifest its power by "patient continuance in well doing" amid continual temptations to evil, and in the face of difficulties and opposition on every side. Such is the present state of things.

Prophecy treats of a widely different state. Abundant proof has been presented in previous parts of this work, that the great subjects of unfulfilled prophecy are, First, that mighty intervention of God's power in judgment at the coming of Christ, which, instead of regulating the ordinary course of events, will bring that course to a close: Secondly, the features of man's ripened iniquity which will call down this intervention of God's wrath; and, Thirdly, the reign of Christ which is to ensue. As to the judgments which either attend or immediately precede "the day of the Lord," when this great intervention of God's power is to take place, they are the very opposite of the present state of things. Instead of wickedness being suffered to remain, while the faith of God's people is secretly sustained, the power of evil, having first come to maturity, will be completely broken and set aside: and the means by which this is effected will be such as to make manifest, not only to the faith of God's people, but to the senses and the minds of all men, what God's judgment is.

So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth (Psa. 58:11).

In the reign of Christ which follows upon this intervention of God's power, instead of faith being secretly sustained against the pressure of surrounding and momentarily triumphant evil, evil itself will be broken down and purged away, and righteousness will be at rest, free from conflict and oppression, and secured in this position by the power of Christ. "The day of the Lord" or "the world to come," along with the judgments which introduce it, stand thus in entire contrast with the present course of things, in which every thing is arranged or controlled by God's secret providence; and it is with the former subjects, not with the latter, that in general prophecy occupies itself.

We are far from affirming that prophecy never touches on other topics. It always makes sufficient reference to the moral state of those to whom it is actually addressed, or among whom it is proclaimed, to link that state in their consciences with the predictions of final judgment and of ensuing blessing. Old Testament prophecy largely foretells, moreover, the sufferings of Christ; but of these it treats in connection with

those final triumphs which we have seen to be the great subjects of yet unfulfilled prophecy; while it passes over in silence the lapse of ages which have intervened. It may further be safely admitted that certain remarkable judicial interventions of God are called, in a subordinate sense, “the day of the Lord” on such or such a place. This is evidently done because of their analogy to “the day of the Lord” in its full sense -- the time of which it is said, “The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” But these interventions are in contrast with the settled course of providential government, and do but confirm, therefore, the principle we are considering, that it is not to the ordinary course of providence that prophecy applies, but mainly to that greatest of all interventions which is yet to take place, and of which these lesser ones are the foreshadowings and premonitions.

It may be alleged that certain prophecies apply to the settled ordinary course of affairs throughout a long period, and that such prophecies do, in fact, give beforehand the history of the periods to which they refer. Dan. 2 and 7 may perhaps be adduced as instances, and certainly if they will not serve as such, there are no others that will. Let us for a moment examine them. What do we find in Daniel’s account of the image seen by the Chaldean monarch in his dream? A minute detail of providential circumstances? Very far from it indeed. The image is all there at once; the application of it to the four Gentile empires is given; the character of that which is the closing object of judgment -- the feet and toes -- is the most minutely described; and then the execution of the judgment on the whole image is foretold. The providential course of events, by which one empire subverts and succeeds another, is not entered into at all. Take the seventh chapter. What is the providential history of “the ten horns,” as usually applied by those who explain the prophecies historically? They are explained to be scourges, which continued from first to last, some one hundred and fifty years, working the overthrow of the Roman empire, as previously settled, and establishing themselves as conquerors in all its western territory. What have we in the chapter itself? A beast rises out of the sea with ten horns, all full grown, after which a little horn comes up, and beast, horns, and all are the subject of God’s judgment, not its executors. *This* is prophecy -- *that* was providence. In the chapter we have what characterizes the object of the prophecy, and its judgment, and the reason of its being executed. All the providential part is left out. These are the prophecies which would at first sight seem to give most sanction to the principle of detailed historical application, and of which so many have in this way made the most; and with what result? Such, that if taken as a literal accomplishment, a child can see the discrepancy. What analogy is there between one hundred and fifty years’ war to destroy an empire, and ten kings, or kingdoms, all in full energy and growth, rising out of that empire and forming part of it, as the symbol of its force? <sup>55</sup>

If we have glanced thus far at the scope and bearing of prophecy generally, it is not in forgetfulness that our special subject is the interpretation of the Apocalypse. Our belief is,

that in regard to the points we have been considering, the book of Revelation will not be found to differ in character from the prophecies of Scripture generally.

To us it appears, that our Lord Himself, in stating the contents of the book, authoritatively reveals to us its structure and plan, and affords the most satisfactory clue to its correct interpretation.

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter (Rev. 1:19).

The words <sup>56</sup> in the original (μετὰ ταῦτα) here rendered “hereafter,” do not bear the sense of our indefinite word *hereafter*, which may mean any time yet future, but signify “after these things.” The Lord Himself divides the book of Revelation into the record of the things which John had seen, (Rev. 1), the things which are (Rev. 2 and 3), and the things which shall be after these things (Rev. 4 to the end). The proof that the second division ends with Rev. 3 is, that at the beginning of Rev. 4 the apostle is called up to heaven by a voice, as of a trumpet talking with him, and saying,

Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be after these things {Rev. 4:1, J.N.D. translation};

using the same term as in Rev. 1:19. It is with chapter 4 that the third division of the book begins.

Now nothing can be more obvious than that “the things which are,” and “the things which must be after these things,” cannot be contemporaneous. The one must terminate ere the other begins. So that if in chapters 2 and 3 we can discover proof of their continued application to the end of the present period; or if in the subsequent chapters we can find proof of their application to a state of things not yet existing, and essentially contrasted with the existing state of things, we should, in either case, have satisfactory evidence that the Apocalypse, Rev. 4-19, is not to be interpreted by any supposed fulfilment of its predictions in the details of history, but yet awaits its accomplishment in a brief crisis of judgment which is to ensue on the close of the present dispensation. Such we believe to be the scope and character of the chapters in question.

The reader will remark that the two branches of evidence now adverted to are quite distinct from each other. If, on inquiry, he should find that chapters 2 and 3 of the Apocalypse cannot be restricted in their application to the seven churches of Asia, but must be regarded as exhibiting the successive states of the entire professing body on earth, till the moment of its utter excision from Christ, this consideration alone would demonstrate that Rev. 4 and onwards, being the declaration of “things which must be after these,” begin to have their application when this excision has taken place. In like manner, if chapter 4 and onwards should be found to differ essentially and in principle not only from

56. That this may be plain to the most unlettered reader, we would explain that *meta* is the Greek word for *after*; *tauta* is the Greek word for *these*; and, being in the neuter gender, signifies not *these persons*, but *these things*; the two words thus denote “after these things.”

the seven churches of Asia, but from the present dispensation as a whole, this of itself would prove that the "things after these" do not begin to be fulfilled till the present dispensation comes to a close. Either proof might exist and be complete apart from the other; but should both be found in the chapters under consideration, the case is rendered clear beyond all reasonable doubt.

For proof of the prophetic application of Rev. 2 and 3 to the successive states of that which bears Christ's name, we refer our readers to pages 108, 109 of the present work. The number seven is used throughout the Apocalypse in a symbolic sense, and is admitted to be expressive of completeness or perfection. Why should "the seven churches" be an exception to the rule? The "seven lamps of fire" in Rev. 4 are there explained to mean "the seven Spirits of God." Every Christian knows that the Spirit of God is one -- that "there is one Spirit" -- and the expression "seven Spirits of God" is universally understood as expressive of the seven-fold or perfect energy of the one Spirit of God. That is, the word seven is used in a mystic, and not a literal, sense. When we read, then, in Rev. 1, of "seven golden candlesticks" in the midst of which walks "one like unto the Son of man," and of "seven stars" which are in His right hand; and when it is explained to us by His own lips that this is a mystery, and that "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches," while "the seven candlesticks are the seven churches" themselves; how are we to understand His words? Surely as in the instance just cited from Rev. 4. Were the seven local churches, the names of which are given, the only light-bearers or candlesticks? Or did the light entirely cease to shine when these Asiatic churches ceased to exist? Let these seven churches, or candlesticks, be regarded as a seven-fold or perfect presentation of the one Church, in its responsibility to Christ as His light-bearer or witness before the world, and we have an interpretation, at once consistent with the entire character of the book, and sufficient to account for the selection of seven local churches, the diverse states of which furnish what was needed for this seven-fold or perfect view of the successive states of the whole professing body. How could such a designation as "the things which are" be applicable to these seven local churches in any but this symbolic sense? Were *they* the only existing things -- the only things existing as a light-bearer or witness for Christ -- at the time when the Apocalypse was written? And do not the things which *then* existed in this character *still* exist? Has Christ no witness, no candlestick, no light-bearer on earth at present? Or has the candlestick been changed? Has the one Church, existing as Christ's witness on the earth, been set aside, and some other body taken its place? Alas, it is but too near this awful consummation! To be spued out of Christ's mouth is to be its end; and its indifference to Christ's glory, while deeming itself rich and increased in goods and having need of nothing, does but too surely indicate how rapidly it ripens for this judgment! But it has not yet been executed. Divine patience still bears with us, notwithstanding our manifold and increasing corruptions. Christendom is not yet "cut off." That which was ordained and endowed to be the self-hiding witness

of Christ's fulness of grace and glory has not yet reached the height of self-glorification at which she ceases entirely to be a witness for Christ, and renders inevitable the immediate execution of the fearful threatening which is even now suspended over her. Until this does take place, "the things which are" evidently include all that *now* exists as a perpetuation of that which was the light-bearer or witness in John's day, and of which these seven Asiatic churches were the selected symbols or representatives.

It is of importance to note, that while it is to the whole professing body that these seven letters to the churches apply, it is not that they all apply to the whole body at one and the same time. It is impossible that at one and the same time the state of the whole Church or that which bears its name and responsibility, can be expressed by such opposite descriptions as in the addresses to Philadelphia and Laodicea. There is no censure of the Philadelphian church, while for Laodicea there is no hope. It is to be spued out of Christ's mouth. We are shut up to the conclusion, therefore, that as these addresses cannot be restricted to the seven Asiatic churches of John's day, and as they cannot, because of their diversity, apply to the whole professing body at one and the same time, their application is really to the entire continuance of that body on earth, furnishing a successional picture of its condition as responsible to God. *It is in its responsibility* that the Church is thus presented, not in its vital oneness with Christ as His body. True believers are, of course, saved everlastingly, and nothing can affect the security of the Church as the heavenly body of Christ, its glorified Head. It is the Church, as on earth, the responsible witness for Christ, that these prophetic addresses apply; and the responsibility of the Church, thus considered, is shared by all that assumes and bears the name.

We are now in more favorable circumstances to judge of this application of Rev. 2 and 3 to the successional states of the professing body on earth, than if we had lived in apostolic times. Let the reader suppose himself suddenly placed before a most accurate, striking portrait of one with whose countenance he is perfectly familiar: he would need no arguments to convince him that the one was designed as a representation of the other. Let any Christian, familiar with the outline of what has occurred in the progress of the present dispensation, glance at the contents of these chapters, and see if there be not such a correspondence as needs no arguments to prove it a designed representation.

The weightiest argument urged by those who maintain the exclusive historic application of Rev. 4-19 is, that to interpret them of the future, leaves an interval between the days in which they were written, and the commencement of their application, longer than we can suppose would have been left without any information as to the events by which it should be marked. The whole force of this argument rests on the assumption that it is in chapters 4-19 alone that such information is to be sought for or expected. *We have the information in Rev. 2 and 3.* The argument is, therefore, without value and without force. Nay, more, it suggests an argument of real weight in favor of the futurity of Rev. 4-19. Seeing that we have in chapters 2 and 3 that which applies to



the whole period from the apostles' days to the excision of the professing body, why should we have it repeated in the succeeding chapters? Further, Rev. 4 begins the declaration of "things which must be after these"; and as "the things which are," exhibited in Rev. 2 and 3, are still in existence, it is clearly not in the present or past -- not in a period contemporaneous with "the things which are" -- that we must look for "the things which must be after these."

In one sense, indeed, we could cheerfully admit that there may have been a designed application of Rev. 6-19 to events most of which are now past.

No doubt the churches existed in Asia as a matter of fact, and clearly the seven epistles were directly addressed to them, and had a real bearing upon them in the days of the apostle.

This was not, as we have just seen, their only, nor even their principal, design; still, that they had such a bearing on the then existing Asiatic churches there can be no question. Now some who strongly maintain the accomplishment of chapters 6-19 to be in a yet future crisis, do nevertheless believe that they were also intended to have a subordinate application throughout the present period. Regarding Rev. 2 and 3 in the sense just adverted to, as applying in the first instance to the literal churches of Asia, they look upon the succeeding chapters

as sketching the dealings of God with the western and eastern empire: first, in its hostile pagan state; next, in its outwardly Christian profession; and lastly, in its open revolt against God, opposing Christ in His priesthood, as it will eventually do to the last extremity, when it is a question of His rights as King.

Without expressing adherence to this double interpretation of the chapters in question, we feel no hesitation in saying that we see no such objection to it as to that which confines "the things which are" to the seven literal Asiatic churches, and restricts us to an historic fulfilment of the later chapters. It is quite consonant with God's sovereign goodness, and with Christ's tender care of His people, to suppose that, as age after age of trial, apostasy, and persecution passed away, true Christians should find in the Apocalypse such symbols of that revolt against God and oppression of His people which are the ultimate objects of His judgments, as would, in their apprehension, correspond with the then existing character of misrule. This supposes nothing on their part but acquaintance with their own circumstances: while it supposes in the Apocalypse such a designed adaptation of its symbols and predictions, as to correspond with these circumstances in such a sense and to such an extent, as to minister to these tried ones the guidance, the consolation, and the strength which their circumstances required. There is nothing in such a view to preclude the actual accomplishment of all these chapters (6-19) in a brief and yet future crisis. What we cannot but deem most objectionable is the attempt, by minute, historic details, to interpret these chapters as though they had found in these details their final accomplishment. This is to deprive the Church of the light these chapters are designed to shed on the scenes which succeed the present period; and it is to make

the Church dependent for the understanding of God's word on an amount of human learning and information altogether beyond the reach of Christians generally. The partial and subordinate application of apocalyptic symbols to the great outline of what has transpired during the last eighteen centuries, is not open to this objection. The use of such an application does not consist in our being able to give all the details of it now, but in the application, by the Spirit of God, of one part or another of these symbols to the comfort and guidance of true saints in each successive age, as bearing, in a subordinate sense, on the circumstances with which they found themselves actually surrounded. Human learning was not requisite for this. It called for nothing but the prayerful and diligent perusal of Scripture itself, and the teaching of the Holy Ghost, by which alone even this is of any avail.

But whatever amount of credit may be due to this principle of double interpretation, we cannot but regard with regret those systems which tie down the apocalyptic visions to a supposed fulfilment in historic details. It would be easy from the contrariety of these systems to one another to show that they are mutually destructive of each other's claims definitely to explain the particulars of what they all allege to be fulfilled prophecy. But though this forms no part of our object, it may be well, in adverting to this topic, to point out to the reader a distinction of no small importance. Twenty students of the Apocalypse, agreeing in this, that from Rev. 4 it is as yet unfulfilled, may have different interpretations of this unfulfilled prophecy to suggest. Such differences do but prove that the prophecy is as yet far from being understood. The partial or total ignorance of the expositors accounts for such differences. But suppose twenty expositors should agree with each other in maintaining that these chapters, or most of them, are absolutely and finally fulfilled, and yet have twenty conflicting theories of interpreting them -- what do such differences prove? Not only that the expositors are mistaken in their theories, but also that the basis on which they all proceed is a mistake. What claim can a prophecy have to be a fulfilled one, when twenty can suppose it to have been fulfilled in twenty different events? To suppose it fulfilled in such a case is to reflect, however unintentionally, on the wisdom and power of God Himself, as though His word contained predictions so uncertain and indefinite, that twenty persons might rightly deem them fulfilled in twenty widely different events or classes of events! Many, we are sure, who adhere exclusively to the historic principle of interpretation, would utterly shrink from such a conclusion. Let them consider, however, whether the principle on which they proceed, and the results hitherto educed by its application, are not fairly open to it. Scripture does contain fulfilled prophecies, but no such obscurity hangs over them. There are not twenty ways in which godly people suppose the prophecies of our Lord's birth, earthly parentage, miracles, betrayal, and crucifixion to have been fulfilled. And had the apocalyptic seals, trumpets, and vials been actually accomplished, there would not have been among expositors so many conflicting methods of explaining them.

We return to our Lord's arrangement of the book -- "the

things which thou hast seen" (Rev. 1), "the things which are," (Rev. 2, 3,) and "the things which must be after these." This last division begins at Rev. 4. John, having on earth received the instruction of chapters 2 and 3 as to the professing body, its successive states, and its final doom, along with the most varied and ample encouragements for the faithful, including the assurance to all such that they shall be removed ere "the hour of temptation" arrives "which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" {Rev. 3:10}, is called up to heaven to see "the things which must be after these." What he sees and hears in heaven itself forms the subject of Rev. 4 and 5. God, and the Lamb, and the throne of God, and the living creatures, and the enthroned elders, and the angels, are all seen in these chapters in their relations to each other *in heaven*. The action of the following chapters is the result toward the earth, and upon it, of what the apostle thus witnesses in heaven.

What, then, are the characteristic features of the scene thus opened in heaven to the apostle? and what light is shed thereby on the remainder of the book? One striking feature can scarcely be supposed to have escaped the attention of any serious reader. It is as to the names by which God Himself speaks, or is spoken of. All those names by which He had been known in previous dispensations, and in covenant relations with His earthly people, as "Lord," or "Jehovah," "God," "the Almighty," are here found; but the name "Father," by which in the New Testament He is made known, and in which the Church, by the Spirit of adoption, so delights to address Him, is omitted. The word never occurs, save where our Lord speaks of Him as His Father, or where He is so spoken of by others. It is not as *our Father*. This is the more remarkable, seeing that John, the penman of the book, was the one to whom had been entrusted the happy service of more fully unfolding the Father's name and character, and the filial relation of believers, than is done by any of the sacred writers besides. In his gospel and epistles this is his special theme. How evident, that in this other lengthened communication by the same pen, the range and scope of the subjects brought forward must be entirely different, when the word Father, as applied to God (save in the exceptional way above noted), never occurs!

And if *the name* of God in the Apocalypse be thus different from that under which the rest of the New Testament specially reveals Him, the difference is not less striking between *the throne* of God as seen here by the apostle, and as elsewhere described to us. Paul, having referred to our great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, says,

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need {Heb. 4:16}.

But the throne, as beheld by John, is one out of which proceed "lightnings and thunderings and voices." It is the throne of judgment instead of the throne of grace. It reminds us of Sinai -- "the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire," accompanied by "blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of

words" {Heb. 12:18, 19}. The succeeding chapters are in perfect harmony with the character of the throne as here portrayed. The book of Revelation is essentially a book of judgment. It sets forth the power of God's judicial throne, exercised in vindication of the rights of Christ, until He Himself comes forth to "tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." "The wrath of God," and "the wrath of the Lamb," <sup>57</sup> are the most prominent subjects of the book. How, then, can we possibly confound the apocalyptic period with the present, as the principle of historic fulfilment does? Is the present period characterized by "the wrath of God," or "the wrath of the Lamb"? "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" {2 Cor. 6:2}; but in Rev 4, at the very commencement of the third division of the book, the throne of God is seen to be a throne of judgment, and no longer, as at present, a throne of grace. But though invested with these attributes of judgment and of terror, the throne as beheld by John is encircled with a rainbow. The sign of God's covenant with the earth is associated with this throne of judgment; affording thus the pledge that whatever may for the time be the destructive effects of the judgments indicated by the thunderings, lightnings, and voices, mercy and blessing to the earth are in the end to succeed.

But the apostle sees other thrones.

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats [literally, thrones]: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold {Rev. 4:4}.

These personages are evidently symbolic, and from their language, when in the next chapter we hear their song, it is equally evident that they symbolize the redeemed.

Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we <sup>58</sup> shall reign on the earth {Rev. 5:9, 10}.

Surely we have here what is of the deepest significance. John does not see the redeemed, as at present, on earth, expecting to be caught up to heaven at the descent of Jesus into the air; he sees them crowned and enthroned in heaven, and anticipating their reign with Christ upon, or over, the earth. These chapters thus evidently unfold to us a *transitional* state of things, alike distinguished from the present and the millennial state. It is not the Millennium, for the redeemed are anticipating it as future; besides which, the very event that calls forth their songs, is the Lamb's taking the book, the

57. It is worthy of remark that the very word rendered Lamb in the Apocalypse is different from that employed in John's gospel. In the gospel, as well as in Acts and 1 Peter, it is ἀμνός -- throughout the Revelation it is ἀρνίον.

58. There is some question among scholars as to the reading here, whether it ought not to be "they." The only difference made in the sense by this would be, that the redeemed on high are heard by the apostle anticipating the reign of those who are yet, at that time, as shown in our last, suffering on earth.

opening of each seal of which ushers in an act of judgment preparatory to the Millennium. Equally remote is it, in character and principle, from the present period. The throne of grace has become, as we have seen, a throne of judgment; and the saints, instead of being on earth awaiting their translation to heaven, are in heaven, symbolized by the crowned elders awaiting their reign with Christ upon the earth.

The translation of the Church to heaven, at the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, is an act of pure, perfect grace: the crowning act of that grace in which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has abounded toward us. No wonder that in this book of judgment it should not be historically narrated. Even the relation of Christ to the seven churches in the Apocalypse is judicial in its character; and the end of that which these churches represent, is to be spued out of Christ's mouth. Clearly this cannot take place while the true Church is yet upon earth. The removal of the true Church may be immediately followed by this judgment on the false one. And though the translation of the Church is not historically mentioned, there is this promise to the faithful at Philadelphia,

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from [literally, "out of," not *in* or *through*, but *out of*] the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth {Rev. 3:10}.

To us it is evident, that this promise will have been fulfilled in the translation of the Church, ere "the things which must be after these" begin to take place. John is taken up to heaven to be instructed as to these things. Why should he, except that the Church will be there when the things themselves transpire? All he sees there, as well as all the action described in the ensuing chapters, is in harmony with this view, while on any other ground the chapters before us are inexplicable.

At the very commencement of this work it was our endeavor to show, that the descent of Jesus into the air, to raise His sleeping saints, and transform those that are alive, translating both into His own presence in glory, is the one, true, scriptural hope of the Church. Our object in certain subsequent parts has been to show, that the fulfilment of this hope is not dependant on earthly events: that while "the day of the Lord" cannot come till the man of sin is revealed, "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him,"<sup>59</sup> may be at any moment; that it only awaits the Father's good pleasure, and the completion of the Church, which is Christ's body -- His bride. Such is the uniform doctrine of the epistles. What further light does the Apocalypse shed on the subject? This -- that while it makes no historic mention of the fact, it shows, from the beginning of Rev. 4, that the fact has taken place ere the scenes it portrays begin to open. *The only place in which the Church is seen from Rev. 4:1 to Rev. 19:14, is in heaven.* There, as symbolized along with Old Testament saints by the four and

twenty crowned elders, it is seen throughout these chapters -- and it is seen nowhere else. In chapter 19, the marriage of the Lamb having been solemnized in heaven, He, as the rider upon the white horse, comes forth to tread the winepress of the wrath of God; and then we are told, "the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" {Rev. 19:14}.

The action of the intermediate chapters consists of successive judgments upon the earth's wicked inhabitants. The Church is not amid the sphere on which these judgments fall. On the contrary, it is seen to occupy the heavens whence these judgments proceed. In Rev. 4 the symbols of the Church, the crowned elders, are first seen peacefully seated on the thrones which surround the central throne, and then prostrating themselves before that throne, worshipping Him that sits thereon, and owning His title as Creator. In Rev. 5 one of these elders instructs and comforts the apostle, weeping because no one can as yet be found worthy to open the seven-sealed book in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. When the Lamb takes the book, the whole company of these crowned elders fall down and worship, in the song at which we have already glanced. In Rev. 7, they are seen, as always, in closer proximity to the throne than the angels themselves; and one of them again becomes the instructor of the apostle, as to the white-robed multitude to whom his attention is directed. The sounding of the seventh trumpet in chapter 11 reawakens their praises.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come {Rev. 11:16, 17}.

They are again seen in Rev. 14, and in Rev. 19:4, but still in heaven. After that, these symbolic personages are seen no more. The reason is obvious. They represent the redeemed in their unincorporated form, as translated to heaven, already both crowned and enthroned, but awaiting the moment of their descent with Christ to the earth. Hence, when the marriage of the Lamb has taken place, the Church ceases to be represented by the crowned elders, because now corporately acknowledged as "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." The one symbol merges in the other; and from this point, it is in her bridal character that the Church is seen. Along with the Old Testament saints, she follows her Lord out of heaven: "the armies which were in heaven followed him." Along with these, and the martyrs of the crisis, she reigns with Christ a thousand years. But her own bridal glory, as the companion and sharer of her Lord's joy, and the minister of His beneficence to the earth, over which she reigns with Him, is set forth to us in the vision of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" {Rev. 21:10}.

One point must not be overlooked. There are saints on earth during the period embraced by Rev. 6-19 of the Apocalypse. It is this which has led so many to suppose that the Church remains on earth throughout that period. But it has been already shown from the Old Testament that amid the sorrows of the closing crisis there will be Jewish saints,

59. See pp. 95-102; especially from p. 99.

broken hearted on account of sin, zealous for God's glory, and desiring the advent of the Messiah, whose calling, experience, and hopes, differ most widely from those of the Church -- from those of Christians under the present dispensation. It has been shown, moreover, that many of these will suffer death at the hands of the last proud adversaries of God. Now it is our firm conviction that a patient and unbiased consideration of the Apocalypse is calculated to satisfy the Christian, that what is there said of saints on earth is more in harmony with the known standing, experiences, prayers, and hopes of these Jewish saints than with his own or with those of the Church of God. Not that we are to suppose there will be no saints of the approaching crisis but such as are Jews. We believe that one thing in which the Apocalypse supplies instruction omitted in the Old Testament is, that there will in that period be Gentile as well as Jewish saints. In Rev. 6, some who have been slain are heard imploring vengeance on those who have shed their blood. In Rev. 7, one hundred and forty and four thousand out of the tribes of Israel are sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads; while an innumerable company out of all kindreds and nations are seen to have come out of the great tribulation, and to have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. In Rev. 8 an angel presents with much incense at the golden altar the prayers of saints -- prayers, the answer to which is, that the angel takes the censer, and fills it with fire, and casts it into the earth; on which "voices" immediately ensue, with "thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake" {Rev. 8:5}. The sackcloth testimony, the martyr-death, and the triumphant, visible ascension to heaven of the two witnesses in Rev. 11 we considered in our last. We add nothing now to the considerations then presented, to show that this is not only what has not been fulfilled as yet, but so contrasted, in spirit and principle, with the character of the present dispensation, as to preclude the thought of its having been accomplished. Rev. 12 exhibits to us Israel's glory according to divine counsels: Israel -- the mother, as all know, of the man-child who is to rule all nations. The man-child is caught away from the dragon's rage to God and His throne; but when, besides this, the dragon shall be cast out of heaven, and come down to earth, having great wrath, because he knows that he hath but a short time, against whom will his wrath be directed? Against the woman, and "the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" {Rev. 12:17}. That is, against Israel, and especially the remnant, whose destinies, whether spared or martyred, we have recently been considering. Saints on earth are again mentioned in Rev. 13 as victims of the beast's enmity against God, and against all who own His name; but this only serves to identify such saints with the evidently Jewish martyrs of Dan. 7 under "the little horn." So of Rev. 14:12, and Rev. 15, 16; while Rev. 20:4 shows us, as explained in our last, that these martyrs of the crisis, being precluded by their death from the earthly hopes of blessing under Christ's millennial reign, are advanced to the far higher dignity of sharing, with Old Testament saints and with the Church, the privilege of reigning with Christ a thousand

years.

"The things which thou hast seen" -- Christ's glory as walking amid the golden candlesticks -- John has recorded in Rev. 1. "The things which are" -- the successive states of the professing body, with Christ's judgment thereof, ending in its being spewed out of His mouth -- form the subject of Rev. 2 and 3. "The things which must be after these" begin to be unfolded in Rev. 4 but, that he may understand and communicate them, the apostle is caught up to heaven. There he witnesses a scene unlike the present, and equally unlike the millennial state of things. It belongs to neither the millennial period nor the present, but is a transitional period between the two, in which "the things which must be after these" have their fulfilment. During this period, the true Church is in heaven. It sits there, is crowned there, worships there; and deeply interested in the action which takes place on earth, it manifests its interest from time to time. Seals are opened -- trumpets blown -- vials of wrath poured out. All these judgments from God upon the earth. They increase in intensity to the last. The objects of these judgments, Babylon and the Beast, are described. When Babylon's overthrow has taken place, the marriage of the Lamb is celebrated in heaven, and judgment is executed by His own hand on the Beast and on his armies. The armies which were in heaven attend Him when He thus comes forth to conquer and to make war. All enemies are overthrown. Satan is bound. Christ and the saints, including those of the crisis, as well as the Church and Old Testament saints, reign over the earth a thousand years. For a little season at the close, Satan is loosed, and a rebellion takes place, which is crushed by instant judgment, and the winding up of all things follows. The heavens and the earth pass away, and give place to new heavens and a new earth -- to the everlasting state -- in which God is all in all.

Such seems to us to be the outline of this wondrous book. We commend it to the prayerful consideration of our readers.

## Chapter 17

### *The First Resurrection*

There is perhaps no point on which the Church at large has more widely departed from those habits of thought, feeling, and expression which characterized apostolic Christianity, than that of the place given to death on the one hand and to resurrection on the other. With the apostles and with Christians of their day, death was, so to speak, left behind; while resurrection, or rather the coming of Him whom they knew as “the Resurrection and the Life,” was the one object of their joyful, triumphant hope. As to all that makes death really terrible -- the fact of its being God’s righteous sentence upon mankind as sinners, its connection in this character with that eternal death of which to unbelievers it is at once the type and portal -- its import as the expression of vassalage to Satan who “had the power of death” against all who were his slaves, -- as to all this, we say, the first Christians knew how death had been borne for them by Christ, and robbed of all its terrors. The sentence against their sins had been executed on Jesus; the entrance to eternal death had thus been closed against them by Him whom they knew as their deliverer from “the wrath to come”; and, as to Satan, the resurrection of Christ was to them the demonstration, that “through death he had vanquished him that had the power of death” {see Heb. 2:14}. Death was thus regarded by these Christians as a conquered foe. Nay, they were accustomed to speak of Jesus as the One who “had abolished death, and brought life and immortality (or incorruptibility) to light through the gospel” {see 2 Tim. 1:10}. Consciously partakers of the risen life of Christ -- Christ risen being in fact their life -- they looked back to His death *for them* as having discharged every claim upon them, whether of the law, or of divine justice, or of Satan, or of death; and being thus one with Christ in His life and partaking of His victory, they joyfully sought to manifest “the power of his resurrection” in dying practically to themselves, sin, the world, and all hopes or thoughts of any rest or portion here. Did sin present its baits? “How shall we, *that are dead to sin*, live any longer therein” {Rom. 6:2}? Did the flesh plead for indulgence? “Therefore . . . we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh” {Rom. 8:12}. Whence is this inference drawn? To what does the “therefore” in this passage refer? To the statement by which it is immediately preceded: -- “And if Christ be in you, *the body is dead because of sin*; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” {Rom. 8:10}. Did the world invite to an easier path? *The cross of Christ* was that in which they alone gloried, and by it they were *crucified* to the world, and the

world *crucified* to them. Was the danger contemplated of abrogated ordinances resuming their power over the mind? “Wherefore *if ye be dead with Christ* from the rudiments of the world, why, *as though living in the world*, are ye subject to ordinances” {Col. 2:20}? In a word, their whole position and walk was that of dead and risen men.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify **therefore** your members which are upon the earth (Col. 3:1-5).

They were still on earth, it is true, and they had evil propensities which required to be mortified; but God in His grace, having identified them in life and glory with Christ Himself, as risen and ascended, it became their privilege to mind those things only to which they were thus introduced, reckoning themselves dead to all besides. This led necessarily to a path of self-renunciation, which seemed madness to those who were not in the secret of their resurrection-hopes. Indeed, the apostle himself says,

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable {1 Cor. 15:19}.

But resurrection was their hope. “Christ, the first-fruits,” had risen, and they knew that they should not be left always here. Not that they calculated with certainty on death in the literal sense. “We shall not all sleep,” says the apostle, “but we [that is, whether asleep or awake] shall all be changed” {1 Cor. 15:51}. Resurrection was what they counted upon. They *might* fall asleep as some of their brethren had done already, but whether or not, the world was to them already stamped with the character of death, and that for which they looked, was the communication to their bodies, of the life already enjoyed by their souls, in their oneness with the risen and ascended Christ. Man’s natural life -- all that man naturally knows as life -- was now, in their estimate, death; and they waited for the appearing of Christ, “the Resurrection and the Life,” when mortality would be swallowed up of life. They knew it was for Him that their departed brethren were waiting; and though the apostles and early Christians esteemed it better to depart and to be with Christ, absent from the body, and present with the Lord, they did not look upon death, and their individual happiness after death, as the object

of their hopes, much less could it be the object of their fears. Death was *theirs*, and they so knew this, that instead of regarding death as an officer of justice having absolute power over them, they were able to view it as a servant, which might be employed by their Lord to withdraw them from the conflicts and sorrows of the present scene, to rest with Himself till the moment of His appearing. But it was for that moment they looked and waited. It was to see Him, and be perfectly conformed to Him, in body as well as in spirit, that He might be thus, according to God's eternal purpose, "the first-born among many brethren." Ah, it was this living expectation that made the apostles and early Christians what they were. It was by this they were inspired with courage, armed with fortitude, endued with meekness, made glad to lose what others lived to obtain, and enabled to rejoice with exceeding joy amid afflictions the bare enumeration of which is enough to cause the natural heart to faint. They had the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.

Why does the Christianity of the present day so little resemble theirs? Why the uncertainty, and want of confidence, of which almost universal complaint is made? Why the fear of death, the shrinking from the cross, the love of pleasure and of ease, and dread even of the world's censure, which so characterize us, alas! in these days? No doubt there has been a great departure from the simplicity of Christ, and the Holy Spirit being grieved, the general tone of Christian character and experience is impaired, and the power of divine truth as a whole greatly diminished. There exists a solemn need for self-scrutiny and self-abasement in all these respects. But while admitting this, and praying that it may please God to press the sense of it on our souls, may we not also, dear Christian readers, inquire whether the truths by which the first Christians were so powerfully influenced are held by us? or, if undoubtedly held as to the general theory, whether they are held by us in the same relations and proportions as by the apostles and their fellow-Christians of that day? If there be some one subject but seldom mentioned in the New Testament, and never brought forward as a prominent or leading theme; if there be another subject, on which the New Testament largely dwells, connecting it with every detail of Christian truth and Christian conduct; and if in the present day this divine order be reversed -- the former subject brought into prominence, while the latter is thrown into the shade, -- can we wonder that such different results are produced? Let any Christian reader turn to the New Testament, and see the place given there to the subject of *death*; let him peruse its sacred pages, and mark the position that the subject of *the resurrection* fills; let him then compare with the New-Testament usage on this point, the prevailing character of religious discourses, conversations, and books, in the present day, and he will cease to wonder that we see but little of the Christianity of early days. Death, of which the apostles said so little, is by most uniformly held out to view as the necessary terminus of each Christian's path below, and preparation for it as the great business of the period which may intervene. The happiness of the disembodied spirit is the

great element of nearly all the instruction that treats of what is future to the Christian, and it becomes thus the object to which the Christian aspirations are almost solely directed; while resurrection, of which the New Testament is full, and the coming of Christ, at which the resurrection of the saints is to take place, receive but little attention, and so produce but little effect on either the affections or the consciences of God's people. Nor is this all. The resurrection of the saints, and Christ's coming, with which it is inseparably connected, are not only put in the back-ground as to the measure of attention they receive, but the notions respecting them which generally prevail are of a character to keep them in the shade. The whole period of the Millennium is held necessarily to intervene between us and the coming of Christ, so that neither it nor the resurrection which attends it can possibly be viewed as a proximate object of hope, by those who entertain this idea. With such a theory in the mind, death and the disembodied state become unavoidably the objects of habitual expectancy; that is, if there be enough of serious godliness to withdraw the soul in any way from the supreme regard to present worldly objects and pursuits. And let us not suppose that all kinds of religious truth are of equal efficiency for this end. If God has chosen to reveal in His word a certain class of objects for the purpose of supplanting the world in the affections of His people, and if, in our individual meditations and social intercourse, as well as in our formal religious instructions, we resolutely prefer employing *another class of objects*, we ought not to be surprised if the worldliness of our own and of our brethren's hearts should prove too strong for us. God is wiser than man! The only issue of preferring our own thoughts to His, is to have it made manifest that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" {1 Cor. 1:25}. May He teach us the true wisdom, which consists in entire subjection to His blessed word! *What that word reveals as the all-absorbing object of Christian expectancy, is not death and the disembodied state, but the coming of Christ and the resurrection from the dead.*

Nor is the Old Testament silent on the subject of resurrection. It is differently presented there, it is true; but this is what we might expect. It is not there set forth as the proximate and heavenly hope of a people identified by grace with an earth-rejected but heaven-enthroned and heaven-exalted Christ. *This* is not the subject of the Old Testament but of the New. The bright future of the Old Testament is the kingdom of the Messiah. From Moses to Malachi, one prophetic strain after another takes up the joyful, wondrous theme, each celebrating, in its turn, the triumphs, the repose, the magnificence, of Messiah's reign -- its righteous character, its world-wide extent, and its duration co-eval with that of the sun and moon. On the shores of the Red Sea, the Lord's hosts begin to chant these strains; and from the rivers of Babylon, where the captives sit down and weep -- from that strange land where the oppressors in vain require of them a song -- there does sound forth the piteous plaint, which, while bewailing present sorrows and degradations, anticipates the advent of Messiah and the glories of His reign. And has the

resurrection no place in these anticipations? Who that is conversant with the Psalms and prophecies, needs ask a question such as this? In the first place, the Messiah, whose reign is foretold and celebrated is the One whose sufferings are predicted as preceding His exaltation -- whose death and resurrection are anticipated as introductory to His reign. Psalms and prophecies need scarcely be cited in illustration or in proof of this. But further, the thought of resurrection is commonly associated, by the prophets, with their anticipation of the kingdom itself. Who can hesitate as to what "morning" it is of which we read, where, having referred to the wicked and their end, the psalmist says,

Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them, and *the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning*; and their beauty [that of the wicked] shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave*: for he shall receive me (Psa. 49:14, 15).

To what does the prophet refer when, in Isa. 26:13-19, he institutes the contrast between the former lords who have had dominion over Israel, and others, whose resurrection he foretells? Of the one class he says,

They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise {Isa. 26:14}:

while of the others he writes:

Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead {Isa. 26:19}.

Need we point out to our readers the connection between these anticipations, and the predictions of Messiah's kingdom -- of millennial blessedness -- in the midst of which they are found? Hosea's prophecy, too, is well known:

I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction (Hos. 13:14).

The restoration of Israel is set forth in Ezek. 37, under the symbol of the resurrection of the dry bones, of which the valley, as beheld by the prophet in his vision, was full. Daniel predicts, moreover, that in connection with the time of unequalled trouble, and Michael's standing up on behalf of Israel, and Israel's consequent deliverance, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:2). And though Ezekiel's predicted resurrection be evidently a symbolic one -- and if it should be, as some suppose,<sup>60</sup> that

Daniel's prediction be also of a figurative character, it is still manifest how the Spirit of Christ in the prophets associated the thought of resurrection with the expectation of Messiah's kingdom. It is only as proofs of this that we refer to the passages we have quoted. We do not adduce them as establishing the doctrine of "the first resurrection," but only as showing that when the Spirit of prophecy looked onwards to the millennial period, the thought of resurrection was in some way associated therewith. Full, clear light as to the nature of the connection between the two is not to be looked for in those earlier revelations. It is in the New Testament we find this. It is surely enough, if in the Old Testament it be apparent that the resurrection and Messiah's kingdom are so associated in the mind of the Spirit, that almost any prediction of the latter ensures some allusion, more or less distinct, to the former. In some instances the allusion cannot denote less than the actual hope of resurrection of the bodies of God's people; in others the idea is more vaguely introduced; but the connection between the resurrection and the kingdom of Messiah is established by all.

We would now, dear Christian reader, invite your attention to another point of no small importance to the subject under consideration. In the Old Testament we read of the reign of the saints, as well as of Messiah's reign, while in the New we have repeated assurances that the saints are to reign with Christ.

But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever (Dan. 7:18).

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Dan. 7:22).

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 (Matt. 19:28).

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord (Matt. 25:21, also 23).

And in Luke 19:17:

Have thou authority over ten [or "five," v. 19] cities.

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60. (...continued)

The most competent scholars, and some who could not be suspected of any doctrinal bias in the case, Jewish rabbis, for instance, maintain, that the Hebrew words rendered "some" -- *some* to everlasting life, and *some* to shame, etc., more strictly imply *these* and *those*; and that their use here does not denote a distinction between *some* and *other some* of the raised ones, but between the whole of them that are raised, and the whole of those who remain in the grave. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; *these* (that is, the raised or waking ones) to everlasting life, *those* (who do not awake or arise) to shame and everlasting contempt." It is but right to place before the reader this solution of a difficulty which is often urged. We do not, however, press the passage as an argument for a premillennial literal resurrection. Some whose judgment is of weight, and who fully believe in a literal premillennial resurrection of the righteous, do not see in this passage more than the revival of the righteous part of the Jewish race under the figure of a resurrection. We leave both thoughts with the reader for his prayerful consideration.

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60. The whole passage is as follows in our English version. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The connection in which this prophecy stands proves irrefragably that this resurrection, whether literal or figurative, is premillennial; it takes place at about the same general epoch as the other events predicted in the passage and enumerated above. Some, perceiving how this, if the resurrection be literal, would demonstrate a premillennial resurrection, very earnestly press as a counter argument, that if from this passage we expect a premillennial resurrection of the righteous, we are bound by its terms to expect that some of the wicked will also rise before the Millennium. But this is by no means so certain as they represent. (continued...)

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17).

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . know ye not that we shall judge angels? (1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

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* (Eph. 1:22, 23).

It is a faithful saying, . . . if we suffer, we shall also reign with him (2 Tim. 2:11, 12).

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: . . . even as I received of my Father (Rev. 2:26, 27).

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Rev. 3:21).

Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood . . . and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9, 10).

And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

It is in this last passage that we find the expression, "the first resurrection." It is not for this reason, however, that we now quote it, but as one of the closing testimonies to the truth, that the saints are to reign with Christ. It is a truth, as we have seen, not altogether unrevealed even in the Old Testament, but one which really pervades the New.

At what time, then, dear Christian reader, and in what sense does this joint reign of the saints with Christ take place? If, as we have seen, the Old Testament is filled with prophetic anticipations of a kingdom to be established, as all must confess, on the earth; if these anticipations be connected, as we have seen, with glimpses of resurrection-blessedness and glory; if in the New Testament the resurrection at Christ's coming be the great event held out as the proximate hope of the saints, with such oft-repeated assurances, moreover, of their suffering with Him *here* being rewarded by their reigning with Him *hereafter*; if these things be so, *when* and *how* are these prospects to be consummated -- these promises to be fulfilled? **In the first resurrection.** Hear the description of it in the words of inspiration, and say if, in the prophetic vision thus unfolded and thus explained, there be not a futurity presented to us, harmonizing with every prophetic anticipation of the Old Testament, and realizing to the full all the hopes and aspirations of New Testament saints, whether directed to resurrection on the one hand, or participation in Christ's glorious reign on the other. And if it be so, can there be a stronger presumption in favor of the natural, unforced sense of the passage being received as the only true one, than that it does thus combine in one harmonious whole, and crown with pure and unfading lustre, the testimonies of the Old Testament to the *earthly* and of the New Testament to the *heavenly* glories of the kingdom of Christ? Let us read the passage, as given us in Rev. 20:1-6.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is

the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon 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, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Let it be supposed by the reader that these words had now for the first time passed under his eye -- that, ignorant of the existence of such a passage, and therefore entirely free from bias towards this or that theory of interpreting it, he had now read it for the first time in his life, what impression would it naturally make upon his mind? Could any one thus reading it question for a moment that it predicts an actual resurrection of saints and martyrs, and that these risen ones as priests and kings are to reign with Christ for a thousand years -- the rest of the dead remaining in their graves till the thousand years have expired? We are persuaded that such is, beyond doubt, the sense in which any intelligent person, unacquainted with systems and theories of prophetic interpretation, and therefore necessarily unbiased by them, would, on a first perusal, understand the passage. It was thus understood by the universal Church for almost the whole of the first three centuries; and it was not until Christians began to mistake the world's patronage of a corrupted Christianity for the commencement of the Millennium, that they adopted those spiritualizing theories of interpretation by which such a passage could be adapted to such views.

The questions which we would now, however, press on the reader's attention are -- If this be not the kingdom of Messiah predicted throughout the Old Testament, and if this be not the reign of the saints with Christ promised throughout the New, how are the predictions of the one and the promises of the other to be fulfilled? If it be not *in His kingdom* that we are to reign with Christ, when are we to reign with Him? We are not forgetting that in Rev. 22:5 it is said of the saints, "and they shall reign for ever and ever." But if it be so easy to spiritualize and explain away the prophecies of our reigning with Christ for a thousand years, what security have we against the application of the same principles to such a passage as the one last quoted? We are told, moreover, in Scripture (whatever may be the meaning of the words) that at the end, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; and it would be extraordinary indeed if the reign of the saints *with Christ* did not commence till Christ had delivered up the kingdom to God. *His reign* continues *till* then.

For he must reign, *till* he hath put all enemies under his



feet. . . . 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. 15:24-28).<sup>61</sup>

Clearly, then, the reign of the saints *with Christ* must be *while His reign continues* -- in other words, it must be *before* instead of *after* "the end," when Christ delivers up His kingdom. Most of the passages, moreover, which foretell the reign of the saints with Christ, are manifestly inapplicable to the everlasting state, which succeeds this final act of Christ. The kingdom "taken" and "possessed" by the saints of the Most High, or of the high places, in Dan 7, is that which immediately succeeds the downfall of the fourth Gentile monarchy: *that is to say, it is identical with the millennial reign of Rev. 20*. The sitting of the apostles on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, may find its place in the scene unfolded to us here, and of which it is said, "This is the first resurrection"; but what place has it in the everlasting state? "Power over the nations," promised in the address to Thyatira to those who overcome, is seen here in actual exercise: "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." But will there be earthly "nations" in the everlasting state, subjected to the "power" of these overcomers? Then, finally, the reign anticipated by the redeemed in Rev. 5 is expressly said to have the earth for its sphere -- "and we shall reign on [or over] the earth." Let the reader judge whether it be in "the first resurrection," in which the saints live and reign with Christ a thousand years, that these anticipations of reigning *over the earth* are fulfilled, or in the everlasting state, when "*the earth* and the heaven" shall have "*fled away*," and "*no place shall be found for them*"!

Many, indeed, interpret "the first resurrection" and thousand years' reign of the risen ones with Christ, as implying nothing more than a state of unexampled religious prosperity. They hold that during this season of the prosperity of religion on the earth, Christ is seated, as at present, at the right hand of God, the saints of all former generations being, as to their bodies, in the grave; and as to their souls, present with the Lord, and waiting, even as now, for the moment of their resurrection. It is contended by those who take this view, that Christ will not then reign in any other sense than that in which He now reigns over His people; only, that at that time, mankind generally will be included among His people. They maintain, moreover, that the resurrection of the martyrs and saints in the passage before us, merely denotes a revival of their spirit, and the universal spread and predominance of the principles for which they suffered. But how, we ask, could such a revival of the spirit of the martyrs, and such a predominance of their principles, be a reward to *themselves* when they have been perhaps for centuries in their

graves, and are still there? *Is this the reigning with Christ which is more than to compensate for the suffering with Him?*

Let it then be distinctly borne in mind, that on any other ground than that of the simple, natural, obvious meaning of this passage, there is no place left for the saints' reign *with Christ*. Their reign *with Him* cannot be what is meant by the everlasting state, which succeeds His delivering up the kingdom; and on the theory of those who spiritualize Rev. 20:1-6, they are not *saints* who reign, but the spirit and principles which, during their lifetime, distinguished the saints; whose bodies (according to this theory) will, alas! be still in the dust of death, while the reign of their principles and spirit is taking place upon the earth! Such, however, is but one of the many startling consequences which flow inevitably from this mode of interpreting the passage before us. Many such will be apparent on a closer examination of its contents.

But before we examine more minutely the passage itself, let us turn to some of the previous testimonies of Christ and His apostles as to the resurrection. From these it will be found that while *the phrase* "the first resurrection" never occurs till here, *the doctrine* of an eclectic resurrection -- a resurrection of the righteous apart from the wicked -- is fully revealed elsewhere. The phrase in question, does but give formal, precise expression to a truth, with which Christians in the apostolic age were perfectly familiar.

Our Lord's reply to the question of the Sadducees (Luke 20:34-36) is very express.

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world [or age, αἰών] marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [or age, αἰών], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

He proceeds further to prove, from the fact that God proclaims Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they must rise from the dead, seeing that "God is the God of the living, and not of the dead." God's covenant engagements with the patriarchs would fail of their fulfilment if they were not to be raised from the dead. But, observe, this is not the whole of our Lord's reply. The words we have quoted meet the question on another ground. Our Lord speaks of a *resurrection-age*, and of a class of persons which shall be *accounted worthy to obtain that age*, and the resurrection from the dead. He not only declares that they do not marry, but also that they die no more; and He distinguishes them by two epithets -- "children of God" and "children of the resurrection." We do not here rest upon what many competent scholars maintain, that the words rendered "resurrection from the dead," mean literally "from among the dead"; we content ourselves with putting it to the reader, whether the passage as it stands does not evidently bear that sense? Can that be a universal, indiscriminate resurrection of righteous and wicked, of which it is said that some "*shall be counted worthy to obtain it*"? Could it be said of an indiscriminate resurrection, that they who partake of it "*can*

61. We surely need not remind our readers that the divine dominion of the Son, in the unity of the Godhead, is unaffected by this economic change, mighty and all-comprehensive as this change may be. The "kingdom" which Christ delivers up, is a kingdom which has been given to Him, and He delivers it up, and is subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- may be all in all.

*die no more*”? What then becomes of “the second death”? A resurrection, moreover, the partakers of which are termed “the children of God, *being the children of the resurrection*,” can scarcely be one in which righteous and wicked universally and indiscriminately arise. Were this the only passage on the subject, it seems to us that it would be decisive as to the resurrection of God’s children being distinct from that of others, and as to its being at the commencement of an age or era on which the character of resurrection is stamped: as our Lord says, “that age.”

In a previous chapter, our Lord, when enforcing on His hearers the practice of kindness to the needy, says,

And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14).

Does not the use of such a phrase, “*the resurrection of the just*,” suggest unavoidably, that the event it so designates is distinct from the resurrection of others? Not that others will not be raised.

There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust Acts 24:15).

But the words of the apostle, as well as those of Christ, would seem to imply that they are distinct from each other, rather than that they are one indiscriminate event.

In John 5:19-29, we have a passage which fully exhibits this distinction, and in every way demands, and will amply recompense, the closest examination. It contains one word which in the original occurs four times in the passage, and is rendered “judgment,” “condemnation,” and “damnation.” The import and the bearing of the passage are more easily perceived if it be uniformly rendered by one of these -- by the word “judgment.” The great doctrine of the passage is, that of the Son’s equality with the Father, and the determination of the Father that the Son shall be honored even as He Himself is. There are two ways in which this honor to the Son is secured.

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and *quickeneth* them, even so the Son *quickeneth* whom he will {John 5:21}.

This is one way. Observe that in quickening, the Father and the Son act conjointly. They who are so quickened are brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son, and gladly honor the Son even as they honor the Father. These bow of good-will. As regards those who will not thus bow to Jesus, who will not thus honor the Son, His rights are to be vindicated. Such are to be compelled, however unwillingly, to render honor to the Son. But in the process by which this is to be effected, He being the One who has been dishonored, acts alone -- and not alone merely, *but in the particular character in which He has been dishonored*.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all *judgment* unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father {John 5:22, 23}.

Again:

And hath given him authority to execute *judgment* also, **because he is the Son of man** {John 5:27}.

Into this judgment, they who have been quickened by the Father and the Son do not enter. There is no need that they should, for they honor the Son as the effect of being quickened, and for them to be brought into judgment would be, in fact, to call in question the efficacy of Christ’s own work, through which they are absolved.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [*judgment*], but is passed from death unto life {John 5:24}.

As to all others, they come under the judgment of that Son of man whom they have despised. “Marvel not at this,” our Lord proceeds to say:

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 [the quickened ones], unto *the resurrection of life*; and they that have done evil [the rejecters of the Son, and despisers of His glory], unto *the resurrection of damnation* [*judgment*] {John 5:28, 29}.

Thus there is *a resurrection of life* for those who have been previously quickened, and *a resurrection of judgment* for all besides.

“Yes,” says an objector, “but if this passage thus evidently distinguishes between the two resurrections in respect to their character and object, it as evidently identifies them as to time. It is in one hour that both resurrections take place.” It is surprising, that this verbal objection should have the weight that it possesses with many minds, in the presence of such an answer to it as the immediate context supplies. Undoubtedly the Lord says, “the *hour* is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. But had He not said, almost in the same breath, “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 5:25}? Reader! how long has *that* “hour” lasted? If it had not lasted almost two thousand years from the time when our Lord pronounced the words, neither reader nor writer of these pages had heard His blessed, gracious voice! And if the word “hour,” in v. 25, denotes a period which we know to be so long, why should not the *same word*, from the *same lips*, in pursuance of the *same general theme*, be also understood of a lengthened period?

To this it has been replied, “that when the word ‘hour’ is used of a lengthened period, it is because the action or quality by which the hour is designated extends throughout the period and characterizes it; as, for instance, that ‘the hour’ of quickening souls, is a period *through the whole course of which* this action of divine power and grace is carried on.” It is contended, “that in the case under consideration, the long interval between ‘the resurrection of life’ and ‘the resurrection of judgment’ renders it improbable that the word ‘hour’ can be used in the extended sense in which it is admitted to be used in the preceding verses; and that therefore we must take it in the literal sense, and conclude that the righteous and the wicked rise simultaneously.” We have sought to state this argument in its full force, and having done so, we need do little in reply, but refer the reader to the passage itself -- to

our Lord's own words. Inattention to their scope and drift can alone account for the use of such an argument. Our Lord is really *contrasting* two periods -- "the hour" of quickening dead *souls*, and "the hour" of quickening dead *bodies*. The resurrection of all that are in the graves does as much characterize the one period, as the quickening of those who "hear the voice of the Son of God and live" characterizes the other. True, indeed, that "the resurrection of life" is at the beginning, and "the resurrection of judgment" at the close of this period. But when we consider that within that period the resurrection of both classes assuredly takes place, and that the whole period is what our Lord terms in Luke 20 "that age" -- that is, *the resurrection-age*, what room is there to hesitate as to whether our Lord uses the word "hour" of both periods in the same sense? To suppose otherwise seems to us to be using a latitude of interpretation in respect to Christ's words which we should none of us use in reference to the words of a mere human author.

But there is a double contrast in our Lord's words. He not only contrasts the hour in which He quickens men's souls with the hour in which He raises men's bodies, but also *His action in quickening* and *His action in judgment*. Indeed this is the great subject of His discourse. And now mark, dear reader, the object of those who deny the doctrine of a "first resurrection," and contend for the simultaneous resurrection of righteous and wicked, is to show that there is no literal resurrection till the end of all things, when, as they allege, righteous and wicked will be raised together, and *together arraigned* before "the great white throne." Now what our Lord insists upon is, that they whose souls have been quickened by Him *will not come into judgment* -- that "the resurrection of judgment" *is not for them*.<sup>62</sup> The life which they have received in this "hour" of quickening dead souls is, in the coming "hour" of raising dead bodies, to issue in "the resurrection of life"; while the wicked, who would not come to Christ that they might have life, are to be raised *for judgment*. The doctrine of a simultaneous resurrection of both classes for judgment before "the great white throne," sadly obscures, if it does not entirely and absolutely neutralize, the distinction on which our Lord insists.

In John 6, our Lord refers no fewer than four times to the resurrection; but in each instance it is to the resurrection of His people; and the terms in which He speaks are such as intimate that the resurrection treated of is to take place *as their distinctive privilege*.

And this is the Father's will . . . that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but *should raise it up again at the last day* {John 6:39}.

62. There is nothing here to contradict the truth clearly enough revealed elsewhere, that believers themselves "must all appear before the judgment-seat [βῆμα, not κρίσις, as in John 5] of Christ." But this appearing is not a question of life or death, -- the justification or the condemnation of the *person*. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"; while, as to all the details of their conduct as believers, they "must give account of themselves to God," -- yea, the very "counsels of the heart" must be "made manifest," that every man may "have praise of God" (see 1 Cor. 3:11-15, and 4:3-5).

Also:

That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: *and I will raise him up at the last day* {John 6:40}.

Again:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: *and I will raise him up at the last day* {John 6:44}.

Finally:

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; *and I will raise him up at the last day* {John 6:54}.

The "last day" is not, as is popularly supposed, a day of twenty-four hours, absolutely at the close of all things. It is the great closing period, in which God makes manifest the character and results both of man's and Satan's actings, and of His own eternal counsels, as well as of His gracious operations throughout the preceding periods. Just as we have in Scripture "the day of the Lord" in contrast with "man's day," and "the day of judgment" in contrast with "the day of salvation," both these being expressive of a lengthened period; so we have "the last day" in contrast with preceding days, or periods, leading on thereto. But the object for which we quote the four passages in which this phrase occurs, is to point out that the resurrection of the saints is represented as the completion of everything that relates to their position and state. It flows from the gift of the saints to Christ by the Father, and from Christ's faithfulness to the charge with which the Father has entrusted Him. It is inseparable from the everlasting life which is the portion of every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him. It is the final issue of the Father's drawings, and of that faith in a crucified Savior which is described as "eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of man." True, there is nothing here to distinguish it as to time from the resurrection of the unjust. But this is *in itself* a point of secondary importance. There is no resurrection treated of in this chapter save that of believers; but no statements could be uttered or penned more widely to distinguish it as to its *source*, its *ground*, and its *character*, from the resurrection of the wicked, than those to which our attention has now been directed.

The Church has its existence by virtue of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The life by which it is animated is His life, as risen from the death He underwent for our sins, by the infinite efficacy of which death those sins are put away. In Eph. 1, 2, where the Holy Ghost unfolds a truth beyond even this, this truth is most strikingly developed. The truth there specially revealed, and which does pass beyond the subject of our present meditations, is that of the association of the Church with Christ, not as risen only, but as ascended also. But ascension implies resurrection; and our participation in Christ's resurrection is, moreover, expressly declared. "The exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe" [is] "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" {see Eph.

1:19, 20}. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved:) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus {see Eph. 2:4-6}. Thus even now is the Church partaker of the resurrection-life, as well as of the heavenly exaltation of Jesus. The life has not yet been communicated to our bodies, and therefore it is in spirit, not as yet *actually*, that we are in heavenly places.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;  
neither doth corruption inherit incorruption {1 Cor.  
15:50}.

The resurrection of our bodies will place us *actually*, where our oneness with Christ by the Holy Ghost now places us *spiritually*, in the heavenly places, whither our risen Lord has ascended, and where He has sat down. It is surely of all importance to have such a testimony, that the resurrection of the Church is on a principle common with that of her glorified Head, and by virtue of her association with Him in life, in inheritance, and in glory!

What a light does the truth just considered shed on the words of the apostle,

That Christ should suffer, *and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead* (Acts 26:23).

As to the simple fact of restoration to life after death, He was not the first in whom such restoration took place. Instances are recorded both in the Old Testament and in the Gospels, of persons being recalled to life. But it was to the natural Adam-life that they were restored, and so had a second time to sleep the sleep of death. But as to the life which exempts its subjects from weakness, dishonor, corruption, mortality; the life received, moreover, by virtue of sin's penalty having been undergone, God's glory manifested and secured, Satan vanquished, and death completely overthrown; as to this life, and resurrection in the power of this life, how evident that Christ was indeed *the first* that rose from the dead. He who went down under all Jehovah's waves and all His wrath on account of our sins, atonement which He had undertaken to make: He who tasted all the bitterness and felt all the power of death, though Himself the Prince of life, and the only-begotten Son of God: He was *the first* to emerge from death's dark dominions, as the One on whom death had no claim, and over whom the grave had no power. "It was not possible that he should be holden of it" {Acts 2:24}. "In him was life" {John 1:4}. He had "power to lay down" His "life, and power to take it again" {see John 10:18}. He had laid it down, that God might be glorified, His Church redeemed, sin put away, Satan overthrown, creation itself delivered; and that all the counsels of eternal wisdom, holiness, and love might be accomplished. It was sin that had made it needful that at such a cost, in such a way, God should be glorified and the good pleasure of the Father's will fulfilled. Christ shrunk not from the mighty work. He took flesh and blood that He might accomplish it. While passing on towards it He could cry, "How am I straitened till it be accomplished" {Luke 12:50}! When the hour arrived, He was in perfect readiness, and went out to meet those to whom He said, "Now is your hour, and

the power of darkness" {see Luke 22:53}. He died. The sun was darkened, the rocks were riven, the temple's vail was rent, the graves were opened. Even at His *expiring* cry, the domains of death were laid bare; *and was it possible that He could be holden of death?* No. "Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" {Acts 6:4}, and bearing with Him the trophies of His victory, "the keys of death and of hades" {Rev. 1:18}, He came forth, "leading captivity captive" {Eph. 4:8}. Having "spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it [himself]" {Col. 2:15}. But though in the conflict He stood alone, and the glory of the victory belongs entirely to Himself, of its fruits we are favored to partake. He was "*the first* to rise from the dead" {Acts 26:23}, but it was as "the firstfruits" {1 Cor. 15:20, 23}, and the abundant harvest is in due season to follow.

He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:18).

Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! {1 Cor. 15:57}

We have been guilty of no digression, dear reader, in considering thus the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is when the apostle has described the vision that he beheld, of thrones, and sitters upon them, to whom judgment was given; when He has described two distinct classes of risen ones who partake of this glory, and said of them all, that they lived and reigned **with Christ** a thousand years; when he has explained that the rest of the dead lived not again throughout this period, it is then that he says of the whole vision, "**This is the first resurrection.**" And can we contemplate the first resurrection without considering Christ's place in it? Christ, "the first" who rose, "the first-fruits," "the first-born," "the first-begotten from the dead," "the first-born among many brethren"! No, His place must not be omitted or overlooked! It is in proportion as we understand *His place* that we shall understand *our own*. To say that it is by His power we shall rise, is to say the very least that can be said. It is by His power that even the wicked will be raised for judgment. But as to us, who through grace believe in Jesus and belong to Jesus, it is as given to Him of the Father, purchased by His own blood, absolved by His death, partakers even already of His life, nourished by eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood -- it is as one with Him, members of His body, and co-heirs of His inheritance and glory, that our bodies shall be raised. True, that some will have part in "the first resurrection" who do not stand thus in the intimate relation to Him which belongs only to the Church, which is His body -- His bride: but Christ and the Church surely form the chief part of "the first resurrection." The Lord grant to all His people a more profound sense of the riches of His love, the value of His sacrifice, the power of His resurrection!

The truth of "the resurrection at the last day" seems to have been known among the Jews at the time of our Lord's sojourn on earth. The Sadducees denied it, but with this exception, it seems to have been traditionally held by the nation at large. On the occasion of the death of Lazarus, when

the Lord had returned to Bethany, but had not as yet entered the town, Martha, hearing of His approach, went out to meet Him; and in answer to the consolatory assurance, "Thy brother shall rise again," she said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." This was true as far as it went, but our Lord would unfold to her truth of a still deeper and more blessed character.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:23-26).

The last day might be far distant; but Jesus would have Martha and her sister to understand, that in receiving Him they received not merely the Raiser of the dead, but the One who is in His own person "the resurrection and the life." In His absence, sickness had been permitted to enter His beloved retreat at Bethany, and death had followed: the grave itself had received its victim, and the friend of Jesus lay to all appearance secure within its embrace. But the sorrowing sisters were to know, -- yea, it was to be manifested to His desponding disciples, who had but just said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him," and to the Jews who were assembled as the comforters of the bereaved ones -- all were to know, that life is essentially in the person of the Son of God Himself, and life, not for Himself alone, but for all who are His. Death could not prevent *His* communicating and *their* receiving life; for "he that believeth in me," saith Jesus, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." This was now to be proved in the resurrection of Lazarus: but without presenting it as an argument, may we not suggest to our readers, what an illustration is here afforded of the effect, even as to the bodies of the saints, of the *presence* or *absence* of Jesus, "the resurrection and the life"? In His absence, sickness and death may and do befall the bodies of His people. The moment He returns, believers, though dead like Lazarus (or rather asleep, to use the word by which our Lord would fain have made the disciples understand Him, but they were dull of hearing), shall live; while all who are then alive and believe in Him shall, without passing through death, be changed, and thus "shall never die." Christ Himself is the life of His saints. Nor will it be always, as now, spiritually alone, and by faith, that He is thus known; His life will be communicated to the sleeping dust of those who are His, and in resurrection they shall behold and reflect His glory.

Phil. 3:11 represents participation in the resurrection from the dead as the object of the apostle's earnest desire and strenuous pursuit -- "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Had the general, indiscriminate resurrection of all mankind, righteous and wicked together, been that to which the apostle looked forward, how could he with any propriety have used such language as this? Surely the resurrection after which he thus panted, was one peculiar to saints. This is an argument which the mere English reader can appreciate as well as the most learned; but there is evidence the most satisfactory that the true version and right rendering of the passage is much stronger than in our Bibles. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection *from*

*among* the dead" <sup>63</sup>. If this be so, it is direct verbal evidence of the doctrine of "the first resurrection."

An attempt, unfair as it seems to us, is sometimes made to evade the force of such passages as this. It is assumed, for instance, when we apply "the resurrection *from among* the dead" to the pre-millennial resurrection of *believers*, that we restrict the other phrase, "the resurrection *of* the dead" to the post-millennial resurrection of the wicked. The real question being left out of sight, it is contended (a point which no one disputes) that the latter phrase, "the resurrection *of* the dead," is not only applied expressly to the resurrection of *both classes*, but specifically to that resurrection which is *peculiar to believers*, and even to the resurrection of Christ Himself. No doubt this is the case; but then no millenarian writer would think of contending that "the resurrection *from among* the dead" is the formula invariably used in Scripture to denote the first resurrection, and "the resurrection *of* the dead" to express the postmillennial resurrection of the wicked. A child may see that the latter expression is applicable to both events, while the former is necessarily restricted to one. Christ's resurrection was "*from among* the dead," as in 1 Pet. 1:4, and, of course, it was also "a resurrection *of* the dead," as in Acts 26:23 and Rom. 1:4. But it is utterly illogical and unsound to infer thence that the two phrases are interchangeable. Either might be used, as occasion requires, of an eclectic resurrection, but ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν neither is nor could be predicated of the resurrection which embraces *all the rest of the dead*.

In Rom. 8 we have two passages of deepest importance on the subject before us.

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness {Rom. 8:10}.

63. The late Mr. Gipps, the esteemed author of "Treatise on the First Resurrection," combats, throughout that work, the doctrine we are seeking to exhibit and establish; and in discussing the argument stated above, has some remarks deserving of the readers most serious attention. Assuming that the reading of the *Textus Receptus* is indisputable, he reasons from it to show that the rendering we have given above is inadmissible; and, it must be confessed, that his observations have great force and acuteness. The fact is, that the terms as given in the *Textus Receptus* are irreconcilable, and so subversive of each other; ἐξανάστασις as plainly intimating an eclectic resurrection on the one hand, as τῶν νεκρῶν implies on the other that of the dead generally. We do not give Mr. G.'s reasonings in detail. The learned reader may find them in "note z," to pp. 84, 85 of his Treatise. It is on account of the following remark that we refer to it at all. "I conceive," says he, "that if Phil. 3:11, had been meant to express the rising *from* the dead, the preposition ἐξ in composition with ἀνάστασις would have been repeated, and the phrase would have been τὴν ἐξανάστασιν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν." Such was the judgment of this devoted man and excellent scholar, at a time when the labors of criticism had not yielded so abundant a harvest as they have since brought forth. What would have been his astonishment, if God had spared him, to see the critical editions of Scholz, of Tischendorf, and of Lachmann, who all agree to read *the very phrase which he conceived proper to express the idea of a resurrection of saints before that of the rest of the dead!* The only difference is, that the entire phrase in the correct text of Phil. 3:11, is yet stronger than what he suggests as strong enough -- τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν. These three editors adopt systems of recension which vary in important respects, and their unanimity is so much the stronger, as not one of them was influenced by doctrinal views, each coming to this conclusion upon external evidences alone.

This is our present state.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you {Rom. 8:11}.

A vivifying of these mortal bodies, declared thus to be dependent on the fact of the previous indwelling of the Spirit, is surely what none can anticipate but those who are partakers of this wondrous grace. But this is not the whole. Salvation itself is seen in the light of the verse just quoted to have a twofold character; and this the apostle proceeds to trace out in the verses which succeed. There is a sense in which we believers are already saved; and there is a sense in which salvation is still the object of hope. "The Spirit of adoption" we have already received. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, *that we are the children of God.*" This is our present known relationship to God, of which the indwelling Spirit bears full testimony. But "if children," the apostle argues, "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Our present relation to God as His children associates us in hope with all the prospects of Christ Himself as the "appointed Heir of all things." Now it is our privilege to partake of His sufferings; *ere long* we shall participate in His glory; "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The anticipation of this makes present sufferings easy to be endured. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." What the apostle reckons upon is not a state of happiness for the departed spirit (true as that expectation is in its place,) but *a glory to be revealed*, and to be revealed, mark, *in us*. It is the glorification of the body of which he treats. Its *vivification* he has previously inferred from the present indwelling of the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead: its *glorification* he now exultingly counts upon, as the infallible result of present relationship to God as His children, and as the counterpart to the suffering with Christ which at present flows from this relationship. But when are these hopes to be fulfilled? When are these mortal bodies to be quickened, and this glory to be revealed in us? Ask many Christians, and they will reply, "At the last judgment and consummation of all things, when the heaven and the earth shall flee away from before the face of Him who sits upon the great white throne." But what says the apostle here? Is this his doctrine on the subject? No, he speaks of creation's groans and travail; he foretells creation's deliverance from the bondage of corruption; and he connects creation's unintelligent yearnings after renewal and repose, with our own intelligent hope of being glorified together with Christ.

For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation (κτίσις)] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature [creation] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty [literally, the liberty of the glory] of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not

only they [it], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body {Rom. 8:19-23}.

The whole creation, of which man was part, but over which he was placed as lord, became subject by man's sin to vanity and to the bondage of corruption. Misery, decay, and death, are the fruit to all creation of the apostasy of Adam, its responsible head. But these results of sin are not to remain for ever. The groans of creation are to be hushed, and its travail to be succeeded by glad and peaceful repose. Who that has read the Old Testament can fail to be reminded of some of its joyous predictions? Does it not witness of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid? of the calf, the young lion, and the fatling being led, and led together, by a little child? Does it not speak of a covenant with the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, and the creeping things of the earth? And does it not call on all creation to rejoice in Jehovah's reign?

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth (Psa. 96:11-13).

It is needless to multiply quotations on this point. The removal of the curse under which the sin-blighted creation groans, is well known to be associated in Old Testament prophecy with Messiah's reign. And with what does the apostle associate it in the passage before us? *With the quickening and glorification of the bodies of God's children* -- with "the adoption -- the redemption of our body"! Oh, yes! if it was by the disobedience of the first Adam that all creation was involved in the consequences of his fall, the obedience to death of the second Adam secures for creation the blessings of His reign. If by man came misery and ruin, by man shall also come deliverance and joy. If the groanings of creation have proclaimed the defection and condemnation of the first man, the songs of that creation shall celebrate the faithfulness, the worth, the glory of the second. And when creation itself shall be delivered thus from the bondage of corruption, and be subjected instead thereof to the beneficent rule of the Prince of Peace, it will not be *alone* that the Blessed One will reign. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of *the sons of God.*" It is for "the liberty of the glory of *the children of God,*" that is, the liberty which their glory will bring to creation, and diffuse over its whole extent, that creation waits. When Christ reigns, the saints are to reign with Him. But this must surely be in glory. In point of fact, our mortal bodies form part of the creation which at present groans, and it is by means of our bodies that we are linked with its present condition. Already we possess "the first-fruits of the Spirit"; but this hinders not our groaning in ourselves. Nay, it gives to our groanings what those of creation lack -- the intelligence of that for which we wait, and which is to bring the full deliverance. The redemption of our body -- the quickening and glorification of these mortal tabernacles -- is

that for which we wait; and when Christ unites thus His co-heirs with Himself in that glory which is to be revealed *in them* as well as *in Him* -- when the manifestation of the sons of God takes place -- then will creation be delivered. The dismal pall with which sin has overspread it will be exchanged for bridal garments and songs of joy; hallelujahs and hosannas resounding throughout heaven and earth shall replace the universal wail which will then for ever have died away; and the glory of the Lord, not merely revealed in the word, made known by the Spirit, and discerned by faith, but openly manifested in the person of Christ and of the many sons whom He will then have brought to glory, shall fill the whole earth with blessing! But if this be the teaching of the apostle in Rom. 8, how fully does it harmonize with the doctrine of "the first resurrection," and how strikingly is that doctrine confirmed thereby!

In 1 Cor. 15 we have a passage which for various reasons demands our attention. It begins by demonstrating the fundamental importance of the doctrine of the resurrection, and then proceeds to unfold it as follows:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 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 {1 Cor. 15:20-24}.

To a mere English reader, the words "then cometh the end" might suggest the idea that "the end" is at the same time as the coming of Christ, or that it immediately succeeds that event. But the words in the original, as all scholars know, have no such signification.

Every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward (ἐπειτα), they that are Christ's at his coming; then (εἶτα) the end, etc.

Now these words, εἶτα and ἐπειτα, are used in many passages, where it will be seen that the events mentioned do not occur at the same time, but after a considerable interval. In v. 5 of the chapter before us, where these identical words are used, we have such an instance. "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of above five hundred" {1 Cor. 15:5}, etc. Does this mean that Cephas and the twelve saw the risen Jesus at the same time? No; but in succession, and, as all know, after a considerable interval. Yet it is the same word (εἶτα) which is employed in both cases -- "then of the twelve," "then cometh the end." Another instance we may cite from Mark 4:28: "first the blade, then (εἶτα) the ear, after that (εἶτα) the full corn in the ear." Here there can be no mistake. The same word is rendered both "then" and "after that," and evidently signifies "after that" in each case. Succession of events is that which is indicated by the words εἶτα and ἐπειτα, without, in any way, defining the length of time which may intervene.

There are, then, three great events which succeed each

other, and the apostle, in the passage before us, states the order of their succession. The first is the resurrection of Christ -- "Christ the firstfruits"; the second, the resurrection of all who are Christ's at His coming; and the third, "the end," which is distinguished by the delivering up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Between the resurrection of "Christ the firstfruits" and the resurrection of those who are His at His coming, upwards of eighteen hundred years have already elapsed. Between the resurrection of the saints at Christ's coming and His delivering up the kingdom at "the end," the period of the kingdom itself intervenes. By the kingdom itself we mean the kingdom of Christ in its open, manifested character. In mystery, it exists even now -- in manifestation it is not set up till Christ comes, and then the saints are raised, to share with Him in the glories of His reign.

As to the sequel of this passage, two remarks may serve to clear up its meaning. First, there is an evident allusion to Psa. 110 as well as to Psa. 8. Secondly, we have carefully to distinguish between God's putting all things under Christ, and Christ is actually subjecting all things by His own power. All things put under man is evidently the subject of Psa. 8; and in it we are furnished with the words so often quoted of Christ in the New Testament, "Thou hast put all things under his feet." In Heb. 2 the apostle, quoting these words and applying them to Christ, shows the absolute universality of their scope, but intimates that their practical accomplishment is yet future.

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. *But now we see not yet all things put under him.* But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor {Heb. 2:8, 9}.

The risen Jesus, crowned with glory and honor at the right hand of God, is set thus over all the works of God's hands. All things, as to acknowledged right and title of supremacy, are already put under Him of God; and faith discerns and owns this, though as to the actual enforcement of His claims, and the subjugation of all things to Him by power, "we see not yet all things put under him." It is just here that the doctrine of Psa. 110 comes in.

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, **until** I make thine enemies thy footstool {Psa. 110:1}.

The Lord is seated at the right hand of God until a given epoch, at which His enemies are to be made His footstool. That epoch has not yet arrived, and therefore we see not yet all things put under Christ as matter of fact. God is not at present putting Christ's enemies as a footstool under His feet. He is bearing with them in long-suffering grace, while by His Spirit He gathers out from among them those who, instead of being trodden as a footstool by His feet, are to sit with Him on His throne, and participate in His dominion and His joy. When this work has been completed, the expected moment will arrive, at which Jehovah will make Christ's enemies His footstool. What will ensue on this? The Psalmist replies:

The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: *rule thou in the midst of thine enemies* {Psa. 110:2}.

We read further,

The LORD at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies {Psa. 110:5, 6}.

Christ will, in the day of His wrath, actively subdue by His power those enemies who have been placed by Jehovah for this purpose as a footstool under His feet.

We have, then, two entirely distinct and contrasted periods. In the one, Christ sits at the right hand of God, in the acknowledged title of universal supremacy, but waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool. During this period, the enemies are borne with in patient grace, and the co-heirs are gathered who are to sit with Him on His throne. This period fills up the interval between the resurrection of Christ the first-fruits, and the resurrection of those who are Christ's at His coming. The other period is from the time when Jehovah makes Christ's enemies His footstool, and He begins actively to crush them by His power, and as matter of fact to subject all things to Himself. This period extends even beyond the close of the Millennium, for we know that it is not till after the thousand years that "death and hades" are "cast into the lake of fire." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Let us read now, in the light of those other scriptures, the whole of the passage under consideration.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 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. 15:22-28}.

The given supremacy of man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, ("the second man is the Lord from heaven") is evidently the subject of which the apostle in these verses treats. This supremacy is exercised in resurrection. When Christ rose and ascended into the heavens, He took the place of universal supremacy at God's right hand, all things being, as to His title, put under Him. But He rose as the firstfruits. All who are to reign with Him form the harvest. That harvest is not yet ready. While it is being prepared, He sits at the right hand of God. "They that are Christ's at his coming" will at His coming be raised. His enemies will then be made His footstool. All things will, *in fact* as well as *in title*, be then put under Him. His own power will be exercised in the actual subjugation of every thing hostile to His character and sway. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Scripture amply testifies that when He is thus subjugating all things to Himself, the saints who have been raised at His coming are united with Him in the exercise of His power. Even death itself must at last be destroyed. Then, when all things have been subjected to the sway of the risen and

glorified man, The second {last} Adam, the Lord from heaven, He delivers up the kingdom in which, *as man*, He has exercised the authority confided to Him; and **God** in contrast with **man** -- God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost -- is all in all. Blessed, wondrous conclusion of God's ways! May our hearts adore Him with more profound reverence! and may He be to our faith now what He will be absolutely and for ever when all the dispensations have run their course!

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen {Rom. 11:36}: -- "**That God may be all in all** {1 Cor. 15:28}."

Not only does this chapter establish thus the simultaneousness of the Lord's coming and the resurrection of the saints (distinguishing these from "the end," when the kingdom is delivered up) but it proceeds to give more minute instruction as to these events, and to furnish still further evidence, that they come to pass when Christ takes the kingdom, not when He delivers it up. The apostle shows that the change of the living saints is at the same time as the resurrection of those who have departed, and that the whole is accomplished at or before the commencement of the Millennium.

Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all [*i.e.*, whether we sleep or not] 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* <sup>64</sup> shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory {1 Cor. 15:51-54}.

Now, the only passage in which this saying is written is Isa. 25:8; and there it is so interwoven with unmistakable predictions of millennial blessedness, that for the apostle to say, as he here does, that it is to come to pass at the same time as the resurrection and glorification of the saints, is equivalent to his declaring in plain terms that the Millennium is thus introduced.

Some objections which are made to this view of 1 Cor. 15 it may be well to notice before passing on to another scripture. It has been urged that the expression, "they that are Christ's at his coming," implies that the coming of Christ will not take place till all who are Christ's -- that is, all who will ever belong to Him -- have been saved; and that the affirmation of the passage is, that the whole company of the redeemed, from the beginning to the end of time, will at Christ's coming be made alive. This interpretation palpably takes for granted the question at issue. What, we ask, would be the sense in which any unprejudiced reader, unaware of any questions on the subject, would understand the words, "they that are Christ's at his coming"? Would not the natural

64. Not εἴτα, as in verse 24, but τότε, the literal and uniform meaning of which is, "at that time."



sense of the passage seem to him to be, "as many as are Christ's at the time he comes." That such will then be made alive is all that the passage affirms. The difference between the two statements is obvious; and it is for those who urge the objection to show that the sense in which they use the passage is its natural, obvious, and *only* sense. If this, as is evidently the case, be impossible, no such argument as that under consideration can be founded on the passage. If it can be established by other scriptures, let it be so; to appeal to this is clearly inadmissible. When the master says in Matt. 25:27,

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then *at my coming I should have received mine own with usury*

does he mean that he had no property besides what had been entrusted to this wicked servant, and that he never would have any other afterwards? To take the words "mine own," used in this particular case as equivalent to the words, "all that is now or ever will be mine own," is precisely such a mistake as to understand "they that are Christ's at his coming" as equivalent to "all that do then or ever will belong to Christ," which is the sense put upon these words by the objection we are considering.

It has also been objected that "the last trump" in 1 Cor. 15 is the same as "the voice of the Son of man" in John 5:28; and as in the latter passage "all that are in the graves" are said to "hear the voice of the Son of man," it is inferred that "the last trump" will not sound till the resurrection of the wicked takes place; and that, in fact, the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will take place simultaneously. But it is a pure assumption to identify "the voice of the Son of man" in John 5 with "the last trump" in the chapter before us. The object of the Savior in John 5 is not at all to depict the circumstances which attend the resurrection either of the righteous or the wicked; it is not of "the archangel's voice" or "the trump of God" that He is speaking, but of His own voice, which alike quickens dead souls and raises bodies from the grave. The only difference is, that while the former are quickened by hearing "the voice of the Son of God," some of the latter being raised for judgment, it is by voice of the "the Son of man," to whom, as He says, all judgment is committed. That with which "the last trump" is identified is "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God" in 1 Thess. 4:16; but there we have no mention of any but saints being raised or changed, and the passage as a whole is in every way confirmatory of the doctrine of "the first resurrection."

Finally, it has been sought to identify the destruction of death (v. 26) with death being swallowed up in victory (v. 54); and as the former is confessedly at "the end," or immediately preceding it, it has been contended that so is the latter. But the swallowing up of death in victory is not necessarily the destruction of death. A foe, long triumphant, may have laid his rueful grasp on the rightful subjects of some mighty prince; he may, by that prince's conquering hosts, be swallowed up in victory, and all his captives set at liberty -- and yet the life of the tyrant may be spared; yea, he may be spared to act the part of jailer to the prince's enemies. It is exactly so in the case before us. Death has had under his

grasp the bodies of God's beloved people. At the coming of the Lord, the Prince of life, he will be compelled to relinquish every captive: not one of all the bodies of God's people shall be left in the grasp of the fell destroyer. He must disgorge his prey. He must give up all. Already has he been compelled to release that blessed One Himself, who once entered, voluntarily entered, his dark domains. It was then that death was conquered. A mightier than he who had the power of death had voluntarily subjected Himself to death in atonement; and having in His death put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He came forth, bursting every barrier, and leading captivity captive. Not only was it impossible that He Himself should be holden of death; His death in atonement set aside death's title over the saints. He abolished death; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself. Faith knows this now, and rejoices in this perfect victory of Christ over death. True that for wise and gracious purposes, death is still permitted to retain in his grasp the bodies of those who have been put to sleep by Jesus. But when Jesus comes, the bodies of all His saints will be delivered from every trace of the power of death. Death shall then indeed be swallowed up in victory! Still death is not destroyed. It is, so to speak, for a thousand years longer, the jailer of those unhappy ones who have lived and died in sin. They too shall then be raised in the resurrection of judgment, and then death itself shall be destroyed. "Death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire." But this brings us to Rev. 20, and to that chapter we must now turn our attention.

There are two interpretations of this passage which respectively number among their adherents so vast a proportion of those who pay any serious attention to prophecy, that the question may be said to lie between these two -- other explanations of the prophecy being unimportant and not requiring notice. One view -- that which has till lately generally prevailed for the last century or two -- is, that "the first resurrection" is not a real, but a figurative resurrection -- that it denotes the universal triumph and prevalence of true Christianity during the Millennium -- exhibiting this prevalence and triumph under the figure of the resurrection of those who have been martyred in Christ's cause. This view denies that there will be any actual resurrection of the saints until, as is alleged, all the dead, both righteous and wicked, are raised to stand before the great white throne. The other interpretation, which for nearly the whole of the first three centuries was universally entertained, and which has been greatly revived among Christians during the last thirty years, is, that "the first resurrection" is a literal resurrection of the bodies of the saints, and that it takes place at the commencement of the period of universal blessing under the joint reign of Christ and His saints, which all Scripture teaches us to anticipate. The question, Which of these two views exhibits the real meaning of the passage, must, under the teaching of God's Spirit, be determined by the internal evidence which the passage itself affords, and by its harmony with other parts of God's word.

In maintaining the latter as the true interpretation of the

passage, we are met at the threshold by the objection, that the Apocalypse is a book of symbols and figures, and that for this reason we may almost presume beforehand that "the first resurrection" is not actual, but figurative. This, however, would equally prove that the resurrection of "the dead, small and great," in the latter part of the chapter, is to be similarly understood. But this is not the whole of our answer to this objection. It is cheerfully allowed that the Apocalypse is a book of symbols and figures, and that to overlook this in interpreting the book would indeed be a gross mistake. But, besides figures and symbols, it contains divine explanations of the one, and interpretations of the other. The "seven golden candlesticks," beheld by John in vision, were doubtless symbols. The "seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" {Rev. 1:20}, is the explanation from the Lord's own mouth of what the symbols denote. The "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head" {Rev. 12:3}, is a symbol: "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" {Rev. 12:9}, is the divine interpretation thereof. When John saw "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" {Rev. 17:1}, he beheld a symbolic scene. The unchaste woman herself was a symbolic personage; and the "many waters" on which she sat were symbolic also. But when we read, "the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth" {Rev. 17:18}; and again, "the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" {Rev. 17:15}, are we to make these also into symbols, and thus deprive ourselves of the light afforded by the divine and literal explanation of what the symbols represent? So in the passage before us. We do not deny that symbols were used in the scene which the apostle describes. "The thrones" which he saw, and the sitters upon them; the souls of them that were beheaded, and which he also says he "saw," no doubt these were symbols. The whole scene, being one presented to his eye, leaves no question as to its symbolic character. But what did the symbols represent? and in what kind of language is the answer to this question couched? **"This is the first resurrection"** is the divine answer to the inquiry, What do the symbols represent? And can we suppose that this answer is any thing but literal? Is one enigma solved by another in the word of God? Is this the method of divine teaching? We have no wish to deny the symbolic character of most that the book of Revelation contains: we believe that the recognition of it is essential to the understanding of the book; but there is no principle of sound interpretation, requiring us to regard as figurative the brief explanations of its symbols, which its divine Author has graciously inserted for our guidance. To regard them thus would be a refusal to avail ourselves of the help He has vouchsafed, and a casting to the winds all hope of arriving at any settled certain conclusions as to the meaning of His words.

"This is the first resurrection." Do not these words, inserted by way of explanation, imply that the doctrine of a first resurrection was not previously unknown? We are told

by the opponents of this doctrine, that it would be strange if a truth of such importance could be found in but one passage of Scripture; and assuming, as they do, that this is the only passage which can be adduced in proof of the doctrine, they use this consideration as presumptive evidence against its so being so understood. But have we not seen that the truth of an eclectic and pre-millennial resurrection is taught by numerous passages? Have we not read of "the resurrection of life" -- "the resurrection of the just" -- "the resurrection from among the dead"? Does not the apostle speak of "a better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35)? Have we not seen, both in Rom. 8 and 1 Cor. 15, as well as in the connection of the latter with Isa. 25, that the resurrection of the saints is introductory to creation's deliverance and millennial blessing? And what is the office of the sacred penman in Rev. 20? Not to reveal truth previously unknown -- but to take a doctrine, already familiar to the souls of the saints, and place it in its connection with those disclosures of the future, which it was confided to him to record. Having given us in Rev. 1, the vision of the Lord's glory which he was privileged to receive -- in Rev. 2, 3, the Lord's judgment on the successive states of the professing body till it should be spewed out of His mouth -- in Rev. 3, 4, the relations to each other and to the earth, of God's throne, the Lamb in the midst of it, the redeemed already in glory, crowned and enthroned, and only waiting till their Lord should reign, to reign with Him over the earth -- in Rev. 6-19, the successive judgments, seals, trumpets, vials, by which the power of God's throne should act toward the earth on account of its consummated wickedness, as well as the forms and characters this wickedness would assume, and the faithfulness even to death of one and another company of earthly saints during this closing crisis of man's iniquity, Satan's power, and God's judgment: -- having in Rev. 19 shown us the advent of Christ Himself in judgment, attended by His heavenly saints, with the complete overthrow and destruction of His adversaries; Babylon, the beast, and the false prophet, with the armies of the two latter, being all cleared from the scene, and the marriage of the Lamb having taken place in heaven, -- what can be more beautiful, or in more perfect order, than that in this chapter (20) the apostle should, as he does, show us Satan bound, that he should not deceive the nations of the millennial earth -- the thrones and sitters upon them, not now in heaven, as in Rev. 4 and 5, but in their connection with the earth (a connection only anticipated there) -- the martyred saints of the Apocalyptic crisis not being left out of the scene, but specifically named that we might be sure they were not excluded: what could be more perfect, we ask, than that he should show us these "blessed and holy" ones, living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, and should say in explanation of the whole -- "This is the first resurrection"? There is absolutely nothing in this passage unrevealed elsewhere, save what is evidently a subordinate point, a matter of detail -- the *duration* of the saint's reign with Christ.

<sup>65</sup> The participation of the martyrs under the fifth seal, and the martyrs under the beast, in the reign of the saints with Christ, is indeed taught here with a precision not found elsewhere. But this could not be termed a new revelation. It is of these very saints that Daniel had declared, in Rev. 7, that they should take the kingdom and possess it, and that judgment should be given to them. It is not true, therefore, that Rev. 20 is the only passage in which the doctrine of “the first resurrection” is found. If it had been so, it is surely not our place to dictate to our divine Instructor, how often He is to repeat the lessons He would have us to learn, but reverently and thankfully to receive each truth He reveals, whether communicated in one passage or in many. But even if there had been weight in such an objection, it does not apply to the case before us. All the truth which the passage teaches additional to what had been previously revealed, is as to the thousand years’ continuance of the reign of the risen saints with Christ. Their resurrection, apart from that of the wicked, and their joint reign in resurrection with their Lord, is amply revealed elsewhere.

It is a mistake to suppose that the latter part of Rev. 20:4 is explanatory of the former. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” This is one statement of the apostle, and what follows is not an explanation of this, but a further statement. As to who are indicated by the word “they” -- “they sat upon them” -- we ask no more than what every scholar knows and what is admitted by the ablest opponents of the doctrine we maintain; namely, that the word here rendered “they sat” may be understood *impersonally*, as equivalent to “they were sate upon,” a usage quite familiar in the Greek Testament and in the Septuagint. <sup>66</sup> Reading it thus, “And I saw thrones, and they were sate upon, and judgment was given unto them,” this only inquiry remains, By whom were they occupied? Does not all Scripture reply, By the saints -- the redeemed? Daniel had seen the thrones set, but not occupied. See Dan. 7:9, where there is no question that the words “cast down” mean *set*. John sees thrones in heaven, and elders in white robes, and with crowns of gold seated thereon (Rev. 4, 5). More than this, they are there anticipating what is here exhibited. “We shall reign over the earth,” is their language in Rev. 5. They are seen reigning here. Regarding then the crowned elders as symbolic of the whole company of the redeemed, after their translation to heaven, but prior to their issuing forth in the train of the mighty Conqueror, as foretold in Rev. 19, we can be at no loss to understand who they are that

occupy the thrones first named in Rev. 20:4. The Old-Testament saints, we know from Heb. 11:39, 40, are waiting for the moment of our resurrection; and “they that are Christ’s at his coming” would surely include them. They, then, and the Church, symbolized by the elders from Rev. 4 to Rev. 19 are seen there following in the train of Christ as He comes forth from heaven to execute judgment on His foes, and they, doubtless, are the sitters on the thrones. But in chapter 6 we read of souls under the altar, slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held, to whom it was said, that they should rest yet for a little season till their brethren who should be slain as they had been, should be fulfilled. Subsequent chapters inform us of the death of these others, under the persecutions of the beast; and now both companies are seen, in addition to the general body of the faithful.

And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God [martyrs under the fifth seal, Rev. 6], and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands [these are the company for whom the former had to wait]; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [the whole scene] is the first resurrection {Rev. 20:4, 5}.

“The first resurrection.” It can only be so styled in reference to a *second*. And what other resurrection is referred to in the chapter, but that at the close, where “the dead, small and great,” are represented as standing before God? How could a revival of the martyrs’ spirit, or the triumph of the cause for which they suffered, be “the first resurrection,” and the literal, actual resurrection of “the dead, small and great,” be the second? Some indeed go so far as to say that this is not the second resurrection implied by the use of the words “the first,” but that it is to be found in the revival of the extinct party of the wicked, in the rebellion of Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium. But are *they* “the rest of the dead,” from among whom the saints are raised at the beginning? The saints “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Understand this literally, and it is quite clear how the wicked could be termed “the rest of the dead,” seeing that righteous and wicked had all alike been dead with respect to the body. But if you understand the resurrection of the saints as a mere figure of the prevalence of true religion, and the second resurrection as the revival of wickedness at the end, how can you class these together, or suppose the Holy Ghost to class them together, by such an expression as “the rest of the dead”?

This phrase “the rest of the dead” seems to us, as has been well said by another, to be

an expression which absolutely and necessarily connects this *remainder of the dead*, later raised to life, with the *other dead* just before said to have been earlier raised to life; as having been originally, and prior to the abstraction of the dead first taken, part and parcel of the *same community of dead*, in whatever sense, whether literal or

65. We are not forgetting here that the saints are to “reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:5). But that of which prophecy treats, is the participation of the saints with Christ in the kingdom entrusted to Him *as man*, and which, as we have seen, He is at the end to deliver up to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

66. “In the New Testament, verbs are used *impersonally* in the third person plural.” Winer’s Gram. § 49. “Nothing scarcely is more common in the Old Testament and in the New, and especially in the Chaldee of the book of Daniel, than to employ the third person plural for the *passive voice*, thus making a kind of impersonal verb of it.” Moses Stuart’s Gram. § 174, Note 2. (*Comm. on Apoc. ad. loc.*)

figurative, that word *dead* be meant: -- just as a *remnant* of cloth must needs have been once *on* and *of* the same piece as *the part* whose abstraction left it a remnant; just again as the rest said by Luke to have escaped to land, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship (Acts 27:44), were of the same ship's company with those that had escaped by swimming; or, to take an Apocalyptic example, as "*the rest of men*" (Rev. 9:20) that were not killed by certain plagues, were of the same community with those that had been killed by the plagues.<sup>67</sup>

now over all the vanities of this world of death.

How is the conclusion to be avoided, that the raised ones at the beginning of the thousand years, and "the rest of the dead" who "lived not again till the thousand years were finished," were all "dead" in the same sense, and at the same time, prior to the "first resurrection"? And in what other sense than that of *the literal death of the body*, could the righteous and the wicked be regarded as alike dead? Evidently the death is an actual, literal death; and if so, the resurrection must be also a literal, actual resurrection.

If you reject the plain, obvious sense of the chapter, as foretelling an actual resurrection of the saints to reign with Christ, you are involved in inextricable difficulties. Think of a mere figurative resurrection, in which not a single dead body is raised, being styled "the first," and the actual resurrection of all who have died, being the second! Think of the triumphs of Christianity being set forth by the figure of the resurrection of the martyrs to live and reign with Christ, while the expression "the rest of the dead" who live not again till the thousand years are finished, is explained to mean the extinct wicked party who rise up again at the end of the Millennium! Think too of the expression "priests of God" -- "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." One might perhaps speak figuratively of the reign of principles -- but what, unless they be persons, can be made of the risen ones being priests of God?

It is objected by some that John only saw "*the souls* of them that were beheaded," etc.; but this is merely a term to designate their state just previous to their resurrection, and marking the identity of those so designated, with "the souls under the altar" in chapter 6. "It is no more implied, that they were still in an incorporeal state, than the title 'the dead,' in v. 12, ("I saw *the dead*, small and great, stand before God") implies that these last were still, at that very time of standing before him, *dead men*." To take a similar instance, -- "And when the devil was cast out, *the dumb spake*" (Matt. 9:33), surely does not imply, that he was still dumb when he did so! It is quite a common mode of expression in such a case.

We do not pursue the subject further. Enough has been advanced to show the real meaning of the vision, and the untenableness of the principles of interpretation which would set it aside. God grant, that the exhilarating prospect of having part in the first resurrection, may give us the victory

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67. {E. B. Elliot} *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, fourth edition 4:141.

## Chapter 18

### The Millennium

The word *Millennium*, as most of our readers are aware, simply denotes *a thousand years*; while the phrase “the Millennium,” is universally understood to imply that period of universal peace and righteousness, which we learn from Rev. 20 is to be a thousand years’ continuance.

The Millennium, as Scripture portrays it to us, has its heavenly as well as its earthly aspect. It is to the former, that our attention has been directed, in examining the subject of The “First Resurrection.” That subject discloses to us the persons whose reign, in resurrection-life and heavenly glory, will so wonderfully contribute to the blessedness of the earth and its inhabitants, throughout the Millennium. Our present object is to inquire into the condition of the earth and its population during that blissful era, as also to notice one or two topics of deepest interest relative to its introduction.

First, it is a mistake to suppose that the judgment executed on antichrist (see 2 Thess. 2:8, and Rev. 19:20), at the coming of Christ with all His saints, is immediately succeeded by the full peace and blessedness of the millennial period. That period doubtless commences with the overthrow of antichrist. But the early part of the Millennium itself is characterized by the subjugation of Christ’s foes -- a work which we have no ground for concluding is accomplished in a moment. Babylon having been previously overthrown (see Rev. 19:2), the destruction of antichrist certainly sets aside all that had been prominently acting in open antagonism to God; and it brings, moreover, the nation of Israel into open, acknowledged connection with Christ. But evidently there are judgments to be inflicted and enemies to be subdued, after the nation of Israel is dwelling peacefully in its land under the protection of Christ.

And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land (Mic. 5:5).

That the Assyrian comes there to his own destruction, numerous passages testify. The point to which we now direct attention is -- that his coming, and therefore his destruction, are both at the time when Christ is Israel’s peace. This He will not be in the days of antichrist. Even then, as has been fully shown, there will be a remnant seeking after God, and longing for the coming of their Messiah; but the nation, alas! will be in league with antichrist. Gog, moreover, whether or not he be the same as the Assyrian, is said to “come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people” {Ezek. 38:8}. He is represented as saying,

I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.

The prophet is directed to

prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD, In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts . . . and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land (Ezek. 38:11-16).

It is manifest, therefore, that the incursion of this northern confederacy, and the awful judgment by which it is visited, are both subsequent to the return of Israel and their peaceful establishment in the land, under the protection of their Messiah, and the smile and sanction of God.

Scripture witnesses also of judgments in Idumea (Isa. 34 and 63), on Egypt (Isa. 19), on Moab and Ammon, on Tyre and Sidon (Ezek. 25-28); besides which local judgments, we have predictions of others more widely diffused.

For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many (Isa. 66:16).

For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9).

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall 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 (Matt. 13:41, 42).

The parable of the sheep and goats in Matt. 25 seems to picture forth to us a session of judgment distinct from all these in its character, and yet a judgment of living nations, at the commencement or introduction of Christ’s kingdom. It is not in a moment that all these scenes of judgment will transpire.

The history of David’s reign affords a striking type of this opening portion of the millennial period. That David in his sorrows, rejection, and exile, was a type of Christ, as the Stone refused by the builders, the whole Church of God has ever recognized. Nor can there be a doubt, that the rejected Stone becoming the head of the corner was typified by David’s accession to the throne of Israel. It may not have been so generally discerned, that it requires both David’s reign and that of Solomon to furnish the complete type of the

millennial period. David reigned at Hebron for seven years before he reigned at Jerusalem. This period was one of conflict between the house of David and the house of Saul. But even after this, when owned as king by all the tribes, David was engaged in one continued series of conflicts with Israel's enemies all around. True, he was successful in these conflicts. His conquests extended far and near, for God was with him and gave him the necks of his enemies; but a period of conflict, however successful, is not one of tranquillity and repose. Solomon, as his name indicates, was the peaceful prince. And while David stands as the type of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," it is in Solomon's reign we see the divine picture of the peaceful glories of Christ's kingdom. *Psa. 72*, which is entitled "A psalm for Solomon," has always been justly read as a magnificent prediction of millennial times. And how could there be a livelier representation of those times than in the history of that prince?

Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life . . . For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon (*1 Kings 4:20-25*).

But there is to be a David-reign as well as a Solomon-reign of Christ; and both are included in the thousand years. During a short portion of that period, Christ will be subduing His enemies by power, like David; and afterwards, through the remainder of the Millennium, He will reign in peace, like Solomon.

To turn to another point. When we speak of Christ subduing His enemies by power -- of the Millennium being introduced by Christ's coming and the judgments to be then executed -- we do not for a moment forget, that so far as the conversion of souls is concerned, the Agent by whom it will be accomplished then, even as at present, is the Holy Spirit. It is possible that, in earnestly insisting on those truths which are generally neglected and forgotten, millennarians may have been in danger of taking for granted, and thus lightly passing over, such a generally acknowledged doctrine as the one just stated. But the prophetic word does not thus take it for granted and pass it over. It shows most clearly, the all important place which the operations of the Spirit fill, in connection with the introduction of millennial blessedness.

Foretelling the sad desolation of Israel's land on account of the nation's sin, the prophet predicts its continuance until, as he says,

the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest (*Isa. 32:15*).

The same prophet, anticipating Israel's forgiveness and restoration, records the following address:

Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel (*Isa. 44:2-5*).

Nor is it merely at the commencement of the Millennium that this effusion of the Spirit takes place. He operates on the souls of the remnant even prior to the coming of Christ in judgment; and His presence with the nation after that epoch is never to cease. These points are both beautifully presented in *Isa. 59:19-21*.

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

This will surely be accomplished in the remnant.

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

The coming of the Redeemer, and His coming *to Zion*, let it be observed, is not superseded, or rendered unnecessary, by this action of the Spirit on the souls of the remnant. It is in connection with the Redeemer's advent, His second advent, as *Rom. 11:26, 27* incontestably proves, that the agency of the Spirit is here exhibited. That gracious agency is to be uninterrupted and perpetual.

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 {*Isa. 59:21*}.

The well-known passages in *Zech. 12:10*, and *Ezek. 36:25-27*, both apply to Israel.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications.

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also I will give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

But while these promises of the Spirit are restricted to the nation of Israel, the prophecy of Joel extends much further.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit (*Joel 2:28, 29*).

The relation of this passage to Israel's restoration, and to the final crisis of the world's affairs, has been already pointed out (see page 127). It is true, that there was at Pentecost a

commenced fulfilment of this prophecy, the progress of which was interrupted by Jerusalem's final, definite rejection of the Gospel, when preached by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. The thread of God's dealings with Israel and the earth being thus cut off, the interval which has since elapsed has been and is still occupied with the formation of Christ's heavenly body, the Church; and not until its completion will that thread be resumed. But when resumed, there will not be merely an effusion of the Holy Spirit on the Jewish remnant, or even on the whole Jewish nation, but on "all flesh." The judgments which immediately precede the Lord's coming -- those which accompany that event -- or those by which it is quickly succeeded, will have purged out the obstinately wicked of that generation; and the survivors, awed by those judgments, and compelled to bow to the scepter of Jesus, will, by this universal outpouring of the Spirit, be generally turned in heart to the Lord. Numerous passages would appear to indicate thus much as to the original population of the millennial earth.

The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (Isa. 40:5).

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9).

The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God (Psa. 98:2, 3).

We are far from affirming, that these passages imply that every soul of man will be converted, even in the earliest stage of that period of universal blessing; but viewed in connection with the promised outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh, they would indicate the all-but-universal conversion of the spared ones, who survive the judgments and form the nucleus of the earth's population during the thousand years. The generations to be born during the millennial period *may* not, and there are passages which indicate that they *will* not, be thus universally regenerate; still, the proportion of those who are so throughout, must be very great indeed.

But it is not merely in the vast number of persons truly converted that the distinctive blessedness of the Millennium consists. The conversion of souls has taken place under every dispensation which God has established since the fall, and will, no doubt, more abundantly than ever take place in that bright and coming dispensation. But the characteristics of the dispensation are to be found in that which relates to *the divine government of the earth*. As to the salvation of souls, it has always been by grace, through faith, and on the ground of Christ's redeeming work -- His atoning sacrifice; and it has always been by the quickening power of God's Spirit that men have been regenerated, and thus turned in heart to God. These things will be as true in the Millennium as they have always been. But in the Millennium, the earth will be under the government -- the *open, manifested government* -- of Christ and His glorified saints. Satan, moreover, will be bound. These are the two features of that blessed period, which are prominently presented in Rev. 20; and they form, in fact, the

great characteristics by which it is distinguished from every former period or dispensation.

The government of the earth, as is well known, was originally confided to Adam. When he had fallen, and subjected both himself and the creation over which he was placed to the dominion of the great deceiver, God did not at once introduce the Second Adam and establish His kingdom. In the curse pronounced on the serpent, there was an intimation of His coming, as the Seed of the woman, to bruise the serpent's head; while the mystery of His humiliation and sacrificial death was hinted at in the words, "Thou shalt bruise his heel." This precious light was afforded to faith, in whomsoever it might be found, throughout even the antediluvian age; but the race of mankind, as such, seem to have been left to make manifest what was in their hearts. The result is well known: the earth was filled with violence, and, by means of the flood, God interposed in judgment on the guilty, rebellious race.

A new order of things commenced with Noah. The judgment having vindicated God's holiness, and grace having triumphed in the deliverance of Noah and his house -- the Lord having smelled, moreover, the sweet savor of Noah's burnt offerings (types, as they doubtless were, of Christ's precious sacrifice), He says in His heart,

I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease (Gen. 8:21, 22).

Under this covenant with creation, of which the bow in the cloud is the sign or token, the earth has continued till the present time, and will continue throughout the millennial period, till, the kingdom being delivered up by Christ to the Father, the heaven and the earth shall pass away, giving place to the new heaven and the new earth -- the everlasting state -- in which God shall be all in all. The Millennium is the last of those dispensations under which the earth and its inhabitants were to be placed, during the continuance of God's covenant with creation after the flood.

The establishment of this covenant was connected with the introduction of the simplest elements of judicial authority. To man, in the person of Adam, had been entrusted power over all the inferior tribes of living creatures; but we find no trace of the scepter or the sword among men themselves, as ruling over, or subject to, one another, till the days of Noah. Then it was that the solemn principle was established, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9:6). This power in man's hand over the life of his fellow-man, as a restraint upon the violence which would otherwise fill the earth, is the fundamental principle of government, and characterizes all the ages, from the flood to the close of the millennial period. In that period, the government of the earth will be in the hand of Christ. In what other hands could it be the means of universal blessing?

Passing by the instances in which this power has been

based on nothing but military success, or human will -- instances of which Nimrod's kingdom is the first recorded example -- it is well known that God has entrusted to man repeated grants of power, to be held and exercised in responsibility to Himself. The nations at large being left to their own ways on account of their idolatry, and Abraham being separated therefrom by the call of God, the nation that sprang from his loins became the scene of God's manifested government. Not to dwell on the period during which that government existed as a pure theocracy, God appointing first Moses, then Joshua, and afterward raising up judges from time to time, we would remind our readers of David's elevation to the throne, and of God's covenant with him and with his house. To David and his offspring was the power of the sword entrusted, with the responsibility of using it according to the laws and directions of God himself. Such was their unfaithfulness to this deposit -- so awfully did they employ this heaven-entrusted power in rebellion against God, and the slaughter of God's prophets and messengers -- that they and their land were given up to judgment and desolation, and God's throne was removed from Jerusalem, the city of His choice. At that time, God made another grant of power to Nebuchadnezzar and his successors among the Gentiles. This was unaccompanied by God's presence, and the direction of His laws, which had been connected with His throne at Jerusalem. The throne of the Lord was never set up at Babylon, but a man was placed there, to whom "the God of heaven gave a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory," informing him by the prophet, that wheresoever the children of men dwelt, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, had He given into his hand, and made him ruler over them all. His kingdom was to be succeeded by another one, inferior to it, that by a third, and it also by a fourth, which was to be found in existence at the last great crisis, when God Himself should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed -- a kingdom that should not be left to other people, but which should break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and stand for ever. *That is the millennial kingdom;* and it should be asked, "How can a kingdom be said to stand for ever which is limited in its duration to a thousand years?" the answer is obvious. The passage itself defines the sense in which it is said to "stand for ever." These words do not imply that there will be a kingdom on earth to all eternity, but, that as long as there is a kingdom on earth, this one shall endure. *It "shall not be left to other people"* -- that is, it shall not pass away, and be followed by a *sixth* empire, as the four previous kingdoms pass away and give place to this one. This shall be the last, the final monarchy. When Christ delivers it up to the Father, having put down all rule and all authority and power, it is not that another kingdom may be set up, but that "*God may be all in all.*" All the dispensations having run their course, the unchanging, eternal state will ensue.

The reader can have no difficulty in distinguishing between the subject of God's gracious actings, in the salvation of souls by Jesus Christ, and the subject of God's government of the earth, as entrusted to the kings of Israel and Judah, and afterwards to the four Gentile empires. Why, then, should it

be more difficult to distinguish them with regard to the Millennium? No doubt, when He who is the alone Savior of souls (blessed be His name!) is also the King of the whole earth, the knowledge of Him as the Savior will be diffused to a wonderful extent. But this is not what exclusively characterizes that blessed period. It is His reign, and the reign with Him of His risen and glorified saints, that constitute its grand distinction from every other period.

The seventh, as well as the second chapter of Daniel, presents us with prophetic emblems of the four great Gentile monarchies; and both chapters predict the existence of the fourth, till the moment of its destruction by God's judgment at the coming of Christ; a judgment accompanied by the transfer of universal dominion to Christ and (as foretold in chapter 7,) to the heavenly saints. Should it be replied, that the fourth empire is not now in existence, the answer is that admitting the fact of its present non-existence in its united, consolidated form, Scripture provides for this apparent anomaly, by showing that its last form -- that in which it is to be overthrown and destroyed -- is one in which it has never yet existed, and to exist in which *it must reappear*. Even Daniel's prophecy establishes this fact; while the Revelation actually predicts the reappearance of the fourth empire, in an awful, blasphemous, Satanic form and character, leaving no room for surprise that it should be in its days that divine longsuffering reaches its limit, and gives place to righteous wrath and holy judgment. It is immediately upon the execution of this judgment, as foretold in Rev. 19, that in Rev. 20 we have the binding of Satan, and the reign of Christ with the risen saints for a thousand years. Could there be more decisive evidence that the real character of the Millennium consists in the substitution of Christ's manifested rule, for that of all those to whom human government has been entrusted, but in whose hands (however great a blessing in itself, and on the whole, so long as upheld by God's secret providence) it has been used for self-aggrandizement, oppression of the poor and of God's people, and, at last, for open and blasphemous revolt against God?

Endeavor then, dear reader, to realize what would be the condition of a kingdom, under the absolute government of a monarch so wise as never to make one single mistake, so equitable as to deal even-handed justice to all, so tender-hearted as to rule with the gentlest sway, so pious and benevolent as to seek no object but the glory of God and the well-being of his subjects, and so powerful as to secure the absolute submission of all within the sphere of his dominions! What a kingdom! But when we think of such a kingdom, as extending over the whole earth, and embracing all nations within its limits; and when we understand that Christ Himself is to be its Head and Lord, and that the risen saints are to be His associates on the throne, all language fails, and the heart can only find relief in adoration too profound to be expressed!

The binding of Satan is another feature of the millennial period, very essentially distinguishing it from all preceding dispensations. Our Lord describes him as "a murderer from the beginning," who "abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." "When he speaketh a lie," says the blessed



One, “he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). No wonder that a world subject to such a deceiver and destroyer should be the theatre of rebellion and the vale of tears which this world actually is! Not only did Satan deceive our first parents, and thus corrupt human nature in its original stock; he has since been permitted to exercise his malevolent power in actively deceiving, and still further corrupting, the successive generations of mankind. It was the true character of his murderous reign which was evinced in the antediluvian world, from the shedding of the first blood spilled by man’s hand, to the scenes of matured wickedness by which the earth was filled with violence, only to be repressed by the flood which swept the whole race from off the earth. Occupying, with his angels, the created heavens, Satan succeeded after the deluge in leading men to idolatry, which Scripture declares to be the worship of devils. “They sacrificed unto devils, not to God” (Deut. 32:17). “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God” (1 Cor. 10:20). It becomes evident thus, that all the horrible superstitions, impurities, cruelties, and enormities of paganism are but the genuine expression of the character of Satan’s rule. Even Israel, God’s redeemed and chosen nation, he succeeded in ensnaring to the same awful wickedness. It is of Israel that the passage in Deut. 32 speaks. And whatever amount of good may have been wrought at any time amongst men by the rich and sovereign grace of God, the effects of this grace being entrusted to man’s responsibility, Satan has always succeeded in marring and corrupting them. The reign of David and that of Solomon form an illustrious era in Israel’s history; but it bears the marks both of human weakness and of Satan’s successful wiles. The sons of Zeruiah were too strong for David; and worse than that, the pride and lusts of his own heart were too strong for him, when stimulated and called into play by the enemy. “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel” {1 Chron. 21:1}. Solomon was in his old age turned away from the Lord, and the disruption of his kingdom on his son’s accession to the throne bore a mournful testimony that Satan was still at large, and that the reign of the promised Seed of David had not yet arrived. Even after the return from Babylon, Satan is seen as the accuser and adversary of Jerusalem (Zech. 3). In the New Testament, Satan’s workings are still more clearly brought to light. Daring to become the tempter of the Holy One, his efforts are, for the first time since the world began, completely foiled, and he retires before the rebuke of Jesus, departing from Him for a little season. Put to shame by the steadfastness of the Second Adam, the woman’s seed, he gathers all his forces, and urges and leads them on to the rejection and murder of God’s blessed Son. Proved thus the prince and god of this world, in the death of Jesus, he receives the death-blow to his own power. Jesus dies; but in dying He cancels Satan’s claims and seals his doom.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (John 12:31).

But this judgment has not yet been executed. The apostle speaks of him as “the god of this world,” as “the prince of

the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”; and while it is undoubtedly true that, as believers in Christ, we are already delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are continually cautioned against the wiles of the devil, and told that as a roaring lion he goeth about, seeking whom he may devour. The world is still under his yoke, and energized by his power; and it is as having the imperial power of this world under his direction and control that he is seen in heaven, in Rev. 12, as a great red dragon, with the characteristic marks of the fourth Gentile empire, seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. As long as the created heavens retain him, he is not only “the ruler of the darkness of this world,” but also “the accuser of the brethren”; and it is only by “the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony” that they can overcome him, and often only by “not loving their lives unto the death.”

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits (see margin)] in high [heavenly] places (Eph. 6:12).

Had she been faithful in these conflicts, what a bright vessel of God’s testimony and grace might the Church have been! How would her rejected Lord have been glorified in her! But alas! the testimony of this, as of all previous dispensations, being confided to man’s responsibility, the Church has not withstood in the evil day. Satan has succeeded by his wiles, where he could not prevail by power; and in the bosom of the Church itself, as existing upon earth, there has grown up that which is the very masterpiece of Satanic craft. When men slept, this vigilant enemy was employed in sowing tares among the wheat. The leaven was soon introduced into that which should have been an unleavened lump. The mystery of iniquity had already, even in the apostles’ days, begun to work. It has wrought since with fearful energy, and produced the most disastrous results. It is still working, and will continue to work, until, the hindrance being removed, it issues in the manifestation of the man of sin. The corruption of Christianity by Satan’s wiles, while he remains in the heavens, gives birth (when his expulsion thence has taken place) to the last great product of his malicious opposition to God and to Christ -- to that, indeed, which becomes the object of utter judgment, before such judgment falls on Satan himself. “The beast and the false prophet” are cast into “*the lake of fire*” before the thousand years begin: Satan is not cast *there* till after they have run their course. Throughout the Millennium he is confined to the abyss, or “bottomless pit.” Expelled from the created heavens, as seen in Rev. 12, his expulsion is celebrated in songs of triumph, while, as to the earth, it is the occasion for the time of yet deeper woe.

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants 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 {Rev. 12:12}.

The prophetic history of that short time of Satan’s “great wrath,” and of tribulation to mankind unequalled since the

world began, has been considered in previous portions of this work. The events which are to be crowded into it will all have transpired, and the utter overthrow of Satan's vast confederation against God will have taken place, when he himself shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. He will thus be excluded from the earth as well as the heavens. The object of his restraint and imprisonment is stated to be, "that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled." What a wondrous change! All power in the hands of Christ and His glorified saints, and that in open, manifested exercise, while Satan is both bound and banished, and the nations delivered thus from his usurped ascendancy, and from all the deep deceptions which he has been permitted so long and so successfully to practice!

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the change in the entire condition of things, resulting from the two facts, of Satan being bound and of the world's government being exercised by Christ and His saints. *Now* Christ, our life, is *hidden*, and Satan is *at large*. Faith knows Christ, trusts Him, feeds upon Him, delights in Him, loves Him, and seeks, however feeble the measure may be, to serve and glorify Him. This faith is produced and sustained by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. But what opposition does He encounter! It is not only that our own fallen nature -- the flesh -- is contrary to the Spirit, but Satan acts by it in order to deceive and enthrall us, and being the god -- the prince -- of this world, all that it contains is at his disposal <sup>68</sup> for the furtherance of his treacherous designs. Every sense becomes thus the avenue of temptation; while the tendency of every object on which the senses are exercised, is to hide Christ's glory from our view, and to draw away the heart from Him. They who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation are so kept in spite of every thing. This is the time, in short, for the life of faith, the walk of faith, the fight of faith, the trial of faith; and it is by faith alone that we can stand, or conquer, or endure. But when the world's condition is formed and its affairs regulated by the government of Christ Himself and His risen saints; when all outward power is on the side of God, of truth, of obedience; and when in addition to this, temptation is entirely absent, the tempter himself being bound in the abyss, who can estimate the difference between such a state of things, and that which has existed ever since the fall?

Think of the One who is then to "bear the glory and sit and rule upon his throne." It has been well said, and often said, that no man is fit to command who has not first learned to obey. Such a statement applies only to delegated power, and not, as is obvious, to the divine government, supremely exercised by God Himself, who does all things according to the counsel of His own will. But it is His good pleasure to confide the government of the earth to man; and all those to

whom it has hitherto been confided, have failed in this first great qualification -- obedience. Not so Jesus. He became man, and took the servant's place and form. To be the servant, He had to *become* man; for as to His essential glory, "being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." But "he made himself of no reputation" {see Phil. 2:6, 7}, and while all others *owe* obedience, He "*learned*" it "by the things which he suffered" {Heb. 5:8}. And He did learn it! Who besides has been subjected to such tests as He? Who has had such a path of sorrow, or gone through such depths of anguish and distress? But in all He was obedient -- obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And this is the wondrous title He has acquired to universal dominion. *Acquired*, we say, for it is not to be forgotten that while He has inherent titles of infinite dignity as God and Creator, He has by the incarnation and the cross, by His obedient life and His obedience unto death, *acquired* titles, which must, in the righteousness of God's ways, be acknowledged and made good. "Wherefore God also," says the apostle,

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, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

Be it that even in this given glory He stands alone and pre-eminent; be it that the universal lordship here attributed to Jesus is of a deeper, more essential, and therefore more enduring character than that special form of dominion over the earth which characterizes the thousand years, and is delivered up to God, even the Father, at the close; be it that this lordship of Jesus over all in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, which is the reward of His obedience unto death, can never cease -- never be delivered up; still, it is impossible to contemplate His fitness for the glories of the millennial sovereignty, in which the saints are associated with Him, without adverting to the divine glory of His person, and the infinite reward of His humiliation, and obedience, and death. True, it is as Son of David that He is heir to David's throne. But David's Son is David's Lord. The child born, the son given, according to Isa. 9:6, upon whose shoulder the government is to rest, has for His name, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father [Father of the everlasting age], The Prince of Peace" {Isa. 9:6} It is "of the increase of his government and peace" that "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" {Isa. 9:7}.

To whom could have been entrusted the mighty work of redemption, but to the One who is God and man in one person? How could we, dear Christian readers, have trusted our souls to any one who was less than God? And how could any one who was not perfect man, have suffered what was needed for man's redemption? And is not all this true of Christ's fitness for His coming glories, as well as of His

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68. Luke 4:6 bears solemn testimony to this fact. Satan did thus use all the glory of this world in tempting Christ, and Christ did not in His reply contradict the words of Satan, "for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will give it."

mighty, redeeming work? Who else could bear the glory? Who besides is entitled to the throne, or qualified to fill it? And if infinite grace has associated us, poor, saved sinners, with the glory of Christ's millennial sway -- yea, associated "his body the church" with his future inheritance of all things -- well do our hearts know that it is in *His* title, and by virtue of what *He* is, what *He* has done, what *He* has suffered, that we are thus co-heirs of His kingdom and His crown. Blessings, eternal blessings, to His mighty and glorious name!

How the Holy Ghost delights to exhibit in the Scriptures, the connection of what Christ is in Himself, and the life He led, and the work He accomplished when here in humiliation, with the full results of that work when He comes again in glory. This has just been glanced at as to His Godhead, His incarnation, His redeeming work, and the perfection of that obedience in which He humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross: but in the Old Testament we find the Spirit tracing this connection as to all the detailed perfectness of His human character and ways.

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever {Psa. 45:2}.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows {Psa. 45:7}.

There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 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 {Isa. 11:1-5}.

It was doubtless in the days of His humiliation, that these excellencies of His character were displayed; but the Spirit of God connects them thus with His millennial rule, as affording the fullest assurance of what the righteous and beneficent character of that rule must be.

In glancing at some details of what Scripture teaches concerning this glorious kingdom of Christ, space will allow of little more than a bare enumeration of particulars. The connection of the Church with the millennial state is portrayed to us in John's vision of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." It is styled, "the Bride, the Lamb's wife": and while its relation to Christ is thus expressed, its relation to the millennial earth is indicated by various parts of the description. There is no night in the heavenly city, and yet it is not by candle, or by sun and moon, that it is enlightened, but the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its light, while "the nations of them which are saved" -- the spared nations of the millennial earth -- "shall walk in the light of it." It has no

temple, "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" -- but to it, as to a temple, "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor." Nor do the kings alone thus resort to it: -- "they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into [or unto] it" {see Rev. 21:9-26}. The pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, flows through the midst of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Such is the relation of the Church to this scene of blessing. Herself the witness and expression of God's perfect grace, and of the perfect love of Christ her Lord and Bridegroom, she is the vessel of that grace, in ministering light and healing to the nations. With her, in her governmental glory as reigning with Christ, are associated the saints of the Old Testament, and those of the Apocalyptic crisis, as noticed in "*The First Resurrection*." All who form "the first resurrection," live and reign with Christ throughout the thousand years.

The earthly seat of dominion and center of blessing, is "the city of the great king" -- Jerusalem. The twelve tribes restored to the land, and no longer two nations, but one, will have Christ for their king and head, and will constitute the most favored and honored portion of the earth's redeemed population. This national pre-eminence of Israel in millennial times has been considered in a previous part of this work, and is demonstrated by almost every reference to the Millennium which the Old Testament contains.

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 {Jer. 3:17}.

And they shall call thee The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations {Isa. 60:14, 15}.

With regard to this point, it is interesting to trace the harmony between the Old Testament and the New, and the striking correspondence between the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem. The one is "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" -- the other is the earthly metropolis of His kingdom. Does the Old Testament assign a place of special and pre-eminent blessing to the twelve tribes? Mark how the New Testament accords with this. To the apostle, Christ says,

In the regeneration [or, the restitution of all things] 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 (Matt. 19:28).

But seeing that the apostles became afterwards a part of the Church -- the Bride, the Lamb's wife -- they must needs be found in their place in the heavenly city. Accordingly, while the wall of the city is seen to have "twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," it is also represented as having "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" {Rev. 21:12, 14}. The gate was, as is well known, the place for thrones, or seats of judgment; and one can scarcely fail to

mark the coincidence between our Lord's words to the twelve, and this mention of them in the description of the heavenly city.

There is much ground for believing, that all who survive of Israel at the commencement of the Millennium will be saved, and that the whole nation also throughout the thousand years will be saved. "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children" {Isa. 54:13}. The "new covenant" is to be made with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, in which covenant God engages to put His law in their inward parts, and to write it in their hearts.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more {Jer. 31:34}.

Then, as to the world at large, *idolatry will have entirely ceased*. "The idols he shall utterly abolish." *The true God will be known and worshipped*.

And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD {Isa. 66:23}.

The LORD alone shall be exalted in that day {Isa. 2:11, 17}.

*War will be at an end, and universal peace be enjoyed*.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more {Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3}.

*All subordinate rulers acting as the ministers of Christ, justice will be impartially administered*.

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment {Isa. 32:1}.

The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful {Isa. 32:5}.

I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness {Isa. 60:17}.

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor {Psa. 72:4}.

In his days shall the righteous flourish {Psa. 72:7}.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth {see Zech. 9:10}.

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 {Psa. 72:10-12}.

*The curse being removed, and creation delivered, the fertility of the earth will be wonderfully increased, and teeming abundance will be the natural result*.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The

pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing {Psa. 65:11-13}.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt {Amos 9:13}.

*The very habits and instincts of the brute creation shall be changed*.

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 {Isa. 11:6}.

*Every cause of fear, whether from man or beast, being removed, men will dwell in delightful confidence, security, and repose*.

And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods {Ezek. 34:25}.

And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely {Hos. 2:18}.

Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places {Isa. 32:16-18}.

*The minds of men, without any vain pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, shall yet be well instructed*.

And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure {Isa. 33:6}.

*Human life will be greatly prolonged*.

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 {Isa. 65:20}.

What must be the longevity of mankind in those days, for a man to be deemed a child at a hundred years, while every one dying at so tender an age, shall be seen to be cut off by judgment for his sin!

Such are some of the ways in which "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth," will, in those days of the rule of heaven, make known His beneficence to the sons of men. The true Melchizedec, "king of righteousness," and "king of peace," will be exercising His royal priesthood, blessing men from the Most High God, and blessing the Most High God on behalf of the happy myriads of the earth's teeming population. How wondrous the grace that has assigned to us, poor sinners of the Gentiles, the place of reigning with Him, as kings and priests unto God! Happy they who are the subjects in that kingdom! Thrice happy such as are destined to be sharers of Christ's glory, sitting with Him on His throne!

## Chapter 19

### *A Recapitulation; or, Outline of Prophetic Truth*

It has been our endeavor, throughout the preceding pages, to present the testimony of Scripture to positive truth, rather than to refute the objections by which it is sought to neutralize this testimony, or to prove it irrelevant to the subject in hand. Our reason for pursuing this method is, that on any subject it seems to us the upright, straightforward course, to consider in the first place what it is that is affirmed, and what the positive evidence alleged in its support; giving every consideration afterwards to such objections as may be advanced. If there be indeed some prejudice so fully pre-occupying men's minds, as to indispose them for the impartial consideration of the subject, it may be needful to dissipate it at the very commencement; or if, in the prosecution of an inquiry, difficulties should arise and objections suggest themselves, which it would be unfair to postpone, it is well to examine such at once. Within these limits, we have not refused to meet objections and consider difficulties, as the subject of prophetic testimony has unfolded itself before us; but, in general, our aim has been to consider the *positive* rather than the *negative* side of every question -- to establish *truth* rather than to combat *error*. And while this is the course which has commended itself to our own judgment, as the most proper to be pursued, so, we are persuaded, it must commend itself to the conscience of the Christian reader. It yields to God's word its rightful supremacy over all the reasonings of man's mind, placing the student of prophecy in the becoming attitude of a learner, instead of investing him with the loftier pretensions of a judge.

Still, as the inquiry draws towards a close, it will become needful -- may we not say indispensable? -- to consider such objections to the truths with which we have been occupied, as may fairly be supposed to have weight with serious, godly minds. We could not undertake to notice every counter-argument which has been employed -- every objection which has been advanced. There may be some with which we are not acquainted; and there are some occasionally brought forward which do not call for a serious reply. But as to such as are generally alleged,-- as to all such as may be supposed to create a real difficulty with those who humbly read God's word, and desire to be acquainted with its import -- we feel bound, as the Lord may enable us, to give them the fullest

consideration our limits will allow. As, however, we have hitherto abstained from personal controversy, we shall still generally avoid citing authors, or mentioning names; contenting ourselves with stating and considering the objections of our brethren, in such forms as they are known actually to assume in the minds of those who are exercised thereby. Our object is not controversy, but instruction. Our aim is neither to challenge opposition, nor to take up such challenges as may have been thrown down, but, by the Lord's blessing, to meet the difficulties of sincere inquirers after truth -- of those who equally shrink from receiving what Scripture does not teach, and from rejecting what it does.

Before turning thus to the examination of difficulties and objections, it is desirable to present, in a condensed form, the substance and general outline of what Scripture appears to us to teach on prophetic subjects. The details, and proofs from Scripture, have been already furnished, and need not, therefore, be repeated. Our desire is briefly to exhibit the outlines of all that has been taught in the present work. The bearing of the objections will thus be more easily perceived; while for positive proofs the reader is referred to the preceding pages themselves.

The apostle furnishes us, in 1 Cor. 10:32, with a classification of mankind, which renders material aid in presenting a condensed view of those future dealings of God which form the subject of prophecy.

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

Mankind are divided thus into three classes. As it respects man's condition before God in reference to eternity, there are but two classes, the saved and the unsaved -- the regenerate and those who have not been born again. But with regard to God's government of the world, which is the subject to which prophecy applies itself, there are three classes -- Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God. As that with which we have most immediately to do, let us first consider "the Church of God."

"The Church of God" consists not, as is popularly supposed, of all saved persons from the beginning to the end of time. *The expression is never so used in Scripture.* It is its

use in Scripture which is alone of any importance to our present inquiry; and *there* it denotes the assembly of true believers from the day of Pentecost, when that assembly was formed, to the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air, to receive it to Himself in heaven. Saints, gathered and baptized into the unity of Christ's body -- unity with Christ, and with each other -- by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, constitute "the Church of God." The saints who thus compose "the Church" have, of course, many things in common with Old Testament saints, with the disciples during our Lord's lifetime upon earth, with the Jewish remnant in the coming crisis, and with the saints who shall inhabit the millennial earth. All saints, of all times, are quickened by the Spirit, justified through the blood of Christ, preserved by almighty grace, and destined in resurrection to bear the image of the heavenly, even as in the present life they have borne the image of the earthly. But to "the Church" belongs, in addition to these things, the wondrous distinction of being Christ's body -- His bride -- inhabited by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost descended not till Christ was glorified. Having descended, He baptized believers into one body, whether they were Jews or Gentiles -- one body with each other -- one body with Christ, their glorified Head. The Church, knowing Christ, and being united to Him, while he is rejected by the world and hid in God, is associated with Him in that headship over all things, both in heaven and in earth, with which Christ is rewarded, and for the open exercise and display of which He only waits the Father's good pleasure, and the arrival of that dispensation of the fulness of times, in which all things, both in heaven and in earth, are to be gathered together in one, even in Christ. Meanwhile, the Church is even now quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. It has its blessings, whether present or future, *in* Christ and *with* Christ, as one body and one spirit with Him, not like others, whose portion it is to be blest *by* Him and *under* Him, as the subjects of His reign. The Church has one life, one portion, one home, one glory, one inheritance, with Christ Himself; and, whether now or hereafter, is indwelt and actuated by the Holy Ghost, as the essence and power of this oneness with Christ.

The existence, calling, and glory of the Church of God is "the mystery" "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men," but "from the beginning of the world was hid in God" {Eph. 3:4, 5, 9}. It was to the Church alone that "the mystery" of its own calling and glory could be revealed. Accordingly, it was not till Christ had died and risen and ascended, and the Holy Ghost had come down and incorporated the, till then, scattered disciples into one body: -- nay, more, it was not till the utter rejection of the gospel by Jerusalem and the Jews had cut off all hope of their being *at that time* pardoned and restored, that the Holy Ghost revealed to Christ's holy apostles and prophets "the mystery," till then unknown, of Christ having died

to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles who believe] unto God in one body by the cross {Eph. 2:15, 16}.

It was no mystery that the Jews were to be blest under their Messiah's reign, or that the Gentiles were in a subordinate way to partake of their blessedness. All this had been fully revealed in the Old Testament. But when the rejection of Jesus by the Jews had closed for the time all prospect of blessing for them, as well as for the Gentiles and the earth by their means, that God should then by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven form a new assembly, in which all difference between Jew and Gentile should be swallowed up by the pre-eminent grace which made both, and both alike, members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones -- this was a mystery indeed!

Such is the Church. During the period in which it exists on earth, whenever a Jew through grace receives the Gospel, he ceases to be, properly speaking, a Jew; whenever a Gentile is converted, he in like manner ceases to be, properly speaking, a Gentile: each one is taken out of his natural position, whether as Jew or Gentile; and both are brought into the new wondrous position of being one with Christ, and thus members one of another.

The terminus of the existence of the Church *on earth* is the descent of the Lord Jesus to receive it to Himself *in heaven*. This descent of the Lord Jesus into the air is the Church's hope. The testimony of the New Testament to this fact is uniform and overwhelming. Whether the Christian be regarded as an individual, or the Church be considered in its corporate character and relationship, the hope of the Christian, the hope of the Church, is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to receive His saints to Himself in heavenly resurrection-glory. From our Lord's closing discourse with His disciples, when He assured them that if He went away, He would come again and receive them to Himself, that where He was they might be also, to the closing words of Scripture, "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" {Rev. 22:20}, the one unbroken voice of inspiration proclaims the coming of Jesus to be the hope of "his body, the church." How should it be otherwise? For whom should the bride be waiting but the Bridegroom? To whose return should the faithful servant be looking forward, but to that of his absent Lord and Master? Heirs of incorruption, and already possessing the earnest of the Spirit, saints do nevertheless yet groan in mortal tabernacles, being burdened. For what can they be supposed to groan but for the coming of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, and at whose coming mortality is to be swallowed up of life? Nor shall the Church wait thus for her Lord in vain.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry {Heb. 10:37}.

His longsuffering is salvation. The calling of those who are to form the Church must be completed. The last stone must be hewn out of nature's quarry, and fitted to its place in that "holy temple in the Lord," into which the whole building is growing up. The gifts and ministries in the Church continue until then; but then they cease. That which is perfect will have come, and that which is in part will be done away.

The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,

with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord {1 Thess. 4:16, 17}.

Happy would it be, if this were all the notice that the subject of the Church of God required! But, alas! in close connection with that Church during its existence on earth there is a "mystery of iniquity," which had begun to work in apostolic times, and which has never yet ceased to work; the full results of which will not be developed till the true Church has been translated into heaven. The Church itself has not been faithful; and though its ultimate and eternal blessedness is, according to God's eternal counsels, secured by its oneness with Christ, and the changeless efficacy of His precious blood, its history on earth affords sad and sorrowful proof that whatever is entrusted to man's responsibility fails. The remissness of true saints gave opportunity to the enemy to introduce the germ whence proceeds the mystery of iniquity, with all its dire results. When men slept an enemy sowed tares. Evil men crept in unawares. The fatal leaven, thus introduced, has wrought with silent and steady force. Even now, vast communities, bearing the name of Christ, exist, the very best of which includes many of whom it can scarcely be hoped that they are Christians in anything but name, while in others the openly profane form the great majority. Some there are, more loud than any besides in their pretensions to be "the Church," who deny or neutralize the very foundations on which the Church is built; and not content with this, they persecute the true Church, and corrupt the nations of the earth. What men call Christendom is really "*the world*," under the guise of a Christian profession; a profession which, while it fearfully enhances the responsibility of those who assume it, changes not the enmity of their hearts towards God and towards Christ, but affords the opportunity of indulging that enmity under fairer pretexts and in a more refined and seductive way. Judas was nearer to Christ outwardly than any one besides, except his eleven fellow apostles; but this outward nearness to Christ did but add malignity to his sin, and make it the more awfully conspicuous. Sad type of what Christendom in the end will be!

This vast scene of corruption and false profession will remain, when the true Church has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Freed from the restraints which the presence of the true Church imposed upon it, and judicially blinded for its abuse of the unspeakable privileges it has so long enjoyed, Christendom will reach a climax of iniquity so fearful as to draw down the righteous judgments of God. These judgments will both precede and accompany the coming of Christ with all His saints. The Church, having been previously translated and glorified, will follow in the train of Christ's glory, when He is

revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel {2 Thess. 1:7, 8}.

But Christendom will not be the only object of the solemn judgments of that day. "Jews" and "Gentiles" will both be

involved therein; and the bearing of prophetic testimony on the latter class, is what next demands our attention.

"The Gentiles," in the widest sense of the term, are all the nations of mankind, except God's chosen, favored nation -- Israel. Given up, for their idolatry, to follow their own ways, while Israel was made the theatre of God's manifested government, we only read of the Gentiles, through a great part of the Old Testament, as being in one way or another connected with Israel. When God's people were obedient, the Gentiles were either friendly to them or subjected to their yoke; when God's people were rebellious, the Gentiles were used to chasten them for their sins. Things continued thus till the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Ephraim, or the ten tribes, having been previously carried away captive by Assyria; and Judah having by their sins become insupportable in God's sight, they too are now given into the hands, not of Assyria, but of the king of Babylon; and God's throne being removed from Jerusalem, a solemn grant of universal dominion is made of God to Nebuchadnezzar. The times of the Gentiles commenced with him. In his days began the rejection of "the Jews," and supremacy of the Gentiles, by which the times of the Gentiles are characterized throughout. "Jerusalem," says our Lord Himself, "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" {Luke 21:24}.

These times are prophetically described as divided into four periods, distinguished from each other by the supremacy of four great empires, which were successively to bear rule in the earth. From Scripture itself it is demonstrable, that these four Gentile kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. It is to Rome, as the last of the four, and subsisting to the end, that prophecy most particularly directs attention. All the four are represented as ungodly, rebellious, cruel, rapacious, and self-willed; but it is in the fourth, and that, moreover, in a form in which it has not yet existed, that human wickedness reaches its height. Covert evil may be borne with in patience, and left to be judged hereafter; open revolt leaves no alternative but present overwhelming judgment. The fourth Gentile empire, in a yet future form of its existence, will be found in open revolt against God, and will, along with apostate Christendom, be the object of those utter, destroying judgments which attend the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints.

It was in the days of this fourth Gentile monarchy, that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in humiliation on the earth. Judea was then a Roman province, as was evinced by Cæsar's image and superscription appearing on the coins. The power to inflict capital punishment seems to have resided in the Roman governor alone. Hence the Jews were unable, except by his consent, to compass the death of the Holy and the Just One, who delivered Himself, and was delivered of God into their hands. The Roman empire thus partook with the Jewish people in the awful guilt of rejecting and crucifying the Prince of life. And should it be urged by any, that Pontius Pilate was but a subordinate agent and representative of the imperial power; the mournful answer is at hand, that the imperial power itself did afterwards ratify most fully the deed of its representative, by shedding torrents of Christian blood.

It is true that, after centuries of persecution, the empire became nominally Christian: but this outward adoption of Christianity by the imperial power of the world did but bring the latter into intimate combination with that "mystery of iniquity," which had even then been long working in the bosom of Christianity itself: and from this combination resulted that masterpiece of Satanic deception, which is presented to us in the Apocalyptic vision -- Babylon the Great, the corruptress of the nations. From this vast system of worldly Christianity, of a Christian profession adorned with the world's magnificence, enriched with its wealth, and supported by its power, the saints of God are called to withdraw.

Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues {Rev. 18:4}.

The Lord grant to us both to understand and to heed the warning!

When the true Church has reached the end of its exile and pilgrimage on earth, by being translated to its home and dwelling place in heaven, the false professing body will still be found in unhallowed alliance with the wealth and greatness of this world -- nay, more -- claiming the place of undoubted supremacy over the world. "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," will even then be her haughty and scornful boast. But

therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her {Rev. 18:7, 8}.

The earthly instruments of her downfall will be the imperial power itself, and the ten subordinate, confederate kingdoms, which will own fealty to the resuscitated Roman empire.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled {Rev. 17:17}.

The fourth Gentile empire, which, in its unity as a consolidated whole, has, according to prophetic intimations, ceased to exist, is to reappear. To that empire, thus revived, Satan, who will have been, with his angels, cast out of heaven, is to give his power and throne and great authority. Gentile power, originally of God, will thus, in its last state, be energized by Satan, and identical with his usurped dominion, as "the god" or "prince of this world." The eighth head of the fourth empire, when it reappears, will be sustained in his place by the dragon himself; Satanic miracles wrought by one who exercises all the power of "the beast" in his presence, will be part of the means by which men will be induced to worship the beast and receive his mark; death will be the penalty of refusal; and judicial delusion from God having fallen on the nations where the light of Christianity has shone, Satan's triumph will appear to be all but complete. "The beast" and the ten kings, having overthrown Babylon, will forthwith make war with the Lamb. Corruption, of which Babylon is the seat and center, will be exchanged for open, undisguised revolt, on the part of the beast or imperial power

of the earth.

Spirits of devils, working miracles, will go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty {Rev. 16:14}.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army {Rev. 19:19}.

Of the issue of such a contest, who can entertain a doubt? Christ and His saints will come forth from heaven. The leaders of the confederacy against Christ, "the beast and the false prophet" -- more infatuated than Pharaoh, when he rushed after the Israelites into the bed of the Red Sea -- will be taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire; their armies will be slain with the sword of Him that sits upon the horse; and the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God will be trodden by the heavenly Conqueror, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. This awful judgment will be quickly followed by others, upon one host of adversaries and another, until "all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" {Matt. 13:41}, shall have been gathered out of the kingdom of the Son of man; and, Satan being bound, the reign of Christ with His risen saints will continue for a thousand years. But in these closing scenes, Israel, or "the Jews," have an important and conspicuous part, as well as in the millennial kingdom which succeeds. To that branch of the subject also must our attention now be turned.

There is this important difference between the four Gentile monarchies, and the nation of Israel, that while to the former there may have been a grant of universal empire, they have never, like the latter, been the subjects of God's choice and calling. Israel is an elect nation, and "the gifts and calling of God" are, as we know, "without repentance." As to God's government of the earth, Israel, or a great part of it, may be cut off because of sin and unbelief; and Lo-ammi, "not my people," may for centuries be written thereon. But as to the unalterable affections and ultimate purpose of God, Israel can never cease to be the nation of His choice. It is of that nation, in its present state of unbelief and rejection, that the apostle says,

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes {Rom. 11:28}.

Nothing can be more important than that we should bear in mind this truth in all our inquiries into what Scripture testifies concerning Israel.

Israel's captivity and dispersion having taken place at two different times, and on two distinct grounds, there will be corresponding differences in the order and mode of their restoration. The ten tribes, who were, for their idolatry, carried away by the Assyrians, will be restored in one way. The Jews who, having first been carried captive to Babylon and restored to their land at the end of seventy years, were a second time dispersed by the Romans, for the awful sin of rejecting and crucifying their Messiah, will be restored in a different way. Scripture clearly evinces that a considerable



number of the Jews will return to their own land in unbelief. There they will be associated with the imperial power of the earth, when in its last, Satanic form. Prophecy testifies of a "covenant with death," an "agreement with hell" {Isa. 28:18}, to be made by the rulers of the Jewish people at Jerusalem. They will seek the shelter of the great head of Gentile power; and between him (or more probably his representative, the "second beast" of Rev. 13, or "false prophet" of Rev. 19) and the Jews, an alliance, or covenant, will be formed. This covenant, permitting to the Jews the exercise of their national worship, will be treacherously broken by "the prince" in whom they will have trusted, instead of trusting in their God and in the true Messiah, their prince. Their worship will be interdicted, and "the idols of the desolator" -- "the abomination of desolation, standing where it ought not," will be set up in the holy place. Too many, alas! of the returned Jews will submit to this last degradation practised upon them by Satan; having refused the Blessed One who came in His Father's name, they will receive this apostate usurper of divine rights and honors who comes in his own. Such as do so, whether Jews or Gentiles, will be involved in the destruction by which this head of pride will be smitten, when the lowly and long-rejected Jesus shall come forth from heaven.

Among the Jews who return to their own land in unbelief, there will be some, however, whose hearts God will have touched; and these, amid the horrors of that time of tribulation such as never was before, and never will be afterwards, will seek the Lord God of their fathers, and be preserved by His grace from the iniquity that will abound. This Jewish remnant, distinguished from the nation by their penitence, obedience, faithfulness, and expectation of the coming of their Messiah -- distinguished also from "the Church of God," which will, prior to that period, have been completed and taken up to heaven -- occupy a very prominent place in the prophetic Scriptures. Their repentance, trials, consolations, hopes, and fears, are largely recounted in the Psalms and by the prophets; and in the difference between them and "the Church of God," is found the true and only solution of what nearly all Christians find to be such a difficulty -- the imprecations and prayers for vengeance on the adversaries, with which the Psalms and some portions of the prophets abound. The Church stands in Christ and has the knowledge of accomplished redemption: the remnant do not. The Church suffers for Christ's sake and rejoices to do so; the remnant suffer for their own sins and those of the nation, and groan under the sense of God's wrath. The deliverance of the Church is not by the execution of judgment on its enemies, but by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air: the deliverance of the remnant is by the coming of Christ in judgment to the earth. That for which the Church looks as the result of Christ's descent into the air, is its own translation to be with Christ in heaven. The remnant look for their Messiah to deliver them, set up His own kingdom, and bring in fulness of blessing on the earth. As matter of fact the Church does ascend to heaven and dwell there with her Lord; the remnant -- such of them as survive the desolations of the last awful

crisis -- do become the nucleus of the pardoned, restored, and happy nation, under Christ's millennial reign.

A different destiny awaits a portion of those who, in the first instance, form the Jewish remnant. Having primarily the same standing, character, hopes, and testimony as their brethren, the murderous oppressions of the enemy cut short their lives, and they are prevented thus from sharing with their brethren the fulfilment of their national hopes in Israel's deliverance, and subsequent triumph and blessedness under Messiah's reign. Scripture does not leave us in the dark as to what becomes of these martyred ones. Special mention is made of them, as partaking with "the Church" of heavenly glory, and of their reigning as risen ones with Christ.

The order of the events which ensue on the appearing of Christ in judgment, it may be somewhat more difficult to trace. The first blow falls on "the beast," "the false prophet," and the great confederacy against God of which they are the head. Satan also being bound, the sovereignty of the whole earth is transferred to the hands of Christ; and more than this,

all things both in heaven and on earth are gathered together in one, even in Christ {see Eph. 1:10}.

Judgments are executed on all who refuse submission; but these are not judgments executed by Christ *as coming from heaven*, but as having made Zion the earthly center of His kingdom.

The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies {Psa. 110:2}.

The surviving Jewish remnant, pardoned and owned of the Lord as His people, will have their numbers and prosperity augmented by the unexpected return of the ten tribes, so long lost sight of, but now brought back by the Lord's own hand. While the Jews are undergoing their terrible sifting *in the land*, the ten tribes will be passing through discipline of another kind *on their way thither*. They will be all then reunited in the land, and form one nation, under the peaceful rule of their long-rejected King. With the nation, thus re-established, "the new covenant" will be made; and thus all the blessings promised to them of old in case of their obedience, but which they have forfeited by their sin and unbelief, will become their portion on the ground of absolute grace, and of the redemption-rights of the Lord Jesus Christ. All things which offend, and all doers of iniquity, having been gathered out of His kingdom, and the Spirit being poured out upon all flesh, the authority of Christ will be owned by all the nations of the earth.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth {Psa. 72:8}.

The throne of the Lord, now established at Jerusalem, shall be the gathering point for all nations. His house shall then be indeed "a house of prayer for all people." Mankind will still be divided into nations, each having its separate government; but all Gentile rulers will then be subject to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

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 {Psa. 72:10, 11}.

Happy nations! Pre-eminently happy that nation of Jehovah's choice to which will then be fulfilled all that God has promised, far surpassing man's fondest dreams of prosperity and blessedness on earth! Jerusalem, so long a proverb and a byword for the depth of desolation to which it had been reduced, shall then be known as "the city of the great King" {Psa. 48:2}.

And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure unto it {Jer. 33:9}.

Happy and glorious beyond the power of human language to express, or of human heart to conceive, that "Church of God" which will then with Christ be reigning over the earth. Heaven, not earth, is the place where the Church is glorified with Christ; but heaven and earth will not be disunited then, as at present, and ever since the fall. The vision of its glory which the prophet of Patmos was favored to receive exhibits its connection with the millennial earth. He sees "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Its glory fades not, nor does its blessedness pass away, when the thousand years expire: still it is in connection with the earth during those thousand years that the apostle beholds the glory. A vision indeed it is; but a vision of glory which could not otherwise have been made known, to the faith and hope of those whose happiness it will be to constitute the heavenly city. Its jasper walls, its streets of gold, and gates of pearl, are but the images of that which the heart well knows must surpass in glory all that the symbol conveys. God Almighty and the Lamb are its light and its temple; while the river of life, and the tree of life, and the throne of God and of the Lamb, whence the living waters issue -- all bear witness to the exceeding riches of God's grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. But the all-pervading light which fills that city of our God shines through it on the nations of the millennial earth. The river of the water of life, which flows from the central throne of God and of the Lamb, through the street of the city, refreshes in its onward and downward course the earthly subjects of Christ's glorious reign. Of Jerusalem on the earth it can be said,

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High {Psa. 46:4}.

Of "the tree of life," which on either side of the river bears its twelve manner of fruits, it is expressly said, "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" {Rev. 22:2}. How blessed that for the Church, which even on earth is called to enter into the sympathies of Christ, the place should be reserved of being, when glorified, the vessel of those sympathies, in their actual outflow to all that then remains of darkness to be dispelled, of sorrow to be assuaged, or of sickness to be healed! What a period must that coming dispensation be! Christ and the Church, with all the glorified saints who form no part of "the bride, the Lamb's wife," occupying the heavens -- earth, relieved from the curse, freed

from Satan's oppression and deceit, happy under the reign of Christ and His saints -- Israel, restored and blessed, the chief among the nations, and the seat of Christ's earthly rule -- the nations, walking in the light of the heavenly city, and healed by the leaves of its life-giving tree, gathered to the throne of the Lord, to Jerusalem -- while creation itself, delivered from the bondage of corruption, rejoices in the liberty of the glory of the children of God! The true Melchizedec, the Center and Dispenser of the blessings of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth, and the One through whom the praises of all in heaven and all on the earth ascend continually to Him!

It is, however, important to remember that, as to the earthly department of this glorious kingdom, it bears the character of a dispensation in which man is put to the test. Man has been already tried in various and wondrous ways. He was tried in innocence in the garden. From Adam to Noah he was tried without the restraints either of a divine law or of human government. From Noah to Moses he was tested by the latter, but without the former. In Israel, full trial of man was made, as under law. When the law was broken, the Levitical sacrifices and priesthood were introduced. With these shadows of grace superadded to the law, Israel was introduced to the land. Failing there, judges were raised up. When priesthood itself had failed, the kingdom was established. When the house of David began to depart from the Lord, prophecy, *in its full character and bearing*, commenced. When for a long time no prophet's voice had been heard in Israel, the silence was broken by the Baptist's cry, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" {Matt. 3:2}. Christ Himself, the Heir, the King, the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, appeared among men. Him they crucified. The Jews, God's only earthly people, and the Gentiles, to whom the sword of government had been entrusted, united in this awful deed. Then came the Church. Man's sin and incurableness being demonstrated beyond question, sovereign grace began to gather the Church for heavenly association with Christ. But while grace secures everlastingly those who are its true subjects, the present results of that grace are again confided to human responsibility. The result is well known. The Church itself proves unfaithful to Christ. The mystery of iniquity begins to work. The world becomes Christian in name, only to betray the Church into still deeper unfaithfulness, and connect the name of Christ with all the unchanged evil of that world which once crucified and still despises the Son of God. The present dispensation, one of perfect, unmingled grace, ends in complete apostasy. The true Church being translated to heaven, this apostasy is manifested in every sphere of God's previous actings among men. Christendom, the Holy Land, and the revived Roman empire -- the fourth great Gentile monarchy -- all become the theatre of Satan's operations; and human wickedness, unchecked by the solemn judgment which will even then be falling on the earth, will come to its full head. Christ and His saints appear. Judgment clears the scene, and Satan himself is bound. Then follows the last dispensation under which man will ever be placed. Christ and the saints manifested in heavenly glory --

Israel redeemed, and happy, and pre-eminent *on the earth* -- the nations reposing under the peaceful scepter of Jesus -- for a thousand years shall His righteous rule maintain the blessedness of this coming kingdom. But we must carefully distinguish the earthly scene of Christ's varied glories, with the earthly occupants of that earthly scene, from Christ Himself, and the heavenly saints, who are the sharers of His glory. Men on earth during the Millennium will need to be born again, as surely as men in all ages need this. They who are really regenerate during that period will be as infallibly preserved for everlasting blessedness as are all true believers now. But that is very different from being actually in heavenly glory; while, as to any of the earth's millennial inhabitants, who may not have been really "born again," they will be liable, as soon as Satan is loosed, to be drawn away by his delusions. Such a defection will actually take place. As long as Satan is bound, the righteous rule of Christ will restrain even those whose souls have not been quickened and renewed. But as soon as Satan is again at large, man will give the last, solemn, awful proof that where God has not in His grace imparted a new and divine life, all the glory and happiness of the manifested reign of Christ and His heavenly, glorified people is not, when the tempter is again at liberty, sufficient to restrain men from falling into his snares, and following him to *his* and *their own* everlasting overthrow! May the serious lesson have its due weight on our souls! May we learn utterly to distrust ourselves, and confide altogether in the strength of that grace which alone keeps us from evil, and which has already triumphed in our deliverance from the power of darkness, and translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son!

From the epoch of Christ's return, the blessedness of the Church is complete. This will be equally true of the Old Testament saints, and of the martyrs of the coming crisis, from the time that they are raised to heavenly glory. There may be various modes in which the glory of Christ and the saints is afterwards *revealed*, but the *blessedness* of the saints must be complete when once they are in resurrection with their Lord. The loosing of Satan and the rebellion of Gog and Magog can make no difference to them. And even as to the earth, the revolt is not universal. The number of the rebels is stated to be "as the sand of the sea"; but this is a comparison often applied to the single nation of Israel, and cannot therefore imply of necessity that all are deceived. From numerous scriptures we know that at least the nation of Israel will be preserved from apostasy; and the very passage which informs us of the post-millennial falling away makes mention of "the camp of the saints" -- earthly saints, no doubt -- and "the beloved city," that is, the earthly Jerusalem, "the city of the great King," against which the deceived and rebellious nations gather together.

Nor is this last defection of so large a portion of mankind suffered, as in the ages previous to the Millennium, to continue. "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." The devil who deceived them is then cast, not into the bottomless pit, where he had been previously confined, but into "the lake of fire and brimstone." The

judgment of the dead before the great white throne ensues -- a judgment issuing in the final disposing of all things for eternity. All, of all ages, who are not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire. Death is cast there. Hades is cast there. The heaven and the earth, having fled from before the face of Him who sits on the great white throne, and the kingdom having been delivered up by Christ to the Father, new heavens and a new earth are created, in which righteousness will eternally dwell. The Millennium is *the reign* of righteousness. In the new heavens and the new earth of the everlasting state, righteousness *dwelleth*. There being no longer so much as any innate evil to restrain -- all evil and evil doers having found their place in the lake of fire, which is the second death -- the whole company of the redeemed from among Adam's ruined race, will find their home of blessedness in a creation where evil exists not, and is unknown. God will, throughout eternity, be all in all.

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 {Rev. 21:3, 4}.

Such is the outline of what seems to us the prophetic testimony of God's word, -- the testimony which we have sought in the preceding pages to develop to our readers. Our attention was first directed to the hope of the Christian, the hope of the Church. This we found to be not death, or the disembodied state, happy as that is for the Christian, but the coming of the Lord. Not His coming to the earth, but His descent into the air, to receive His saints to Himself in heaven. The hope of the Christian is thus in the strictest sense *a heavenly hope*. The hope of the Church, too, in its corporate character, we found to be, not the conversion of all mankind to its ranks, but its own translation to heaven, when the Lord, the Bridegroom, appears. This hope was shown to be associated in the New Testament with every element of Christian character, and linked with every detail of the Christian's life and walk. The prospects of the world were next considered. We found the concurrent testimony of all parts of Scripture to be, that what awaits the world is judgment, -- solemn, overwhelming, universal judgment. The characteristic features of this judgment were then examined: the marks by which it is distinguished from all judgments previously executed on the wicked. The yet future, but rapidly approaching judgment, we found to be connected with Christ's coming, and introductory to the Millennium. Ample proof of both these points was produced from Scripture. We saw, moreover, that there are three distinct spheres on which the judgments are to fall: Christendom, the Gentiles, and the nation of Israel. The doom of Christendom became thus the subject of a distinct inquiry. Its responsibility as set in God's goodness -- its non-continuance therein -- and the irrevocable sentence, "otherwise thou shalt be cut off" -- were all considered. The true Church being translated to heaven prior to the cutting off of Christendom, Christ and the Church became the next subject of our meditations. The distinction of

the Church from all that preceded it, and from all that is to succeed it on the earth: its unity, its holiness, its completeness in Christ, its bridal relation to Him, its heavenly place and portion, its identification with Christ by the present indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and its future association with Christ in His headship over all things both in heaven and earth, were all inquired into, and the present responsibility of the Church to keep itself for Christ was considered. Israel, in its past history and present state, became then the topic of inquiry; and this as introductory to the great body of Scripture testimony to its future restoration. The proofs of this given from Scripture were, we trust, such as not to be gainsaid. Israel's restoration, moreover, was found to be invariably linked in God's word with the prospect of those times of refreshing for the earth on which the prophets so largely dwell. This connection formed the subject of another distinct meditation. We then paused to give full consideration to the inquiry, whether the Millennium or Christ's second advent is to be expected first? On this topic, we noticed the absence of any positive proof that the Millennium precedes the Advent: the only texts ever produced as such were examined, and found to be either silent on the subject, or to bear testimony on the other side; while abundant proofs were found, of the most direct and positive character, that the coming of Christ precedes the Millennium. This was naturally followed by another inquiry -- whether Scripture interposes *any* event, as of inevitable occurrence, between the believer and the coming of Christ? Several passages which are supposed to do so were examined, and found to have no such meaning; while the whole body of New Testament passages represent the posture of the Church to be that of the continual expectation of Christ. Certain events are indeed predicted as inevitably to occur before "the day of Christ {of the Lord}" arrives; but Scripture was seen most clearly to distinguish between *the coming* of Christ for His saints, and *the day* of Christ which brings judgment on the world. All that *must* occur prior to the day, *may* transpire between the descent into the air and the return of Christ *with all His saints* to execute judgment on the earth: and this latter event it is that brings "the day of Christ." The progress of evil in the professing body, which bears Christ's name on the earth, was next traced: the last days of Gentile supremacy were also considered; and Israel's place in the approaching crisis, developed from the Word of God. The light shed by Scripture on the respective experiences and destinies of the *spared* and *martyred* Jewish remnants came next in order; and the application of chapters 4-19 of the Apocalypse, to the transitional period between the translation of the Church and the coming of Christ in judgment on the wicked, was suggested as the key to the true interpretation of this wonderful book. The pre-millennial resurrection of the saints (apart from the wicked) to reign with Christ for a thousand years, was largely shown to be the doctrine of God's word; and, finally, the Millennium itself came to be considered. Such is the order in which we have presented to the reader the subjects, of which our present number is a digest.

In presenting these subjects to the consideration of the

Church of God, we desire, on the one hand, to be kept from unduly magnifying their importance; while, on the other, we have no wish to disguise our conviction that, *in many respects*, their importance is such as could not be easily overrated. When compared with the fundamental truths of Christianity -- the Gospel of the grace of God -- it is to the latter that the primary place must freely and joyfully be conceded. But the moment that any man, by the believing reception of the Gospel, has become a Christian, prophetic truth has a most solemn claim on his attention. Conversion itself, in fact, is but half accomplished until the great central truth unfolded in prophecy has its place in the soul. In describing the conversion of the Thessalonian believers, the apostle not only tells us what they were converted *from*, but what they were converted *to*: they "were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, *and to wait for his Son from heaven*" {see 1 Thess. 1:9, 10}. And even as to the details of prophecy, which furnish beforehand to faith the testimony of God's judgments on the whole scene around us, and in the midst of which we are called to "serve the true and living God," how can we intelligently serve Him if this instruction be overlooked or despised? While, then, we cheerfully concede the first and foremost place to the Gospel, by which souls are "turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God" {see Acts 26:18}, we maintain that without prophetic truth, the Gospel itself is but partially understood. We may know what we are delivered *from*; but without prophecy, we are ignorant of that *to* which we are called: while, as to all that concerns the development of divine life, the formation of Christian character, and the maintenance by the Holy Ghost of intelligent communion with God, the instruction vouchsafed to us in prophecy, is beyond all price. It is indeed a "light that shineth in a dark place."

To answer objections to the outline of prophetic truth which has been under review, and to meet the difficulties of inquirers, is all that remains of the present work. God grant us to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good; and in all our inquiries, may we have no object but His glory; no motive, but His love; no trust, but in the teaching of His Spirit; and no rule, but His own blessed word!

## Chapter 20

### Objections Answered

#### Objection 1. {The Lord's Coming is Death}

To the outline of prophetic truth presented in our last it is often objected, "that while our Lord and His apostles do indeed lay great stress on the subject of His coming, *the death of each individual is virtually the Lord's coming to him*; and that therefore the passages which treat of the one may with equal advantage be understood of the other." By some this objection may perhaps be regarded as obsolete; and it has undoubtedly been relinquished by some of our anti-millenarian brethren: but there are numbers by whom it is still urged; and for the sake of numbers more on whose minds it may have influence, as one of the oldest and commonest objections to prophetic truth, we would not pass it by unanswered.

#### Answer 1.

(1) There is no instance in the New Testament in which death is spoken of as "the coming of Christ," or "the coming of the Lord." If there is such passages, let them be produced.

(2) Instead of identifying these two subjects, Scripture pointedly distinguishes between them. True, that as death is the limit of an individual's continuance here, the Lord's coming will be the terminus to all those who are alive and remain to His coming; but, with this single exception, the two events have nothing in common. At death the believer *departs* to be with Christ. When the Lord comes, *He brings the departed with Him*. By death, the believer is *separated* from his fellow Christians on earth; at the coming of Christ, all believers are *gathered together* to Him above. However the sting of death may be withdrawn, and however complete may be the saint's triumph over death, it is, nevertheless, that to which our bodies have become subject *by reason of sin*; the coming of Christ, on the contrary, is that in which His *perfect triumph over sin* will be displayed *in the resurrection of the body*.

(3) So entirely contrasted are "death" and "the Lord's coming" in Scripture, that when our Lord said of the beloved disciple, "If I will that he tarry till I come," etc., the disciples, losing sight of the "if," and understanding their Master to say absolutely that this was His will, immediately concluded that *"that disciple should not die."* They knew quite well that for a disciple to tarry till Christ comes is to be exempted from death.

(4) The apostle Paul, in a passage in which he treats of both

subjects, declares that, however blessed it may be to be "absent from the body, and present with the Lord," what he and his fellow Christians desired and groaned for, was, "not to be unclothed" or disembodied, "but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4). This will surely not be till the Savior, for whom we look, shall appear, and change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. Thus evidently are death and the coming of Christ not only *distinguished*, but *contrasted*, in the word of God.

Nor is it to be regarded as a matter of indifference, whether the actual future of our hopes be the same as that which God holds out to us in His word. People may say, "If we are only ready for death, we shall be ready for Christ's coming also"; but in what sense do those who use this language speak of being *ready* for either? Are not their thoughts limited to the single point of their own personal safety? No doubt that which constitutes our readiness to stand before God, whether *now*, or *at death*, or *at Christ's coming*, is the one accomplished work of Christ, the whole efficacy of which is God's gift to every poor sinner who through grace believes in Jesus. But is our individual safety the *only* or even the *chief* end of God's wondrous grace, and of the precious sacrifice of Christ? Have we no thought beyond that of personal security? Has the grace manifested towards us in the gift and in the sacrifice of Christ established no relations between that blessed One and ourselves? Are there no affections flowing from such relations? When the hope is set before us of beholding Him who became man, and died on the cross to accomplish our redemption; when He who is not ashamed to call us "brethren" -- nay, more, who owns us as His bride, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" -- when He says, "Surely, I come quickly," is no response elicited but such as is expressed in the remark, that "if we are ready for death, we are also ready for Christ's coming"? The readiness for which He looks is the readiness of true and single-hearted affection, and of diligent, devoted service: a readiness to which the hope of His appearing directly ministers: a readiness, moreover, which is greatly hindered by such low apprehensions of His love as would make us satisfied with merely knowing that we are safe. The true readiness is that of the wise virgins, who, with oil in their vessels, with lighted and well-trimmed lamps, and with girded loins, *went forth to meet* the Bridegroom.

### ***Objection 2. {The Lord's Coming and Intermediate Events}***

"Admitting that the Lord's coming is the true hope of the Church -- that for which she is left to wait and watch and long -- is it not quite possible for her to do this, though certain all the while that events of great importance and a period of long duration intervene? In a word, may we not be longing and watching for our Lord, although we know from Scripture that the whole Millennium must pass ere the moment of His return arrives?"

#### ***Answer 2.***

This is an objection urged by some who do now concede that the coming of Christ is the proper hope of the Church, and that good service has been rendered in calling attention to the prominent place which this doctrine holds in the word of God. Some who take this ground go so far as to dwell on the desolate condition of the Church during the absence of her Lord; affirming it to be her place to "refuse to be comforted" with anything short of His personal return. "But, then," say they, "may not all this comport with the knowledge of intervening events and a long intervening period?" Their theory is, that "the heart alternates between two different and apparently opposite views of the interval between its own day and the day of Christ's appearing. Now," they say, "it seems *long*, and anon it seems *short*. To faith and hope it seems near, even at the doors; to love and longing desire it seems far, far away: to the one it is but a day, and then He will be here; to the other, it is a thousand years -- dreary period!"

The best reply to this objection, and to the theory on which it is founded, is furnished by facts. The supporters of this theory urge that their view admits of an unfettered and unmodified use of Scripture language on the subject of Christ's coming; but that is not the question. The question is, whether Scripture language on that subject would ever have suggested such an interpretation as the one before us. Who can be unaware, that until the recent revival of prophetic truth, within the memory of the present generation, the coming of the Lord as the hope of the Church was an almost unheard-of doctrine; while its collateral doctrines, of the distinct resurrection of the saints, and the change to pass on such as are alive, were equally neglected and forgotten? That which has in some measure recalled the attention of Christians to these confessedly important subjects, is the doctrine of Christ's coming, not at the close of the Millennium, but at its commencement -- not with the certain intervention of more than a thousand years, but as an event which may be regarded with habitual expectancy. Facts testify that as Christians imbibe the thought of the certain intervention of a thousand years, they lose sight of Christ's coming as an object of present expectation and hope: and, further, that where in any measure this attitude of soul with regard to Christ's coming is regained, it is by the perception that no such events or periods necessarily intervene as had been supposed to do so. The admissions of those who urge the objection under review abundantly establish this conclusion.

How could it, indeed, be otherwise? We are asked if it be

not possible to look, and watch, and long for our Lord's appearing, well knowing that the Millennium must necessarily intervene? Unhesitatingly we answer, No. Had it pleased God thus to order events, and to make this order known to us, we might have understood that Christ would come, that at His coming such and such things would be accomplished, and that both His coming and these attendant events were of great importance. His coming might thus have been the *ultimate* object of our hope; its *proximate* object it never could have been. We should have known as certainly that we should die and be in our graves for centuries, as that, after the lapse of these centuries, Christ would come. We should necessarily in that case have looked for death as the end of our individual course; and for the occurrence of the predicted intervening events, while our bodies slumbered in the grave and our souls were present with the Lord. Nay more, if God had revealed that Christ would not come for more than a thousand years of blessedness on earth, it would be wrong for us to be expecting His coming until these years had rolled away. Whatever faith and hope might have to say in such a case, they *would not* and *could not* contradict God's word, but be subject thereto. Those who maintain the theory under consideration do not, as matter of fact, look for Christ in any such sense as to use the words "we who are alive and remain," with regard to it. They know quite well that if their views be correct, they will not be alive and remain; and their very anxiety to show that the whole millennium is to pass ere Christ returns, demonstrates their conviction that really to be expecting Him is wrong; and on the ground supposed it would be so. If the Millennium ought to be expected first, in the way so many contend, it would clearly be the Christian's place to be laboring diligently to hasten its introduction. This is a very different work from that of warning the world of approaching judgment, seeking to deliver souls therefrom by turning them to Christ, and seeking to keep ourselves, and stir up our brethren also to keep themselves, separate in spirit from the world, in the steady, patient expectation of our Lord's appearing. The latter is the service really assigned us in God's word; but in order to do it, our expectation of Christ's return must be a real one. Our post and service would be different, if the world had first to be converted, and the Millennium to transpire, before the coming of Christ takes place.

One other view we must take of this theory and of the objection founded upon it. It merges the present and the Millennium period in one, as that of the Lord's absence, and of the consequent sorrow and widowhood of the Church. The Church, according to this theory, is in its mortal state on earth throughout the Millennium; and as it regards the Millennium as the period of the Church's greatest purity and prosperity, its faithfulness to its absent Lord and Bridegroom may be supposed to make it more eager than ever for His personal return. Accordingly, it is asked by supporters of this theory, "What, to them that love His appearing, are *falls of Antichrist*, and bright *latter days*, and whole *Millenniums* of refreshing in His absence?" Now we put it to every Christian reader, conversant with Scripture-predictions of the Millennium, whether such an element as *sorrow for the*

*Lord's absence* and longing for the close of the Millennium, *to bring the joy of His presence*, can have a place therein! The Millennium, the scene of the Church's widowhood and sorrow! We have been wont to anticipate it even for this earth as "the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds": but this theory would overshadow it with the tears of a widowed Church, rightly bemoaning the continued absence of her Lord! Absence! Why, instead of being *absent* from His Church, as now, it is *His presence* that will then fill creation itself with gladness, and cause every shore to re-echo with His praise! The very anticipation of it unseals the lips of the Psalmist and causes strains of holy triumph to flow from his pen.

The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad . . . The hills melted like wax *at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth* {Psa. 97:1, 5}

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together *before the LORD*; for *he cometh* to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity (Psa. 98:7-9).

A theory which confounds this period of bounding exultation and universal gladness *in the Lord's presence*, with the period of the tears and fastings of the Church *because of His absence*, cannot have any strong claims on the adhesion of those who search the Scriptures and abide by their decisions.

This *is* the period of the Church's sorrow: not, strictly speaking, of her widowhood, for the marriage of the Lamb is not yet come, but of her sorrow, in the deferring of her long-cherished hope, to behold and to be with her Lord. Nor will the sorrows and fastings of the Church terminate till her Lord returns. They ought not to cease till then. Alas! that as matter of fact she should so seek to content herself with other objects in the absence of her Lord! But when He comes, it is to usher her into heavenly, bridal joys, and into the endless blessedness of the Father's house. Then will follow (when judgments shall have cleared the scene) the peaceful glories of the kingdom. In that kingdom -- the true Millennium of the Scriptures -- will Christ and His heavenly Bride enjoy the inheritance of all things which is the reward of His humiliation, obedience, and death. All that psalmists have sung, and prophets penned, of the blessedness of the earth during that joyous period, is but a feeble reflection of the Church's joy, as sharing the affections, the home, the inheritance of her Lord. But of all this the theory we have been considering would deprive us, merging, as it does, the millennial period with the present, as one long, dreary season of the Church's sorrows; and really restricting God's wondrous and varied revelation of His glories in Christ, in all the successive dispensations He has established, to the one thought of what is needful for the salvation of all the elect from Abel to the end of time.

### ***Objection 3. {The Saved Will be Numerically Complete Before Christ Comes}***

"When Christ comes, the Church will be absolutely and numerically complete, admitting of no subsequent accessions. If, then, all that are to be saved will be brought in before Christ comes, how can any be brought in afterwards? And if not, what becomes of the lower department of the Millennium kingdom?"

#### ***Answer 3.***

This is an objection which we should not have noticed (as it evidently does not in the least apply to the views unfolded in the preceding pages), but that it is somewhat confidently urged as a decisive argument against millenarian views in general. It is based on the assumption that "the Church," and "all that are to be saved," are terms of identical signification. This is a pure assumption. It has, no doubt, like many others equally baseless, obtained a kind of popular currency, which leads others who have never examined the subject for themselves, to take for granted, that by "the Church" is meant "the whole company of the saved from the beginning to the end of time." If this were true, the objection before us would be unanswerable. If by "the Church" be meant in Scripture "all the saved," and if the Scriptures teach, that at Christ's coming, the Church will be complete, the thought is evidently and undeniably excluded of there being whole nations and generations of saved persons after the coming of Christ. With many who never think of questioning the popular idea of the Church, this argument will, of course, be decisive; but with such only. Let any Christian take his Bible, and patiently and prayerfully examine all the passages in which the term is used, and he will find that in no single instance does it mean in Scripture the whole of the redeemed, or saved, from the beginning to the end of time. If the reader thinks that it is otherwise, let him try the experiment. He will find that, besides its use in respect to local churches, which has evidently no bearing on our present question, and its application to professing Christians in their responsibilities as God's house or dwelling-place, the word "Church" is always used in Scripture <sup>69</sup> to designate *believers, gathered into unity with Christ and with each other, by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, in virtue of Christ having ascended on high; and that it has its existence on earth between the day of Pentecost and the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air*. The proof of this in detail has been already presented to the reader, and need not be repeated here.

The Church is truly to be complete at the coming of Christ. It is for its completion that His coming waits. But when completed, it is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; it is to come with Him when He comes to execute

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69. Acts 7:38 and 19:32, 39, 41, where it is the same word in the Greek, are no real exceptions. The latter is evidently not, as shown by the translators using another word; and there is no reason whatever for their not using the same word in the former. Singularly enough, in employing the word "Church," they deviated from the example of five earlier versions -- those of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer, the Genevan, and Anglo-Rhemish.

judgment on the wicked; and when He reigns over the earth, His glorified Church is to be the partner of His throne. He does indeed come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. But how? Who are to be the admirers? Let the apostle answer. "When He who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory" {see Col. 3:4}. Let the reply of our Lord Himself be heard.

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 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 hast loved them, as thou hast loved me* {John 17:22, 23}.

When the world sees the Church in the glory which the Father gave to Jesus, and which Jesus has given to the Church -- when Christ and the Church are "glorified together" -- *then the world* will know, not only that the Father sent the Son, but also that He has loved the Church with the same love with which He loves the Son. The revelation of the Church in the same glory with Jesus will prove *to the world* that she is the object of the same love. But, then, there must be a "world" before which these wonders are displayed; and the objection we have been examining leaves no place for this.

#### **Objection 4. {Christ is on David's Throne Now}**

"Scripture teaches that Christ is already seated on the throne of His father David, and that His kingdom is already in existence in the only sense in which it will exist prior to the end, when He will deliver it up to God, even the Father, when the everlasting kingdom of Christ and of God will commence."

#### **Answer 4.**

This objection introduces us to a subject which it may be well somewhat fully to consider. The statements frequently made as to the kingdom of Christ are such as to perplex sincere inquirers after the truth. The subject itself, moreover, is one which requires, and will amply repay the patient examination of God's word respecting it.

The objection amounts, in other words, to the assertion, "that Christ is now reigning as King in His own proper kingdom; and that this kingdom formally commenced on His ascension to the right hand of God, and continues unchanged, both in character and form, till the judgment of the great white throne." Before considering the passages by which this objection is supposed to be supported, we would rapidly sketch what seems to us to be the doctrine of Scripture touching "the kingdom."

It may be well to explain here, that we are in no wise disposed to censure the thought so commonly entertained by Christians, and expressed, one may say, throughout the psalmody of Christendom, that "Christ reigns in the hearts of His believing people." Undoubtedly He does; but the figurative use of the word "reign," in such an application of it as this, is no authority for displacing the true, Scripture doctrine of Christ's kingdom; nor can this be ascertained, save by a diligent and prayerful examination of the copious

testimonies concerning it, with which Scripture abounds.

There can be no dispute as to the great mass of passages in the Old Testament which treat of the "kingdom," or of Christ's glory *as King*, that they do so in inseparable connection with Israel's restoration and supremacy, and with the blessing of all nations: -- in a word, with the Millennium. Most of these passages, be it remembered, were penned before the Babylonish captivity. During that captivity, when the throne of God had been removed from Jerusalem, Daniel was inspired to write the prophetic history of the Gentile power to which Israel and Jerusalem had become subject. Four great empires were to succeed each other; the whole to be succeeded, on the destruction of the fourth, by "the kingdom" which "the God of heaven should set up," and which was to be the final, universal kingdom. The prophet sees in vision the divine investiture of the Son of man with the authority and glory of this kingdom, amid scenes of pomp and majesty, such as Scripture alone portrays; and this investiture, mark, is connected with the judgment by which the fourth empire, in its last form, is overthrown and destroyed. Our readers are aware that we refer to Dan. 7.

That the kingly character of Jesus, and in connection too with Israel, was recognized by the Holy Ghost, and those by whom He spake, at the epoch of the Savior's birth, admits no question. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end {Luke 1:32, 33}.

Towards thirty years after this, the Baptist began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus Himself took up the same cry; and it is remarkable, that the passage quoted by Him from Isaiah in opening His commission in the synagogue at Nazareth, is one which, in the prophecy itself, stands connected with predictions of Israel's restoration, and of the full blessedness of millennial days. Compare Luke 4:16-21 with Isa. 61 throughout. Thus no intimation is as yet given, of "the kingdom" being any other than that, which, from the testimony of the prophets, might be expected to be set up.

Soon was it manifested, however, that the Jewish nation, on whose repentance, according to the prophets, hinged every prospect of blessing under Messiah's reign, were very far from being thus prepared to welcome Him. When an infant, His death was sought by Herod. His forerunner, the Baptist, was put to death; and though the common people, the publicans and sinners, had received John's mission, the heads of the nation had refused his testimony, and rejected the counsel of God against themselves. Jesus entered not on His public ministry till John had been cast into prison; and at the close of His first discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth, they sought to cast Him headlong from the brow of the hill. As He proceeded in His work, His rejection became more and more decided; until, in Matt. 13, He opens to His disciples "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" -- mysteries, which it is



given to them to know, while they are hidden from the nation at large. It was the rejection of Jesus by His own people, the Jews -- His rejection, in fact, by the world -- that gave occasion to the kingdom existing in mystery, before it exists in manifestation. *This* is the period during which it exists in mystery; *the Millennium* is the period of its manifestation.

The doctrine of the New Testament is not the substitution of another kind of kingdom for that of which the Old Testament could not fail to awaken expectations, *but the postponement of the expected kingdom* because of Israel's unpreparedness to receive it; and the existence meanwhile of an anomalous state of things, expressed by the phrase "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Christ was presented as king to Israel -- "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass," -- but Israel rejected Him, and in consequence the sentence was pronounced:

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21:5, 43).

Just as in Luke 19 we read,

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, *and because they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear.*

It was to correct this expectation of the *immediate appearing* of the kingdom, that our Lord spake of Himself under the figure of "a certain nobleman" who "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" {Luke 19:11, 12}. Now, could any one say, that the state of things during the absence of the nobleman on this errand, was the nobleman's "proper kingdom," "commencing formally" as soon as he went away, "and continuing unchanged, both in character and form,"<sup>70</sup> alike through the period of His absence and when, having received the kingdom and returned, He rewards His servants according to their conduct while He was away, and puts down His rebellious citizens by power? What greater perversion could there be, than thus to confound an authority, unacknowledged by its lawful subjects, and unenforced by its rightful possessor, with the effectual establishment of this authority by power, and its open, triumphant exercise in the overthrow and destruction of all by which it is questioned or resisted? The one, is the kingdom of heaven, in mystery, as at present: the other, is the kingdom of Christ as openly established in the Millennium. To say that in its transition from the one state to the other, "the kingdom is unchanged both in its character and form," is to say what needs no refutation. Can any two things be more contrasted in "character" than the patient endurance of evil, and its righteous repression by power? And as to "form," what resemblance is there between an absent nobleman's authority over the servants of his household, who serve in prospect of his return, and a monarch's vindication of his long-outraged rights, in the dethronement of the usurper who has reigned, and the punishment of that usurper's followers, who have rebelled, during the absence of the true king?

But another point demands attention. Why the patience, and why the delay, which characterize the present state of things? Can any of our readers be ignorant of the answer? "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." The interval between the rejection of Christ below, succeeded by His immediate exaltation above, and His return in glory to set up the kingdom which He has gone into heaven to receive, is occupied with the gathering by the Holy Ghost of those who are His co-heirs, who are to reign with Him in that kingdom, as His bride. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Christ, though He presented Himself to Israel as their king, well knew that they would reject Him, and that the little band of disciples, gathered around Him by the Father's grace, were to become, after His ascension to heaven, the earliest members of that Church which had really been chosen of the Father in Jesus before the world began, and the formation of which, by the Holy Ghost, was to fill up the interval between His ascension and His return. Knowing this, a vast portion of our Lord's intercourse with His disciples regarded them prospectively as filling the place in which the Church is now found. These communications abundantly evince that the Church is more precious in Christ's eyes than the kingdom. Hidden, as a treasure, in the field, which is the world -- the scene of the kingdom -- *it was the treasure the field contained* which was Christ's motive in parting with all, that He might possess Himself of it. True, His death was the purchase-price of the field; and by and by His rights over the field will be established, when the kingdom is manifested: but it was to possess Himself of the Church -- the treasure -- the pearl -- that was His motive (next to the Father's glory, we need hardly say), in giving up all and laying down His life. He

loved the church, and gave himself for it; . . . that he might present it to himself {Eph. 5:25-27}.

Wondrous the place thus given to the Church! We know not that Christ is anywhere spoken of as king of the Church or king to the Church. He is Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the Church, *which is His body*; she owns Him reverently and joyfully as her Lord, and as Lord of all; but nowhere, that we remember, is He spoken of as her king.<sup>71</sup> The Church is not "the kingdom," but the body now forming and training under the care and by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to be the Bride of Christ, and to reign with Him in the kingdom, when the kingdom comes.

One word as to the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. God is most long-suffering and rich in mercy; and nothing can be more touching than to observe in these chapters, how His mercy lingers over Israel and Jerusalem, as though unwilling to give them up. They had indeed rejected Christ, crucified the Prince of life, and desired a murderer in preference to Him. But He, the vine-dresser, had prayed for the barren fig-tree; on the cross He had implored mercy on

70. {David} "Brown on the Second Advent."

71. Rev. 15:3, in which we have "king of saints," is no exception. In the margin it reads "king of nations" -- and waiving this, "king of saints" is not "king of the Church." There are many saints of former dispensations, and of the coming one, who form no part of the Church.

His murderers; and what doubt can there be, that the ministry of Peter and others, as recorded in those chapters, was God's gracious answer to His prayers? They had crucified their king -- but God had raised Him up, and exalted Him to His own right hand; and even now, if they would but repent and be converted, they should be forgiven -- *nationally forgiven* -- and God would again send Jesus Christ, by whose return from heaven, the oft and long-predicted times of refreshing and restitution should be ushered in. But this testimony failed also. Israel had no more heart for an ascended Christ when proclaimed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, than for a humbled and incarnate Christ when present among them on earth. Stephen convicts them of having always, as their fathers, resisted the Holy Ghost; and by Paul, who is then forthwith converted and called, the mystery of the heavenly place, portion, and calling of the Church, as one with a rejected Christ in heaven, is fully brought out. Christ's relations to Israel and the earth *as king* are all for the present left in abeyance; and the formation of the Church (along with the ministry of reconciliation to the world) forms the one work of the Holy Ghost on earth, until Christ's return.

Let it not be supposed, then, that we would question for a moment, the kingly glory of Christ. Undoubtedly He is king: *but He is rejected as such by the world*, and this is what our brethren forget. His claims and titles are acknowledged in heaven, and witnessed there by His being enthroned at the right hand of God; but heaven, as yet, puts forth no power for the establishment of those rights, and will not till the co-heirs have been gathered in by grace. All on earth who have been so gathered, acknowledge the lordship of Jesus, and rejoice in the assurance, that He shall one day reign in undisputed power. Vast numbers there are, moreover, who own Him nominally, but not in truth; and by means of this nominal acknowledgment of Christ, Satan, the usurper, succeeds in putting deeper dishonor upon Christ's name and character than by anything besides. *And he is permitted for the time to succeed in doing this*. The wheat and the tares are permitted to grow together till the harvest. Such is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But will it be so when the kingdom appears? No.

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall 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*. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear {Matt. 13:41-43}.

We may now turn to the passages which are supposed to teach, that Christ's proper kingdom exists at present, and will exist unchanged in character and form till the judgment of the great white throne.

(1) Peter's sermon to the Jews in Acts 2 is quoted to prove this. Peter, after quoting David's words in Psalms 16, explains that

being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his [David's]

throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ {Acts 2:30-36}.

These are the apostle's words; and it is affirmed, that in them he declares, "as explicitly as words could do it, that the promise to David of Messiah's succession to his throne *has received its intended accomplishment* -- that God **has** raised up Christ to sit upon that throne, in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, as the fruit of David's loins, to the right hand of power: and that *His first exercise of regal authority from the throne of Israel* was to send down the Spirit, as had that day been done." Now however confidently this may be affirmed, as it sometimes is, the reader has only to compare Peter's words with what he is represented as saying, to perceive that he *says* no such thing. *He does not say*, that "the promise to David of Messiah's succession to his throne had received its intended accomplishment." *He does not say*, that "His first exercise of regal authority *from the throne of Israel* was to send down the Spirit as had that day been done." If the objector infers these things from Peter's words, it does not authorize him to put his inferences into Peter's lips, and affirm that Peter said these things. The reader may see for himself that the apostle did not say these things. He says that David knew that God had sworn to him, of the fruit of his loins to raise up Christ to sit on his throne; and he refers to this, and to David's being a prophet, to show that when he (David) said in Psalm 16, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," etc., he did not speak it of himself, but of "the resurrection of Christ"; that *His* soul was not left in hell, neither *His* flesh did see corruption. He then gives his own and his fellow-apostles' testimony to the fact, "This Jesus hath God raised up"; but he does *not* say, "and placed upon David's throne." So far from this, he declares the exaltation of Jesus to a seat, *which he does tell us David never occupied!*

For David is *not* ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool {Acts 2:34, 35}.

How David's throne can be meant by a seat in the heavens, whither, we are carefully told, David has not ascended, it must be left for those to explain who lay any stress upon such an argument.

(2) Rev. 3:7 is another passage referred to in connection with Isa. 22:22, as proving that "when Christ claims to have the key of David's house, His meaning is, that He has that anti-typical authority in David's house which Eliakim's robe, girdle, and key faintly shadowed forth; that He is *now* exercising this power of the key; and that *the house of David* -- as Christ is ruler in it, at least -- *can be none other than the*

*Church of the living God, under the Redeemer's regal administration.*" To this argument we need only reply that at the end of Isa. 22 we find that "the nail fastened in a sure place" (Eliakim) was to "be removed, and to be cut down, and to fall"; "and the burden that was upon it," says the prophet, "shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it" {see Isa. 22:25}. Understand this of Christ's relation to the literal Israel, *as king*, and it is easy to understand. Messiah, the King of Israel was "cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9). "The burden" of Jewish hopes and prospects which hung upon that nail, was "cut off" along with it; though in resurrection, as we all know, the whole is yet to be made good. "The key of David" is in the hand of His risen Son; but it is still "the key of David," and it is *as such* that it is seen in the hands of Jesus in Rev. 3:7-12. It is as opening into a new dispensation, in which He will be known in this character, that He addresses the church of Philadelphia, promising to keep them from "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"; and assuring and exhorting them, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These are evidently points in the address to Philadelphia, which can only find their place, if we regard that address in its prophetic character; and then, Christ's possession of the key of David, as opening into that new dispensation in which His glory as David's son, and the heir of David's throne, will be displayed, is in perfect harmony with the whole. But this affords no proof of Christ's "*now* exercising" the power of which "the key of David" is the distinctive symbol and expression.

(3) The title, "Prince of life," given by Peter to Christ (Acts 3:15), and his declarations (Acts 5:31),

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins,

are both quoted, in support of the idea that Christ now sits upon David's throne, and that His kingdom, in the proper, full, and only sense of it, now exists. But is it not remarkable, that these titles should only be found in these discourses to the Jews in the early chapters of the Acts? Have we not already furnished a sufficient explanation of this? It was God's mercy lingering over that beloved but unbelieving nation, and still setting Christ before it in the relations He was specially to sustain to them. He will yet, as all who believe in Israel's restoration must agree, "give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." He was offering them these blessings by the apostle then. Their continued unbelief left, for the present, no more space for repentance; they were nationally given up to blindness and to judgment; and while this sentence remains upon them, God is gathering by His grace, as we have seen, a body, in relation to which Christ is never spoken of as King, but which is to share with Him His regal authority over Israel and the earth, when the moment for assuming it arrives.

(4) The quotation by the apostles of Psal. 2 in their prayer recorded in Acts 4:26-28, is adduced to prove that they applied the psalm as a whole "*to the present sovereignty and rule of Jesus in the heavens.*" That the confederacy against

Christ to be judged at His second appearing was formed at His first, and that it exists in principle throughout the intervening space, we have no doubt. That the former of these facts is recognized by the apostles in the passage under review is also sufficiently clear; but that there is anything in their words to confound "the heavens" where the Lord now sitteth, laughing at the puny rage of His adversaries, with God's holy hill of Zion, on which in purpose He is said to have set His King, is more than we are able to perceive. Neither can we see anything in this prayer of the disciples to identify the present period of perfect grace with that in which, according to Psal. 2, "the Lord will break the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" {see Psal. 2:9}. The fact is, that all these arguments are based on the fallacy of supposing, that because a psalm or prophecy of the Old Testament is quoted for any given purpose by New-Testament writers, the whole psalm or prophecy must therefore be identical in its subject with that of which the New-Testament writer treats. The unsoundness of such a principle must be manifest to all.

(5) Finally, the apostolic quotations of Psal. 110:1 are produced as proofs of the same doctrine -- that the kingdom of Christ in its proper form was to subsist from the moment of His session at God's right hand. Let us turn, then, to the psalm itself, and to the quotations from it, which were alleged to bear this sense.

And first, as to the psalm itself,

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

That this is a prediction of Christ's session at the right hand of God, until a given epoch described in the latter part of the verse, all are agreed. But what is the epoch specified? "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And is this what is now being done for Christ? Are souls, when they are subdued by grace, made the footstool of their Conqueror? We have always understood that when men are converted they are united to Christ -- made one body and one spirit with Him -- members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones! But, no, if the interpretation contended for is to be admitted, they are made His footstool, to be trodden under His feet! Then, besides the essential incongruity of such an explanation of this first verse of the psalm, it is utterly inconsistent with the following verses:

The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Now when Zion becomes the earthly center of Christ's royal power, prior to His enemies being completely subdued, it is sufficiently obvious that He will be ruling in the midst of His enemies. But how, "in the midst of His enemies," now, while He is seated at the right hand of God? Then we read further of "the day of his wrath," and of His striking through kings, judging among the heathen, filling the places with dead bodies, wounding the heads, or chiefs, over many countries. All this is sufficiently intelligible, if the psalm be understood as predicting Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, there to wait in patient grace till the moment he receives

commission to tread down His enemies, placed for Him as a footstool under His feet; Zion becoming thus the center of His power, whence, in "the day of his power," and "day of his wrath," His conquests proceed. And is it not remarkable, that while the psalm dates, so to speak, from the moment at which the word proceeds from Jehovah, "Sit thou at my right hand, until," etc., and while Christ's priesthood is spoken of as present, "Thou *art* a priest," etc., all else of which the psalm treats, is spoken of *as future*?

The Lord *shall* send the rod of thy strength out of Zion.

Thy people *shall* be willing in the day of thy power.

The Lord at thy right hand *shall* strike through kings, etc.

He *shall* judge among the heathen, . . . *shall* fill the places with the dead bodies, . . . *shall* wound the heads over many countries {Psa. 110:2-6}.

Can anything be more obvious, than that these acts are not characteristic of Christ's present, expecting attitude at the right hand of God, but of the state of things which will follow upon His rising up from that exalted seat? During His session there, the kingdom is in mystery, as we have seen in so many passages: when His session there terminates, the kingdom is made manifest and established by power.

But, secondly, the references to this Psalm in Acts 2:34, 35, and in 1 Cor. 15:25-28, are alleged as contrary to the interpretation we have just given. As to Acts 2:34, 35, the whole passage has been already considered, and needs no further discussion: we have seen that the reference there to Psa. 110 is rather adverse than favorable to the construction put upon it by the objector. For a full examination of 1 Cor. 15 we must refer our readers to pages 161-163. We would only repeat here, that the apostle as evidently alludes to Psa. 8 as to Psa. 110; and that he markedly distinguishes between God's putting all things under Christ, and Christ's actually subjecting all things by His own power. There are two contrasted periods, in the one of which Christ sits at the right hand of God, in the divinely acknowledged title of universal supremacy, but waiting till, at the close of this period, His enemies are made His footstool; while, in the other, He Himself actively subdues His enemies by power, and, as matter of fact, subjects them to Himself. Now it is of this latter or millennial period that Paul says,

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet {1 Cor. 15:25}.

The whole passage harmonizes entirely with the views we have been endeavoring to unfold, and it is greatly confirmatory of them.

We would not leave this subject of "the kingdom," without asking our brethren who urge the objections which have been reviewed, to ponder the following considerations:

(a) Dan. 7 incontestably associates the investiture of the Son of man with the kingdom, with the awful judgment that destroys the fourth Gentile monarchy. That judgment, all agree, is yet future.

(b) Our Lord Himself connects His reception of the kingdom with His return. "And it came to pass, that when He was

returned, *having* received the kingdom," etc. (Luke 19:15).

(c) In His last conversation with His disciples, in which we know He had spoken of all power being given to Him in heaven and on earth, and in which He promised that they should, not many days thence, receive power from on high, they asked Him,

Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel {Acts 1:6}?

His reply was, *not* that they were wrong in expecting that such an event would ever take place, but --

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father had put in his own power {Acts 1:7}.

Who would imagine, from such a reply, that their question had reference to something which at *no* time, and in *no* season, was ever to take place?

(d) The salvation of all Israel, which must be, in order to the kingdom being restored to them, is foretold by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 11 with the utmost clearness and decision. But it is to be at the close of the present Gentile dispensation, when the wild branches are broken off, and the natural branches grafted in again to their own olive tree. How entirely all this accords with Old Testament predictions of the kingdom, we need not point out.

(e) Our Lord, in Matt. 13 while avowedly unfolding the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, foretells a solemn moment of transition, from the patience which has suffered wheat and tares to grow together, to the open exercise of power, in gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity..

(g) In Rev. 10:7 we hear the mighty angel proclaim, 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.

Mark here, first, no one disputes that this is future, and yet pre-millennial; secondly, what change can there be more momentous than that "the mystery of God" should be finished? Thirdly, nevertheless, this is not some vast change, unheard of till the angel makes it known, but the fulfilment of God's word "declared to his servants the prophets." In other words, it is the great change from *mystery* to *manifestation*, of which the prophets so largely speak.

(f) When the seventh angel does begin to sound, what is it that the heavenly voices proclaim? It is this --

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. 11:15).

Here we pause, leaving our readers to consider whether Christ's kingdom can be "unchanged in character and form," from His ascension to heaven till the judgment of the great white throne, when, at a yet future day between these two epochs, a change so vast and wondrous as those scriptures testify is to take place. The Lord give to us unfeigned subjection to His word, and a good understanding in all things.

**Objection 5. {Resurrected Saints and Those in the Natural State Cannot Co-mingle}**

"Is there any sufficient Scripture proof of this union of the earthly and heavenly scenes -- of the corporeal and resurrection states -- in the Millennium? Have you not, in order to prove it, to pick disjointed passages from various parts of the Bible, and put them together as they were never designed to be? Where are the passages which present, in the same scene, the higher and lower departments of the millennial state?"

**Answer 5.**

(1) It is not for us to dictate to God the order in which His truth should be communicated in His word. If it has pleased Him in one class of passages to reveal the divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ -- the glory of His Godhead and of His oneness with the Father; while in another class of passages He reveals the depths of His humiliation as man -- the woman's seed -- the virgin's son -- if these truths be thus, we say, distributed in God's word, are we, because of this, like the Socinians, to reject the one and only abuse the other to aid us in this unholy work? Shall we not rather reverently receive them both, and adore "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich" {see 2 Cor. 8:9}? Let the same principle be applied to the passages which treat of the Millennium, and no such questions will be asked as in the objection under review.

(2) God has not limited Himself to one mode of instruction in His gracious revelation of Himself and of His ways. If He had, reverent, thankful, adoring submission and acquiescence would have been our only befitting response. But He has not. On the subject above-named, while in general proofs of Christ's Godhead are to be gathered from passages distinct from those in which His manhood is set forth, there are texts which blessedly set forth both. "The Word was made flesh" {John 1:14} -- "God was manifest in the flesh" {1 Tim. 3:16} -- and kindred texts, must at once occur to the mind. In like manner, while *in general* the earthly blessedness of the Millennium is foretold in one class of prophecies, and the heavenly glories of the rule of Christ and His risen saints in others, there are passages of exceeding clearness and surpassing beauty in which both subjects are combined. Of this class is Isa. 25:6, etc.,

And in this mountain [Mount Zion, mentioned in a previous verse as the scene of the reign of the Lord of hosts], 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.

As to the whole of this passage, except the words printed in italics, there can be but one thought -- that of its application to

the earthly glories of the Millennium; while, as to the excepted clause, the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. 15:54 leave as little possibility of mistake in understanding it of the heavenly resurrection-glory.

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.

The apostolic comment on the prophetic declaration is no less authoritative than clear.

Rom. 8:17-25 is another passage of the same description. "The manifestation of the sons of God," when we, who now suffer with Christ, shall be glorified together with Him, -- a manifestation which ensues on "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" -- forms the heavenly part of the millennial scene, as here depicted; while a creation, no longer "groaning and travailing in pain together," as at present, but "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory" (see the Greek) of these manifested "sons of God," forms the lower department. Have we not both together here? And on what principles, save those of the outline of prophetic truth presented in a previous number, can this passage be interpreted at all? Eph. 1 presents both the heavenly and the earthly glories of the millennial period: declaring that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, all things *both in heaven and on the earth* are to be gathered together in one, even in Christ. It speaks of the Church as the body of Him under whose feet all things are put, and who is made Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, and which has obtained an inheritance in Him -- that is, which shares His inheritance of all things. Col. 1, in like manner, treats of the reconciling of all things, "whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." It treats of this as a yet future, unaccomplished object of Christ's death on the cross; while of our reconciliation thereby it speaks as already complete.

And you, that were sometime alienated . . . *yet now hath he reconciled* in the body of his flesh through death.

Heb. 2 moreover, while declaring that not to angels, but to man, the habitable earth to come (ἡ οἰκουμένη ἡ μέλλουσα) is subjected, proceeds to show that not only is it subjected to Jesus -- the glorified Son of man -- but that there are also "many sons" who are being brought to glory. And surely if the Captain of our salvation "is not ashamed to call us brethren," we may rest assured that He will not enjoy this future sovereignty alone. But why need we multiply passages? Do not Rev. 20, 21, 22, present both the heavenly and the earthly departments of the millennial kingdom, and present them in their combination with each other? Surely they do. The doctrine of their being thus united under the glorious headship of Christ, who associates His saints with Himself in His glory and His reign, would not have been less sure had God been pleased to reveal it in detached portions only. But He has not done so. Numerous passages do treat of the separate details in their distinctness from each other: but we are left at no loss for passages in which the several parts are combined, and presented to our faith as a glorious whole. Would that our faith were more conversant with these transporting prospects!

**Objection 6. {Mixture of Heavenly and Earthly?}**

“But how can this mixture of earthly and heavenly beings, of earthly and heavenly things, take place? It seems so strange, so unlike any thing that has ever existed, that we find it difficult, not to say impossible, to give credence to it.”

**Answer 6.**

(1) There were certain persons of whom the apostle once inquired, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead” {Acts 26:8}? Such a question is surely the best reply to the former part of this objection. When **God** has revealed what **He** intends to do, there can be no question so out of place as that of how it can be accomplished. “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, *nor the power of God*” {Matt. 22:29}, was our Lord’s reply to a similar difficulty in His day.

(2) As to the strangeness of the union of heavenly and earthly things in the millennial state -- as to its being so different from any previous state of things -- our answer is this: We do not suppose the millennial state to be a perpetuation of that which has existed previously. On the contrary, we believe that Scripture represents it as an entirely new dispensation. And though we do not suppose that the passing away of the physical, corporeal heavens and earth will take place till after the Millennium, the Millennium itself is represented by Isaiah *under the figure* of new heavens and a new earth (See Isa. 65:17-25; 66:22, 23). Could anything more clearly indicate the immense difference between the period thus represented and any previous period?

(3) By “any previous period” is, of course, meant *any since the fall*: for it will not be disputed that in the world’s primeval state there did exist union and intercourse between heaven and earth. And what are we to understand by the expression “the times of restitution of all things,” but the renewal of such a state? Are all other things to be restored, and shall this blessed union of heaven and earth be the alone exception? What mean our Lord’s words, when, speaking of Himself as the second Adam, the Son of man, He says, “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” {John 1:51}?

(4) We are by no means sure, however, when an objector speaks of “this mixture of heavenly and earthly beings, of heavenly and earthly things,” that he does not greatly exaggerate the views which we maintain to be taught by Scripture on the subject. Many who use such language have most distorted conceptions of the doctrines they reject. They suppose us to teach that glorified saints, and those still in unchanged bodies, will familiarly and habitually mix, if not absolutely dwell together, on this earth. But who is there that maintains such a thought? Heaven and earth will no more be *confounded* then than now; but neither will they be *sundered*, as at present. Heaven will surely be the abode of Christ and His glorified saints, as earth will be the dwelling-place of Israel and the nations. But heaven and earth will be *united*, not *confounded*, under the glorious manifested headship of Christ, with whom the Church will also be manifestly

associated. As to the degree, mode, and manner in which the manifestation will take place, we know not that Scripture informs us. But may we not, on the testimony of God Himself, believe the fact, while leaving to His infinite wisdom the manner and mode of its accomplishment? Some things are sufficiently clear. That *at His coming in judgment on the wicked*, Christ, as well as His saints, will be visible, there can be no doubt. “Every eye shall see him” {Rev. 1:7}. “When Christ shall *appear*, then shall ye also *appear with him* in glory” {Col. 3:4}. Then, with regard to *the period* which succeeds, while we are not informed how often, or on what occasions, the heavenly company will be visible to eyes of flesh and blood, it is unquestionable that their power will be in continual exercise to secure the blessedness of the earth and its inhabitants. Satan and the evil angels having been banished from the scene, their evil agency will be replaced by the beneficent, heavenly rule of Christ and of the saints: besides which, even the ministry of the unfallen angels, which has marked every previous dispensation, will then give place to that of man --

to the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak {Heb. 2:5}.

The ministry of angels, though generally invisible, has often been perceptible to the senses; and if numerous cases of this kind are recorded in Scripture as having occurred in the past, why should it be deemed incredible that, in the coming dispensation, the agency of Christ and His glorified saints should be much more frequently matter of sight and sense to the happy subjects of their rule? We presume not to define where Scripture speaks in general terms; but faith will be content to receive what God has been pleased to make known, and leave it with Him to fill up the outline according to the counsel of His own will.

**Objection 7. {How Can Christ Get Up to Come to Earth?}**

“Are we not told by the apostle that Christ, ‘after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down at the right hand of God’? How can this be reconciled with His descent from heaven at the commencement of the Millennium?”

**Answer 7.**

The declaration of the Apostle no one can dispute: but does not the objector himself believe that Christ will descend from heaven at the end of the Millennium? How does *he* reconcile with this expectation the words “*for ever* sat down”? The explanation which will serve for one will serve equally for the other. All Christians believe in a second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, either at the commencement or the close of the Millennium; but any argument from the word “for ever” to disprove His coming at the one epoch would equally disprove His coming at the other, or, indeed, His coming again at all. The truth is that the words have no such sense as that of our Lord being locally, physically restricted to a particular seat. The idea would be derogatory to Him beyond expression. It is either as having finished His own sacrificial work, or in

contrast with the Jewish priests, who stood to offer, or in token of the honor put upon Him, that He is said to have “for ever sat down at the right hand of God”; and not one of these divine thoughts thus expressed is in anywise affected either by His standing to receive Stephen’s spirit, as we know He did in the past, or by His descending, as we know He will ere long, to meet His saints in the air.

**Objection 8. {How Can There be a Millennium after the Final Conflagration?}**

“Does not the Apostle Peter teach that the universal conflagration of the earth takes place at the coming or day of the Lord? And how does this accord with the prospect of a subsequent period such as the Millennium is described to be?”

**Answer 8.**

The objection takes for granted that “the coming of the Lord” and “the day of the Lord” are identical terms; and that when Peter says that the conflagration is to take place *in* “the day of the Lord,” he affirms that it will be *at* “the coming of the Lord.” Now this is the very point to be proved from Scripture, instead of being assumed; and it is a point, moreover, which Scripture, instead of establishing, absolutely disproves. “The day of the Lord,” as Zech. 14 and other scriptures amply show, is a lengthened period -- another term, indeed, for the period which commences with His coming in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire, with His holy angels, but which extends to the moment at which He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Now what 2 Peter 3 affirms is,

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; *in the which* [but without defining in what part of the period so designated] the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up {2 Pet. 3:10}.

No doubt this vast, wondrous, universal conflagration will take place *in* or *during* “the day of the Lord.” That day, moreover, will come suddenly, as a thief; and at its very commencement it will burst upon the world of the ungodly with judgments altogether overwhelming. But it is quite evident from other Scriptures that the millennial heavens and earth are the same as at present. Rev. 20 describes their passing away after the close of the Millennium, and predicts the creation of the new heaven and new earth of the everlasting state which is to succeed.

As to Peter’s words:

We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness {2 Pet. 3:13},

they evidently refer to Isa. 65 and 66, the only passages in the Old Testament, where such a promise is recorded. In Isaiah, the promise is unquestionably accompanied by statements which refer, not to the everlasting state, but to the millennial period. Building houses and planting vineyards, can have no place in the everlasting state. Sin and death, moreover, to however limited an extent, are found in the state of which the

prophet testifies; and these, as all admit, have no existence in the new heavens and the new earth of Rev. 21. Two solutions of this difficulty have been suggested, both of which we shall present to our readers. It has been judged by some that Isa. 65:17:

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind,

refers to the actual new heavens and earth which are to succeed the conflagration of the present, and that in the succeeding verses, the prophet reverts from this final prospect to that which bears the nearest resemblance to it -- the millennial state. Others judge that Isaiah has no eye to the literal, post-millennial heavens and earth, but speaks only of the millennial state: the Apostle Peter, according to the wisdom given to him, using the figurative language of the prophet in reference to literal facts, to which the prophet could have no idea that his own language referred. Either of these views would materially tend towards clearing up the difficulty arising from a comparison of the passages before us.

**Objection 9. {When Christ Comes, the Final Judgment Takes Place}**

“Do not many passages of Scripture teach, that immediately upon Christ’s coming, a simultaneous and universal judgment will take place, embracing both the righteous and the wicked of all ages? and, if so, how can the views unfolded in the preceding pages be maintained?”

**Answer 9.**

Before considering the passages alleged in support of this objection, we would remark, First, that there is no question as to the universality of the judgment. That all must appear before God for judgment, no one questions for a moment. Nor is it fair to represent us as “*admitting*” this. We more than “*admit*” -- we *earnestly maintain* and *would solemnly press* it upon all. Passages, therefore, which simply teach that all will be judged, are beside the question. They only prove what we maintain as earnestly as those who urge the objection. Secondly, all are agreed that it is the second coming of Christ which introduces this judgment. The judgment of all men ensues upon the coming of Christ. Passages, therefore, which simply represent Christ as coming to judgment -- to the judgment both of righteous and wicked, are -- equally with the former class -- apart from the question. The question is, *as to the simultaneous judgment of the whole race of mankind immediately on Christ’s coming*. Where are the passages which declare this? Thirdly, while there are many passages which affirm the judgment to be universal, there are others which unequivocally testify that *in one sense* -- that of being called in question as to eternal life or eternal death -- believers have already passed through judgment in the person of Christ, and, that *in this sense* no judgment remains for them.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment (καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ

ἐρχεται); but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

Accordingly, in the context of this passage, our Lord divides the resurrection itself into "the resurrection of life" and "the resurrection of judgment" (ἀνάστασις κρίσεως). There are those who will rise to be judged; and there are others who will rise by virtue of a life which places them beyond the reach of judgment as to life or death. Evidently *the possessor of everlasting life* needs not to be judged, and cannot be, as to whether everlasting life is to be his or not. Heb. 9:27, 28, gives expression to the same truth.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so 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.

Men, as such, in their natural state of sin and condemnation, have before them death and judgment. The believer has death and judgment behind him, substitutionally borne by Christ on the cross; and he has before him as his blessed hope the second appearing of Christ, for whom he looks, His appearing without sin unto salvation. Believers are, as to their persons, accepted in Christ; their security therefore can no more be called in question than that of Him in whom they are accepted. Fourthly, the works of believers must all nevertheless be brought into judgment. 1 Cor. 3 shows us that there will be those who, because builded on the one only foundation, will themselves be saved, whose works will, as unable to bear the test of the fire of that day, be burned up. Beyond question, we must, in this sense, "all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" {2 Cor. 5:10}. But, finally, the way in which believers are placed before that judgment-seat, demonstrates more than anything besides, that they are not there to be tried for life or death. How is it that the saints reach that solemn tribunal? *By being changed or raised at the very moment of Christ's descent, and by being caught up to meet Him in the air!* Whether the coming of Christ be pre or post-millennial -- all must agree that the very first -- the *immediate* effect of His coming is the resurrection, the change, and the translation into the air of His own people. It is thus, and only thus, that they are placed before the judgment-seat of Christ. And shall they appear there, in bodies fashioned and made like unto Christ's own glorious body, to have the question tried whether they savingly belong to Christ? Impossible! Nay, more; where Christ is represented as being manifested, or as coming in judgment on the wicked, His saints are represented as coming with Him.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory {Col. 3:4}.

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all {Jude 14, 15}.

Are these saints who thus accompany the Lord, to take their place among those on whom the judgment is to be executed, and only be afresh separated from among them, as the result of a judicial process? Incomprehensible as is such a thought, this, and much worse than this, is necessarily involved in the doctrine of a simultaneous judgment of all mankind, from Adam downwards, immediately to ensue on the coming of Christ. But if there are passages supposed to support or to

teach such a notion, let them by all means be examined.

(1) Mat. 10:32, 33, is sometimes produced in support of the objection we are considering. But let the reader turn to it, and he will find only a statement of the most general character, that Christ will confess those who confess Him, and deny such as deny Him, "before His Father which is in heaven." As to these acts being *at the same time*, or *immediately upon His coming*, the passage says not one single word. And if Mark 8:38 be brought forward to help out the argument, there we have mention made by our Lord of His coming "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" -- and He does say, of any who are ashamed of Him and of His words, that He will then be ashamed of them. But there is nothing in the passage to mark this as simultaneous with any other act; and even if there were, is it not proof sufficient of His being ashamed of those who have been ashamed of Him, to leave them in the grave during the whole period in which the confessors of His name reign with Him over the earth? Besides, there will assuredly be a most solemn fulfilment of this threatening in what Scripture calls the judgment of "the quick." Among those living on earth when Christ comes in judgment, how many, alas! will be found who have been ashamed of Him and of His words, and how certain that He will then show Himself ashamed of them. But how does this prove that there are not others who will meet a similar doom when raised to stand before the great white throne? or what evidence do the passages afford that the judgment of the quick and of the dead are at the same time?

(2) Rev. 21:7, 8, is adduced in support of the same theory, of a simultaneous judgment of all mankind at Christ's coming. But a mere glance at the passage shows, that it is a declaration of the final results of what all agree in admitting to be the last judgment -- that of the great white throne -- and therefore proves nothing, for or against the doctrine in question. So of Rev. 22:12-15,

Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

No one doubts that such is the object and result of Christ's coming; but as to proof that all men receive the reward of their works *together*, and that *immediately upon* the coming of Christ, the passage affords none. The same remark applies to Matt. 16:27. Doubtless it is at Christ's coming that the period commences in which He will "reward every man according to his works," and this the passage declares. But it declares nothing as to the order in which the rewards shall be distributed, and that is the question at issue.

(3) Some even produce the parable of the virgins in Matt. 25 in support of the same idea. But what resemblance can be discovered between the entrance of the five virgins into the marriage, while the others have gone to procure oil for their lamps, and know not that the Bridegroom has come, till they return and find that the door is closed upon them -- what resemblance, we ask, is there between this and the arraignment of the whole human family together before the judgment-seat? If language could express, or figures illustrate, a difference between two events, contrasted in almost every respect, it is



surely here that such are employed.

(4) Acts 17:31 assuredly testifies that God “hath appointed a day, *in the which* he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained”; but it is a mere popular delusion, unsupported by Scripture and contradicted by it, to suppose that “the day” here spoken of is a day of twenty-four hours, and if it be allowed that the phrase expresses a lengthened, indefinite period, “in the which” the world is to be judged, it is impossible to prove by this, that all classes of mankind will be judged together.

(5) It is sought to identify 2 Thess. 1:6-10, with Rev. 20:11-15, and to prove from the alleged coincidence, that the final judgment of the righteous and the wicked, at one and the same time, is the subject of which both passages treat. But 2 Thess. 1:6-10 so plainly and simply sets forth a revelation of the Lord in person *to this very earth*, and *instantaneous* execution of fearful vengeance upon the ungodly persecutors of His people, *alive and in the flesh*, that it is astonishing how any should suppose it to set forth a judicial process at all. It is indeed an awful, solemn visitation of which 2 Thess. 1 treats; but it is not the slow solemnity of formal judgment, as in Rev. 20. *Here* the Lord is at once revealed in flaming fire; *there* there is no mention of fire till the judgment is over. *Here* it is bright consuming fire encircling the Lord; *there*, it is the lake of fire. *Here* His appearing is for the instant destruction of His enemies, without any mention of trial at all; -- *there* it is to put them upon solemn trial before either sentence or punishment. *Here* there is not even an allusion to the dead; -- *there* there is as little allusion to the living; the only agreement between them being that in neither are the righteous said to be judged. 2 Thess. 1 represents the Lord Jesus coming to take signal vengeance upon ungodly *living men* -- the troublers of His people: it does not represent His as coming to judge “at once” “all the human race” -- the living and the dead -- the righteous and the wicked. It speaks of *a* terrible judgment upon wicked men, but not of *the* judgment of the whole human family. It does witness of the Lord’s coming “to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe”; but that is surely not in their being arraigned along with the wicked, before one common tribunal, but in their being manifested with Him at His coming, in that glory to which they will have previously been received.

(6) The great argument, however, in support of a simultaneous judgment of all men at Christ’s coming, is supposed to be derived from a comparison of Matt. 25:31-46 with Rev. 20:11-15. All being agreed, that the judgment of the great white throne embraces all generations of men who have not been previously judged, and Matt. 25:31-46 confessedly treating of a judgment to take place at the coming of the Son of man, it is sought to identify these, and thus to show that both passages describe an absolutely universal and simultaneous judgment immediately ensuing on the coming of Christ. It requires, however, but a slight examination of the passages to see that this argument is wholly without

foundation. Neither passage describes an absolutely universal judgment; and so far from both passages describing the same scene, they have scarcely a circumstance or a feature in common with each other. The two scenes are entirely distinguished from each other, as to antecedent circumstances, time, sphere, subjects of judgment, and character of proceedings.

As to *antecedent circumstances and time*, it requires but a glance to perceive that neither passage can fairly be considered apart from the connection in which it stands. That in Matthew is the close of a connected discourse commencing with Matt. 24; that in Revelation is part of an equally connected strain of prophecy commencing with Rev. 19 and extending to Rev. 21:8. Our Lord’s words,

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory {Matt. 25:31},

are not the introduction of a subject then mentioned for the first time, but intended to shed further light upon an event which is the prominent subject of the whole discourse. Read Matt. 24 and 25 and say, if “the coming of the Son of man” be not the great, the main subject of the entire prophecy. The disciples hear of certain marks by which it was to be known that the end was not yet. They are next told of signs which would prove it to be at hand -- the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, and the time of unequalled tribulation also foretold by him. They are cautioned against the idea of Christ’s having come, and of His being concealed in the desert, or in the secret chambers; and He tells them,

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also *the coming of the Son of man be*.

Here is the first occurrence in this discourse of this all-important phrase. We then read,

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*.

We next read of His sending forth His angels to gather His elect from the four winds of heaven; *the coming of the Son of man* is compared to that of the flood in the days of Noah; and a variety of illustrations and parables are employed, the moral repeated at the close of each being --

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein *the Son of man cometh* {Matt. 24:42; 25:13}.

It is after all these references to the event, and in evident connection with them all, that our Lord says,

When *the Son of man shall come in his glory*, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory {Matt. 24:27, 29-31}.

That is, the scene which He thus begins to describe, is one which will quickly ensue on that “coming of the Son of man” of which He had already so largely spoken. Now, in Rev.

20:11-15, *there is no mention of Christ's coming at all; and for the best possible reason, namely, that the context of the passage proves it to have taken place upwards of a thousand years before.* Rev. 19 treats of the coming of the Son of man, while Rev. 20 proceeds to unfold its results, the binding of Satan, and the reign of the risen saints with Christ for a thousand years. On the expiration of the thousand years, a little season ensues in which, Satan being loosed afresh, a rebellion takes place, and fire comes down from God out of heaven and destroys the wicked, while Satan, who deceived them, is cast into the lake of fire. Then it is that the final judgment takes place, the description of which is thus introduced --

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.

Thus, as to *time* and *antecedent circumstances*, no two events could be more widely distinguished than the acts of judgment respectively portrayed in the passages before us.

Nor are they less distinct as to *sphere*. All the earlier part of our Lord's discourse in Matthew, as well as His quotations from the Prophet Daniel, associates "the coming of the Son of man" with Judæa and Jerusalem; and the words, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, he shall sit on the throne of his glory," necessarily carry the thoughts back to numerous Old Testament passages, which speak of *Jerusalem* as "the throne of the Lord," and of "all nations being gathered to the Lord, to *Jerusalem*." See especially Jer. 3:17; 23:5; Joel 3:1, 2, 9-16; Isa. 66. But in Rev. 20 the earth and the heaven have fled away from before the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, before the judgment begins, or the books are opened.

As to the subjects of the judgment, Matt. 25 speaks only of *the living* -- Rev. 20 only of *the dead*. "Before him shall be gathered *all nations*" is the language of the one, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" is that of the other. Assiduous efforts are made to show that "all nations" includes the dead of all generations, and that "the dead, small and great," absolutely means all mankind. But the expression rendered "all nations," literally rendered is "all the Gentiles." The word rendered "nations"<sup>72</sup>, with the article, occurs, if we mistake not, 132 times in the New Testament. It is rendered "the Gentiles" ninety-two times -- "the nations" ten times -- "the heathen" -- five times -- and simply "nations" twenty-five times only; but it is never, in any instance (unless it be this), applied either to the dead or the raised. The very expression indicates a present existence and locality upon earth. Nor is there any mention in the passage of "the opening of the graves," or "the sea giving up its dead," or any reference whatever to the resurrection. It is the judgment of the Gentiles at the coming of Christ. Nor could anything be in more perfect keeping with the whole discourse. Matt. 24:15-41 gives the judgment of Israel; Matt. 24:42 to 25:30, the judgment of Christendom; Matt. 25:31-46, the judgment

of the Gentiles.

Rev. 20:11-15 is the judgment of "the dead," or what our Lord terms, in John 5:29 "the resurrection of judgment." There is not a word in the passage of any but "the dead."

I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God {Rev. 20:12}.

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 {Rev. 20:13}.

The rest of the dead, [who] lived not again till the thousand years were finished {Rev. 20:5},

doubtless form the vast majority in this wondrous scene. Any who may in the course of the thousand years be cut off for sin, as well as the rebels of the little season which succeeds, will also be among the number. There are those who urge the expression "small and great" as at least so far expressive of universality as to indicate that all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be included in this judgment. No argument could be more unfortunate. Where it is said in Rev. 11:18, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, that

Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto . . . them that fear thy name, *small and great*,

do the objectors themselves regard the phrase as including all of all ages who fear God's name? Of course they do not; for they are obliged to acknowledge that the whole Millennium succeeds the epoch to which these words refer. So in Rev. 13:16, are we to understand by "all, *both small and great*," that literally every person on the face of the globe will receive the mark of the beast in his right hand, or in his forehead? Or, again, in Rev. 19:18, does "the flesh of all men, both free and bond, *both small and great*," intimate that not one of the human race will survive the carnage? How, then, should these words in Rev. 20:12 prove that all the dead, of all generations, righteous as well as wicked, are to stand before the great white throne? All who are dead *when the throne is set* will doubtless be raised to stand before it; but the righteous dead will have been raised more than a thousand years before; and as to the righteous during the Millennium, there is no scripture proof that they will die, but strong presumptive evidence to the contrary. In any case, to identify a passage which treats only of *the judgment of the dead*, with another which treats as exclusively of *a judgment on living nations*, death and resurrection not being mentioned in it at all, is a remarkable instance of confounding things which essentially differ, and afford but little support to the doctrine sought to be based thereon -- that of the simultaneous judgment of the whole human race at the coming of Christ.

With regard to the *character* of the judgment, the passages differ just as widely. That in Matt. 25 is not, strictly speaking, so much a trial by a *judge*, as a calling up for sentence, and an award of punishment or reward by a **king**, to *rebellious* or *obedient* subjects. It is as **King** that Christ speaks and acts; and His very first act, after taking His seat upon "the throne of his glory," is a division of the gathered

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ones into classes, in a way which supposes their previous guilt or innocence. His first words are the *sentence* of the righteous, which, as well as that subsequently pronounced on the wicked, assumes, without any process of trial or opening of books, the obedience or rebellion of the sentenced ones. How different from the judgment of the great white throne, where the books are opened, and another book, which is the book of life; the dead being judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Could two scenes of judgment be well described in more dissimilar terms?

It has been supposed, from the mention made of “the book of life,” that there must be some in the judgement of the great white throne whose names are found there. But why this necessity? Without supposing this at all, there is most important meaning in this solemn act. “We need scarcely say, that previous to all investigation God knows that the names of the wicked are not there, even as without any trial he knows the character of their works. But according to His gracious dealings with men, none are *necessarily* condemned for evil works, pardon being offered to the guilty. For this reason, there are two solemn stages in this judgment -- first, a reference to the *other books*, to show that the works of the wicked deserve death -- secondly, the opening of ‘*the book of life*,’ to show that by unbelief they have rejected life. And then, their names not being there, the execution of the sentence follows, -- which is ‘the second death.’”

The last verse of Matt. 25 is sometimes urged as showing that the judgment cannot be at the commencement of the Millennium, and must be identical with that of the great white throne. But let the reader compare Isa. 66:24; Rev. 14:10,11; and 19:20, which will confessedly refer to pre-millennial judgments, and the difficulty will vanish at once.

Here we close. We are not aware of any other objections, of even apparent weight, to the views unfolded in this volume. The Lord grant us to weigh all things in the balances of the sanctuary -- to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

“Brethren, the time is short.” “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” {1 John 2:17}. If there be one lesson more solemnly taught by prophecy than another, it is that of God’s estimate and judgment of “the world.” The momentary duration of its pleasures, is the lowest ground on which we can be exhorted to stand apart from it. *It lies under the condemnation of having crucified, and of still rejecting, the Son of God’s love.* All who through grace believe on Jesus are delivered by His death from this condemnation. But is deliverance from the world’s condemnation all that results to us, as believers, from the death of Christ? No; He

gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us *from this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father {Gal. 1:4}.

The union with the world of that which professes to be the Church, is that which constitutes the very core of Christendom’s apostasy, and which is rapidly bringing on the

judgments by which the world, both professing and profane, will be overwhelmed at the coming of the Lord. From these judgments the true Church will be preserved by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. May this hope, while it cheers and comforts us amid the desolation around, be of practical power in separating us from everything that will not bear the light of Christ’s coming glory! May Christ Himself be everything to us -- everything, not only as the foundation of our hopes, but for our life, our walk, our joy -- the alone object of our hearts!



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