

**KINGDOM
STUDIES**

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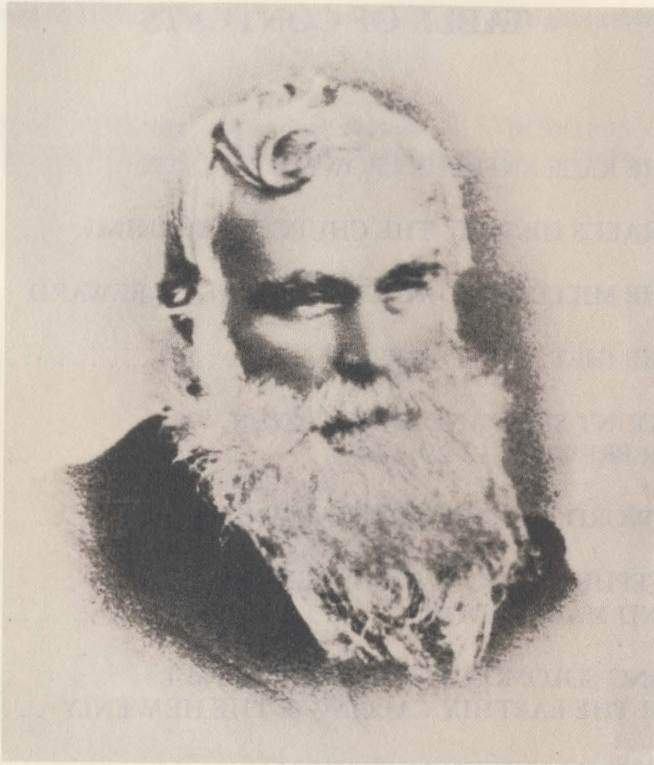
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGES
1. THE RACE AND THE CROWN	12
2. ISRAEL'S HISTORY THE CHURCH'S WARNING	13
3. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM... ONE OF REWARD	13
4. THE GIFT AND THE PRIZE	6
5. MOUNT SINAI AND MOUNT ZION (HEBREWS 12:12-29)	46
6. A WORD TO ANTIMILLENARIANS	15
7. STEPHEN'S ACCUSATION, DEFENSE, AND MARTYRDOM	29
8. KING SOLOMON & THE APOSTLE PAUL OR THE EARTHLY CALLING & THE HEAVENLY	12
9. BAPTISM AND THE KINGDOM	22
10. THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY	10
11. THE CONSEQUENCES OF JESUS BEING THE SON OF DAVID	11
12. THE VISIBLE GLORY OF GOD	16
13. UNWATCHFUL BELIEVERS OF THE CHURCH WILL BE LEFT IN THE FUTURE GREAT TRIBULATION	65
14. RESTING AND WRESTLING	10

TRACTS ON THE KINGDOM.

No. 1.



ROBERT GOVETT, TOWARDS THE END OF HIS MINISTRY

THE RACE AND THE CROWN.

1 COR. ix. 24—27.

THIS is a subject rarely if ever touched on. Why? Because of its difficulties. Let us look at them. Here is the passage with some few corrections required by the Greek.

“Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one (only) receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Now every one that entereth the lists, is temperate in all things: they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so box I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that after having acted the herald to others, I myself should become rejected.”

Put this beside other passages.

(1) “Being *justified freely by His grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”—Rom. iii. 24.

(2) “The wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God is eternal life* in Jesus Christ our Lord.” vi. 23.

(3) “*By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.*”—Eph. ii. 8, 9.

'Now have we not here several contradictions?'—I can fancy some one to say.

1. 'Salvation is spoken of as a *gift*. In Romans iv. it is described as the result of *not* working, but believing. It is regarded as something bestowed on God's elect, written in His book of life. Therefore they *are saved* as soon as they believe, and are called thereupon to *rejoice*.'

2. 'Here the writer speaks of it as a *prize* to be awarded to desert, as the result of training, effort, self-denial; with the danger of entire loss, even in the case of so faithful a servant as Paul.'

'Now I can't see my way through this. What is a contradiction, if here is not one?'

1. 'I am to work; and I am *not* to work.'

2. 'Salvation is a *free gift*; and yet a *prize* to be won by effort.'

3. 'Then, as to the issue. I have salvation already, and yet I may lose it.'

This text then, is a stumbling-block to many. Calvinists know not what to make of it. Arminians seize on it as proving their views. Wesley applies it after this fashion. 'See! these verses show, that there is no certain individual election unto eternal life. Election relates only to the choice of corporate bodies to the enjoyment of the means of grace. There is no certainty as to the final result. Your elect Paul the apostle, may himself, if neglected, be, as he says, a reprobate and lost!'

Here then is the knot. How is it to be untied?

Shall I lay before the reader a similar case, which occurred in modern astronomy? Some years ago, the most distant known planet (Uranus) occasioned to astronomers difficulties insurmountable. Its calculated place did not at all correspond to its observed place. *Now* it was in advance of the spot which theory said it ought to occupy. *Now* it was in the rear of it. What was the reason of this? Some suggested, that

the error lay in the mistakes of the astronomers who observed the planet. No! The real place and the theoretic place could not be so made to correspond, or indeed by any known means. How was it to be accounted for?

Some suggested, that at so vast a distance as is Uranus from the sun, the force of gravitation had lost somewhat of its power. That was very like upturning the whole system of astronomy.

At length the thought occurred—'Perhaps a planet hitherto unknown, lying at a distance beyond Uranus is working all this perplexity.' The sky is searched, and the concealed disturber of the orbit is found. This new link restores all to order. Gravitation abides in all its undiminished power; all is set at rest. Perplexity is replaced by a happy discovery.

It is even so in the present instance. As long as it is supposed, that but *one* object is presented before us in the New Testament, this contradiction and confusion of thought will exist. There is a *second* object in the field of Scripture; the perception of which reduces all texts on the subject to harmony.

Holy Scripture offers to our notice two things, (1) ETERNAL LIFE; and (2) THE MILLENNIAL DAY.

1. To the ungodly God presents *eternal life* as His *gift*. 'Believe in the finished work of Jesus for you, and you are saved in Christ. Rejoice.'

2. 'But when you have become a believer, and are already possessed of eternal life, there is a *prize* set before you, to be sought for by diligence and effort. You are *elected* to eternal salvation. But a place in the glory of the thousand years is a *reward* to be granted by Christ according to works.

THE PRIZE.

The *gift* of God, believer, you cannot lose. But the *prize* you may lose. The first and blest resurrection is a *reward* to those "*accounted worthy*." The kingdom

of heaven, or the age of glory to come, is thus set before you as an object to be sought: Matt. v. 1—12; vi. 1—16; Luke xx. 34—36; Rev. xi. 18; xxii. 12; Luke xiv. 12—14; 2 Thess. i, v, 11.

Eternal life is *not* something to be sought by the believer. It were unbelief. He is saved already. Eph. ii.

But the kingdom of the thousand years he is commanded to seek for. *It is unbelief and disobedience not to do it*; Matt. v. 20; vi. 33; vii. 21; Luke xii. 31; Phil. iii. 14; Rev. ii. 26, 27; Col. ii. 8.

It is then concerning a part in the millennial kingdom that Paul is speaking in our text cited from 1st Corinthians. It is to *that* that he refers, wherever he is speaking in that Epistle of gain or loss: 1 Cor. iii. 1—17; vi. 1—11; xv. 21—28. The apostle is writing throughout to saints justified by faith; and sets this kingdom of glory before them as the prize to be won. In this Epistle he treats of the present exclusion of believers from the church for certain offences. That is a witness of the future exclusion of some believers from the millennial kingdom. There are offences for which the Spirit of God directs that the guilty be excluded from present fellowship at the table of the Lord: 1 Cor. v. 11—13. For *the same offences* the Holy Spirit declares, that offending believers will be excluded from the millennial kingdom; 1 Cor. vi. 8—11.

Many, many will receive the *gift*, who will fall short of the *prize*. This then takes away all perplexity from the passage cited for our consideration. The gift of salvation is bestowed on faith. The prize is something to be sought for by effort. When Paul says—“Lest after having acted the herald to others, I myself should *become rejected*?”—of what is he speaking? Of eternal life? (or salvation?) Does he mean, that if you gain not the glory of which he treats, you are lost for ever? By no means! He is speaking of the *prize*, not of the

gift; of the reward of the thousand years; not of eternal life.

That appears on the very face of the matter. He is illustrating the subject by a reference to the Grecian games.

1. Now who might contend for the prizes there offered?

Only freemen of Greece. Slaves and foreigners were forbidden.*

It is just so here. Who may seek for God's prize?

Not the slaves of Satan and the world; only God's freemen in Christ?

Paul was accepted in Christ; certain of eternal life. At the moment he wrote he was well pleasing to his Master; his fear was, lest he might turn from the course of self-denial and labour which he was then pursuing, and so *become disapproved*.

2. What was the result to those who, in the Grecian games, failed of the prize?

Say that a hundred and fifty started in the race. A hundred and forty-nine come short. What is to be done with them? Are they to be crucified on the race-course? Nonsense! There were ten who lost the prize by but *half a second*! So nearly did they press on the winner! It was vexation enough to them to lose the prize; but there was no punishment to be added to their loss.

BUT HOW IS THE PRIZE TO BE SOUGHT?

We may regard the matter from three points of view; in reference to (1) the RACE; (2) the TRAINING; and (3) the PRIZE.

The apostle illustrates the matter still from the games of antiquity.

* In latter years Romans were admitted.

1. THE RACE.

The stadium, or distance to be run, was about two hundred yards. The candidates were arranged in line, awaiting the signal for the contest to begin. That once given, all was zeal, activity, unslackening effort pressing forward to the goal! All that might entangle, hinder, or weigh down the racer had been thrown off; Heb. xii. 1, 2. Many were striving; only one could obtain the wreath of victory. Each therefore was obliged to put forth his utmost efforts, in order to bear away the prize from competitors so nearly equal with himself.

But "*one* receiveth the prize." If three or more came into the goal so evenly that the judges could not detect any difference in favour of one, these three must contend anew, till one alone be declared superior.

The apostle's exhortation hereupon is—"Do you imitate this zeal! Do you strive, as if only one were to be crowned, and you were to be that one. It is not the case in regard of God's prize, but that one can win it; but strive as if it were so."

You, believer, *are to seek this as an object.* "So run, in order that ye may attain." "That ye may obtain," is a word to all Christians. What shall we say then to those Christians who would exclude all seeking for "*reward?*" who think it "*mercenary?*" That they are certainly in error. *God* bids us to seek reward from Him as an object to be pursued. "*So run in order that you may obtain.*" "There be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. *He that is able to receive it, let Him receive it.*"—Matt. xix. 12.

Ambition of glory from God is a holy desire. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for *Thou shalt be recom-*

pensed at the resurrection of the just."—Luke xiv. 13, 14. "Go and sit down in the lowest room, that when He that bade thee cometh, He may say—'Friend, go up higher;' *then shalt thou have glory in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.*" 10. "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or child, *for the kingdom of God's sake*, who shall not receive manifold more *in this present time*, and in the age to come (*αὐνυ*) life everlasting."—Luke xviii. 29. The present age is the time to surrender, with a view to the kingdom of glory; and while the recompense begins here, it is to be received in full in *the age to come*, or the millennial kingdom of God. So also Rom. ii, 5—16; 1 Pet. v. 1—4.

2. A word next concerning the TRAINING for the race.

(1) That was something which might be regarded as *necessary in itself*, in order to develop and strengthen the muscles used in running; and to give strength of lungs, so necessary to maintain the fleetness of foot to the end of the course. It is evident, that the untrained racer, other points being equal, would have no chance of success against the practised candidate.

(2) But it was also *required by the rulers of the games.* For ten long months previously the candidates were put under a severe system of diet and exercise. All was directed to remove superfluous fat and flesh; and to impart tone and vigour to the whole frame. The amount of food and its quality, and the preliminary exercises were all arranged; and must be submitted to by those who sought the prize.

Paul is showing, against the too great license and self-indulgence which the Corinthians were allowing themselves, as attendants at the idolatrous feasts, etc., that self-denial is by God called for from those who would at last win glory from Him. We who are believers are undergoing God's training; we may not

live after the flesh, nor draw as near to the world, or seek its prizes, as others do. The apostle, therefore, displays to us in the preceding chapter his own self-denial. While, as an apostle, he might justly have demanded the supply of all his wants by those to whom he ministered the truth which saves, and to whom he communicated the supernatural gifts by the laying on of hands, yet he gave up his claims, and wrought with his own hands to support himself. Now this would turn to his glory and reward at the appearing of Christ. Thus his conduct stood out in sharp contrast with theirs. They went into things unlawful, which would shut them out from Christ's reward and approval. *Paul* gave up his just rights, and abstained from things lawful, lest he should lose the commendation of the Saviour, and the glory of the first resurrection.

3. A word next concerning the PRIZE.

"Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we (do it to obtain) an incorruptible."

What was the object which led to so much abandonment of ease and comfort? which demanded so much effort, so much expenditure of time and money? which cost so much anxiety?

Suppose yourself the favoured one! What have you won? A wreath of parsley or olive, of bay or pine! *That* was the prize! Soon withering; soon crumbling to dust, however carefully preserved.

But ours is a prize worthy of God, worthy of our best efforts. Is it not an object worthy to be sought, the entrance into the glory of the thousand years? And in that kindom, as in the Roman empire, there are crowns for various services prepared to adorn the brows of the victors.

For the life of a citizen saved in battle one kind of crown was given by Rome; for the brave warrior who first forced his way into an enemy's camp, another.

In the kingdom of God the same thing obtains; and the conqueror will wear for ever his unfading crown; 1 Pet. v. 4; Rev. ii. 10.

Observe again, the Christian's true position as evidenced both by Paul's example and exhortation, is to be a seeker of reward from God. "They do this to obtain a corruptible crown; but we (*do it with a view to obtain*) an incorruptible."

At the close we are presented with PAUL'S OWN EXAMPLE.

He who knew best the value of the prize, strove the hardest to win it.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly."

1. Here we have the apostle as the *racer*. He was pressing on to the goal, not content with the past; not boasting of his previous surrenders and deeds, but eager to finish his course with joy. Great was his diligence, great his self-denial, great his sufferings for Christ. Hunger he bore, thirst, nakedness, fatigue, shipwreck, prisons, stripes, stoning. All were nothing, might he but win the prize of his heavenly calling.

In one other respect his position was greatly superior to those enrolled on the Grecian lists. All entered on the training and the strife, utterly uncertain as to the final result. The man who had been the most diligent and conscientious in obeying all the rules, and following up all the exercises, might yet lose the prize. Through no fault of his, but owing to the superior vigour of one of his rivals he might be defeated in his hopes. Not so with Paul; not so with the Christian. *The obedient, the self-denying, the diligent servant shall not fail of his reward: "Every one shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."--1 Cor. iii. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to each according as his work shall be."* Rev. xxii. 12.

2. But Paul compares himself also with the *boxer*,

The ordinary prize-fighter in his exercises dealt blows at an imaginary opponent; or when engaged in the actual strife sometimes missed his blow. Paul did not, He sought to master his body as an antagonist, that unresisted, might deprive him of reward and approval from the Lord in that day. The slothful and unprofitable servant will not enter the hall of the feast, but be left in the darkness outside, with tears to deplore his folly.—Matt. xxv.

3. While Paul was led onward by hope, he was kept to his course of life through fear also. “Lest after having acted the herald to others, I myself should become disapproved.”

In the games of Greece, an herald arranged the places of the racers, defined the laws of the contest, and gave the signal of the race. This resembled the attitude of Paul the apostle. He proclaimed the coming kingdom and its glories; he called on all believers to seek its prizes, and arranged the training of the candidates. How sad, if one so conspicuous should yet at last be dismissed as unworthy of the kingdom into which his pupils entered! Great would be his fall and vexation, just in proportion as high had been his standing during the day of the contest.

1 Are these things so? Then what shall we say to Christians who say?—‘Let me only be saved, that is all I care for! If I get just within the door of heaven, it will do for me!’

I would say—‘Brother, if you believe in the Son of God, *you are saved already*. But in the day of the millennial glory, you will grieve as bitterly and as vainly as Esau, if you find that you are dismissed by Christ, as unworthy to enter His kingdom: Heb. xii. 16, 17. To be compelled to wait *a thousand years*, while others are enjoying that bliss! It will seem almost an eternity to have to tarry for salvation,—‘Rise then! Seek this prize! They will not attain it, who do not run. They will not reap, who do not sow.’

2. But there are believers who mix in the world and its pursuits, or are drifting into its pleasure, going as near things hurtful or forbidden, as their own conscience, or the apprehended outcry of their brethen, will permit. To such this passage says—‘Brother, it is the training time! You are called to give up even what is in itself lawful, that you may not lose the prize. Better to use self-denial, and to give up the pleasures of a world at enmity with Christ, than be dismissed by him as disapproved, and excluded from His day of reward and glory!’

3. Brethen in Christ! see here an exemplification of the Saviour’s word—that the children of this age are wiser for their generation than the children of light are for the age to come, its riches and glory.

They put forth all their energies, and make cheerful surrender of many things through hopes of the present life. Shall not the prize set before us by our God animate us to effort and self-denial? We are called to a life of service; not a life of sloth. We are called to a life of discipline, not of self-indulgence. Around us are plenty of examples of laxity of principle and walk among Christians. It were hard to distinguish in many cases between the believer and the world. But our conduct awaits the final decision of the Lord Jesus at His coming. Will He approve it? Or refuse to reward such?

Labour for Christ! Memorable was the saying of a Mohametan warrior. Khaled had, after a long and arduous conflict, proved victorious before Damascus over a Christian champion. No sooner was the fight over, than he mounted a fresh horse, and pushed onward to the front of the battle. ‘Rest a moment, (said his friend Derar,) permit me to supply your place; you are fatigued with fighting this dog!’

‘O Derar,’ replied he, ‘we shall *rest in the world to come! He that labours to-day shall rest to-morrow.*’

This is true of the Christian warrior and worker.

To-day is the day of conflict; to-morrow the day of victory. To-day is the day of training; to-morrow the day of the reward and the crown. Let us spend our time with a view to the coming decision of Christ. Here is a field for true ambition. We cannot desire or seek too zealously the glory that is to be given by Christ. If the glory that comes from man could spur to such zeal, effort, and self-denial, how much more should the approval by Christ and His crowning the conqueror before the great congregation, nerve us to diligence and self-control. Seek the glory which comes from God, and the entry into the kingdom which Christ shall give to those whom He approves!

Has this fallen into the hand of one attempting to be reconciled to God? Have you been seeking, friend, to recommend yourself to the Most High by your good words and works? *That struggle is vain.* You cannot by your efforts win eternal life. It is the *gift* of God to every one who believes His witness about the Son of God as slain for sin and risen again.

Do not mistake here! No one can be saved, except by the work of *another*; by the death, resurrection, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you accept the *gift of God*? It may be done in an instant. How long does it take to accept a bank-note of a thousand pounds? Long? 'Tis done in a second! So may you take God at His word. "*The gift of God is eternal life* in Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. vi. 23.

Do you believe the testimony about the Saviour's coming millennial kingdom? After you are saved in Christ, you may then begin to seek that day of glory.

Receive the *gift*, and you may then start in pursuit of the *prize*!

ISRAEL'S HISTORY,
THE
CHURCH'S WARNING.

—♦—
THOUGHTS ON 1 COR. X. 1—13.

THE connection between the Ninth and the Tenth of the 1st of Corinthians is so close, that it never should have been severed as it is, by being divided into two chapters.

It is generally agreed by critics, that we should read the first verse thus—"For, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant." The preceding verses of the ninth chapter had given us the right course to be taken by the Christian in view of the kingdom as the prize of our calling, illustrated by the example of the apostle.

He pointed out at the close the real danger which affects even true Christians. That this danger is real the Holy Spirit proves, by the facts of God's dealings with Israel in the desert. Paul had shown the greatness of the danger, by his own constant care against it. He sought the prize, and avoided those things which would have cut him off from it. He now exhibits the contrary conduct, as exemplified in the history of Israel and shows us how they received, not God's

approval, and the prize of their earthly calling; but the displeasure of the Lord, because of their giving way to those temptations, against which the Scripture would put us on our guard.

This exhortation comes in by way of warning to the believers of Corinth against having any fellowship with idolatry. Some of them had even sat in the idol's temple, and banqueted on meats offered to the idol. They thought that in so doing, they were only displaying true Christian liberty. They would have Paul believe, that they were too firm in their attachment to Christ to be in any peril from idols; which were merely so much gold, or marble, or wood. Besides, were they not already publicly pledged to Christ by baptism, and by the Christian Supper?

The Holy Spirit then discovers to us, that despite all they said, the danger was real, of God's displeasure, and of their fall. He does so by presenting the history of Israel as a case exactly in point.

Let us consider then—

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESEMBLANCE TO ISRAEL IN PRIVILEGES.

II. ISRAEL'S OFFENCES, AND GOD'S JUDGMENTS THEREON.

I. ISRAEL'S PRIVILEGES.

1. "For, I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea: And were all immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea: And all used to eat the same spiritual food: And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they used to drink out of the spiritual rock which followed them; but the rock was the Christ."

Paul shows us, how God's people of the earthly calling ransomed by grace, and set upon a footing of continual privilege, were called to win the prize of their calling, and lost it.

They were delivered out of the hand of their enemies by the blood of the Lamb. They were taken

visibly under God's protecting wing, and led out of Egypt. They were set under the cloud of the Lord's presence: Num. xiv. 14.

All were led out from Egypt by a door miraculously opened, and miraculously shut. Pharaoh's claims upon them were cut off by the Red Sea. That answers then to the Christian's redemption by the blood of Christ, and to his passage through the waters of baptism. "They were immersed *into* Moses," as believers ought to be immersed into Christ, and identified with Him. The cloud of the Divine Presence over Israel answers to the name of God—as Father, Son, and Spirit, called over the baptized believer.

They had somewhat answering to our Lord's Supper. They had the bread, not of nature, but of heaven, as their daily supply. They had water given them by grace, out of the rock smitten by the rod of law and judgment. This answers spiritually to Christ smitten for our sins, and the Holy Spirit thence flowing to us. The water, after once bursting out of the rock, followed Israel in their wanderings through the desert. This in its spiritual significance answers to ourselves, who after being buried to the flesh, walk with Christ, and are fed by Him. The passage through the Red Sea precedes the manna and the water of the rock. The Red Sea was a severance once and for ever; even as baptism is a rite but once to be solemnized by the believer. But the bread and water were supplies constantly repeated; even as our feeding on Christ and drinking into His Spirit are to be our continual aid.

Israel then were led as one family by God's appointed leader, and were all fed alike. Must they not, therefore, all alike receive God's approval? Very far from it!

"But with the majority of them God was not well-pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

Here then comes in the force of the five times repeated "*all*." Thus the Holy Spirit presents to us

the correspondence with the race of the previous chapter. "Know ye not that they who run in a race run *all*? but *one* (only) receiveth the prize." The whole body of Israel received the same great privileges, and were set at the same starting post. But did all win the goal? Nay, they became "castaways," or were disapproved of God. Here then is refuted by solemn fact the Corinthians' confidence in their feelings of attachment to Christ, and in their resting upon their union with Christ, as manifested in baptism and the Supper. Did Israel turn away from Moses, in spite of like identification with him? So might *they*, despite their union with Christ, both real and visible.

God was not well-pleased with Israel. Their privileges did not so place them under grace, as to put them beyond responsibility, and the call to obedience. The Lord displayed His disapproval of them. For they never gained the prize of their calling. What was that? An entry on the land that flowed with milk and honey. That was the object set before God's rescued ones. "I am come down to deliver them out of the land of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land *unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.*" Ex. iii. 8. They were His people ransomed by blood, numbered by hundreds of thousands, and yet of the delivered out of Egypt by grace—but two entered the land of promise, when it became a question of their obeying God and pleasing Him! Among the number of the excluded were Moses the servant, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. Of course these two and others of Israel will be saved; but the principle took effect even *on the leaders!*

God was not "*well-pleased.*" The proof was visible enough. They never entered the good land. The millennial glory is to be distributed according to God's good pleasure in His ransomed ones. His redemption-work will answer to His creation-work. In six days

God made heaven and earth. On the seventh day God rested from His work, surveyed it, and was pleased with it. "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." At the end then of His six thousand years of redemption-work God will look over His redeemed, and will admit to His seventh day of rest those of His redeemed alone in whom He can take pleasure, as having sympathised with Him, obeyed Him, and wrought with Him. Christ, as being the One in whom the Father has always been well-pleased, will be chief in that day. Paul sought always to please God. He would teach us to be like Him. "We labour (are ambitious) that whether present or absent [in body] we may be *well-pleasing* to Him:" 2 Cor. v. 9. We are instructed that with some of the saved, God will not be well-pleased.

"The just by faith shall live; but if he* draw back my soul hath no pleasure in him."

Let us consider next:—

II. SOME OF ISRAEL'S OFFENCES, WHICH DISPLEASED GOD, AND EXCLUDED THEM FROM REWARD.

(1) "Now these things were types of us, that we should not be lusting after evil things, as they also lusted. (2) Nor become ye idolaters; as did some of them, as it is written—'The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.' (3) Nor let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and fell in one day twenty-three thousand. (4) Neither let us tempt the Christ, as some of them tempted, and were destroyed by the serpents. (5) Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the Destroyer."

We are apt to sever ourselves from Israel's evil conduct, as though we believers were much better than they. But the Holy Spirit gives us to know that Israel's desert-history is only a picture of the provocation of God's own assembly. Not of 'the *professing*

* There is no 'any one,'—which ought not to be inserted.

church,' but of *the Church* of Christ. "*Types of us.*" (1) Their offences were generally, "lusts of evil things." God put His racers under a new discipline, and training, and diet. He took away the old vegetables and fruit of Egypt, the fish, and the flesh, and the wine, to feed them peculiarly as His people. But Israel relished not the new diet, and rebelled against the training. Their heart went back after the old, and they despised the new.

"Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes:" Num. xi. 4—6. They lusted after flesh, and quails were given in abundance. But the displeasure of God sent them by numbers into "the graves of lust."

Then, Christian, turn not back to the objects and the pleasures of a world you have left, or you will displease your Heavenly Trainer!

(2) They fell into idolatry, in spite of being dedicated to Jehovah; in spite of their promise to serve Him alone. True believers have need to be warned against every sin, however heinous.

Idolatry is fast coming into England. Worship of the 'consecrated elements,' of the crucifix, of the Virgin, saying prayers before one's 'patron saint,' are practised. *All worship before images is idol-worship.* The Corinthian Christians had unwittingly fallen into this sin, by banqueting in the idol's temple.

Perhaps Israel scarcely realised that they were idolaters in worshipping the golden calf. 'Was not the feast to Jehovah? Did they not direct their worship to the God that led them up out of Egypt?' How God thought and felt about it, His wrath, which had almost swept the nation away, showed. The sword that slew three thousand discovered His

displeasure, and He warns us that He has never yet reckoned fully with Israel for that sin; but means to avenge it in a day to come.

(3) The Christian is next warned against fornication. This follows in close connection with idolatry; as one of its constant effects. It was one of the sins for which Corinth was notorious. There was danger, therefore, lest that which the world accounted a trivial offence, should gain head in the church in Corinth. How highly it displeases God was shown by the sudden blow of destruction which overtook so many even in Israel's dispensation of far less light. Twenty-three thousand in one day! Numbers then are no security in sinning! Moses says, that twenty-four thousand were slain. Paul's twenty-three thousand were cut off "*in one day.*"

(4) "Neither let us tempt Christ." The word used seems to signify—"Let us not tempt beyond endurance." The reference is to Num. xiv. 22. "Because all those men have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and the wilderness, and have *tempted me now these ten times*, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." They tempted God at Marah because of the bitter water; when their bread came to an end, and when there was no water. They would not go up to take possession of the land when called to do so. They would go up when forbidden. They murmur against the length of the sojourn in the wilderness, and are cut off by the fiery serpents. These judgments of God took effect, not on Egyptians, or Moabites, but on His own people. They are designed to affect, not 'professors,' as if none but such could so sin, or so be smitten; but God's own ransomed ones. They might have argued against such judgments as many do now. 'What! will God smite those whom He has rescued out of Egypt by

the blood of the Lamb, His host led through the waters of miracle, fed at His table day by day?' *Yes! these were the parties cut off in God's displeasure!*

(5) We are warned against murmuring. God's own people so murmured against Himself and His appointed leader. Many times in the course of their desert wanderings they did so. But the final one, the consummation of the whole, which were almost incredible if God had not testified it, was this. After God's vengeance by fire on Korah and his Levites, and the swallowing up of Dathan and his fellow conspirators, we are told that *the next day "all the congregation"* "murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, 'Ye have killed the saints of the Lord!'" This was such barefaced provocation of the Lord, that at once the destroying angel smote them with pestilence. Fourteen thousand and seven hundred were slain before God would accept the atonement of Aaron His priest. Do no true believers ever murmur now? Are there not some, whose great feature of life is their perpetual dissatisfaction, and quarrel with all that befalls them? These then are the parties against whom, as truly as against those in Israel, the threatening will take effect.

"Now all these things happened unto them by way of examples, but were written to warn us, whom the ends of the ages have reached. Therefore let him that thinks he stands, look to it lest he fall."

These offences of Israel were outbreaks of the fallen nature which God met with His visible resentment. His conduct toward them discovered how He felt. He cut them off from the hope set before them. When His people at last entered the land, they were not among them. But Israel is like ourselves, and we as God's people are subject to the same trials as they, and liable to break out into words and deeds

against God of exactly the same quality. These their offences then on the one hand, and God's acts of severity on the other, are put on record for us; on purpose that we may fear God, and restrain ourselves from desires after these worldly and evil things which so drew down God's indignation. Ours is the last age ere the long-promised millennial glory break forth. The rest of God, His redemption-sabbath of a thousand years destined for those accounted worthy to rest with Him, is nigh at hand.

As then we are, though believers, like tinder to the spark of temptation, and as God abides the same in His character now as then, we may not be high-minded, but fear.

Like offences on our part will be followed by like exclusion from the hope of our calling on God's part.

Let not then these examples of our tendencies to evil, and of the things which provoke God till they draw down the sentence of exclusion from millennial reward, be without fruit to us!

There will be less excuse for us than for them, if we offend as they, and are excluded as they were. For God has made His earlier people a warning to us. He has shown us in them the temptation against which *we* have to watch, and the issues with which such conduct is visited by Him. These facts are handed down to us in writing, and Paul expounds them for us, lest we should overlook them, or so misinterpret them, as to put ourselves beyond the range of their application; as many do, in spite of such warning.

Let us then not be self-confident, as was Peter. Let us not be high-minded, as if we sons of God could not be so tempted, and so fall, as did Israel. He who says—'Trust me! there is no fear!' is already drifting with strong current on the rocks.

But there is another and an opposite danger, against which the Spirit lets fall a word of caution.

“No temptation has befallen you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that ye are able; but will together with the temptation make also the escape, that ye may be able to bear up.”

Some have strong tendencies to discouragement and despair. ‘Well, if there are so many snares, so many dangers from within and from without, and Israel’s example is a type of the offences of God’s people under the Gospel, there is no hope, no chance of entering this reward. For my part I shall not try!’

The words and acts of despair as truly provoke God as those of pride and presumption. You are not called to trust yourself, and to measure your forces against those of your foes. Faithfulness and strength reside in God, not in you. But for His grace, none would enter. Be not cast down then! Let not unbelief quench your hope! Peter, when looking away from his Lord at the waves and clouds, began to sink. God measures the strength of the assaults which the enemy is permitted to make. He will give support under trial. He will either remove the temptation, or make the way of escape from it. The world, the flesh, the devil, are against you; but God is stronger than them all; and they who trust His strength will prevail, and enter into His millennial glory.

Fear *yourselves*! For the flesh is weak, and temptations are many and strong! Fear *God*; though you are His people, yea His sons, you may so speak and so act as to provoke Him, and to cut yourselves off from the promised reward. Trust God; for in Him alone are power and faithfulness.

Thus then the Lord has given us, to illustrate this subject, two opposite cases.

1. In *Paul’s* example we have humility, strictness of watch, self-denial, and at length the crowning of reward to come: 2 Tim. iv.

2. In *Israel’s* case, we have the laxity and license of

the flesh in word and deed, with provocation of God, ending in His cutting them off.

Follow then the one example; beware of the other!

But all this argument would be quenched in a moment by many believers, and by some versed in Scripture. They would deny the three main points of parallelism between Israel and ourselves, on which the whole argument rests.

They would say:—

1. ‘*Israel’s standing is not like ours; but the very opposite.*’

‘But were they not God’s ancient chosen people?’

‘Yes; but people of the flesh and of sense only, unconverted men.’

‘This is not true.’ They are described as men of *faith*. “And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. AND THE PEOPLE BELIEVED:” Ex. iv. 30, 31.

“Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and *the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses:*” xiv. 31; Heb. xi. 28—30. But they were guilty afterwards of *partial* unbelief, as most believers are now. Among the excluded were Moses and Aaron. Were they unconverted?

2. ‘*Professors only, not true believers, are in danger of offending in like sort.*’

Are no Christians murmurers? Are none guilty of covetousness, which is idolatry? Have no true believers been guilty of immorality? Do none tempt Christ by marriage with the ungodly?

3. ‘*Our relations with God and Christ, inasmuch as we are members of Christ, and His Bride, are of grace only.*’

This should be proved. It is not true. If we are to be dealt with before Christ “*according to our works,*” it is not true: Matt. xvi. 27; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. ii. 6

1 Cor. iii. 13—17; Rev. xxii. 12. “*All the churches shall know*, that I am He that trieth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto EVERY ONE OF YOU according to your works:” Rev. ii. 23.

‘But does not Moses say?—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.” Does not the prophet say?—“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.”’

The first of these words is spoken of the coming out of Egypt. *But how many entered into the land?* The second relates to Israel’s justification, against the enemy that sought to thrust Israel away from being any more His people. But had not God already cut off the offenders of whom Paul speaks? And said not God within his camp?—“*This evil congregation that are gathered together against Me, in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there shall they die.*” Did He not swear to them that they should not enter the land? and did He not keep His oath, despite their presumptuous attempt to turn Him?

In short, the general answer to the objector I have supposed, is—‘The Holy Ghost’s arguments here and in Hebrews iii, iv—if your objections be true, are quite valueless.’

He should have said just the contrary to what he does say. He should have said—‘There are among you who are the sons of God certain ‘*professors*’ who are in danger of falling into sin, and who will certainly be lost, as were God’s professing people of old. But all who know themselves regenerate, cannot so fall, or be so excluded. For they are not under law, but under grace. These awful judgments of God are directed against *them*; but as regards yourselves, they only show how *you cannot* fall, and how God *cannot* act toward *you*.’

Until any are bold enough openly to say so, and to seek to prove their words, I must consider the apostle to say the contrary here. ‘Though you are sons, yet

God can be so displeased with your temper, your words, and conduct, as to shut you out of all reward. *Grace is the principle of God’s actings now, but the day of Christ’s coming is on another principle—reward according to works.*’ The throne of judgment is set (Rev. iv.), as soon as the Church ends; and then comes the question—‘Who is worthy?’ Grace will *save* eternally multitudes accounted unworthy of *reward*. The book of life is opened when the millennium is past, and those found in it enter through grace into the city of God.

Let us then follow in Paul’s steps of self-denial, patience, humility, watchfulness, prayer. Let us keep aloof from the world and its objects of glitter! Let us fear the laxity, and self-indulgence, and pursuit of the world’s prizes which are found in so many of Christ’s people. Let us beware of pride, self-confidence, disobedience, and hardening the heart against the threats of God. It were sad to awaken, like Esau after the birthright has been sold, to bitter repentance and unavailing tears! How much better—“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me in that day!”

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM
ONE OF REWARD.

SOME Christians are opposed to the doctrine of *reward*. They think that we ought to be led to do good works solely on the principle of love to God. In entertaining this opinion, many are no doubt quite unaware how much Scripture testifies on this subject, both in the Old Testament and the New.

It is intended then to exhibit in this tract some of the Scripture testimonies on this point. It is one of deepest moment to each believer to accept. It is said, that Sadoc, the founder of the Sadducees, began his career of unbelief, by denying the doctrine of reward.

Does then, the Scripture affirm the doctrine of future reward?

The doctrine of reward reposes, as its last foundation, on the character of God Himself, as described in His Word.

Let us then consider :

- I. THE CHARACTER OF GOD.
- II. THE PRINCIPLE OF REWARD.
- III. THE DAY APPOINTED.
- IV. THE APPLICATION OF REWARD TO THE SAVIOUR AND TO HIS DISCIPLES.

I. THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

Jehovah proclaims Himself both in the Old Testament and the New, as the Righteous Governor, who will render at last, to both the righteous and the wicked, recompence according to their works: Deut. xxxii. 35; Prov. xii. 14; Isa. xxxv. 4; xl. 10; lix. 18; lxii. 11; lxvi. 6.

To Abraham, the father of the faithful, after his act of courage in attacking the victorious armies of Chedorlaomer, and his self-denial in refusing the riches of the King of Sodom, God speaks in terms of promise. "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great *reward*:" Gen. xv. 1.

The doctrine of God's rewarding His people is stated in the New Testament as a first truth; following immediately on the confession of the existence of God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is* a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him:" Heb. xi. 6. This is exemplified to us in the translation of Enoch.

Both the Old and the New Testament bear witness to this part of the character of the Most High. It is a principle common to both, as the following passages testify. "I will not keep silence, but will recompense into their bosom, your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers:" Isa. lxv. 6.

It is never said, that '*Law* offered reward for service rendered, but that the *Gospel* does not admit the principle of recompense.' On the contrary, the Gospel assumes this principle, and carries it out into its own sphere with a '*much more*.'

1. If Adam's one offence brought in the recompence of death, *much more* shall Christ's work introduce the millennial kingdom and the reign of life: Rom. v. 17.

* *τινεται*. More exactly, "he becometh."

2. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. *For if the word spoken by angels was (became) steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we (believers) escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*" Heb. ii. 1, 2.

3. "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, *much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.*" Heb. xii. 25.

God then is the Lord of Justice, who in the coming day will render to both the righteous and to the wicked recompence. "To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward:" Prov. xi. 18.

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him:" Isa. iii. 10, 11.

Let us consider next:

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF REWARD.

This day is the time of men's trial. For it is the time of faith. Christ is away. Serve *Satan* and the world, and you will get a present favourable result. Serve *Christ*, and you will have to bear persecution for His sake. Thus the sincerity of men is being tested. It was easy to be a republican when Cromwell was virtually the King of England; and when to be a royalist entailed trouble. But by these sufferings of the king's men their sincerity was proved; as on the other hand, the sincerity of the Nonconformists was manifested when Charles the Second persecuted Dissenters.

God then is putting each to the test in this day of His patience. *Whom* will you serve? To what extent will you labour? How far can Christ trust you now?

How high will He promote you in the day of reward? Are you willing to make surrenders for Him, and to suffer for His sake?

With every believer the question is being tried:

Will you seek reward at Christ's hand? To what extent will you seek it?

God's eye is on labour wrought for His Son's sake. He says He will requite it in a day to come. Jesus teaches us, that not the lowest act of kindness done for His sake shall be without its reward.

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward:" Matt. x. 41, 42.

The principle announced in the Old and New Testament alike, is—that God will render to each at last—
"ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS."

1. "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to each according as his work shall be:" Rev. xxii. 12.

2. "All the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works:" Rev. ii. 23.

3. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward each according to his work:" Matt. xvi. 27.

4. "Each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour:" 1 Cor. iii. 8, 14.

As a secondary result, reward will be *in proportion to suffering for Christ*. To the sufferers unto death for the Saviour's sake a place in the millennial glory is promised: Rev. xx. 4—6; 2 Tim. ii. 10—12.

Hence we have several times the sentiment—that Christ will 'account' some 'worthy' of reward.

1. "The children of this age (*αιωνος*) marry and are given in marriage. But they which shall be accounted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. For neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection:" Luke xx. 34—36 (*Greek*).

2. "We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations which ye endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye even suffer:" 2 Thess. i. 4, 5 (*Greek*).

3. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling:" 2 Thess. i. 11.

This principle is necessary to adjust the respective places of each in the coming day. The redeemed are saved through the perfect work of Christ received by faith. But that is the same for all; and if that were the only principle of God's arrangement it would set all the saved in an equality of station, and of glory. But such is not God's counsel. As star differs from star in size, colour, and brightness, so also is the resurrection of the dead: 1 Cor. xv. It is then at this point that the principle we are considering comes in. According to the differences of *labour* for Christ, and of *sufferings* for His sake, will the station of each hereafter be arranged. Then, as some are bearers of thirty-fold, some of sixty-fold, some of an hundred, there will be answerable diversities of glory. No two of the saved will be in all respects equal in glory, as no two are entirely the same in service and in suffering, and in surrender for Christ.

Consider we next:

III. THE DAY APPOINTED.

The Holy Spirit states, that the present day of grace is moving onward towards a *DAY of an opposite principle*, in which God will render to every one, converted or unconverted, elect or non-elect, saved or lost, according to his works.

1. "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against *the day of wrath, and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, [God is righteous in this day of mercy; but in the coming day He means to *manifest His justice* by the award given to each,] *who will render to each according to his works*: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality,—eternal life: But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace to every one that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile [then comes a long parenthesis] in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel:" Rom. ii. 4—16.

2. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day:" 2 Tim. iv. 8.

The coming day is described as an AGE, of which some will be accounted worthy: Luke xx. 34—36. It is to begin at the seventh or last trump, when Christ is to take the kingdom, and the promised reward is to be given to His servants of various classes: Rev. xi. 15—18.

It is to last for a thousand years.

"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 whoever had not worshipped the Wild 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:" Rev. xx. 4—6.

It is the time of "the kingdom of God," when He resumes the authority which for awhile He has entrusted to the Gentiles: Rev. xi. 15—18.

It is the day of God's future rest from His redemption-work. As after the six days of creation-work God rested on the seventh day, and rejoiced in His creation; so, after six thousand years of redemption-work there is to come the seventh day, or sabbath-rest of redemption-work. It is to be one of a thousand years' duration, as each of the preceding days of redemption-work has been: Heb. iii. iv.

It is the period of the resurrection of the righteous dead, which takes place a thousand years before the general resurrection: Rev. xx. 4—6.

"Thou shalt be blessed; for they [the poor] cannot recompense thee; for *thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*:" Luke xiv. 14.

To attain this Paul pressed onward with the utmost ardour, desiring to partake of Christ's sufferings, and even to find a martyr's death, "if by any means he might attain to the select resurrection from among the dead:"* Phil. iii. 11. (*Greek*.)

It is to be really a time of reward; a repayment of labour expended for Christ, a consolation for suffering, a harvest in return for good works sown.

1. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages*, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; *that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together*:" John iv. 35, 36.

There is then to be a time in which God's labourers

* Την εξασπασιν την εκ νεκρων.

before the law and under the law shall meet together with the servants of the Lord's farm under the Gospel, and all three classes shall rejoice together in God's great harvest-home!

2. "Each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour:" 1 Cor. iii. 8. If we get not our recompence now, we are to find it then.

3. Hence Paul gave up his right to a maintenance in preaching the Gospel. "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me. What then is my reward? That when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of the Christ without charge, (so) that I abuse not my power in the Gospel:" 1 Cor. ix. 17, 18.

The coming day is designed by the Most High as a time of consolation for the sufferers for Christ.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven; for *in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets*:" Luke vi. 22, 23.

But disciples who obtain their reward *now* will not receive it *then*: vers. 24—26. "But woe unto you the rich (disciples), for *ye are receiving your consolation*. Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger (then). Woe unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep. (then.) *Woe unto you (disciples) when* men speak well of you*; for so used their fathers to do to the false prophets:" Matt. v. 4, 11, 12.

4. "Love ye your enemies and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; *and your reward shall be great*, and ye shall be children of the Highest; for He

* The word 'all' is omitted, as it is not considered genuine by critical editors.

is kind to the unthankful and to the evil:" Luke vi. 35.

The coming millennium is to be the hour of requital for good works, whether prayers, fastings, or alms. Hence Jesus persuades His people not to seek their reward here and now, as did the Pharisees; otherwise they would have no reward in the coming glory from their Father: Matt. vi. 1—16; 2 John 8; Matt. x. 41, 42.

Consider lastly:

IV. THE RANGE OF THE PRINCIPLE.

I. It is applied, in the first instance to the SON OF GOD HIMSELF.

1. The xviiith Psalm celebrates Jesus' resurrection, as the result of His prayer to God, (xviii. 4—7,) and notices the earthquake at His coming forth from the tomb. The Psalm, however, goes on to speak of the future day of the kingdom of glory, and the requital then. "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me:" 20, 24—26.

2. The well-known fifty-third of Isaiah, while it celebrates the Saviour's death for sin, is equally outspoken about His recompence to come. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; *for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.*"

3. In the Philippians the same principle is exhibited in the case of Jesus. He is perfect—in self-surrender, humility, and obedience. *Therefore His name is before God the highest of any.* "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death even the death of the

cross. *Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name:*" Phil. ii. 5—11.

4. In the Hebrews we find the same idea. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, ● God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows:*" Heb. i. 8, 9.

5. In the Apocalypse, after the churches are set aside, a new throne is set up, not 'the throne of grace' as now; but 'the throne of judgment.' Then comes the question—'who is *worthy?*' ch. v. There is a pause; for none is found worthy, till the Lamb appears. His worthiness is at once confessed; and all power is given to Him. "*Thou art worthy.*" It is the new day of reward according to works; and it takes effect first on the Son of God Himself.

But if reward is to be dealt out to the Redeemer, according to His work, all pretence against its being applicable to us is at once removed. And if our Lord Himself was cheered by the hope of recompence, well may we be: Heb. xii. 2.

The principle as applicable to Christian teachers has already been noted: 1 Cor. iii.

The same rule will apply to sufferers for Christ's sake.

1. "Now if children, then heirs; heirs indeed of God,* *but joint heirs with Christ, if at least we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together:* Rom. viii. 17.

2. "Faithful is the saying; for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. *If we suffer we shall*

* The translators have lost the distinction here set forth, by omitting the $\mu\epsilon\nu$, and mistranslating the $\delta\epsilon$. The promise refers to sufferers for Christ; and not all Christians do so suffer.

also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us:" 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

3. To the same purpose, is the apostle's illustration which follows. God's eternal kingdom resembles a palace in which there are vessels of various materials, answerably destined by the master to different uses; some honourable, and some dishonourable: 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21; see also Matt. v. 11, 12; x. 41, 42; Heb. x. 34—37.

This offer of reward is designed to steady us in our endurance of the trials of our strange calling, during its day of rejection and dishonour: Luke vi. 23, 35.

1. Thus the example of Moses is proposed to us, as that of the man of faith giving up the world's glitter to suffer affliction with the hope of reward.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; *for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward:*" Heb. xi. 24—26.

Even if life is called for, the principle holds good; the recompence shall outweigh any suffering.

2. "For *whosoever will save his life (soul) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (soul) for My sake shall find it.* For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and be fined his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and *then He shall reward each according to his work:*" Matt. xvi. 25—27.

Also Rev. ii. 10; xx. 4—6.

This view is intended to stimulate us to service while Christ is away.

1. "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities:" Luke xix. 16—19.

2 "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father:" Rev. ii. 26, 27.

The refusal, then, of a doctrine so often asserted in Scripture, is traceable, either, (1) To defective views of *the character of God*, as the Rewarder of service. Or to (2) defective views of *the necessities of the Christian, of the difficulties of our Lord's doctrine, and the sacrifices for which it calls*.

It is easy to work for Christ, when all prospers, But what, when sacrifices, persecution, and death, stand in the way of the Christian worker?—'Why should I be put to such straits? and required to give up so much? Why be called on to surrender life! when thousands of Christians find religion a source of honour and wealth?'

At this point comes in the doctrine before us to stay the rising murmur. 'To you it is given, not only to believe, but to *suffer*. And the sufferer shall reign in the Christ's kingdom of glory.'

Many do not hold those doctrines of Christ which lead into trouble from the world. And not seeing the peculiarity of the Christian's heavenly calling, they see not also the hope given to animate him.

Be strong, then, Christian! Your work, your sufferings shall be rewarded. The Lord knows your trials. He has appointed a day to console you. He has fixed a day in which the sowers and the reapers of His great field shall rejoice together; while the slothful servant is shut out: Matt. xxv. Now is the time of trial, then the day of answering promotion. Those who have been humbled to the darkness of the dungeon, shall come out into the light of God's glory. Those who have passed through the fires shall be promoted, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the kingdom of

a greater than Nebuchadnezzar. The sowing may be in tears, but the reaping shall be in joy.

David, the Lord's anointed king, is driven into exile, in tears, and peril. Barefoot, and with head abased, he climbs the hill of Olivet. But after his humiliation and flight come victory, and return in triumph. Then his mind turns to requite the friends who in his day of suffering opened to him their stores, and drew their swords on his behalf. He remembers the kindness of Barzillai, and would requite it by a seat at his own royal table. David's intentions are indeed baffled by the heaviness of age, and its desire for quiet. But not so with Christ. 'He shall bid His faithful servants enter into His joy. He shall infuse new life into the glorified bodies of His aged and His sleeping ones. "His rest shall be glory."

Shall we look a moment at Joseph? He is rejected and hated by his brethren, because of his superiority given him by God. Sent to them by their father, they sell him as a slave. He is cast into the dungeon on a false accusation. He seems forgotten of God and man. But it is only for a season of trial. Then comes his marvellous and sudden elevation. Owned to be the chief in wisdom, he is advanced to the chief rank. He is virtually King of Egypt. All before him bow the knee.

Most can see that this has been in part fulfilled by Jesus in His day of suffering. Few observe, that the glory and the kingdom have yet to be fulfilled in Him. Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand, awaiting the kingdom, when all His foes shall be put under His feet. He shall have dominion over all the works of God. "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou." He will remember those who have served Him. Seek then a place in this kingdom of the true Joseph!

TRACTS ON THE KINGDOM.

No. 4.

THE GIFT AND THE PRIZE.

THE New Testament speaks both of a GIFT and of a PRIZE.

What is a gift?—It is ‘*something bestowed without price.*’ What is God’s gift?

“The wages of sin is death; but *the GIFT of God is ETERNAL LIFE in Jesus Christ our Lord:*” Rom. vi. 23; Eph. ii. 8; John iii. 15, 16; xvii. 2; 1 John v. 11. It is also called “Salvation.”

What is a PRIZE?—It is ‘*a reward gained by some performance.*’

New Testament Scripture speaks of a prize as set before us.

“That I may know Him [Christ] and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, *if by any means I might attain to the select resurrection from among the dead.** Not as though I had attained, either were already perfected; but, I follow after, if I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold on it, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things behind, and reaching forward unto the things before, I press toward the mark for the PRIZE of the high calling† of God in Christ Jesus:” Phil. iii. 10—14.

* Την εξαναστασιν την εκ νεκρων.

† Or rather ‘the calling above.’ Της ανω κλησεως.

Again:—

“ Know ye not, that they who run in the course of the foot-race* run all, but one (only) receiveth the *prize!* So run that ye may obtain. Now every one that entereth the lists is temperate in all things. Now they do it in order to obtain a corruptible crown, but we (do it to obtain) an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so box I, not as one that scourgeth the air; but I keep under my body, and lead it about as a slave, lest after having acted the herald to others, I myself should become disapproved:” 1 Cor. ix. 24—27.

Here then the Christian prize is stated to be a partaking in the first and blest resurrection of the thousand years, or the millennium: Rev. xx. 4—6. It is also called ‘the reward,’ or ‘the kingdom.’

The *gift* of God then which is *eternal life*, and the *prize*, which is *the millennial kingdom*, are two different things. They differ on almost every point.

1. Eternal life is, as its name imports, something which *has no end*. But the kingdom of the Christ *ends* after a thousand years, and is given up by the Son to the Father, that God may be all in all; Rev. xx. 4—6; 1 Cor. xv. 23—28.

2. Eternal life is something which is begun to be enjoyed already; John iii. 36; v. 24; vi. 47; 1 John v. 13. The believer is *already* “*saved*,” and ought to rejoice on this account: 1 Cor. i. 18; Rom. viii. 24; Eph. ii. 5, 8; 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. iii. 5; Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16. But the prize or the kingdom

* Σταδιον.

is something which even Paul was seeking for and had not then attained: Phil. iii.; 1 Cor. ix. It is a reward for *service* to Christ. and *suffering* for His sake. “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into *the joy of thy Lord:*” Matt. xxv. 21—23. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit *the kingdom* for I was hungry and ye gave Me food;” and xxv. 34—36. “*Not every one* that saith to Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into *the kingdom* of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven:*” Matt. vii. 21; Luke vi. 35; 1 Cor. iii. 8—17; Matt. v. 11, 12. “We must through many troubles enter into the Kingdom of God:” Acts xiv. 22. We are never said to be elect to the millennial kingdom. We are said to be ‘invited’ to God’s Kingdom of Glory: 1 Thess. ii. 12. God means in this way to pay wages to His labourers, both of the Old Testament and of the New. “*He that reapeth receiveth wages*, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together:” John iv. 36. This reward is to be at the seventh or last trump, when the kingdoms of this world become “the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ:” Rev. xi. 15—18. It is in another place stated as given by Christ at His return: xxii. 12.

3. Eternal life is bestowed on God’s elect at once upon their faith; and cannot be lost: Eph. ii. 8; John iii. 15, 16; v. 24, vi. 40, 47; x. 28; 1 Tim. i. 16;

Acts xiii. 46; Rom. viii. 29—39. It is given to sinners *against their deserts*. “*Not by works in righteousness which we did, did He save us, but according to His mercy:*” Tit. iii. 5. “To him that worketh not, but believeth in Him that justifieth *the ungodly*, his faith is reckoned unto righteousness:” Rom. iv. 5. Eternal life is the present *possession* of our calling. The millennial kingdom is the *hope* of our calling: Eph. i. 18.

The prize of our calling is to be sought for with effort. “*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness:*” Matt. vi. 33. “But rather *seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you:*” Luke xii. 31. “From the days of John the Baptist until now *the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and violent ones are taking it by force:*” Matt. xi. 12. “The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is being preached, and every one is pressing into it:” Luke xvi. 16.

4. For the believer to be seeking after eternal life would be unbelief. For the believer *not* to be seeking after the prize of *the Kingdom*, is unbelief. God becomes the rewarder of the diligent seeker: Heb. xi. 6; Matt. v. 46; vi. 1—16; x. 41, 42. To whom is the prize to be given? To those “*accounted worthy:*” Luke xx. 35, 36. “They which shall be *accounted worthy* to attain that age, and the resurrection from among the dead (the

first resurrection) neither marry nor are given in marriage, for neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels:” Heb. iii.; iv.; vi. 11.

Hence exhortation comes in to stir us up to desire and to seek this glory: Heb. iii. 13; iv. 11. “*Exhort one another daily*, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made *associates* of the Christ [‘*Thy fellows:*’ Psa. xlv. 7, when He comes to take the kingdom,] if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” “*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any fall after the same example of disobedience*” (*Margin.*). For as human prizes require certain excellencies, and may be lost by the contrary offences, so with the prize of God. Some of the offences that will cause offenders to lose this glory are stated in 1 Cor. vi. 1—11; Gal. v. 19—21; vi. 7—10; Luke xviii. 17; Eph. v. 5; Rev. ii. 26, 27.

And the danger of loss is not distant and slight. Hence the apostle bids us seek, as if we were the only one that could win the prize. He exhibits to us twice the provocation of God’s people Israel, after their deliverance out of Egypt, as warnings to us: Heb. iii.; iv.; 1 Cor. x. And the Most High has commanded the actual exclusion of some believers from fellowship at the table of the Lord for certain specified offences. Most churches are compelled, at some time or other, to excommunicate some of those received, because of these sins. But those justly accounted

unworthy to sit down with their brethren in this imperfect state and time, will be by Christ accounted unworthy to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the millennial kingdom.

He has distinctly said, that He will confirm the just judgments of His churches on this point, when He comes : Matt. xviii. 18.

On this subject Abraham, the father of the faithful, is set forth to us as an example. He is first justified by faith : Gen. xv. But after that, he is found obedient to God's commands of circumcision and the offering of his son. On that latter occasion God by oath binds Himself to fulfil to Abraham all His promises, which look onward to the millennium. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for *because thou hast done this thing*, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; *because thou hast obeyed My voice :*" Gen. xxii. 16—18.

With Israel, Abraham's sons after the flesh, it was just the reverse. They believed God at the beginning of their deliverance out of Egypt : Ex. iv. But then instead of obeying God, they provoked Him by unbelief and disobedience, till at length He *swore* they should not enter into the land of promise, the hope of their calling. "*Look to yourselves (therefore) that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward :*" 2 John 8.

MOUNT SINAI

AND

MOUNT ZION.

HEB. xii. 12—29.

THIS is, by general consent, one of the most difficult passages of the New Testament. But, as the writer thinks he has light on it, he commends the following exposition to the notice of his brethren in Christ.

The Epistle to the Hebrews embodies two great subjects :—

I. God has bestowed *eternal life* on the believer as a *gift* ; it is ours through grace, and in Christ. The Holy Ghost warns therefore the sons of God by faith against falling back from Christ to Moses and law. To do this would bring in the *justice* of God, and any who will dare the justice of God, must perish assuredly.

II. But *the millennial kingdom* is a PRIZE to be sought by patient continuance in good works. This may be lost by negligence and unbelief ; and therefore warning comes in.

The believing Hebrews were suffering affliction from their brethren who adhered to Moses. They were dispirited by much suffering ; and by the decrease, if not the dying out, of the hope of Christ's return, and

of His millennial kingdom of glory. They had been called by the Most High to run a race with a crown in view. But the heat of the day, and the length of the course had exhausted their strength. Their hands had well-nigh ceased to perform the good works of faith; their knees were seldom and feebly bent in prayer.

The apostle, therefore, seeks to re-invigorate them, by assuring them of the reality of the coming of Christ, and the certainty of reward to those who hold out to the end. He awakens their fears also, by the view of what they would lose, if they gave up hope and effort.

“Cast not away your confidence which hath *great recompence of reward.*” “For yet a little while and *He who is coming will arrive, and will not tarry.*” “Now the just by faith shall live; but *if he draw back, My soul hath no pleasure in him.*” x. 35, 37, 38.

“The second time without sin *shall He appear* unto them that look for Him *to save:*” * ix. 28.

Thus there is a reference to Isaiah xxxv. 2—4. “They *shall see the glory of the Lord*, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye *the weak hands*, and confirm the *feeble knees*. Say unto them that are of a feeble heart—‘Be strong, fear not: *behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you.*’”

With a reference to the same context was John the Baptist encouraged by our Lord, when his faith wavered in the prison. “Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not:” Gal. vi. 9.

The thirteenth verse alludes to the dangers of following crooked courses, in order to get quit of persecution.

“Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

* This is the order of the Greek.

There was danger lest those halting through lack of faith should abandon the Christian hope altogether, if stumbling-blocks arose from the conduct of the leaders.

This lameness was an inward spiritual fault. But when to that difficulty is added the external difficulty of a rugged and devious path, the danger would be greatly increased. But these feeble believers were to be encouraged and healed, not excluded from fellowship. Whence it is clear, that the church is not to be solely a school of exercise for the sound and strong, but also an hospital for the diseased. Even the lame were believers, moving on in the way of God; and care was to be exercised, not to turn them out of it, but to seek their restoration to strength.

There is a reference, I believe, to Israel's march through the wilderness; and to the danger there was lest those growing weary and footsore, might be seized on by Amalek: Deut. xxv. 18.

14. “Pursue peace with all, and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord.”

Israel might fight at Rephidim with their enemies of old; but the Christian is to be a man of peace. *No Christian, then, ought to be a soldier.* For believers are the sons of God; and God is not now showing Himself as ‘Jehovah, *God of armies,*’ but as “the *God of peace,*” who has made peace by the blood of the cross. Jesus therefore calls on all His disciples to resemble their Father by kindness to their foes. Peace with all—with the men of the world, as well as of the church. Our only foes are spiritual foes; our only arms are spiritual: Eph. vi. But peace is not to be bought by the surrender of truth. Hence follows the call to holiness, which is effected by truth alone.

Christ our Lord is coming, therefore let us seek holiness. Here begins more clearly the allusion to Israel at Sinai. Moses is directed to say to Israel—

“*Lo, I come unto thee.*” “Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes. And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai:” Ex. xix. 9—11.

So now the Lord Jesus has given notice of His appearing, and it seems likely it will be on “the third day”—if we reckon by Peter’s rule—(2 Pet. iii)—that a thousand years are with the Lord one day.

There are two kinds of holiness; that of Israel, which was a cleansing of the *flesh*; and that of the church, which is a cleansing of the *spirit*, or conscience: Heb. ix. 10, 13. The first kind of holiness was effected by water applied to the flesh and to the clothes. The second, through the blood of Christ applied to the inner man by faith, and by the holy Spirit’s energy!

Answerably to these two holinesses there are two visions of God. (1) After the washing in *water*, all the people beheld the Lord in cloud descend upon the top of the Mount. But they were forbidden to draw near. (2) The second cleansing was by *blood*; and after it, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, with seventy of the elders of Israel went up to the Mount, saw the God of Israel, and feasted in His presence.*

Thus there will be in the kingdom to come *two* approaches to Christ. One will be the distant vision of the Lord by men in the flesh, requiring a cleansing of the *flesh*, as well as of the *conscience*. The other will be the near access to the Lord in the heavenly places, the sitting down at Christ’s table in His king-

* It is interesting to observe, that Sandie has proved two points. 1. God descended at first on SINAI. This is the name of the *top* of the mount. It is about three miles from the plain in which Israel stood. 2. God then descended to the lower bluff overhanging the plain. That is called Horeb. Thence God spake the Decalogue. There, I think, the elders feasted.

dom, with those accounted worthy. This will belong to those risen from the dead. And in order to this there will be, not the climbing to the top of a mount, but the being caught up to meet the Lord into air: 1 Thess. iv.

Be it observed, that it was not *all* of the elders, nor *all* the sons of Aaron who went up; but a selected number alone. The Mediator’s approach to God was a third position of vision, better than the previous ones. This height seems to apply to Christ alone: Ex. xxxiii. 12—18.

This “seeing the Lord,” is one of joy and reward. All men will one day appear before Christ; but this beholding, as requiring holiness, refers to the vision of glory on the Mount. And it answers to the words of the Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount, where He promises to the *pure in heart* the sight of God: Matt. v. 8. The next verse speaks of the blessing attached to the *peacemakers* in that day. Thus remarkably does one doctrine of Scripture confirm the other.

By the sight of the Lord is here meant the glory of the millennial kingdom, as we gather from Paul’s parallel exhortation to the Ephesians. “For this ye know, that no fornicator, or *unclean person*, or covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any portion *in the kingdom of the Christ and God*.” Eph. v. 5.

This vision of Christ as Lord of all refers to His coming in the kingdom with power and great glory. That had been previously promised as the time of salvation to those that look for Christ: ix. 28. See also Isa. xl. 5; lxvi. 18.

● Our preparation as Christians for the sight of the Lord, is by blood and by water. The *blood* is *sprinkled* upon our *hearts*; *the whole body is to be bathed in water*. Has any of my Christian readers neglected this last? If he refuse, he will rue it in the coming day. The sprinkling with blood is once for all; the bathing in water but once also.

Against this holiness which Christ requires, there are many enemies lying in wait. These therefore are to be guarded against. The elders of the church of Christ answer to the overseers who superintend, or might superintend, the preparations for Jehovah's advent.

Four different irruptions of evil, contrary to the sanctification required, and so cutting off from the vision of reward, are named in subordinate clauses of the sentence before us. "Looking diligently, lest any one falling back* from the grace of God trouble you."

The host which Christ was conducting and to which these Hebrew Christians belonged, was the host of *grace*. Their countrymen opposed to them, were of the army of the *law*, and of justice. The figure used then seems to point at the time when Pharaoh's host was advancing to slay and carry captive the host of the Lord. These ailing believers answer to any whose courage might have failed them, and who might have straggled behind, intending to desert to the camp of the foe. The man who turned back to Moses and the law left Christ and grace: Gal. v. 4.

Two senses of the word "grace" will here apply, and are closely allied. (1) 'Grace' is sometimes spoken of *the system of the Gospel*, or 'objective' grace, as it would be called. (2) Sometimes it is spoken of *the favour* in which a superior holds an inferior: in this case 'the favour of God.' So Paul bids believers in the first sense, "continue in the *grace of God*:" Acts xiii. 43. So Peter says: "This is the true *grace of God* wherein ye stand:" 1 Peter v. 12. In the second sense the apostle writes—"Now the just by faith shall live; but *if he draw back, my soul hath*

*So the margin—"Fall from." But it is the present participle.

no pleasure in him," and so feels not favour towards him, but displeasure: Heb. x. 38.

Thus the nation of Israel when set before the visible mount fell back from the grace in which God was leading them, under the other principle *law*, and its justice; and the consequence was the displeasure of the Most High at their sin. Had it not been that Moses their mediator had found grace in God's sight and interceded for them, they had been cut off. This verse then is not spoken of the ungodly, or unconverted. The persons intended *had accepted grace, and were as yet under God's favour*; but like the Galatians, they were falling back to law. Such are not exhorted to *accept* the grace of God, but they were to be looked to, lest they should *fall back from* their previous standing.

"*Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*"

Here is a second danger. There are some evils in the Christian Church, which as medical men say of diseases, are 'sporadic,' occurring in scattered instances; and some which are 'infectious,' and spread rapidly. It is of the latter kind of mischief that the Spirit of God here speaks.

The "root of bitterness," signifies the secret leanings of the hearts of some towards some form of unbelief. At length, one bolder than the rest, suggests the wicked thought and action, and a party arises, determined boldly to act out the sin. (1) Such was the sin of the calf made at Horeb, into whose worship the nation was, as it were in an instant, drawn. (2) Such was the unbelief which led the congregation to refuse to enter the land, because it was both an undesirable portion, and the entry on it was impossible. (3) Such were the conspiracies of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. (4) Like these was also the sin of Achan which troubled the camp of Israel and defiled it.

Probably the danger which was the nearest to

some was, that they should join the Roman idolatry ; as some of the Herodians had already done. They thus got quit of persecution from Israel, and were on the winning side, as far as the rulers of earth were concerned. This is remarkably confirmed by the passage in Deuteronomy, to which allusion is probably made. "Lest there be among you *man* or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to *go and serve the gods of these nations* ; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood : " Deut. xxix. 18.

This idea is strongly confirmed by Israel's history at Sinai. As soon as they doubted the return of Moses, the root of unbelief was there. When they openly denied the likelihood of his reappearing, there was a rush towards idolatry. Just so the unbelief of the Saviour's return, so confidently expected at first, would turn the heart of some defaulters towards a visible and tangible defence against earthly trouble.

To those who resisted the evil, the root brought *trouble*. To those who accepted it, *defilement*.

16, 17. "Lest any be a fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for a single meal sold his rights as the first-born. For ye know that even when afterwards he wished to obtain the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no room for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

It does not appear from Scripture that Esau was a fornicator ; but this is one of the sins against holiness which will involve exclusion from the millennial vision of Christ. It answers to that word in Deuteronomy—uttered by Moses when the Lord's people were about to enter on the earthly prize of their calling. "Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor ; for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you : " Deut. iv. 3. This is confirmed by what the Holy Spirit says on another occasion, on which He brings

before us the conduct of Israel, on the one hand ; and that of Jehovah, on the other : 1 Cor x.

The fourth offence against sanctification which would exclude from the blessing of the firstborn, is an ungodly bargain. It is possible to barter away things spiritual for trifles of earth ; and to repent when too late of the bargain, at a moment when God will not suffer it to be changed. Esau's sale of his birthright for a single meal is a conspicuous example of this. He despised the birthright ; himself depreciating it—a strange procedure in the case of one selling a commodity. He confirmed the sale by oath ; calling in God to be a witness and avenger, if the bargain was broken. He forgot the circumstance, till the time came to receive the blessing. Then a sense of its value flashed across him, and he earnestly desired *that* which he had previously sold beyond recovery. But God overruled the circumstances, so that though he was the father's favourite son, he lost the blessing of the firstborn ; and not his bitter passionate pleading and tears could recover it. There was no room for repentance after a sale by oath. *God* remembered, though *he* forgot !

To whom does this apply ? *To believers now !* They may, against the remonstrance of conscience, seize upon or hold fast to worldly position and advantages, of which Christ requires the surrender. If they do, they gain temporal things at the expense of spiritual. They will find that the bargain holds good in the day of the first resurrection. They are receiving their good things now, to their loss and exclusion in the day to come. It is observable that Esau made the sale when he was fatigued and discouraged, as the Hebrews were. He so forgot the bargain, as quite to expect to attain the blessing which he had sold. Esau was a son of Isaac, as the Christian is a son of God. The birthright really belonged to Esau ; and he despised and lost it. So there is something which a Christian now has, which

he may neglect and lose also. What is it? Not eternal life; that is ours by promise. What then? The *prize* of our calling may be lost.

“He found no place of repentance.”

Whose is the repentance spoken of?

On this point there are two opinions. Some holding that it is (1) *Esau's own* repentance; others, that it is (2) his *father's* repentance.

Nakedly so stated, it seems as if we gave a strange sense to repentance in the second case. But such a view omits to notice the peculiarities of the passage in hand. First, then, we must look at the history. The writer manifestly directs our eye to it. “*For ye know.*” He appeals to the record of God, oft read by the Jewish reader.

“And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and *he shall be blessed.* And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father! And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, *Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?* And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of

the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above: And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck:” Gen. xxvii. 30—40.

From this narrative it is clear, that Esau did not seek *repentance in himself for his sin*; but *repentance in his father*. Had he sought to repent, and that earnestly with tears, he would have really repented. But such a phrase as ‘seeking repentance’ in regard to a man's own self, is not to be found. Moreover, when we apply the clue found in the history, to our present verse, the sense is perfect. “When he wished to obtain the blessing he was *rejected*, for he found no place for *repentance*, though he sought it carefully with tears.” The question was *not* in that hour—‘Will *Esau repent* so as to gain the blessing?’ The blessing was conveyed away beyond opportunity of repentance on his part. The price of his sin had been enjoyed, and he had sworn not to undo the bargain. But the question was, ‘Is he to have the firstborn's blessing?’ *That* he wished for: *that* he sought. *That* was *refused him by his father*. Then comes in the word, “For he found no place for *repentance.*” The one whom Esau wished to *repent* was his *father*, and he sought to produce *in his father* that *repentance of his decision* which he was unable to obtain. Here the sense is complete and in accordance with the history, while the other sense is not.

The ‘repentance’ sought comes in after the statement of ‘rejection’ found. Esau's wish was to possess the blessing, and therefore, he sought to remove the barrier which he found in his father's determination. But he prevailed not. Observe, moreover, that it is not said, “There *was* no place for repentance.” But ‘he *found* none.’ That is, the appeal is to the history, and the history affirms the interpretation of repentance above given. He *did* seek repentance of

his father, in the recall of his decision. He did *not* seek repentance for himself toward God. Far from really repenting, he determined to slay his brother.

And to this view attaches the true application of the passage to ourselves. Profane bargains may now be made by believers. Yea, and *are* made. Here is one who, against the remonstrances of conscience enters, or continues in, the ministry of the Church of England. The fruits of them may now be enjoyed; but in the day to come such will be rejected from the blessing of the firstborn. Great will then be the desire of the glory lost; but in vain. The Heavenly Father will be more firm than Isaac. Vainly will the loser seek with tears to *change his Father's mind!* Let us then beware of such compacts!

The Kingdom is to be given to Christ *the firstborn* by the Father, when He a second time introduces Him into the habitable earth.

Israel in relation to the nations of earth was God's firstborn. Israel was to obtain the priesthood and kingship by obedience to the covenant: Ex. xix. 5, 6. But we have already received the standing by faith and of grace. We are peculiarly redeemed and consecrated to our dignities, by the blood of the Lamb; and are registered on high. As we are believers while Israel is in unbelief, and as we receive no portion on earth but rejection, therefore, in the coming kingdom we take a higher glory than the patriarchs or the saved of the twelve tribes, if we are well pleasing to Christ.

But warning is given to us, that it is possible by unbelief to lose the standing of the firstborn, as well as the blessing. This is Paul's argument in Gal. iv. If Gentile believers became circumcised, they voluntarily joined the lower covenant, and became sons of Hagar the slave-mother; having Jerusalem below for their city. The same lesson is read to us by the history of Esau here. He ceased not to be a son; but he lost

both the standing and the blessing of the firstborn by his own misconduct.

Of *that*, believers are to be partakers with him under not a few conditions, which many Christians break without scruple or fear. They will repent of their offence when too late. God their Father, though He loves them as sons, will yet be firmer than Isaac, and hold them to the bargain they have made, the brief fruits of which they have already enjoyed. God Himself is under oath about it, not to admit such to the glory of that day. Esau was not *cursed* by his father; he obtained an inferior blessing; even as the rejected from millennial reward will yet enter eternal life, as having names in the book of life. What it is which the believer so offending will lose, this epistle points out in several forms.

We are now presented with the characteristic differences of standing between Israel of old, and Christians, together with the bearing of this upon our conduct.

18—21. "For ye came not near unto a mountain capable of being felt, and to kindled fire, and unto blackness, darkness, and tempest, and to sound of trumpet, and to voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that not a word more might be added to them. (For they could not bear that which was commanded.) 'And if but a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned.'* And, so terrible was the spectacle, (that) Moses said—'I am terrified and trembling.'"

What is the connexion here? It is very close, as evidenced by the 'for.' It links on to verse fourteen, which describes the need of holiness in order to the vision of reward.

"Ye came *not* near unto—but ye *came* near unto." Those addressed by Paul, then, were men of faith. The fathers of Israel drew near to the Mount of Justice. The men of unbelief, followers of Moses, after Christ had come, were still near the awful Mount of fire.

* See Critical Editions.

But the men of faith had left that earthly position for a heavenly one. Christianity is not merely a new edition of Judaism. It gives a new standing, and a new rule of life, on a different principle.

Their drawing near to these objects took place by faith, and the men of the church whether living or sleeping, may, in a moment be translated to the midst of these objects belonging to the new covenant in its heavenly department. The translation is not effected by death, or by our going to Christ, but by Christ's coming to us: ix. 28. Then both the living and the dead of Christ's people will enter together on their portion in these things.

Paul is tacitly answering the boasts of the men of the old covenant. They thought only of the *glories* of the meeting of their nation with God at Horeb. Paul then displays the failures of that covenant. It was full of *terror*. And this ought to deter Christians from touching it. He points out too the superior glories of the new-covenant objects.

The covenant of Sinai was the boast of Israel, as elevating them above the other nations of the globe. It was to this covenant, that there was a danger of some Hebrew Christians falling back. The Holy Ghost therefore depicts for us its awful character. The sights and sounds of God's descent among them shook the stoutest hearts with terror, as Moses led them forth out of the camp to meet with God.

Seven points are named:—

(1) Before them was a *mountain*, not visible only, but so close, as to be capable of being touched by the hand. Ours is a mountain, not only incapable of being touched by men in the flesh, but one beyond the present range even of sight.

(2) "*And to kindled fire.*" Jehovah descended upon the Mount in fire, and His words came forth out of the fire. How then could mortal men, and sinful men meet the claims, or live with, the God of law who

dwells in *fire*? This was especially terrifying to them. Beneath the Lord's feet the mountain smoked and trembled, and burst into flame. The people feared, lest the flames should leave the mountain and consume them. Nor was it an idle fear. Jehovah cautioned them against touching the Mount, lest He should break forth upon them. And they felt the force of the warning.

"Now therefore why should we die? for this *great fire* will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die: " Deut. v. 25.

(3) (4) (5) Besides this, there were *smoke*, and *clouds*, and *thunders*, and *lightnings*.

(6) (7) "And the *sound of a trumpet*, and the *voice of words.*"

The trumpet was the signal for Israel to leave the camp, and to draw near to the foot of the Mount. It was the sign of Jehovah's descent. They were awed, not by *sights* alone, but by *sounds* of dread. And these last seem to have more contributed to their terror than the sights of judgment near.

The voice of the Most High urged His own righteous claims with such piercing effect, that they begged that God would not add any further word. A mediator was needed. Man cannot bear, either physically or morally, to hear the claims of God uttered by Him. How awful then will be the day, when He shall *pass sentence on transgressors!* Reader, are you a sinner? How will you meet the vengeance of God on sin, when you could not have borne even the statement of His claims?

The multitude were alarmed also at the severity of the enactment against touching the place of Jehovah's feet. If an unconscious beast offending against this ceremonial enactment, was to be slain, *what should become of a man wilfully offending against moral enactments?* It was evident, then, that the excuse of ignorance in the case of a sinner would not

be allowed. They were also required so to slay the beast as not to touch it with their hands, *lest themselves also should be defiled*.

Lastly—and this is particularly forcible—the very man to whose lot it fell to be the mediator of the covenant, confessed, that the scene terrified himself as truly as the rest. Some have inquired—‘Whence come these words of Moses? They are not in the Scripture.’ It is true. But shall it be difficult to the Spirit of God to give us tidings of that day which Moses omitted to give? We can at least point to the spot in the narrative of that day, where, it is probable, the statement was made by Moses. After the description of the scene with its terrors, the Scripture adds—“*Moses spake and God answered him by a voice:*” Ex. xix. 19. The voice of God was probably a word of encouragement to him, like that which Moses in his turn gives to the people: Ex. xx., 20. The word used is in the present tense, “I quake.”

How does this scene at Sinai rebuke the carelessness of those, who think it a small matter whether God be obeyed or not!

We are next presented with the answering standing of the Christian.

2. “But ye came near unto Sion, a Mount and a city of the living God, a heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to a festival and assembly of firstborn ones enrolled in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, Mediator of a new covenant, and to a blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than Abel’s.”

This second seven of objects belonging to the new covenant is in close connexion with the *seeing the Lord*. He is to be beheld at last in the city above, the heavenly Jerusalem. The articles are omitted before the objects, as in the first seven.

In opposition to God’s ancient people, men of the letter, and of the flesh, we, at our conversion, drew

near to *seven objects of faith, testified of by God*, far more real than the objects presented to Israel. For “the things *seen* are *temporal*, but the things *unseen* *eternal*.” Our heavenly calling introduces us to heavenly objects. We stand before them as Israel before Sinai. We are really quite close to these things, though as yet we see them not. A veil is over them for the moment; but at any instant they may be revealed to our sight, and we may be caught up to, and for ever dwell among them.

Our drawing near is of the spirit, as theirs was an approach in flesh. And to them it was said—“Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: *and worship ye afar off!* And *Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come nigh:*” Ex. xxiv. 1, 2. What a contrast to the call to us! “Having therefore, brethren, *boldness to enter into the Holiest* by the blood of Jesus LET US DRAW NEAR *with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*” We are as yet on earth in bodies of flesh, and these things are up in heaven, so that we do not at once enter on their possession; but they are ours in title, and when possessed of our resurrection-bodies (*not, ‘at death’*), we are to enter on the enjoyment of them.

What are we to understand by “Mount Zion”? Many contend that it should be taken literally, as speaking of that mount, on part of which the earthly Jerusalem stands. The main reason for so regarding it is the presence (in our translation) of the definite article. But there is no article in the Greek.

I cannot receive this view; for the following reasons:—

1. The Mount Zion of which the writer of this Epistle speaks, was *not an object of touch* or of sight; else there was no contrast between the Mount to which Israel drew near, and that to which the Christian does. But Mount Zion, literally taken, was daily an object of

sight, and trodden by the feet of many of the believing Hebrews who dwelt at Jerusalem. It is certain, then, that *this* Mount Zion is heavenly, and therefore is not an object of sight or of touch now. It is indeed a *real* mountain, one day to be seen and to be trodden by the feet of God's saints; but in resurrection only.

2. The mount in question was one to which *the man of faith* alone drew near. But to Mount Zion the earthly thousands of unbelieving Israelites drew near. Some dwelt upon it. Therefore the Zion here spoken of is Mount Zion the heavenly. Moreover, in this Epistle the Holy Spirit counsels the men of faith to leave Jerusalem the earthly. It was lying under judgment, and soon to be desolated by the Roman sword. The curse was lying on the bloody city. It was spiritually Sodom and Egypt! Therefore the word is not—'Come to it!' but 'Go out.'

3. Again, we believing Gentiles do *not* draw near to the *earthly* Mount Zion. Its glory has departed. Neither at Jerusalem nor at Gerizim are the true worshippers to worship the Father: John iv. 4.

4. The other objects in verses 22—24 are not earthly but heavenly. So then is this, the only one on which a doubt could be raised, heavenly.

5. Lastly, the objects presented to us in verses 22 and 23, stand distinguished from the first seven by being *unshaken*, and abiding for ever according to the argument contained in verses 26 and 27. The things which Israel saw, whether on earth or in the sky, are destined to be shaken and to pass away, but our objects are to be *unshaken*, appertaining to the eternal kingdom. Therefore the Mount Zion spoken of must be the heavenly one; for the Jerusalem of earth will be destroyed with the old earth. It is the slave-mother, (Gal. iv.) and she and her child abide not in the house for ever, while the freeborn son does. Thus Paul says in this Epistle—"Here we have no *continuing* city; but we are seeking the one to come:" xiii.

But while in the desert there was only a mountain, and it was ages before Jerusalem the city was possessed by Israel, with us it is different. Our *mountain* and *city* are both provided by God in Heaven! Mount Zion the earthly, was a part of Jerusalem the earthly. Together they made up 'the city of God.' It is so in this case also. The *city* and the *mountain* will be united in heaven. The mountain of heaven is the twelve foundations of precious stones on which our city stands. "The heavenly"—then characterizes alike both the mount and the city. As the one is heavenly, so is the other. Thus it is stated also in the Apocalypse. There we find Mount Zion and the New Jerusalem: Rev. xxi. 10. Thus too, by uniting the mount and city, the number seven is made up.

The old Mountain of Sinai was called 'the Mount of God,' because God there descended; and made His glory to rest: Ex. xviii. 5; xix., xxiv. It was at that spot that Aaron met Moses: Ex. iv. There Jethro, leading Moses' wife and sons, met him and Israel: xviii. There Moses and Israel met God: xix.

But when Israel was settled in the land, Jehovah chose a spot where both *mount* and *city* should be united. Thither Israel went up thrice a year, at certain specified seasons, to meet with God, and to keep with joy the festivals of the Lord: Deut. xii., xvi. Thither were all the males of Israel to appear before their God.

It is to this that Paul, I believe, specially alludes. The order could not be observed, while they were in the desert wandering; but when they had come to their *rest* and *heritage*, the law was to be in force. Thus these objects are set before *us* now, although our rest and heritage are to come.

Our city is the "city of the *living* God." Jerusalem of earth was the city of God. But God was not there displayed as the God of *life*. Men died there, as surely as elsewhere. Their kings were buried there, of

which Jehovah complains : Ezek. xliii. 7. But our city is the city in which God will manifest Himself as the God of life. For all the dwellers there shall be risen from the dead ; and death cannot enter there. Israel could not draw near to the God of law without the signs of *death* threatening them, in the earthquake, and fire, and tempest. But we draw near to God in Christ as the God of life eternal in resurrection. Christ is the Son of the living God ; and believers of the church are in Christ ; and because He lives, they shall live also.

The heavenly Jerusalem is a real city ; as real as the old and earthly one. When the saints shall have put on their new bodies, they will need a place to stand on, and they are to have mansions to dwell in. It is not in the Revelation alone that the city is spoken of. In this literal and dogmatic epistle it is described as a city. So Jesus speaks of it as a literal city, in His address to Philadelphia : iii. 12. Abraham, as the man of faith, expected it ; as the blessed contrast, in its twelve foundations, to his poor frail, foundationless tent. This is the city in which the men of faith shall at length, as the heirs of God, assemble. It differs from the earthly Jerusalem, in that its plan, and its framing, and materials, all come direct from the hand of God. While Israel's place, as the men of the letter and of the flesh, was at the foot of a sterile mountain without food or habitation ; ours is a city in which shall be found the tree of life, the water of life, the glory of God, and the everlasting mansions of the saved.

It is a question not easily adjusted how the following words are to be divided. I divide them, with the authorised version.

(2) "*And to myriads of angels.*"

'But so doing you offend against the structure of the sentence. The other points enumerated begin with 'and,' but there is no 'and' before 'general assembly.'

No ; but may not this be accounted for ? By the omission of 'and' at this point the author shows his desire to disconnect in some measure, the *five* objects which follow, from the *two* which precede. For the angels are not so closely connected as ourselves with the spirits of the just, or with the Mediator and His blood. But the decisive point in favour of this arrangement is, that we read of no festival belonging to the angels, while the passover is the feast of the firstborn. And Jesus tells us that the passover has yet to be "*fulfilled in the Kingdom of God :*" Luke xxii. 15, 16.

This notice of the angels refers to our forming part of God's great family. Angels belong to Christ, and He is coming with them as His reapers, when He shall render to each of His people according to their works. Then Christ shall be the ladder of Jacob, on whom the angels shall ascend and descend. At Sinai there were multitudes of angels. But Israel was fenced off from them : we on the other hand have them as our fellow-servants and our present aids. They will be the sentinels of the city of God : Rev. xxi.

(3) "*To the festival* and assembly of the firstborn enrolled in Heaven.*"

Jehovah enacted, that there should be a festive assembly of the males of His people three times each year, at His chosen city. This will have its counterpart in God's better people of the church. Only their festival will be in heaven and in resurrection.

Who are "the firstborn" ? The saved ones of the Church of Christ. As we have observed, Christ is the Firstborn of the firstborn. Israel, in reference to the saved of the church is only an inferior son, as compared with the firstborn. The firstborn were God's priests, and kings. Answerably hereto we see two different standings even at Sinai. The *priests* were

* Πανηγυρει. This word is used by the LXX. several times to signify the times of the Jewish festivals : Hos. ii. 11 ; ix. 5 ; Amos v. 21.

distinguished from the *people*; though even they were not allowed to draw near, were it but to *gaze*: Ex. xix. 21, 22, 24. The firstborn were in peculiar danger in Egypt, and were especially protected, when Egypt's firstborn were cut off: Ex. xii. Therefore the passover as solemnized afterward at the mount, and in the city of God was peculiarly '*the festival of the firstborn!*' Israel celebrated the anniversary of the passover before the mount of God: Num. ix. 4, 5. Israel is as yet unclean by the dead body of the Son of God, whom they have slain. Hence they will not, and do not keep the feast now together with *us*: Num. ix. 6—14.

This future passover festival is also the time of joy at the inauguration of the new covenant, and answers to David's festival when he brought the long forgotten ark into the city of God's choice. Then was David's kingdom established: the Lord gave him rest from his foes. The assembly at Sinai in Exodus xix. was by no means a joyful and festive one, for fear swallowed up joy. It was the Mount of Justice.

Christ is 'the firstborn of every creature;' and 'the firstborn from among the dead.' He is our head to whom we are to be conformed: Rom. viii. 29. He is to be a second time brought into the habitable earth, and then the angels are to worship Him, and we are to judge angels: Heb. i. 6. That festival is to be held when we are coming to our rest, and to our inheritance in the city of God.

Jehovah took the tribe of Levi to be His priestly servants, in place of the firstborn of Israel. We Gentiles then peculiarly ransomed are sovereignly taken in place of Israel. Kings and priests of Israel went up to feast with God, and to behold Him on the mount, while the nation in general was kept at a distance below: Ex. xxiv. This was a type of the two different standings of Israel, and of the church.

The firstborn of Israel were numbered and enrolled by Moses on earth (Num. iii. 41—43), before they

came to keep their festival of the passover in the land. We are enrolled in heaven in the book of life. We are not yet come to heaven; but have a name and heritage there.

(4) "*To God the judge of all.*"

This has proved a stumbling-block to most commentators. For how is God as the Judge an object of *grace*? Hence they have sought to give a new turn to it. But it is not needed: it is not allowable. While this Epistle most fully testifies to the present throne of grace and unrestricted access to God in the Holiest during this day, while Christ is the Mediator interceding above; it testifies just as boldly of the day to come, in which Christ will appear as the King and Judge, to render to each according to his works. The millennial-day is "*the day of judgment.*"

Some indeed deny this future judgment of believers: but the testimony of Scripture is plain enough to the contrary. Jesus calls all His servants before Him; and they have to render individually an account to Him. In the parables of the Talents and the Pounds we see Jesus as the Judge of His servants. Whether His sentence be favourable or otherwise, it is in the same capacity of Judge that He decides concerning each. It is at His *judgment seat* we must all appear: Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10. The coming day of Christ's judgment is to take effect on *every soul of man*: Rom. ii. 5, 6; Jude 15; 1 John iv. 17; James ii. 12—14.

To this judgment, moreover, Paul has already borne witness, where he uttered the Spirit's threats against any who should draw back to Moses and law. "*Vengeance belongeth to Me, I will recompense; saith the Lord. And again, 'The Lord shall judge His people':*" x. 30. So, later on, when addressing the believing Hebrews, he asserts the lawfulness of marriage, he adds—"But whoremongers and adulterers God will *judge*:" xiii. 4 (whether they be in the church, or outside).

'But is it not written—"He that believeth on Him that sent Me hath eternal life, and *shall not come into judgment*"?' John v. 24.

No! *It is NOT so written!* It is—"Hath eternal life, and BOTH not come into judgment, (*ερχεται*) but is passed from death unto life."

All the three statements of the verse refer to the position occupied by the believer as soon as he believes. But they do not deny that his judgment is to come.

'Yes; but the Psalmist says—"That none living shall be justified before God if He judges."

Aye, but we are speaking of those *already justified by faith*, who are one day to be judged according to works. The question as regards them is not—"Are these foes of God or friends?" But—"These are servants of God; how have they behaved themselves since they *were reconciled to God*, and became servants of Christ?" The God of *grace* is the God of *justice* also.

There are three great classes to be judged in "the day of judgment." 1. The angels. 2. The firstborn. 3. The righteous.

Moreover, the passover, the festival of the firstborn, was an occasion of God's judging. The deliverance of the firstborn was one based on judgment. It was the time of Israel's going out of Egypt, and their attitude in eating the lamb was to be of those prepared to leave the land of bondage for that of liberty. "Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. *For I will pass through the Land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment. I am the Lord:*" Ex. xii. 12. Hence, closely after the parties to be judged, we have Paul speaking of the true Mediator, and of the blood of the true Lamb of God.

Israel was warned on that occasion, that judgment was coming, and that only the houses signalized by the blood were safe. Hence the command,—"*None of you shall go out of the door of his house till the morning.*" For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite:" 22, 23. That was a word, not to the Egyptian, but to the Israelite. This answers therefore to the awful warnings of Heb. vi. and x. against deserting Christ, the true High Priest, and the shelter of His blood. For there were some amidst the believers of that day who were hesitating, whether they should not do it. To them applied also the warning, that one who had fled for refuge to the provided city was not to go outside its walls, or he was in danger of death from the avenger of blood. Thus the word—"The Lord shall judge His people," is not to be explained away, as without any bearing on the believer. Judgment of the believer in the coming day appears again and again throughout the epistle: i. 9; ii. 1—3; iii., iv., etc.

"*And to spirits of just men made perfect.*"

This gives us the Old Testament saints; from whom Christians stand distinguished throughout the Epistle. "God spoke to *the fathers* by the prophets unto *us* by His Son." 'To *Israel* the word of angels; to *us* the word of the Lord Jesus:' ii. 1—3. Moses the leader of the one people; Christ of us: iii. "Whose house are *we*." The good news of God was sent to *Israel*, it is repeated to *us* in a new day: iv. 2. 'The parties first addressed forfeited the blessing; let us see that *we* do not!' 11. To *Israel* was given "the word of *righteousness*;" to *us* the word of *grace*, which let us hold fast: ii. 9; iv. 16; xii. 28; xiii. 9, 25. To *Israel* was commanded the law under the priesthood of Aaron; for *us* the law is set aside, for the priesthood is changed: vii. 12. To *Israel* of old

was given the sanctuary made by human hands, and reared on earth. *To us* the heavenly sanctuary, which the Lord, and not man, has pitched. To Israel belonged the old covenant; to *us* the Mediator of the new covenant and His blood, with its cleansing of the conscience, a thing impossible under the law. The men of law serve a God that stands aloof, and that forbids even His priests to enter into His presence. But *we* are all priests consecrated by blood and by water, called to draw near to the Holiest of the heavenlies. After exhibiting the worthies of the older day as men who wrought and suffered on the principle of faith, and after noticing their trial as ended, and their good report as won, Paul adds: 'That a better place is reserved for *us*; and that the two parties are both to be glorified together; wherefore the men of the early day are waiting for *us*.' For the rest to come will embrace all three classes: those before the law, those under it, and the men of the Gospel. Together they will make up "*the people of God*:" xi. 25. All three are to be judged, and then to enter the rest of God.

This conclusion is confirmed by the title given to these ancients. They are the "just," or "righteous." Abel is named as one of the righteous: xi. 4. They suffered "for righteousness' sake:" Matt. v. 10. But we for Christ's sake (11, 12) and our principle of action—the formative and fundamental principle now—is *grace*. So that the worthies of *this* day are characteristically the "gracious." It is confirmed too by their being described as "spirits" "made perfect." For they are regarded as belonging to an antiquated dispensation, of which all the subjects had passed away from earth, and so were departed "spirits." Their time of trial being ended, they were perfected in regard of their souls, though they were awaiting the perfection of their bodies in resurrection. The living Israel of the law were rejected, unrighteous, guilty of the blood of the Son. They were not the people of

God, And those to whom the apostle wrote were living men, and so in contrast with departed spirits. We are "the firstborn" in dignity now, and shall be so in heritage, although in point of time we are the last-born.

But the Saviour has taught us God's sovereign counsel, that "the last shall be first."

"*And to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant.*"

Jesus here stands opposed to Moses in the former group. Moses was terrified at the characteristic spectacle presented by the very covenant of which he was mediator. But Jesus our Mediator is not terrified and trembling at the foot of the mount of earth, but seated at the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heaven, waiting there, till God's power shall subject to Him His foes.

On the three occasions in this epistle on which our Lord is spoken of as Mediator, His covenant is described as "*a new covenant*." Why not "*the new covenant*"? *We* always so describe it.

Because this was not the ordinary view in Israel, and so was not the usual expression of those to whom the apostle wrote. With us it is a settled thing; to the Hebrew Christians it was needful to prove their entirely new standing, resulting from the transfer of the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifice from the sphere of the earthlies to the heavenlies.

Here we may be assured, that the writer is speaking to *true Christians*. 'They had come to the Mediator of the new covenant, and to His sprinkled blood.' But unbelieving Israel refused Jesus, both as Mediator and Sacrifice. They stood to Moses and law.

"*And to a blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.*"

The absence of the article before each of the two groups of seven is remarkable. The English translation defaced this feature.

There are waiting, then, before God for the time of Christ's descent, two classes; the approved before and under the law, and the approved of the Gospel. The righteous of the law, and the firstborn under Christ, together make up the one "people of God," for whom the future sabbath-rest is preparing: iv. 9. These two divisions of the saved, divisions based upon the different attributes of God under which the saved have been educated, will in the day to come appear in visible distinctions of glory. The son of the bondwoman is not to inherit with the son of the freewoman: Gal. iv. The approved of the law and the approved of the Gospel will indeed form one great family; but we are the firstborn, and our inheritance is double theirs. This gives further light to the closing statement of chapter xi. that the Old Testament men of faith are waiting for their glory, and are to enter on it only when we are ready, to whom is assigned the chief portion.

The reference now is clearly to the making of the old covenant at Sinai: Ex. xxiv. After the sacrifices, Moses read the Lord's commands, and they promised to do them. Then he took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and they were consecrated thus to be the Lord's people. Their promised obedience of the flesh was the ground of the covenant. But we stand on the *accomplished righteousness and satisfaction of our Surety*.

Here the Saviour's blood is exhibited, not in connexion with Himself as *High Priest*, but as *Mediator*; answering to the position of *Moses* in making the covenant. The apostle does not make the scene of Ex. xxiv. the characteristic scene of the law; for the voice of the Mediator and of blood came in at that point to hush the previous terrors of the Mount. Our drawing near is in grace, after the voice of the blood sprinkled on us.

When the former covenant was made, blood was

used; but it was not the Mediator's own blood. Hence it had less of the nature of a testament,* than now. But we, before the new covenant is made with Israel, enjoy the Gospel-benefits of the blood of Jesus, by virtue of its being the will and testament of the Mediator. For the blood of the covenant is produced as the proof of the death of the Mediator and Testator, and thus we enter on the legacies of His will.

It is very noticeable, that the blood is spoken of as distinct from the Mediator. So also in x. 29. It appears, that the Saviour at His death parted with all His blood. It was drawn out of His body by the scourging, the nails, and finally by the spear. Hence after His resurrection He says—"A spirit hath not flesh and *bones* as ye see Me have." He says not "flesh and *blood*;" although in our Epistle the apostle describes Jesus as in the days of His life on earth as partaking of "flesh and *blood*." And Paul affirms, that bodies of "flesh and *blood*" cannot, as being mortal, have part in the heavenly places of the kingdom of God: 1 Cor. xv.

Some of Christ's blood was taken by Himself up to heaven, as our ransom-price; and as the sanctification of the heavenly things: ix. 23. By virtue of its presence in the sanctuary above, we have a welcome to draw near into the Holiest. "By His own blood He entered in once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us:" ix. 12. By that we are consecrated to serve the living God: 14. In the Lord's Supper too His body is exhibited as separate from His blood.

The blood of Christ, then, is *in heaven*. It is also in another sense *on us* who believe (ix. 14), sanctifying

* That the word is rightly translated 'testament' in ix. 15—17 I doubt not. The proofs are, that (1) *διαθεμενος* never means 'mediating sacrifice;' and (2) *νεκρος* is never applied to animals.

us to God as kings and priests. It is further given to us to drink in the Supper.

Of this twofold use and application of the blood, Ex. xxiv. is a witness to us. For Moses in making the covenant takes half of the blood for God, and sprinkles it on his altar; and half he sprinkles on his people.

It is sprinkled spiritually on our heart and conscience: ix. 14; x. 22. It gives us full confidence to draw near to God.

So that we of the Church of Christ are now occupying the place of the priests and rulers of Israel, who were by God invited to ascend the mount, and to feast before Him. The seventy-four went up, after the blood was sprinkled upon the people, and on them. Immediately after the account of the blood sprinkled, we read, "Then *went up* Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And THEY SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL; and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon *the nobles of the children of Israel* He laid not His hand; ALSO THEY SAW GOD, and did eat and drink."

We as God's firstborn, answer to the seventy-two* nobles of the sons of Israel. The blood is sprinkled on us, and we are waiting to be called up to see God, and to His festival on high. We are waiting also for Christ's descent for us into air with shout and triumph: Ex. xix. *also has then to be fulfilled.*

This blood speaks better things than Abel's. The blood of Abel was sprinkled on Cain his murderer, but only to condemn him. The blood of Christ is sprinkled on us, according to God's mind. Its speech is twofold. To God *for us*, giving us peace; and it speaks also *to us*, calling for our love and obedience

* Moses and Aaron together represent Christ in His double capacity of Leader and High Priest.

towards the Mediator. The blood of Christ introduces believers into the new covenant, and the new earth: while Abel's blood called for vengeance both on the murderer and *his earth*. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground. And now art thou cursed *from the ground*, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood at thy hand. When thou *tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength.*" Gen. iv. 10—12. Into *our earth and city* the murderer cannot enter: and no cry of blood can rise up.

But this notice of Abel's murder and of its voice is closely connected with what follows. For the day of vengeance for the blood of the Martyrs has yet to come. It will be earth's darkest and most terrible day—the day of the shaking of heaven and earth, preparatory to their passing away for ever: Mat. xxiii. 35; Rev. vi. 9, 10; xvi. 4—7, 17—21.

Thus the Mediator and His blood stand in blessed opposition to the last two objects of the first group—"The sound of a trumpet and the voice of words," which pierced and terrified the souls of the men of law.

25. "See that ye decline not listening to the Speaker. For if they escaped not, who declined to listen to the Speaker of oracles on earth, much more shall not we (escape), if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven."

Our seeking after holiness then is rendered more facile than of old. For law and its terrors are inimical to holiness. True holiness comes from love. Holiness in its perfection is impossible under law. "*Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law but under grace.*" Rom. vi. 14; viii. 4—6. "*I through law died to law, that I might live to God.*" Gal. ii. 19. "*The strength of sin is the law.*" 1 Cor. xv. 56.

Israel at Sinai begged to be excused from hearing any more words of God. There was the same spirit at

work then among the people of Christ; yea, there *is* still. The trials of obedience were found to be so great, that many respectfully excused themselves from obeying some of Christ's commands. His calling them to give up their friends, to leave their national worship, and to resist to blood, were calls felt to be so severe, that they begged to be excused. It is so still. The Saviour's words in the Sermon on the Mount, the command to be immersed as a believer, the prohibition of oaths, war, and so on, are by many felt to be so difficult, that they respectfully decline obedience.

The Speaker at Sinai is the same as the Speaker now the Giver of divine oracles*—Christ: i. 2; ii. 3. Under the old covenant and its earthly calling, He spoke from earth. During the heavenly calling, He speaks from heaven. That it must be Christ who as God spoke at Sinai, is certain; for the God who gave the Decalogue was *seen* by the seventy. But the Father has never been seen: 1 Tim. vi. Moreover, this exhortation is delivered with a view to our one day *seeing* God.

That which troubled Israel and that which they declined was *prohibition*, and its *penalty* on disobedience. One prohibition with its penalty was given before the Decalogue was uttered. But after the ten commands there are chapters full of further prohibitions and penalties: Ex. xxi. 2, to xxiii. 33. Those things from which believers now would draw off are also the commands and prohibitions of Christ together with their penalties.

But some Christians refuse commands and penalties altogether. 'They are *legal*.' Not so. We have already been discussing some: x. 35; xii. 1, 12, 14, etc. 'Follow holiness, beware of profaneness,' and then the penalty, if disobedient, of not seeing the Lord.

Attend to the things spoken by Christ. For if the

* *Χρηματιζω*. Always to be taken for God's speaking.

words to Israel carried a penalty to the disobedient *much more shall not we, if disobedient, escape*: ii. 1—3.

It is supposed, therefore, that both under the old covenant, and the new, there are commands given of God. It might be hoped then, by some, that a respectful protest against certain commands felt to be very difficult would release the parties protesting from any responsibility in declining to obey them, and from any penalty. It is to close up such hope, that these words are given. God's previous dealings with His ancient people in like circumstances are considered to be a conclusive reply, discovering what He will do in like failures of His present people; for the Speaker is the same.

The protesters of Israel when disobedient and murderers, did not thereby escape. The sword fell on them when guilty of idolatry; the plague cut off those who offended in the matter of Baal-peor, and the oath excluded them from the land. Hence it appears, that neither will those who decline Christ's commands now, escape.

"They" and "we" mark out the two different divisions of God's people. "We" includes all true Christians; Paul among the number. This division began to be made by Christ from the first. "It was said to *them of old time* but I say to *you*."

The terrific circumstances under which Israel begged to decline listening form some excuse for them. But the more gracious conditions under which the men of faith are now set, remove all such excuse. Hence the ground for infliction on defaulters abides, with a 'much more.' I commend this and the like statements to those who affirm, that nothing but grace can ever attach to God's people now.

The turning away of God's people Israel was partial. Thrice the word here used occurs in Numbers xiv.: the chapter which tells of Israel's temporary refusal to enter the land, and their consequent sentence to die in

the desert. "Ye shall fall by the sword: because *ye are turned away from the Lord*, the Lord will not be with you:" 43. These escaped not the sword, or the death in the desert.

Paul knew then that some were turning away, in part or in whole, from Christ's commands, as unreasonably severe. Such disobedience however would not escape punishment.

26, 27. "Whose voice shook the earth then, but now He hath promised, saying—'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but the heaven also.' Now the word, 'Yet once more'—manifesteth the removal of the things shaken as of things that have been made; in order that the things not shaken may remain."

That the Speaker then and now is the same, appears on the very face of this statement. The Speaker is He who shook the earth. Now Moses' voice did *not* shake earth. Thus then the previous assertion is confirmed.

One of the most terrific circumstances attendant on the giving of the Law at Sinai was omitted in the former group of seven. With the fire there was also earthquake. "*The whole mount quaked greatly:*" xix. 18. But now it is brought into view, and its significance is pressed.

And here we come upon a current false interpretation of the passage, which utterly destroys the apostle's argument; and which it were well to remove before expounding these verses.

What then is the shaking here spoken of? and what is its time?

It is supposed and asserted by Owen and others, that the coming of which Haggai speaks—from whom the promise is taken—was the Saviour's *first* coming. Let us look into the matter.

In the days of Haggai, the returned people said, that the time for rebuilding the Lord's house was not yet come. The Lord assures them, that they were in error. That the troubles they were experiencing

around them arose, because of their neglecting to build it. Thereupon they arose and did build. But the issue was so poor a house, that those who had seen the former, wept. Nevertheless God comforts them. 'Be strong!' The covenant of Sinai is not annulled. I am still your God. "*Yet once*, it is a little while, *I will shake the heavens and the earth*, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, *and the desire of all nations shall come*, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." "The glory of this house shall be greater, the latter than the former," saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this place will I give *peace*, saith the Lord of Hosts:" ii. 6, 7, 9.

Some take the shaking of the *heaven* and the *earth* to be the same as the shaking of the *nations*; which is certainly wrong. The shaking of the nations is the *consequence* of the shaken earth: Rev. vi. The coming here spoken of is evidently the Saviour's second coming. The temple at Jerusalem was not filled with glory at the Saviour's first appearance. On the contrary, Jesus had twice to cleanse it from its defilement. There was, at the Saviour's first advent, none of the brightness which filled the temple at Solomon's dedication, but which is promised in a day to come: Ezek. xliii.

Nor was Jehovah there describing Himself as "Jehovah of *hosts*." Nor did God give *peace* in Jerusalem, as the prophet promised.

On the contrary, Jesus expressly warns His disciples against supposing that He came to bring *peace* anywhere on *earth*. He had come, *not* to bring *peace*, but division and the sword: Matt. x.

It results too from the erroneous assertion—that the prophet means the Saviour's first coming—that the shaking of heaven and earth must be a *spiritual*

* It is generally agreed, that this is the better rendering.

shaking of a *figurative* heaven and earth. Then *earth* means the Jewish *civil* polity; and *heaven* means the Jewish *ecclesiastical* system. This idea necessarily follows; for there was no literal shaking of heaven and earth at our Lord's Incarnation. The shaking of the nations, then, must be made to mean the revolution effected in morals among the heathen nations which accepted the Gospel. As a further consequence the removal of the old civil and ecclesiastical systems of idolatry and oppressive rule, *is come*. It is effected by means of the Gospel. Thence it follows finally, that *the Gospel dispensation and its present privileges are the eternal and abiding kingdom never to be shaken!*

Now this conclusion stands in direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the Epistle, and to the foundation of the Gospel itself. Now is the time of "the word of the kingdom," not of its *power to smite and remove*: Matt. xiii. 19. *That* is to come only at the Saviour's sending forth His angels to do justice on the wicked, and to carry the righteous into the glory of the kingdom of their Father: verses 41—43. Now is the time of the invitation to the feast; the feast cannot begin, till all the guests are assembled, and the king's son has made his appearance: Matt. xxii.

But let us regard the matter as seen from this Epistle.

(1) First, then, Paul here exhibits Messiah Himself as waiting His second coming, and His kingdom: i. 6, 8, 13. He describes Him as having, in promise, though not yet in performance, all things subjected to His feet. Now this subjection of all things looks onward to a *future* day. We are awaiting His coming to save us: ix. 28.

(2) If we look at the question from Abraham's history, as here stated, we find, that he has not yet inherited the land of promise, but is desiring a better city and country than any which earth can bestow. "For here we have *no continuing city*: but we *are*

seeking the one to come." That is, the city in which the saved are to dwell is one, which even under the Gospel has not yet come. Much less have believers entered it! Abraham's victory over the kings, and the blessing of Melchizedek have, in the antitype, yet to come.

(3) If we regard it in the light of the history of Esau and Jacob, then this is the time in which the profane sale may take place; but *the blessing of the firstborn has yet to come*. It looks onward to another day and dispensation: xii.

(4) If we take up the history of Israel as here presented, we are as *yet in the wilderness, passengers and pilgrims through it, not yet come to our rest and heritage*. We are called on therefore to be careful, lest like Israel we be shut out from the future and unfulfilled rest of God, belonging to the end of God's redemption-work, which is still going on: chap. iii. iv.

(5) From another point of view, we are the man-slayers who have fled to the city of refuge and are shut up there; looking for restoration to their lost possession, as the result of the death of the High Priest. This restoration is yet to be; and has not been received by the Gospel. The Gospel has given us the true *refuge*: but that is temporary only—the refugee looks to his lost standing.

(6) Looked at from Moses' covenant, we are set in the place of Joshua and the seventy elders on Mount Sinai, waiting for Moses' descent from the mountain. That is, our present position is not one of the unshaken things. Our hope is to be realised in a future day, and at the coming of our Mediator, for whom we are to look.

(7) Moreover, the apostle describes the position alike of the Old Testament worthies and our own, as one of waiting. It is now the time of the race—the crown is not yet given: xi. 39, 40; xii. 1—13. In short, it is the time of *faith*, not of *sight*. Nor can

the unshaken kingdom come, till this season of exhortation and of toil is over.

(8) Scattered up and down the Epistle occur not unfrequent notices of the *future*, as being the day of our hope. Salvation is yet to come: i. 14. The age of glories is yet future: ii. 5. The supernatural gifts were tokens of it: vi. 5. The good things of our High Priest are yet to come: ix. 11; x. 1. It is the time of *hope*, not yet of *possession*: xi. 1; iii. 6; vi. 11, 18; vii. 19; x. 23; xi. 8. The feast at the opening of the heavenly tabernacle, and the introduction of the ark of the new covenant are yet to be.

This interpretation, then, being manifestly opposed to first principles, and to the whole tenor of the Epistle, let us turn to the true view; which it is not difficult to establish.

“Whose voice then shook *the earth*.” What earth? The literal one. What kind of shaking? A literal one! Oh then! the shaking of heaven and earth *yet to come is literal too!* And if so, then the coming of Christ spoken of by Haggai is His *second* coming, and not His *first*. For there was no literal shaking of heaven and earth at the Saviour’s first advent; but it is to attend His second coming, as many places of Scripture testify. The apostle cites this shaking, as yet to be. “I *will* shake.” (The true reading.)*

The shaking of heaven and earth is not to take place in Gospel times, it is not suited to a day of grace, but is the result of God’s displeasure, in the great and terrible day of the Lord: Isa. xiii. 6—13; xxiv. 1, 5, 6, 19, 20; Joel iii. 16. And the *fire* of the Lord consumes heaven and earth, at the last great outbreak of rebellion: Rev. xx.

* Σεισω. If you read *σειω* with our translators, “I am shaking,” the issue is the same. Then the things established, and *not* to be shaken, have *not yet appeared*.

Thus the two contrasted positions of the men of law, on the one hand, and the men of faith, on the other, have two great references in this passage.

(1) *Backward*. The apostle shows, that our standing is far more *favourable to the holiness* that God calls for, than the old position at Sinai. Here the reference looks backward to ver. 14.

(2) *Forward*. The writer compares the two sevens in regard of their respective *stability*. The first seven pass away; the second seven abide evermore.

Observe, that the announcement by the prophet goes beyond the statement of the law. The prophets were commissioned to describe the coming of the new covenant, and so the things attendant on the passing away of the old covenant come into view. Hence they speak of the future terrible shaking of earth and heaven, sometimes even testifying of their passing away. This was not suited to Moses’ day. For the earth was to be the portion of Israel, if obedient. It is in its future state, to be the joy of Israel, ‘the land of the living,’ and the home of the righteous.

Of the future shaking of heaven and earth Isaiah witnesses. It is to take place, not in our Gospel day, but in the day of wrath or of judgment on the living.

“Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall move out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger:” Isa. xiii. 13.

“The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously:” xxiv. 19, 20, 23.

The New Testament also bears witness thereto.

“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: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away:” Matt. xxiv. 29, 35.

This concussion just precedes the millennial kingdom of the Christ. And the reason of the shaking is the Lord’s vengeance for the blood of the martyrs. Accordingly, in the Apocalypse, after the martyrs under the altar have called for judgment, the next seal gives us the terrible shaking of both earth and heaven: Rev. vi. 12—17; xvi 4—20. Hence it stands connected in our passage with the ‘*Blood of Abel*,’ which calls for vengeance against man and his abode.

But if so why is this removal of heaven and earth called a ‘promise’? To the man of unbelief this may be regarded as a threat; but to the believer it is a promise: for a better heaven and earth, not to pass away, are to succeed them. And so Peter states it—“Nevertheless we, according to His *promise*, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness:” 2 Pet. iii. 13.

But what means that indirect reason given in the removal of the old? “*As of things that have been made.*”

These words teach us, that there are before God two creations. The first has been defiled by the entrance of sin and death, and is to pass away. The second has *yet to be shown*. It is to come after the destruction of the present creation. This was stated at the opening of the epistle. After the quotation which tells of the Son’s millennial kingdom in company with His “fellows,” a quotation follows, which declares, that this present creation shall pass away. “They all shall wax old as a garment; and *as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed*; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

The prophet Isaiah had foretold the same. “For behold, *I create new heavens and a new earth*; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind:”

Isa. lxxv. 17. “For as *the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain* before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain:” lxxvi. 22. It is evidently to these passages that the apostle points, and on these turns the phrase which has been found so difficult.

The shaking of the heavens and earth is the shaking of the old creation; but it is to be replaced by a better creation, which God *is about to manifest*. The present heavens and earth are to retain their places, only till each word of the Old Testament has received its accomplishment. Then, as having fulfilled their purpose, they will pass into annihilation. I know indeed, that many think, they will be only purified by fire. I am sure, that this idea is contrary to the testimony of God: Rev. xx. 11; xxi. 1, 2; Matt. v. 18; xxiv. 35. The new creation will be of new materials and more excellent workmanship, as built for eternity. God has created anew those who in this dispensation are made His sons: 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 15; iv. 24. Answerably thereto the new man will have new heavens and earth, the result of the new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

“*In order that the things unshaken may remain.*”

These words tell us, that the scene at the giving of the Law conveyed by God’s design, a hint of the passing away of “the heavens and the earth that are *now*.” If “that which *decayeth* and waxeth old is ready to *vanish away*,” still more that which is *shaken*. Houses that have suffered two shocks of an earthquake are often unsafe to dwell in, and must be taken down. Two strokes of palsy foretell death at hand. The old covenant attaches to the old heavens and earth; and as the covenant is to vanish, so also the heavens and earth to which it belongs. The old man is to pass away from before God, together with his old and defiled habitation.

If the presentation of God’s *claims* from man under

law shook the earth, how much more shall God's entering into judgment with the sinful, because of *their breach of God's commands*, utterly destroy them?

But at Sinai and its characteristic scene, there was another element closely conjoined with the Lord's presence, and the earthquake of His descent and of His voice. "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it *in 'fire,'* and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a great furnace, *and the whole mount quaked greatly:*" Ex. xix. 18. That is, Paul shows, that the *application of law and justice to a sinful world will issue in the destruction and removal of man's habitation as well as of himself.* This was an important conclusion to be added, in order to prove to those who boasted of the law, and imagined that the earth which now is was to be our final abode, that the touch of law applied to man, the sinner, would issue in the removal of all it touched. As earth shook at the promulgation of law to sinful man, so when the judge shall wind up the account in vengeance, it will cause the passing away of the scene of the lawgiving in flaming fire.

Israel believes in the immutability of the covenant of law given by Moses; this epistle is an argument to prove *that law and all its surroundings must be removed if sinful man is to be saved.*

Hence the apostle has shown a new leader, a new high priest, a new covenant, new sacrifices, and new tabernacle—all of which God has brought in. Hence comes the remarkable notice—where the apostle speaks of Jesus' new Day of Atonement—"But Christ having come as High Priest of the good things that are to come, passing through the greater and *more perfect tabernacle* (that is to say, *not of this creation*), and not with the blood of bulls and of goats, but with His own blood, entered in once for all into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption:" ix. 11, 12.

Here then we see the force of the new place from whence Christ is now speaking, as contrasted with His old place under the law. The seven objects presented in verses 22 and 23, belong to the old creation, and are to pass away with it. But the second seven, as objects of faith, and as belonging to the new covenant are the unshaken objects; and are never to pass away. They stand on grace; and not on sinful man's promised obedience. Hence Jesus, as Mediator of the new covenant, speaks from the unshaken region, not from the lower heaven of Moses.

28, 29. "Wherefore let us, receiving an unshaken kingdom, hold fast grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for moreover our God is a consuming fire."

There are two kingdoms, (1) the *shaken* or millennial kingdom administered by justice, belonging to the old earth and the old covenant; (2) the *unshaken* or eternal kingdom, which begins after the old earth has passed away. The shaken or temporary (millennial) kingdom is a new trial of the flesh in "the day of judgment." The earth and heavens are shaken at the beginning of that day, and pass away altogether at its close. The flesh tried anew fails under Satan's renewed temptation; and then the old man and his old abode are removed. Haggai refers to the coming of the millennial kingdom where he says—"I will shake the throne of the *kingdoms of the nations.*"

"*We receiving a kingdom unshaken.*" We receive the title to the eternal kingdom now. It is ours already by faith and by gift. We obtain a part in it by the blood of the new covenant. We are legatees under Christ's will; accepting our priesthood and kingship as a gift in opposition to acquiring them by works. Therefore it is just the contrary to the contract with God established at Sinai: Ex. xix. 5, 6. That covenant Israel never fulfilled so as to claim the

promises of the law, on the footing of their obedience.

“*Let us hold fast grace.*”

I do not assent to those, who would translate the Greek words in a classic sense. The rendering just given falls in perfectly with the gist of the Epistle. These men were already Christians; sons of God by faith. They are called to hold fast the principle they were already possessed of, and not to exchange it for justice. This is the main argument of the Epistle; a warning against Moses and justice. It would be in effect the renouncing of the Son, and of the Spirit of grace; a passing from the throne of grace to the Mount of Sinai and its destructive fire. So would they exchange the boldness of access given to sons, for the terrible awaiting of judgment and the fury of fire destined for the foes of God.

The same warning appears in the Epistle to the Galatians. They were being drawn in to add the law to the Gospel, as the way to obtain the promises to Abraham. Paul shows the folly of the attempt. It would make them children of the slave-mother, destined to be cast out of the house. Thus they would put themselves under law and the curse, and renounce Christ and *grace*.

The first part and the last of the passage which we have been considering meet and sustain one another. There was danger of their being troubled, even while they held grace, by one of their number falling away from Christ and grace, to Moses and law. Now the fatal and final results are shown, in case any should permanently so fall.

The holding grace is necessary to present acceptable service of God. There was indeed another service of God under law and justice. But even while it was recognized, its inherent weakness was exposed. “Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin *thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein,* which are offered by the law; then said he—‘Lo, I

come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second:” x. 8, 9. Henceforward those sacrifices would be a service of unbelief.

A sense of the terribleness of God as the God of justice was necessary then to steady the believer against falling back to law. It is also needed still. Our service to God must be the opposite of carelessness. This Epistle warns us, that wrath may overtake those reconciled to God, if disobedient to His commands. “So I swear in *My wrath*,—‘They shall not enter into My rest:’” iii. 11; iv. 3. The only place of safety from judgment is the blood-stained house. Outside it is the sword. The place of safety for the manslayer is the city of refuge. Outside it is the avenger.

This, then, is the second reason assigned for the holding fast of grace. (1) Only thus can our present service be accepted. (2) Only thus can we escape eternal fire.

For the nature of God is eternally justice. This is stated, against those who assert, that God is benevolence only; that there is no wrath in Him against the doer of evil.

Sinai is the warning of God’s terribleness as the God of law, to sinners. There was great danger, lest the Most High in drawing near to guilty man should destroy him. The words of law are words of sternness, coming out of the midst of the fire in which Jehovah as the God of justice dwells. *This is part of the glory of the Holy One.* After the blood of the covenant had been shed, and the seventy had feasted before God, we read still—“And the appearance of *the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the Mount:*” Ex. xxiv. 17. Moreover, when Jehovah left the Mount to dwell among Israel in His royal pavilion, this part of the glory still accompanied Him. On the altar of brass the *fire* was to be ever burning. It was indeed confined within safe limits to those who approached God

in His appointed way. The sacrifices and the blood paved an access to God. *But there stood the fire*; and sometimes the disobedient felt it. Witness Nadab and Abihu, Korah and his company.

When God touched the earth in descending to state His claims, He came in fire, and the mount flamed and smoked. When He sends forth judgment at the last, fire burns up the earth: Rev. xx. 9—11.

Here then is an everlasting reason for reverence and godly fear; which may we retain while rejoicing in the grace which gives us an everlasting heritage through grace!

Let us hold fast both God's *justice*, and His *grace*. The same Epistle which says—'Let us draw near'—'Let us come boldly'—says also—'*Much less shall we escape, if!*'

The *agreement* between our position and Israel's relates to a *day to come*—the great *difference* between us and them turns upon our position *now*. *It is grace now; it will be judgment by and by.*

In conclusion, then, the passage cautions believers against two dangers.

1. They may by misconduct lose millennial glory.
2. Or they may throw up grace as a principle of conduct. In so doing they would be cast upon the terribleness of the justice of the Most High. Let us take the warning! Amen!

TRACTS ON THE KINGDOM.

No. 6.

A WORD TO

ANTIMILLENARIANS.

A WORD TO ANTIMILLENARIANS.

—:o:—

THE argument which is oftenest in our day upon the lips of Antimillenarians is of this kind:—

‘We object to your doctrine of the millennium, because of its carnality. We hold, from many passages of Scripture, that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual: Rom. xiv. 17; John xviii. 36. Jesus says, that His kingdom is not of the world; but you make it quite worldly. You assert the restoration of the temple and its services, of animal sacrifices, of the feasts of Moses, the priesthood of Aaron’s family, and so on. Now this is only to debase the Church of Christ and to Judaize it. Does not the Scripture tell us, that the sacrifice of our Lord has put away those sacrifices of bullocks and goats, supplanting them by the better sacrifice of alms-giving and praise? Does not the Epistle to the Hebrews tell us, that Christ’s priesthood has set aside the old line, and that it is an “intransmissible priesthood”? Is not the Hebrews a call to Jewish Christians to come out from the services of the Law and the temple, from the old priesthood, and the old city, and to see in Christ the fulfilment of all these things? When the substance is come then are you going to lead us back to these shadows, to “a worldly sanctuary,” and to blood which can never take away sins? How can this be of God’s mind? It is going *backward*, while God’s scheme is *progress*! How

can you ever expect Christians with their open bibles to accept your views? They are so contrary to the New Testament, that we wonder how any student of it can believe them! It is not Christianity, but a confusion contrary to its principles.'

Let me then put in a reply, which I think will show that the confusion is on the side of the objectors.

1. First then I quite agree, that the scheme of the future dispensation (or the millennium) is *not Christianity, but as unlike it as well can be*. The coming dispensation of the thousand years stands opposed to this dispensation in almost all points.

The principle of the Christian faith is—"We walk by *faith*, not by *sight*." The foundation of the thousand years is—"Sight not *faith*!" Christ is come back; an object of sight to all. With this great change, other things change too. The Lord's Supper ceases. That is a rite only to be celebrated "till he come," for it is designed to witness to the Church of Christ of her Lord's absence, and would be wholly unsuited to His presence. Baptism also will cease, for that is burial to the world; a confession that our portion is not here below, nor in this life, but in the first resurrection. That will be unsuited to a time, when men, and Israel in especial, are to have and to enjoy the earth as their portion. Moreover the name of God peculiar to our dispensation ceases then to be used. It is no longer, 'Father, Son, and Spirit,' but 'Jehovah, Lord of armies:' Psa. xxiv. 10: Isa. ii. 12, etc. Christianity ceases; the Church is at an end, as soon as Christ is returned. It began only after our Lord's rejection by the earth and His hiding in heaven, while the Holy Spirit came down to witness of His unseen glory. It ceases as soon as the Spirit returns on high, and as soon as Christ comes forth visibly from the heaven. Then come the days of refreshing, and the times of the restoration of all things which have fallen now into delapidation and ruin: Acts iii.

2. The principle of the Christian faith is **MERCY**; the principle of the millennium is **JUSTICE**. Now, God is calling on the sinner in grace to repent, that he may receive forgiveness. Then every transgressor will be stricken at once for his sins, and broken in pieces as a potter's vessel by the swing of an iron rod: Rev. ii. 26, 27; Psa. ii.; Jer. xxxi. 29, 30. Christ and Satan are not to reign side by side. *Satan's* reign is now. He is the "prince" and "God of this world;" and its course in general is according to his mind: Eph. ii. But as soon as ever "*justice goes forth to victory*" (Matt. xii. 20.) his power is over: he is caught and imprisoned, unable to get out of his den, till the thousand years are over.* Now the wheat and the tares grow together side by side, but Jesus assures us, that at His coming He will send angels to bind together the wicked, and to cast them into the furnace of fire. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Is earth burnt up then? No! the angels by their power clear the earth of evil things and persons, that it may become the kingdom of the Son of Man: Matt. xiii. 41—43.

That is to be the day too of reward to good works, and to the sufferer for Christ's sake. The trees are either to be spared, or to be hewn down and cast into the fire, according as they have borne good fruit or no. The floor, which is now a mixed heap of straw, chaff, and wheat, is then to be purged, and the chaff burnt *down* with unquenchable fire, the wheat being borne away to the heavenly garner. Now is the time to do *well* and to *suffer for it* (1 Peter ii. 20, 21), a strange calling, quite opposed to that of Israel. But then the Lord Jesus will give the reward to all who have wrought and

* The idea of his being in hell now and in prison, while yet he can get out of his durance when he wills, is strange enough. He is really the lion ranging earth at will. 'What say you then to Jude 6?' It is another class of angels.

suffered for His sake, and the reaping shall be as the sowing.

Antimillenarians think, that the Christian should rule the world, and be a governor bent on setting it right. Scriptures of the New Testament assure us, that we are not to reign in this evil day, while God's best people are suffering persecution, and while Christ is waiting for His throne: 1 Cor. iv. 8—14; Rev. iii. 21. The power of the sceptre shall indeed be given to Christ's approved ones, but in another and better day: 1 Cor. iv.—vi; Luke xix; Rev. ii. 26, 27. To rule now is to exalt oneself, and to reap abasement in the day of the coming kingdom.

There are two different aspects of the kingdom: its present face of mystery; its future one of glory, when Christ comes. We millenarians think your views of the kingdom of grace *not spiritual enough*. For you allow the Christian, though buried to the world by baptism, to seek its honours, power, wealth, science. When we speak of the kingdom we mean generally the kingdom of glory; and then both the spiritual and the temporal are to be enjoyed together, as any one may see on reading Jer. xxx., xxxi. The new covenant, yet future, provides for both the blessings of nature and of grace.

3. Now is the time when Christ's servants are called to labour for Him; for the harvest is vast, the labourers few. And the true servants of Christ are oft fatigued, persecuted, disheartened, in their work. But the coming day is the day of meeting of the scattered labourers on Christ's farm, and of their rejoicing together over God's redemption-work complete. It is the day of battle now, for Satan and his angels are abroad, with fiery darts and strong wrestling, seeking to overcome the Christian warrior: Eph. vi. But then the trumpet of God will have sounded victory and rest from war. The tempting devil at length is caged; the Christian has put off the animal body and needs no

more the armour of proof, which was so necessary to his safety during his marches in the wilderness. As then this dispensation is one of *labour* and of *battle*, the coming one is one of *rest* from *toil* and from *war*. It is the harvest-home of joy over the cleared fields: John iv. 36.

4. Now is the time when the worship of God is not local but spiritual, and the place of assembly is spiritual, on high. Jesus is Priest of the heavenly sanctuary, and we go up in spirit to the Holiest of Heaven. The feasts and fasts and the glories of art are out of season; they savour of the law of Moses. Paul could rebuke such observances as a return to heathenism: Gal. iv. 9—11. Jesus foretells, that the true worshippers shall worship the Father, neither at Jerusalem, nor at Gerizim. *Everywhere* the true worshipper is to lift up holy hands. But is this to be for ever? No! Jesus speaks of this form of worship, as only that of an "hour" then coming: John iv. 20—24. But not a few Scriptures assure us, that *local worship* on earth having Jerusalem as its great centre, will be restored. What say Isa. ii. and Mic. iv.? What say Psa. cxxxii, and Zech. xiv.? And to take one or two Scriptures of the New Testament, what says Mark xi. 17?

"And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called by all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

And Jesus, when taking leave of the temple, declares, that it is left desolate because of their unbelief, and shall not be restored to its glory till they repent, and he returns: Matt. xxiii. 38, 39. As its desolation arises from Israel's unbelief and the Saviour's departure, so with Israel's repentance he returns, and fills the house with glory: Ezek. xliii.

I now proceed to take up the other point, and to show THAT MILLENNIAL VIEWS UNDO THE USUAL

CONFUSION OF THOUGHT, AND PRESENT AN ADVANCE, WITHOUT ANY GOING BACK.

The ordinary views confound together three different fields, kept quite distinct in God's book. What they are, 1 Cor. x. 32, will discover to us. I. THE JEWS; II. THE GENTILES; and III. THE CHURCH OF GOD;

After the flood, we have the peopling of earth by THE NATIONS. Then, God was pleased to select a nation from among the nations for his own. That was ISRAEL, the people of God. Then the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles; into the circumcised and the uncircumcised. On this distinction the Law of Moses is founded, and to it the great body of the books of the Old Testament, especially of the Prophets, refer.

But now God has left Israel to itself, because of its unbelief; and has set up for Himself a new assembly, which is that of believers in His Son. This is called the Church; it is neither Jew nor Gentile, but a body of elect ones called out from each of the former divisions.

Let us look at the matter from this point of view, and the supposed confusion and retrograding of our scheme is gone.

I. LET US LOOK AT THE CHURCH OF GOD.

Then we learn, that it is not for ever to abide on the earth. It is set forth as the great sheet which came down out of heaven, filled with some of the various animals of earth, detained there awhile, and then it is drawn up to heaven there to abide: Acts x. It is described as a field of wheat, sown by the hand of Christ, and spoiled by the secret efforts of Satan: Matt. xiii. But wheat is only an annual plant. It is cut down and borne away to the garner. *The field is not sown again.* Christianity or the Church of Christ ceases with the coming of Christ, and is never restored: Matt. v. 13.

Now of the Church we affirm, that the millennium will bring to it a very great advance. What is its state now? What are its principles?

Its principles are—labour and suffering for a Christ expected to return we know not when. It is set as sheep among wolves, while the world and Israel are foes to Christ, and Satan is abroad to hinder and to persecute the sons of God. It is called to do good and to suffer evil, like Christ Himself. It is not to love the world, nor to seek its reward here below. It is to be a pilgrim and stranger, finding its refuge from sorrow, and suffering, and combat, in the spiritual blessings of heaven and the power of the Comforter.

What a glorious change for the better then will the millennium make to the waiting Church? The Lord Jesus descends and takes His people out of the earth to Himself, whether asleep or alive; takes them away from the trials and sufferings and labours of this time, to His presence of glory, and adjudges their place in regard of the kingdom of glory during the thousand years. The accepted by Him, in place of being subjects, they will then be acting priests and kings; thrones and sceptres will be committed to them by Christ. They will no longer suffer from the pains and aches and death of these mortal bodies, but be clothed upon with incorruptible bodies shining as the sun. Sin and temptation are for them ended ever more. They have given up their tents here below for the everlasting mansions of the Father's house, and for the city of God, the new Jerusalem; whose glories as far exceed those of the earthly city, as the work of God exceeds the best work of man. There they meet the approved ones and worthies of all previous dispensations, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God. I suppose none will deny that there is *advance here!*

II. NEXT AS REGARDS THE JEWS, (OR MORE PROPERLY, ISRAEL. *)

What is their state at present? The Jews, (or the men of the two tribes) of our day are, as it regards religious views, either Rabbinites or Infidels. (The Karaites are so few we may dismiss them from notice.) Rabbinites add to the Word of God the traditions of the elders, and so make the Scriptures void. They know not the Word of God, do not understand their own prophets, are out-casts from their land, and are in consequence unable to observe most of their Law. They have practically no priesthood, temple or sacrifice; there is no hope of their ever, as a nation, accepting the Gospel. They are "as concerning the Gospel, enemies for our sake:" Rom. xi, 28. The final wrath, as Paul says, is already on them. "They please not God, and are contrary to all men:" 1 Thess. ii.

The infidels among them have given up the hopes of the prophets, and think the lands of the Gentiles as good, or better than their own.

They are moving on to a worse condition still. They will indeed go back to their own land probably under agreement with the powers of Europe. But they will go back in unbelief of the gospel, restoring, as soon as they are permitted, the temple, its feasts and sacrifices. Their unbelief will then increase, and their blasphemy will end in idolatry, and in a state of wickedness greater than they have ever reached, till God's wrath in full measure is poured out on them, and the False Christ sets up his throne for worship even in the temple of God at Jerusalem: Matt. xii.; 2 Thess. ii.; Ezek. xxii.

* 'The Jews' in strictness refers only to the two tribes, and leaves out of sight the other ten. But God has not lost sight of them.

What a change will the millennium produce here! The twelve tribes will be brought back to their land, never more to be divided into two nations; never to be cast out of the land of promise. They are to be renewed of heart, all righteous, all anointed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Their cities are to be rebuilt, their temple, priesthood, and sacrifices restored, after a special plan given by God to Ezekiel. Then shall God make with them the new covenant, on the far better footing,—that *the Lord* shall now fulfil its conditions, after *men* have proved their inability. The Law shall be written on their heart, and all shall without teaching know the Lord: Jer. xxx., xxxi.—xxxiii.; Ezek. xliii.—xlvi.

Observe then, that when we speak of the restoring of Jerusalem as the place of worship, of its priesthood, and sacrifices, and feasts, we do not imagine or teach these things as *parts of Christianity*, or as about to be accepted by the Church. We give to *the Jew* his place and portion. That which the prophets of the Old Testament attribute to him in the way of blessings, we keep distinct from the heavenly blessings of the Church. *Earth* is his portion, and not *ours*. *His* sanctuary is a worldly one, his priests, men in the flesh. *Ours* is *heavenly*, our priesthood is to be in risen bodies, and in the *temple above*, which the Lord, and not man, has pitched. *His* city is Jerusalem *below*, into which death and tears can enter. *Our* city is Jerusalem *above*, into which nothing that defileth, no sin or death can enter. The confusion then is that of our opponents. There is no going back here—but an astonishing advance. To you, who justly rejoice over half-a-dozen Israelites now brought to the knowledge of Christ through the efforts of missionaries and societies, how vast will be the subject of joy, when "*All Israel shall be saved, because there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*" Rom. xi. 26. The nation shall, as it were, be born

in a day, shall mourn over the Jesus whom they pierced; and once brought to renewal, it shall never more backslide!

III. A WORD NOW CONCERNING THE GENTILES (OR NATIONS).

We may divide them into—(1) the Pagan nations, (2) the Mohammedan nations, and (3) the nations called Christian.

1. The *Pagan* nations who worship idols are, as all will admit, in so low a condition, that any giving up of idolatry will be a great advance on their part.

2. The *Mahometans* in their present state are little above idolaters. They refuse Christ, and persecute Christians when they can, they are afar from God through wicked works, and deny the true God through their faith in an imposter-prophet.

3. But what of the nations *professedly Christian*? Will not they at least be converted by the gospel? Alas! Any one who knows how Europe in general is divided into the infidel on the one hand, and the superstitious observer of Rome's ordinances and idolatries on the other, and sees how little effect the circulation of God's word by millions has had among them, would not be sanguine, if the result were to be made a matter of calculation on our part. But Scripture teaches, that nations now Christian in name will apostatize; will throw off in hatred and in indignation the very name of Christ, as fettering them in the pursuit of their own worldly and wicked ends. Then will arise the False Christ, who will suit their heart exactly, and will rule over them to their perdition, only to be put down by Christ's coming in glory and power: 2 Thess. ii; Psa. ii.

What change for good among the nations will the millennium effect then? Our Lord finds the nations

assembled by armies to fight against Himself, under the leadership of Satan, His False Christ, and False Prophet: Rev. xix. He seizes and imprisons these their chiefs, and slays their armies. The remnant of living men he assembles in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there pronounces their doom, according as they have dealt by his "least brethren" of Israel: Matt. xxv. 31—46; Joel iii.

Those whom He pronounces blessed then enter on the kingdom of earth, and its enjoyment. They obey Christ as King of kings. They aid the Jews, as the people of His choice, in every way. They confess Israel's superiority, as given by God. They cast away their idols, and worship the Lord returned to His temple at Jerusalem. War is at an end. Its weapons are turned to instruments of agriculture: Zech. xiv; Isa. ii; Psa. xlvi. Earth is prosperous and happy. It yields plenteous crops and fruits to an extent never known now. The nations go up year by year at the close of autumn to worship Jehovah-Jesus in His temple at Jerusalem, and to look on the enemies of Christ, cast into the fire of Tophet, an abhorring to all flesh; Isa. lxvi. They are no longer the sport of Satan's deceits; for Satan is then a prisoner of war in the pit, unable to get forth. Life is prolonged, diseases checked, and the rulers of earth are perfect ones, God's saints raised from the dead and approved of Christ. As now the stream of the world runs increasingly against God and His Christ, so then it shall be in His favour.

Is there then not advance here?

Search and see, Christians! if these things be not so! If they be so, should you not seek to have a place in that day? This is the prize which Paul sought with all his ardour, not accounting martyrdom too great a price to pay, if but thus he could enter on that day of joy, and the reign with Christ: Phil. iii. Do you seek what he so sought? As soon as he believed, this was the race on which Christ set him, this the

prize, this the crown after which he ran: 1 Cor. ix., x.

Is there such a kingdom of glory? Ought we not to fear to lose it? For God says, that while faith is not enough to admit into the kingdom of glory, *unbelief in it is quite enough to shut out*: Luke xviii. 17.

How many of believers in Jesus in our day, proudly refuse this doctrine, and even scoff at it? They will in no wise believe, though a man prove it to them out of the Word of God! They will at length see what they have lost, and will, with bitterness not to be imagined, mourn over their folly and unbelief.

They are occupied with thoughts of the world's conversion by the preaching of the gospel, heedless of the few results of it, and the increasing unbelief and superstition around; heedless above all, of the Scriptures of the prophets which describe the intensity of wickedness, and the terrors of judgment, which are to descend in awful fury on the men of the latter days.

They are like the men in Paul's ship on his voyage to Rome. The apostle testified, that the voyage on which they had entered would be with hurt and danger to the cargo and the crew. But the centurion, the master of the ship, and the majority of these men were for moving onward in that wintry season; and when *the south wind blew softly, supposing they had attained their purpose, they set sail*. But speedily after, their hopes were wrecked. Tempestuous Euroclydon burst on them from the mountains; the ship could not face it, and onward they drifted, amidst cloud, and cold, and rain, and hunger, and mountain-waves, they knew not whither!

But some perhaps who read this have never believed in Christ. To such here is a new appeal. You friend, do not doubt, that there are kingdoms of men, and that each has its king, and its power and glory. You by birth belong to the kingdom of Great Britain, and Victoria is your queen. But, is it true, that God is about to set up another kingdom by His Son, sent

from the heaven to rule over the earth? That Jesus who went up to heaven is about to come back, with His angels and saints, to put down His foes, to destroy with everlasting destruction those that know not God, and those that obey not the gospel of God? If He should come to-day, where are you? You know not God. You have never obeyed Christ. What then must become of you? You must be destroyed in eternal fire! You are chaff, fit only for that! A weed, deserving only to be flung into the furnace! Turn! Turn! It is not too late. Accept this testimony to Jesus' coming, kingdom, and glory! Seek a place in it! And then when the wicked are cut off, it shall be yours to rejoice with exceeding great joy!

THE END.

TRACTS ON THE KINGDOM.

No. 7.

STEPHEN'S ACCUSATION, DEFENCE, AND MARTYRDOM.

FEW readers, or even students of Scripture perceive much force in Stephen's defence, given at such length in the seventh chapter of the Acts. It appears to them only a rambling citation of portions of the patriarchal and Israelite history, having little, or no bearing on the accusations brought against him. They think too, that probably it was broken off, before it reached its intended completion, by violence apprehended or already begun. Hence they are unable to perceive, why his enemies were so exasperated with the speech.

With the Lord the Spirit's help, I think to be able to set the reader at such a point of view, that he shall perceive the martyr's defence to be full of force, strongly bearing against the views of his accusers, and a real and triumphant refutation of their charges.

Stephen was one of the seven Greek-speaking Jews appointed by the church at Jerusalem and by the apostles, to overtake the new emergency of labour, which arose out of the need of supplying the wants of the Hellenist widows of that city: Acts vi. Stephen was one of the new deacons; but beside that, he

wrought many wonders and miracles. He was led into discussion with Jews of the party opposed to Christ. Probably the discussion was held in the synagogue of the Libertines;* and it would seem, that the challenge originated with them.

In the conflict he proved victorious, by the wisdom and grace of the Holy Spirit given him. This vexed the beaten party, and they sought to slay him. It is easier far to kill a man of God, than to refute the arguments he draws from Scripture.

They accuse him, then, of blasphemy against Moses and against God. They set him before the religious council of the nation, and bring against him false witnesses who affirm:—

“THIS MAN CEASETH NOT TO SPEAK BLASPHEMOUS WORDS AGAINST THIS HOLY PLACE [THE TEMPLE] AND THE LAW. FOR WE HAVE HEARD HIM SAY—THAT THIS JESUS THE NAZARITE SHALL DESTROY THIS PLACE, AND CHANGE THE CUSTOMS WHICH MOSES DELIVERED US.”

Stephen's reply indirectly presents to us the arguments generally used by Jewish opponents of Messiah. We see in them the men of the flesh and of law, full of self-righteousness, confident that they were better than their fathers, and entitled to expect the fulfilment of the blessings promised to Israel by Moses and the prophets: Luke xviii, 9; Matt. xxiii, 30. We see them here expecting a reigning Messiah, and refusing a suffering one. Among the accusers of Stephen too, were Sadducees, men who believed that the only rewards and punishments were received in this life; the immortality of man being to them only a Pharisaic dogma. Such men would measure the criminality of each by his history. If trouble befel him, it would be a proof of guilt, and of his being refused by the Most High: Luke xiii, 1—5.

* Meaning Jews, who were once Roman slaves, but had been made free by their masters.

The arguments, then, of the Jewish opponents of Stephen would take some such form as this:—

‘*Jesus is not the Christ.*’

1. ‘How could he be the Messiah, who never received from God the throne and sceptre promised to the Son of David? Psa. lxxii, lxxxix. Jesus often spoke about the kingdom of God, but it never came: Luke xvii, 20. If he were the prophet like Moses, as his friends asserted, he would have had the confidence of Israel, and have proved the deliverer of Israel, as Moses did: Luke xxiv. Now on the contrary when He was seized and condemned, He never delivered even Himself from the cursed and cruel death of crucifixion. Did not God always deliver His beloved servants, when in trouble and danger of death? Was it not promised that Messiah should be covered by God's hand, rescued, and exalted? Psa. xci, 14, 15; xli.’

2. ‘Did not Scripture promise, that Messiah's foes should be cut off? Psa. lxxxix, 23; lxxii, 9; xcvi, 3. How came it to pass, then, if Jesus were Messiah, that the disciples of Moses who resisted His claims, and slew His people, were not destroyed by miraculous judgments, as the prophets foretold?’

That this argument was considered very powerful and satisfactory, we see, from the appeals made to Jesus upon the cross. Passengers, scribes, elders, chief priests, the spectators, the soldiers, the robbers, all, Jew and Gentile alike, joined to challenge Him to come down from the cross and deliver Himself, if He were indeed the Christ, the King of Israel, the Son of God: Matt. xxvii, 39—44; Luke xxiii, 35—46. It was supposed therefore, that His death was the destruction of His pretensions.

3. Another argument against the claims of our Lord, was founded on the *judicial decision of His own nation* against Him. ‘The wise, the learned, the powerful, had rejected His claims, and given sentence of death against Him. The scribes and chief priests

in their council had condemned Him as a blasphemer. Now the law said, that the decision of the priests and judges at Jerusalem should be held to be infallible: Deut. xvii. He was rightly put to death, then, as a deceiver: Matt. xxvii, 63; John vii, 48.'

This argument also was considered of great weight, as we see by the discourse of the two disciples going to Emmaus. 'Jesus,' they said, 'was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people. Yet the chief priests and rulers gave Him up to the Romans to be put to death and crucified Him. If His own nation refused Him as an impostor, how could He be the Messiah? The Messiah's people were to be His willing subjects, as the Psalmist declared: Psa. cx; Luke xxiv, 19—21.'

4. 'How again could He be the Messiah, if He threatened to destroy the temple, and change the customs of Moses? Were not all the godly kings of David's line, zealous for the maintenance of the whole law, restoring it when it had fallen into disuse?'

5. 'Lastly, how could Christians be 'the children of the kingdom' of Messiah, as they supposed, when they were despised, imprisoned, and robbed? Instead of being exalted, they were losing even the privileges which they had gained by the law of Moses. If Jesus were indeed their Head, how was it, that He did not defend them? Why did He not avenge them on those who ill-treated them? What had become of *Him*? If He were risen, why did He not show Himself, that they might see and confess Him as risen indeed?'

Now the speech of Stephen conveys, principally in the way of narrative, a reply to these and like arguments. Viewed from this point of view his defence is a well-directed battery, every shot of which told, and irresistibly laid low his opponents.

The martyr takes the histories of ABRAHAM, JOSEPH, and MOSES, and by these two or three witnesses establishes every word.

Take first the case of ABRAHAM.

What did Israel think of him? That he was 'the friend of God, the great and righteous head of their nation, their father, source of the promises to himself and their nation.'

If now we are to judge by circumstances, how would they prove their views by the life of Abraham?

The Most High began by stripping him of his country, his relations and friends. He was to leave them all for a foreign land, of which he knew nothing. He promised him, that the (1) LAND should be his, and that a (2) POSTERITY numerous as the sands of earth, and as the stars of the sky, should be given him.

Had the Most High then fulfilled to him these promises?

(1.) Did He give him the *land* of Palestine as his possession? "HE GAVE HIM NONE INHERITANCE IN IT, NO, NOT SO MUCH AS TO SET HIS FOOT ON."

He promised the land to his SEED. Did Isaac get it? or Jacob? or the twelve patriarchs?

(2.) Did he see the fulfilment of an innumerable SEED? For long years "HE HAD NO CHILD."

What did God say about his seed? That they should be *strangers in a foreign land, enslaved and ill-treated, for four hundred years!*

How then must they judge concerning Abraham, if they dealt out the same measure to him, that they did to Jesus Christ? They ought to say, 'That it was clear, that Abraham was deluded, or an impostor; for he never yet had enjoyed the promises, which as he imagined the Almighty had made him!'

But if the treatment of Abraham's seed for 400 years was to be so severe as foretold, then it was no proof that believers in Jesus as the Christ were deluded, because they were troubled and persecuted in their own land, and for as long a time.

Then too, it was no proof against Jesus being the Individual Heir, and the chief promised Seed of

Abraham, that he was refused and rejected even unto death.

How would they reply?—‘We admit all that; but another time is coming, in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shall be raised from the dead, and their seed shall then enjoy the land, and become innumerable; while all other promises will be fulfilled to them that are included in the reign of Messiah, the great Heir of Abraham. Moreover God promised, at the very time that He ratified the covenant to Abraham, that He would judge the nation that persecuted them, and bring them out of their bondage to serve him in wealth and freedom.’

To this plea the reply was evident at a glance.

‘We agree with you. But if that future time of retribution, and of the fulfilment of promises avails in the case of Abraham, it avails for *us too*. We also say, ‘Judgment is coming on those who persecute Abraham’s spiritual seed, the children of his faith. And Abraham’s true sons shall have a greater deliverance, and better riches, than those which rescued Israel drew from Egypt. Then Jesus after all may be the heir of Abraham, the seed to whom the promise was made: Gen. xv, 18.’

‘Of the time of trouble which was to precede the deliverance, Jehovah gave an emblem, which ought to confirm our faith. When the covenant was ratified, a *furnace of smoke* preceded *the torch of fire*: v, 17. That is, the brick-kilns and rigour of Egypt were to take precedence of the glorious deliverance: Deut. iv, 20; Isa. lxii, 1. Far then from present persecution furnishing the proof, that we and our Lord are not Abraham’s seed, they are really proofs in our favour!’

Stephen’s observation too, that the God of glory showed Himself to Abraham in Mesopotamia, long before he dwelt in Canaan, is a commencing refutation of their idea, that the service of Jehovah could only take place in the holy land and holy city.

The martyr then speaks of the covenant of circumcision, (Gen. xvii,) which followed on the first covenant, (Gen. xv,) and then traces the line of the circumcised posterity of Abraham up to JOSEPH.

II. JOSEPH.

‘What think you, ye Hebrews, of Joseph?’

‘He was great and wise, the favoured of his father and of his God, ruler of the world, and deliverer of Israel in time of sore need. He was beloved of God too, as witness the dreams which told of his great exaltation, and which as sent from heaven, were at last accomplished.’

But what of his early history, both amidst his own family, and the Gentiles?

“*The patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt.*” They hated him, and could not even speak peaceably to him. When in Egypt he is falsely accused, numbered with transgressors, and thrust into the dungeon by his Gentile master. What say you of him *now*? Do not troubles so repeated and so long continued, prove him to be rejected of God! When his brethren said, “Behold, *this dreamer* cometh! Come now therefore let us slay him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams,” which was the accepted party? The eleven patriarchs, or the one Joseph? Who was condemned by God, the eleven chiefs of the nation, or Joseph? “**GOD WAS WITH HIM.**”

Man’s rejected one was God’s accepted one. The same conduct then on the part of Israel against Christ, promoted by *the same spirit of envy*, is no proof that Jesus is not the Christ, the beloved Son of God: Matt. xxvii, 18; Mark xv, 19. Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver: Jesus for thirty. Joseph was delivered up to Midianites; Jesus to Romans.

Did affliction and humiliation prove Joseph to be forsaken of the Most High? If it did not, neither

does the same affliction avail as an argument against Jesus. God was not only with him, but "*delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house.*"

Perhaps, then, it might be true that Jesus despised, sold, falsely accused by his brethren, might be not only delivered out of all his trials by resurrection, but promoted on high before the King of kings, to be ruler of the world, and lord of God's household, whether angels or men! Joseph, rejected by his own family, and forgotten, found a home and glory in Egypt. Jesus despised as 'a dreamer' by Israel, might yet be reckoned supremely wise by the Ruler of earth and heaven!

The *first* half of Joseph's life is heavily laden with affliction. "Till the time came that his cause was known, the word of the Lord tried him." The *second* half of it was *glorious* beyond all former example, and without a break. *Might it not be thus one day with the rejected Nazarite also!*

Do you say, 'How should He be the Messiah and Deliverer of Israel, who could not deliver Himself from the degrading death of crucifixion?' Try the same reasoning on Joseph! Could he be the exalted of God, and the deliverer of his nation and of the world, who could not save himself from being put down into a pit, sold for less than a slave's price, and thrust as a malefactor into a dungeon under false accusation?

Soon there came judgment on his persecutors. Famine assailed them. Egypt was the only country where food was to be had. This threw them into Joseph's hands, unwittingly on their part. He was master of their lives and fortunes, and aware of it. Perhaps, then, that is typical of a day to come, the Day of Great Tribulation, when Israel will be thrown on their hopes of Messiah, and will ask for His

aid and His coming; ignorant that Jesus is the Messiah.

The *second* time of the patriarchs seeking Joseph, he is *discovered* to them, and he makes known his kindred to Pharaoh.

So Jesus, the rejected at His *first* coming, may at His *second* coming make Himself known to His brethren of Israel, and forgive them; while He sets them on high above the nations of the world; and reassembles them to their own land.

Jacob and the other patriarchs died in Egypt, never receiving possession of the land of promise. They had a tomb in Canaan.* They were only pilgrims and strangers. Was it wonderful then, if Christians occupied the same place of faith? For Israel and Jerusalem had now become Egypt: Rev. xi, 8. Then God began to fulfil His prophecy to Abraham concerning their trouble and bondage in Egypt. Their increase beyond measure proved that God had not forgotten them. And yet this very increase was the occasion of their affliction. It made Egypt and its king very jealous of them. Perhaps, then, the rapid increase of Christians in those days was the *proof that God was with them*, and the afflictions which they endured were no proof against them; but rather an

* "Our fathers died, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre, that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor (the father) of Sychem." "Has not Stephen's memory here tripped? Was not the sepulchre that Abraham bought purchased of Ephron the Hittite? Gen. xxiii. And was not the cave of Machpelah situated not in Sychem, but near Hebron?' Yes, *if* (1) the reading of the Greek is correct; and (2) *if* the martyr refers to the same transaction as is recorded in Gen. xxiii. (2) But *that* we may well doubt. Not all that Abraham or Jacob did is written: Gen. xlviii, 22. (1) The present reading is not to be accepted. Tregelles, on good manuscript authority gives—"which Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Emmor *in Sychem.*"

evidence that they were the true seed of Abraham, blessed of God according to the promise, and about to be delivered.

III. We come now to the critical history of MOSES.

What would Israel say of Moses?—That ‘he was the chief and most trusty of God’s servants, the greatest of men. God loved him and spoke face to face with him, and set his glory upon his countenance.’

‘Apply now to Moses the same principle whereby you condemn Christ. What would you have thought of him, if judged by the circumstances of his life?’

‘That he was rejected of God! Though he led on his nation with the hope of the land flowing with milk and honey, he was himself shut out of it by the judicial decision of God. Does not *that* overthrow your estimate of Moses? Neither let a like lot undo your view of Christ!’

But let us with Stephen enter more particularly into this history.

I. Moses was born as the time of promised deliverance drew near, yet he was in peril from his birth. That Jesus then was born in like circumstances was no proof against him, but rather an evidence that He was the predicted prophet like unto Moses, whom He began to resemble, even from the time of His birth.

Moses was “*fair to God.*” So the margin gives it, and so it ought to have been rendered. Much more, was not Jesus beautiful God-ward, as proved by the songs of angels glorifying the Most High at His birth? And what was Jehovah’s testimony at His baptism? “*This is my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased.*”

Moses was taught in all Egypt’s wisdom, mighty in words and deeds. Jesus was great in wisdom, so as to astonish all who knew Him, while yet He obtained it without human teaching: Matt. xiii, 54. Jesus is described by the two going to Emmaus, as “a Prophet *mighty in deed and word* before God and all the people.”

Moses, had he pleased, could have dwelt in a king’s house, far above the afflictions which befell his people; and was in a fair way to be next the throne of Egypt, if not on the throne itself. But his heart of compassion yearned over his oppressed brethren. He left therefore, voluntarily, his glory, to take part with the afflicted people of God, when he was forty years of age, and fully competent to weigh the consequences of such a choice. Might not Jesus then be the Prophet like Moses, if He stooped from a loftier throne, moved by compassion for Israel and the world? Did they admire Moses for his disinterested condescension? Why not then admire Jesus also for the same reason?

Was not this His becoming ‘a prophet like Moses,’ while yet he was superior to him?

Moses bent on his people’s welfare, on one occasion stepped forward, by overt act, to testify how fully he had taken the side of Israel. “Seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him *that was oppressed*, and smote the Egyptian.” Was not the conduct of Jesus like to this, when He stepped forward to deliver His people from spiritual darkness, to rescue them from disease, and to show His power over Satan and death itself? “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power, who went about doing good, *and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him:*” Acts x, 38. Jesus smote none to death, but He delivered those oppressed by demons, and overcame their Prince.

Moses was disappointed in his attempt to engage his people’s affections. “*But he supposed, that his brethren would understand, that God by his hand is giving them salvation; BUT THEY UNDERSTOOD NOT.*” (Greek.) *Perhaps then the case of Jesus was like this!* God was giving a higher salvation to Israel and the world, and Jesus would let them know it; *but they perceived it not!* Perhaps, then, this was the foretold

time of Israel's blindness, when they should see Messiah and His works, and not perceive; should hear His words of wisdom, and comprehend them not: Isa. vi.

We have next the crisis of Moses' effort depicted. His own people were divided among themselves; the unrighteous part prevailing. Their discords he would gladly have removed, as a first step towards their rescue. But the doer of wrong to his neighbour, refused him both by word and deed. He thrust him away, and denied his mission of deliverance, reproaching with his very act of favour towards his countryman. Might it not be then, that the kindness and grace of Jesus toward Israel, had been in like manner misunderstood by the nation, and his purpose of redeeming them refused by the proud and oppressing sect of the Pharisees? Not that, in one point, the reproach launched against Moses could be dealt against Jesus. When besought to divide an inheritance between two brothers at variance he refused, in words like this opposer of Moses. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Luke xii, 14. Moses in justice smote the Egyptian to death. Christ in grace delivered some from death, and healed the stricken ear of one of His persecutors. Was Moses reproached for his act of grace to Israel, an act which put his own life in peril? And was not Christ's death urged on, because of His raising Lazarus from the dead; while moreover He was taunted on the cross by His foes with—"He saved others: Himself He cannot save"!

Which of the two parties then would they say was right in word and deed on the occasion of old? Moses? or Israel? '*Moses!*' they would reply. Perhaps then the nation's rejection of *Jesus* was as evil in their day, as the refusal of Moses had been in the days of yore!

Could God love Moses, and be with him in spite of Israel's national refusal? So might it not be true of Jesus? It is the Rejected Stone, rejected by the blind

builders of Israel, that is one day to be Head of the corner.

Moses thus refused is in peril of life, and flees. For forty years he tarries in another land; and finds a wife, and has a family there. Jesus rejected might have fled, but would for others' sake give up His life. As Israel is not ready, he moves away to another region, where he is gladly welcomed. If Jesus should tarry away from His people for a longer time than Moses, he would still be only resembling His predecessor; and His absence from His blinded and oppressed people would be no proof against His mission of God, but rather in favour of it.

We come next to Moses' second and successful visitation of Israel. "After forty years were expired, there appeared unto him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush." The first appearance of God to Abraham originated the patriarchal dispensation. This appearing of Jehovah to Moses originated the Mosaic.

Of Moses it might be said, that his first attempt to deliver Israel was premature. He moved at the promptings of his natural feelings; unendorsed by any supernatural commission of God. It was only on the second occasion, that miracle was given him, and then he proved successful.

But of the mission of Jesus this could not be said. God appeared to Jesus at His baptism. The new name of God, as Father, Son, and Spirit, was there displayed in act. Moses is obliged to ask the name of God which he is to bear to Israel: Jesus is aware of it; He *is* the Son. Moses is afraid, and is warned not to draw nigh without preparation. Jesus is not afraid; and over Him the heaven is opened, and the Spirit descends, and rests on Him. Is there not here a greater than Moses?

But if it be said, 'The appearance to Moses took place after his rejection and flight,' we still find new

resemblances unfolding themselves, and new superiorities. At the intercession of the ascended Christ, as Peter testifies, the Holy Spirit, as the angel (or sent One) of the Lord, descends in fire on the disciples of the rejected Christ. Might *they* not then be the bush that was burning, yet unconsumed? Moses wondered at the sight. And did not men of Israel out of all nations wonder, when the Spirit coming down in wind and fire, gave to the 120 to speak with new tongues, while tongues of fire that consumed not, stood on their heads? Out of the fire of the bush came forth the voice of Jehovah, testifying that He was the God of the fathers. Might not then the testimonies of inspired apostles be true; that this new manifestation came from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Acts iii, 13, 25; v, 30; xxii, 14.

Where was it that this manifestation of God in Moses' day took place? In the holy land, and its temple? Nay, but before either tabernacle or temple were built, in the desert of Arabia! Why then should they imagine, that God's discovery of Himself was confined to the temple, or that He was bound to dwell there alone? Did not this appearance of God in the desert to Moses, set aside any former places of God's abode, if there were such? Might it not be true, then, that the Church of God, His house of living stones was the place of His then abode, to the setting aside of the temple of Herod?

While Moses was refused, Israel continued under Gentile oppression. Might it not be true, then, if Jesus were the prophet like Moses, but superior to him, that Israel might continue blind toward God, and oppressed by men, so long as they refused Jesus, however long the time might be?

"Now come, I will send thee into Egypt."

"THIS MOSES whom they denied, saying, 'Who made thee a ruler and a judge?' THE SAME did God send to be a ruler and deliverer with the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush."

The nation denied Moses, and drove him away. Denied him in those very aspects, in which, as he saw, the God of Israel meant to use him. *Was the nation right in its denial?* They would say, No! *Might not the nation then be wrong in another denial before Pilate?* The Holy Spirit had charged it upon them. "The God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers glorified His servant* Jesus whom ye delivered up, and DENIED† in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye DENIED the Holy One and the Righteous, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; but ye killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from among the dead:" Acts iii, 13—15. *May not Jesus, then, though the rejected of Israel, be yet God's chosen One?* Though ye, O men of Israel, before Pilate refused Jesus as your king, may He not still be *God's king elect?* Have not God's good pleasure and His counsel for the future, been more fully declared in Jesus' resurrection from among the dead, than in the prolongation of Moses' life? Yes! He is thus declared to be the *Judge* of all: Acts x, 42; xvii, 31. Perhaps, then, Jesus is the long-expected deliverer of Israel! His refusal by Israel's great men staggered the two on their way to Emmaus. But the Saviour speedily set them right. "*Ought not the Christ to suffer [first] and [then] to enter into His glory?*" Must not the Stone that was to be Head of the corner be first rejected by the wise builders of Israel? The rejection of Moses by Israel—whom did it condemn? Moses? or Israel? Perhaps, then, their condemnation of Jesus was but Israel's fighting against God's chosen One, and a condemnation of *themselves!*

Moses in the work of deliverance, was not alone.

* Παιδα. Reference to the "righteous servant" of Isaiah. Paul is the first to witness to Christ as "the Son:" Acts ix.

† Same word as in Acts vii.

A Divine Person attended with His divine command to arrange all, and to put down all human power with divine force. And had not the same been in part shown, when the Divine Spirit, at Jesus' baptism, descended on Him? Then he began publicly to act in the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Was not that something higher than Moses' commission in the desert? And what had come to pass since then? Had not all Jerusalem heard of the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost, in wind and fire? and of the divine wisdom and power of miracle which then gave its attestation to Jesus as the ascended Deliverer?

“The same (Moses) brought them out and showed wonders and signs in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.”

Again and again does the speaker thrust upon his unwilling audience the identity of the chosen One of God, with the denied One of their fathers! They spoke of Moses in that olden day with contempt. “*This* Moses!” So were the men of Stephen's day with like contempt treating the Lord of glory. “*This* Jesus the Nazarite!” In Stephen's day the whole nation stood up to avenge on the martyr a supposed slight against Moses, even though but an uttered word! Perhaps, then, one day the tables might so turn with regard to Jesus, and the nation might worship and rejoice in Him as their deliverer whom their fathers persecuted and slew!

Did Moses, who at his first appearing to Israel wrought no miracle, on the *second* occasion come armed with the power of working signs and wonders? How then should it be incredible, that Jesus, who at His first appeal to Israel showed signs and wonders greater and more numerous far than Moses, work still greater prodigies in the yet future deliverance of Israel?

For a period of forty years miracles in Egypt, the Red Sea, and the desert, occurred. May there not be

then a period when according to the covenant of marvels made with Moses, (Ex. xxxiv,) the hand of God to smite and to rescue by the might of Jesus, shall be seen?

“This is the Moses which said unto the children of Israel, ‘A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken.’”

Moses, the once rejected of Israel, foretold a prophet who was to be like himself. He might be like Moses in power, in character, and in *history*. Perhaps, then, Moses hinted, that the Prophet who was to follow and resemble him was to be like him, *in being rejected by Israel at His first appearing!* If so, this rejection of Jesus by His nation was no proof against His mission by God, but rather a *witness in His favour!* Moses could testify of his people that they had been rebellious against the Lord ever since he knew them: Deut. ix, 7. Perhaps the prophet who was foretold would have the same testimony to give; a testimony availing not to his own condemnation, but *to Israel's!*

“*To him shall ye hearken.*”

O then, this new Prophet is also to be a law-giver, an issuer of divine commands! Perhaps those commands may be a repeal of some, or of all of those of Moses! Then it would be no blasphemy against Moses to testify, that *the prophet he foretold had come;* and that the new prophet was to be listened to, in preference to the old. Did not *Moses* change the *fathers'* customs? To be like Moses, then, Jesus should change *theirs!*

Was Moses *meek?* Jesus was meeker still. Moses once, under strong provocation prayed against his opponents. Jesus allowed them to proceed to scourging, spitting, gibes, and crucifixion!

Here, then, the martyr turns on his accusers with immense force. ‘You accuse me of blasphemy against Moses. Do you yourselves obey him? Are you not

in conspicuous opposition to him? He foretold a successor to himself, who was to be guide to Israel and legislator. Him you refused; nay more, you denied and slew. You speak of Him with contempt. Now in all this, are you not witnesses against yourselves? Did not your fathers hurl at Moses the very taunts you launch against Jesus? Jesus, then, is the prophet like Moses; like him in history, and in commission by God; like him in character, like him also in his refusal by Israel.'

"This is he who was with the congregation in the wilderness, with the angel that spake to him in Mount Sinai, and (with) our fathers, who received living oracles to give unto us."

Moses' glory was seen not only in the deliverance out of Egypt, but in his presence with God's assembly during the forty years of the desert. Had not Jesus also an assembly, whom He was leading, as truly as Moses? If they taunted Jesus' followers with their rejection, and their loss of their heritage and sufferings, could they not reply—'Yes, this Jesus who has led us out from the world, has appointed to us a burial beneath the waters, and a resurrection therefrom, which answers to Israel's passage through the Red Sea. Our deliverance is far greater than that of old, and if we find trouble now, it does but answer to the trials of God's former assembly (or 'congregation') in the desert. Christ is with us still, as Moses was with Israel, in spite of their desert trials.'

But Moses was not alone in his work in the wilderness. With him went the angel of the Lord, the angel of the covenant, the One who spoke to him in Mount Sinai. So can we say of Jesus, "Lo, I am with you all the days unto the end of the age:" (*Greek*) Matt. xxviii. And could not Stephen boast of the Holy Spirit still abiding with the Church of Christ? Was not He too a *speaking* angel? Were there not prophets everywhere whose word was, "*Thus saith the*

Holy Ghost?"? Moses would have been glad to have had all the Lord's people signalized by the Spirit put upon them. Stephen could assert, that Moses' wish was fulfilled in all believers of that day. The Lord had visibly given to all that obeyed Jesus, the Spirit in power. They had gifts either of word, or of deed. To this as a mighty testimony on their behalf, Peter had already appealed to Israel: Acts v, 32.

Did God of old speak in the wilderness? He was at that moment speaking to Israel in their land. Did the Lord distribute of the Spirit that was on Moses to seventy elders? Was not He a greater than Moses, who bestowed prophecy, or tongues, or healing, on every one who accepted Him?

Were Moses' oracles "living"? The oracles of Christ by the Holy Ghost were life-giving. They witness to One who is Resurrection and Life.

"To whom our fathers were unwilling to become obedient, but thrust him away, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us! For as for THIS MOSES who led us out from the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him.'"

The parallel and its force still continues, and deepens. Even after Israel had seen the wonders wrought by God through Moses, and had confessed him their deliverer, they loved not to obey. They were not pleased at the restraints under which he led them; and refused him with contempt, even when speaking of him to Aaron his brother. They wished to be not God's separate people, but like the nations. Already too, in Stephen's day, the Herodians, men who glorified the Romans, and adopted their practices, were giving tokens of the awful unbelief of Israel in the last days.

Moses, because of his absence, invisible on high, but appearing in the presence of the Lord for their sakes, was despised and thrust aside by the tribes, and with

him his God. But what said the men of Stephen's day tauntingly of Jesus? 'What is become of your Christ?' The same taunt did their fathers launch at Moses. The same reply was to be given concerning Moses, as Jesus' disciples gave concerning Christ. 'He is on high in the presence of God for us.' But Aaron's mouth was stopped from bearing that witness; for he with the other elders had, in unbelief left the height which Moses had assigned him: Ex. xxiv, 14.

The contempt which the Jews of that day were expressing for Jesus—'This Jesus the Nazarite will destroy this place'—their fathers had uttered in the same manner against Moses. "As for *this Moses* who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." *This was particularly stinging.* Some six or seven times does the martyr make use of their word of contempt to glorify Moses, and to discover to them the opposition between God's thoughts of Moses and the nation's. "*This Moses* whom they refused, *the same* did God send:" 35. "*This* (Moses) brought them out:" 36. "*This is that* Moses that said:" 37. "*This is he* that was in the church in the wilderness:" 38.

41. "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands."

The result of Israel's unbelief of Moses' return from the Mount, was idolatry. Moses and his God are set aside together. It is coming to pass thus even *now* in our day. With the ceasing of the expectation of Christ's return, there is increasingly a leaning towards images. And Israel, though in Stephen's day they were opposed to idols, will yet, in the latter days fall into idolatry. This is hinted in the Saviour's parable of the return of the evil spirit to the house which it had voluntarily left for awhile. It will return with the seven spirits worse than itself: Matt. xii.

This is shown us in Rev. ix, 20, 21. In Moses'

day they worshipped a calf. In the last days it will be worship of Satan and his *Wild-Beast-King*: Rev. xiii. With the refusal of the *Lamb* and his Father, Satan and his blaspheming king and false prophet, step in.

"Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'Did ye offer me slain beasts and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? But ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God Remphan, the figures which ye made to worship them, and I will carry you captive beyond Babylon.'"

With that act of idolatry in Moses' day God was so displeased, that He judicially gave them over to worship the starry host. And answerably thereto arose a system of false worship, mocking the promises and hopes given by Jehovah. They carried in the wilderness a rival tabernacle, dedicated to Moloch (king), *the king of heaven.* They carried also the star of Remphan. Remphan means 'Healer.' Then in place of "*Jehovah the Healer,*" (Ex. xv, 26, Jehovah Ropha,) and the star to come out of Jacob, with the sceptre to rise out of Israel, they had framed a false scheme of their own devising: Num. xxiv, 17. Jesus, at whose birth appeared the true star, Jesus, the real King of heaven, and King of the Jews, in His former life had displayed Himself as the "Healer of every sickness, and every disease among the people." On His being refused, God's judgment upon Israel could but be more severe, and His abandonment more complete in the day to come, than in the former case. Amos had predicted a captivity yet to come. And when that should take effect, could it be otherwise than that the temple rebuilt of Herod should be again destroyed, as it had been of old?

This passage of the speech, then, is directed against certain fallacious pleas and ideas of Israel—to this effect. 'God cannot move us again from our land.'

For we are no idolaters, as our fathers were. We are obedient to Moses, zealous for his laws, haters of idols. To *us* then, and to our day belong the promises of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, that Jerusalem, and its temple, and its nation, shall not be plucked up, or thrown down for ever.'

Not so. God has never forgiven Israel the sin of the calf: Ex. xxxii, 35. Idolatry broke out again in the land, and under the kings: 1 Kings xii. Its third and last aspect has yet to come. That will be Israel's day of captivity, the day of great tribulation.

The part of Stephen's speech which ensues, refers to the charge of his blaspheming the temple.

44. "The tabernacle of witness was (intended) for our fathers in the desert, as He commanded who spake to Moses, that he should make it after the pattern which he had seen."

They boasted of the temple and of Moses. But Moses and their fathers had only a moving tabernacle. That alone was suited to their frequent change of place. It was also "the tabernacle of witness," or of testimony, not "the temple of fulfilment." This edifice bore testimony in several directions.

(1) *Against* their idolatry. Was not *Jehovah's tabernacle* a testimony against that of *Moloch's*? As *Jehovah's* tabernacle that bore His ark of the covenant, was a witness of the better things to come according to His promises; so the tabernacle of *Moloch* could but be a token of the dark days of God's judgment yet to be. As the one proclaimed, that the land should be entered, and the enemies of the tribes scattered; so the other betokened the triumph of Israel's foes, and the tribes being swept off from *Jehovah's* land of promise.

(2) But the tabernacle of witness made by Moses, was also the testimony to a *system of things yet to come, far superior to itself*. For Moses as mediator of Israel went up to God, stood amidst the heavenly tabernacle, and saw the originals above; which when he came

down he was to imitate. The *earthly tabernacle* then, and the temple which followed it, were witnesses to the *heavenly tabernacle* to which Stephen bore witness, as the one whereinto Jesus had entered. 'You boast of the earthly tabernacle. But its vessels and furniture are only *copies of those amidst which our ascended Mediator and Priest, the Lord Jesus, is ministering*.' Heb. ix. There *God* is now, and Jesus is, like Moses, Mediator of a covenant, only of a better covenant; even as the heavenly things are superior to those of earth.'

"Which (tabernacle) also our fathers with Jesus (*Joshua*) having received, brought in (to the land) at the time of taking possession of the nations, whom God drove out from before our fathers, up to the days of David; who found favour before God, and asked to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house."

The place of worship under Moses, and even for four hundred years was only a tent, removed from place to place. David desired to build a house for the Lord, yet though he found great favour with *Jehovah*, he was not permitted. It was very significant, that Moses could not lead his people into the land of promise. He must give way to *Jesus*. (*Joshua*, in Hebrew). Might it not be then, that the *Jesus* whom they despised might be the conqueror, who should give them possession of their land in a day to come, and overthrow the Gentile enemies of Israel, as the prophets foretold?

48. "But the Most High is not dwelling in houses made with hands, as the prophet saith, 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, what kind of a house will ye build me? or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?'"

While, then, the Lord has promised one day to dwell in Jerusalem, and in her temple, (Psa. lxxviii, 16; cxxxii, 14; Ez. xliiii, 7,) yet it was not then to be fulfilled. He had left the earth for the heaven, as Ezekiel showed:

Ez. viii, 4 ; ix, 3 ; x, 3, 4, 18, 19 ; xi, 22, 23. Thither Jesus had gone up, as apostles had testified to the nation of Israel : Acts ii ; iii. In Israel's devotion, then, to the earthly temple, as the place of God's residence at that time, they were really fighting against God.

Thus the martyr has shown, that Jehovah was not tied to any one place of manifestation. He had discovered Himself to Abraham in Mesopotamia, to Moses in the desert bush, and on the mountain top. Then He moved from place to place, with the wanderings of His people. Even when the land was entered, there was still the tent only, for long years. While God promised to dwell in Solomon's temple, it was only on conditions ; on the breaking of which the Lord deserted the abode man had made. It was no blasphemy then against God to say, as Jesus had said, that the temple rebuilt by Herod should be destroyed.

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye always resist the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ? And they slew those who beforehand spoke of the coming of the Righteous One, of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers : Ye who received the law at the command of angels, and observed it not !"

Their circumcision was the boast of Israelites. This boast the martyr takes away from them. They had circumcision in the flesh, but not in the spirit ; the sign, not the thing signified. Their own Moses had reproached them, as the stiff-necked, rebellious against God, and blind. They refused to be turned from evil by any testimony : Lev. xxvi, 41 ; Deut. x, 16. Their hearts refused God's commands. Nay, they refused even to hear the Lord's words, uttered by Stephen the inspired, as they presently afterwards show.

Were the men before him better than their fathers ? By no means ! They refused the Son of God. After the Spirit's descent to bear witness to the Son, they refused the Spirit too. They had rejected the prophets,

and persecuted them. Even those into whose mouth God had put messages of hope, concerning the Deliverer to come, were maltreated and slain. How then could they imagine, that their national and official condemnation of Christ, really disproved His claims ? It only condemned themselves. It only showed, that the spirit of Israel all through, was of the same kind. If they slew the forerunners of Messiah, men inspired by the Holy Spirit, what wonder if they slew Messiah Himself ? Jesus here is signalized by a peculiar title. "The just One," or "Righteous One." The Psalms frequently speak of the afflictions of "the Righteous One." They testify to plottings against Him, proud speeches against Him, and to His being sold. But the Psalms and prophets both bear witness to His future glory. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied : by His knowledge shall My *Righteous Servant* justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities : " Isa. liii, 11. "I will raise unto David a *righteous branch*, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth : " Jer. xxiii, 5 ; Zech. ix, 9.

There was one distinguished above a world of sinners as "Jesus Christ the righteous." How had they served Him ? They had betrayed Him to the Romans, and put Him to death.

But were they not strict observers of law ? No ! Though angels spoke it, they and their fathers had all along disobeyed it, specially in their refusal of the prophet foretold by Moses, and the crucifixion of the Righteous One.

Such was the Holy Spirit's testimony against these self-righteous ones. Such the breaking up of all their arguments ! A quiet statement of undeniable facts given of God, scattered all their objects of confidence. The effect of the speech is strikingly given : more so in the original, than in the translation.

54. "Now while they were hearing these things they were being sawn through in their hearts, and gnashed their teeth at Him."

They refused to accept the testimony. Hence they were troubled by the truth. It could not be denied. It was stronger than their hearts. They might resist like wood; but the truth was strong as iron, sharp with many teeth, as the saw. Each statement was a new point to pierce them. It was delivered with power of the Holy Ghost. They would not yield. But they displayed their hatred of the truth, by rage. They were like the damned themselves. "Gnashing of teeth" is one of the characteristics of the lost. Here the transgressors gnash their teeth at the inspired of the Holy Ghost, the man who was righteous through faith. For so it was written. "The wicked *plotteth against the righteous, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.* The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming:" Psa. xxxvii, 12, 13; cxii, 10; xxxv, 16.

The Lord's messenger was hated with a malice that could not restrain even its visible expression. This shows how completely the whole speech told against their feelings and their arguments.

There lacked but one more point.

"But he being full of the Holy Spirit gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, 'Behold, I contemplate the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"

He had proved by argument, that God was not bound to any place of earth. He had adduced the testimony of Moses, that there was a better sanctuary of God, than the one of man's building on earth. He had cited from the prophet a proof, that in this dispensation, God is not dwelling in temples made by hands upon earth. But now he is further to be made an eye-witness of the true temple, and of the glory of

God in heaven. There he beholds the Jesus whom they rejected, stationed in the place of the highest honour with God, neither Moses nor Elijah being seen there.

The *speech* had showed, that despite their condemnation of Jesus, He might have gone up into the heaven. But now Stephen, his eyes opened by the Spirit of God, can testify—"He *is* in heaven, *I see Him.*"

He calls Jesus "the Son of Man." This is His title in Dan. vii, 13, 14. It was of Him, then, that Daniel spoke, as the Ruler of all earth. That is the title of the Governor of all things in heaven and earth, (Psa. viii,) in the promised day of glory.

This was not to be endured. Like the deaf adder, they stop their ears; refusing to listen to the truth: Psa. lviii, 4. They rush on him with feet swift to shed blood. They cast stones, and in this way many could take part in his death.

They cast him out of the city, as they did our Lord: for the disciple that is perfect shall be as his Master.

He prays to Jesus, as the Saviour when departing prayed to his Father—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The Redeemer, then, is 'the Lord' of Psalm cx. The Father hath made the rejected Jesus both Lord and Christ. Stephen, therefore, owns him as Adonai, or 'Lord.' '*Lord Jesus.*' '*Lord* lay not this sin to their charge.' The old High Priest is against him, but the new High Priest in heaven is on his side; a Divine Help. With the blood of the new covenant is come a new spirit also, far beyond that of the old. When the Spirit of God inspired the son of Jehoiada to testify against the idolatry of Israel—"They conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king, in the court of the house of the Lord." And when he died, he said, "THE LORD LOOK UPON IT, AND REQUIRE IT!" 2 Chron. xxiv, 18—22. Accordingly, the same year, enemies entered into the land, spoiled it, and slew the princes of the

people ; while the murderous king was conspired against, and slain by his own servants.

In the present martyr's case, *earth closed* against the man of faith, the inspired by the Spirit of Christ. But *heaven opened* to him, and in the vision of the glories there, he can overlook the storm of earth. Death to him is robbed of its sting. He only "falls asleep." At the first and blest resurrection he shall reign with his Master.

From the whole argument, then, we see, that a *new dispensation must arise in order to fulfil the promises made to the patriarchs, to Israel, and to the Church of Christ.* For the time of the fulfilment of the hopes of the patriarchs has never yet arrived. They are waiting. The banquet cannot begin, till all the guests are assembled, and the king has set each in his true place : Matt. xxii, 1—14. To us, if accepted by Christ, the higher place in the age that is coming, is to be assigned : Heb. xi, 39, 40.

Now is the time of God's *patience*, calling on an evil world to repent ; calling to the men of faith to come out from the world, and to work and suffer for, and with, a rejected Christ. The kingdom of glory to come is set before us, as our comfort under trial for Christ, and as the reward and prize of our calling : Phil. iii. Soon "the days of *vengeance*" for the martyrs' blood will fall on the earth ; and the watchful disciples will be caught out of the hour of temptation which is coming upon all the habitable earth, to test its dwellers, and to exhibit their sinfulness : Matt. xxiii ; xxiv ; Rev. xvi. In that day the glory of Jesus will fill heaven and earth, and Israel shall mourn their blindness, and transgressions against Him. Then they that wrought for Christ and suffered with Him, shall with Him be exalted, and reign a thousand years : Rev. xx, 4—6.

Courage, then, Christians who suffer for Christ ! The inferior seed of Abraham was left in bondage and

trials four hundred years. What wonder, if the superior seed of Abraham's faith are called to suffer too, and for a longer period ? It is not our calling to set the world right, and to find our portion here below, in this fleeting life. But we are to wait till the Redeemer comes, till the dead in Christ awake, and the Saviour dispenses His rewards to His faithful servants. May we meet in joy "IN THAT DAY" !

TRACTS ON THE KINGDOM.

No. 8.

SECOND EDITION.

KING SOLOMON & THE APOSTLE PAUL, OR THE EARTHLY CALLING & THE HEAVENLY.

IN the Scripture histories of Solomon the King, and of Paul the Apostle, we have two pictures, both painted by the hand of God, but remarkable contrasts one to the other.

Let us consider, with the light of the Lord the Spirit :—

I. THE PORTION OF EACH.

II. THEIR DOCTRINE RESPECTIVELY.

I. THE PORTION OF SOLOMON was very brilliant. He was the son of Judah's best king, and was chosen by Jehovah out of the king's many sons to reign over Israel. To him the Lord gave a glorious throne, and set him to execute judgment over the people of his choice.

To him the Lord twice revealed himself. The first time, after the king had offered a thousand burnt-offerings, the Most High bid him ask what he would have. He asks for wisdom; and the Lord, well pleased at his request; grants him beside, royal riches and honour: 1 Kings iii.

After the building of the temple, the sacrifices, and the prayer of the king, the Most High promises to answer his petition concerning the house, if he would abstain from idolatry: 1 Kings ix.

The wisdom of Solomon is speedily brought into

view. In a case where no proof seemed possible, he produced decisive evidence, which of the two claimants of the child was the real mother of it. At this, as at a fountain, some of the judges of earth have been content since then to draw.

How great were his *riches!* Silver was nothing accounted of in his days. Cedars were as sycamores. The choicest gold is poured into his lap by hundreds of talents yearly. He inherits the riches left by David his father. He had a thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. His palace was thirteen years building. He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon, store cities, and fenced cities: 2 Chron. viii. Probably the gigantic architecture of Palmyra and Baalbec were due to him.

He had seven hundred princesses as his wives of the first class; and three hundred of the second class.

The Scripture gives us a glimpse at his magnificent court, in its making known to us what was a day's supply for his table.

“And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and three-score measures of meal. Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl:” 1 Kings iv. 22, 23.

Reckoning each ox as containing a thousand pounds of meat, here was provision for an army of thirty thousand men, exclusive of the sheep, harts, roebucks, and fatted fowl, which constituted the side dishes of his banquet.

The king builds the temple of Jehovah, the most costly and magnificent edifice the world has seen, which required, in spite of the thousands of workmen employed thereon, seven years to erect.

Great was his glory as a king.

“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 kings, from the river [Euphrates]

unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt; they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.”

The Queen of Sheba finds her royal glory as nothing in the presence of the king of Israel.

“And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

“And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

“And king Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants: 1 Kings x. 1—13.

“So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his heart. And

they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year :” 1 Kings x. 23—25.

This, then, is the most brilliant earthly lot that the world has seen. But the wise king’s heart after all was led away to folly. He disobeyed God’s warnings, broke His commands, and fell into idolatry. The gifts of the Most High led away his heart from the Giver.

II. WHAT NOW WAS SOLOMON’S THEOLOGY?

In the midst of all this flood of wealth and honour, what was the state of the king’s soul? What the amount of his knowledge of God?

We learn from the book of Ecclesiastes. He had all that earth could give to delight and satisfy the flesh of man; and with keen enterprize, and with vigorous energy he launched into every ocean of pleasure. He tried mirth and wine, great works of pomp and of pleasure, singers and music, with all other sources. What can any do who comes after this great king? He can only copy in feeble measure the greatness of this royal attempt. But what amount of happiness did all this apparatus produce? What did it all effect towards satisfying his spirit?

“VANITY OF VANITIES, SAITH THE PREACHER; VANITY OF VANITIES, ALL IS VANITY!” “*Therefore I hated life:*” “*All is vanity and vexation of spirit:*” Eccles. i. 2; ii. 17.

Great as was Solomon’s wisdom, the work of God on earth was not found out even by him. He was indeed wiser than all men, and his fame was in all the nations round about. “He spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five.” “He spake of trees, from the cedar to the hyssop of the wall; he spake also of beasts and birds, of reptiles, and of fish.”

But his wisdom was of *the earth*, and it gave him no knowledge of *the heaven, or of God!*

His wisdom taught him how to govern men, and to judge them in righteousness. But though he saw that the judgment of God is coming on mankind, and that both young and old will be dealt with because of sin, the wise king of earth discovered not, how God can forgive and justify the sinner. Solomon advises the young man to remember his *Creator* in the days of youth, before old age and death creep on. But he knew not God *the Redeemer*, nor how the mercy which is in Christ Jesus can forgive a life of sin.

The summing up of the king’s wisdom in relation to the things eternal is—“Fear God, and keep His commandments.” For judgment is coming on all transgressors.

And if so, how shall idolatrous Solomon meet the coming judgment with joy?

We turn now to a contrasted picture.

LET US LOOK AT THE CASE OF PAUL.

I. HIS PORTION.

Solomon was the Jew under law, enjoying the earth as his portion in the flesh.

Paul was the man of Moses, led out from law and its portion, to be the Apostle of God under grace.

1. Paul is freed from law, its slavery, its restlessness, and condemnation, to be a son of God by faith. He is sent of God to gather and rule a higher people than Israel. He is consecrated to be *king and priest* by the blood of the Son of God. He is clothed with heavenly power, and does not covet the silver, gold, or power of earth’s monarchs.

2. His visions of God and His Christ, of the state of the dead and of the heaven, were frequent. He beheld the Son of God in the glory of the Godhead, and spake face to face with Him. He learned at the lips of our Lord the religion he was to teach to others: Gal. i. So great were the revelations granted, that to obviate the peril of his being puffed up, an angel of Satan is

sent to buffet him, and to keep down the risings of nature : 2 Cor. xii.

3. But as regards the things of earth, he is stripped of all that he valued, as soon as he turns to become the servant of Christ. His reputation is gone ; he is ' the fool, the fanatic, the madman ; ' a curse to his old companions. He becomes the poor artisan, the tent-maker ; working for his livelihood in mean clothes, and dependent on the labour of his hands. He has no house, he is oftentimes destitute of the necessaries of life. He is the rejected of the world ; the servant of all.

Hear his description of himself in his rebuke to the Christians at Corinth.

" Already ye are full, already 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. 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 honourable, but we are despised. 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.* I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me : " 1 Cor. iv. 8—16.

4. In place of honour, he gains only suffering and contempt from the world ; and even in the church he has to sustain daily combats and annoyances.

What a picture he gives of his life ?

" I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews ? so am I. Are they Israelites ? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham ? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ ? (I speak as a fool) I am more ; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times

received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak ? who is offended, and I burn not ? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me. And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands : " 2 Cor. xi. 21—33.

A prisoner in daily peril of life, with the scars of his scourgings and stonings beaten into his body, oft compelled to flee, he was in every city informed by the prophets of Christ, that bonds and afflictions awaited him !

Now must not the apostle have been a strange *fool*, thus to give up the enjoyments, and honours, and possessions of earth ?

No ! Paul was master of *wisdom* ; of greater and better wisdom than that known to Solomon ! Solomon's was a wisdom of the earth, such as the flesh can at once recognize and honour ; for its scene is of this life, and " under the sun." But Paul's was God's *hidden wisdom*, ordained to glorify his chosen ones of this dispensation. His writings tell us far more deep and blessed things concerning the Most High, than could be learned from Solomon's proverbs, songs, or preaching. To Solomon God gave the shadows of the better things to come, shadows of the dispensation of grace and forgiveness, and of the coming kingdom of glory. But to Paul the Lord disclosed Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit, and discovered the high place and dignity of the Sons of God even now, and the loftier

portion one day to be granted them above the highest of the kings of Israel.

To Solomon's palace repaired kings and nobles continually; attired in their robes, encircled with royal pomp, to learn at his board, and amid his kingly apartments, their own inferiority! To him they came as pupils, inquiring how to reign; seeking to know what was the prudent course in the emergencies of government. To him came sages, asking his solution of their difficulties; solutions of the hard problems which this life offers to our notice. And both philosophers and kings went away admiring, astonished, instructed, and humbled.

How was it with Paul? The philosophers of Athens sneer at "this babbler," and scoff at the chief doctrine which he would commend to their attention. "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked." His tidings were "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Compared with the orators of the Greeks, "his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible." To Romans his proceedings were treason to Cæsar; to the Jews, apostasy from Moses. When he puts forth the powers of miracle which dwelt in him, he has his clothes rent off him, is heavily scourged, and fixed, thirsty and hungry, in the inner dungeon. Now he is regarded as one of the heathen gods who is to be worshipped; and now he is stoned and left for dead, as a magician and a deceiver. To kings he is a prisoner pleading for his life; and his story is regarded as the ravings of insanity. "*Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning hath made thee mad!*" "They had questions against him of their own superstition; and of one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive!"

While he was accounted a poor insane fool, he was yet regarded as dangerous withal, and worthy of the scourge and the prison.

Now whence came this so great contrast?

Because, between the days of Solomon and of Paul, THE SON OF GOD has come (1) *in humiliation*, to suffer and to die for sinners. (2) Because He came IN GRACE, to show what man is, and to endure the contradictions and buffets of those He came to save. (3) And now God is calling out of an evil world a spiritual body composed of those who are to be rejected as Christ was, partakers of His spirit, and of His sufferings. Of this new body, of this new man, Jesus our Lord is the Risen Head, and those who believe in Him in this dispensation are the members: 1 Pet. ii.; Eph. v.

A new and hidden wisdom, long concealed in the bosom of God, and not accepted by the world or its great men, has been disclosed; designed, in the coming day, to surround with glory those who follow in suffering a suffering Christ.

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.* Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God:" 1 Cor. ii. 1—10.

5. Solomon built for God a costly temple of gold and precious stones, the wonder of the world; a glory to the designers and to the architects. Paul was the

wise architect of a better temple, gifted by the Most High with better inspiration than that enjoyed by the artificers in gold and brass, in stone, and gems, and wood. The temple of Solomon was burnt and plundered. The temple of which Paul was architect, is composed of living stones, resting on Christ, never to be destroyed: one day to stand forth in glory eternal. The earthly temple was broken up to make way for *this*. Nay, Paul himself and those whom he gathered to Christ, *were* and *are* temples of the Holy Ghost, to shine in resurrection-glory as the sun! Solomon did no miracle. But Paul not only wrought wonders everywhere, but by the laying on of his apostolic hands, he raised up wherever he went healers of the sick, inspired prophets, and men of miracle, till the wonders of grace and healing became common things.*

But this temple of God is one which is building while Satan is at large; and while the world, whether Jewish or Gentile, lies in enmity and unbelief; and while grace permits men to walk after their own counsels, and to show what is in their hearts. Therefore, to be engaged on this edifice is to arouse the enmity of Satan and of men. Nor are the builders now permitted to lay fleshly sword or spear beside the trowel with which they work. They must endure and not strike again.

6. And how do we take leave of this scarred veteran? He dies a lonely prisoner in a cold and dark dungeon at Rome, after daily peril of his life at the hands of the Gentile master of the world, whose frown made men tremble. But from the first he knew himself to be a victim. He was "ready to be offered." He would have no sorrow testified on his behalf, but joy. To be alive and to be working for his Master and his brethren, was good. But to depart and be with Christ was very far better! Phil. ii.

* The force of one verse is lost in our translation. "And God used to work not the common miracles by the hands of Paul:" Acts xix. 11.

II. WHAT OF HIS THEOLOGY?

1. Paul endorses Solomon's view of the vanity of earth. To his ear all nature groans and travails in pain, waiting for the birth of the sons of God from the tomb: Rom. viii. 20.

2. To him earth is but the place of education, the school of strangership, the desert of our pilgrimage. He looked for his heritage in the better and heavenly country; his citizenship was recorded in the Lamb's book of life; and to him belonged eternal mansions in the new Jerusalem, the home and city of the risen from the dead.

3. Paul saw, like Solomon, *judgment to come*. Paul knows God as the *Creator*; but he has to tell of a SAVIOUR-GOD. He bears witness of a better righteousness than that of the law, provided by the Most High, as the garment of Him that believes in Jesus.

4. Though in the midst of trouble, through much tribulation making his destined way into the kingdom of God's glory, he found peace with God, yea, joy in every condition. The tree which the Spirit of God planted in his heart bore abundantly the mellow many-coloured fruits of love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, temperance.

5. 'Fear God,' is Solomon's main lesson. 'Love God, the Father, and the Son, and obey them, as sons beloved,' is Paul's loftier maxim of practice.

'But how is so trying a portion, so complete a contrast to Solomon's, reasonable?'

Solomon's kingdom was of the flesh, and on the earth, under law. His glory came and went in *forty years*!

But Paul's kingdom is one *yet to come*; his part is in the coming kingdom of glory, and in a resurrection-body. The first-fruits of that glory are the thousand years of the kingdom, when heaven shall rule over earth; and when Christ's accepted kings shall reign in conjunction with the Son of God, of whose majesty and splendour Solomon was but a faint type.

Paul has passed through his tribulation ; manifold as it was, it was brief. He is now awaiting his day of coronation ; his kingdom and sceptre are to come. The Righteous Judge, the King of kings, and Lord of lords one day shall give him praise and glory before his Father and his angels : 2 Tim. iv.

Children of God, then, see to what kingdom of glory the Most High God is inviting you ! 1 Thess. ii. 12. Yours is not the calling to enjoy the earth, but to possess the heaven. You are not to reign now, in this world while it is lying under sin, and Satan, and death ; but passing through it as strangers and sojourners, you are to look for your riches and throne in a day to come, when Christ our Lord shall take His glory. While *He* is waiting, *you* are to wait, and to keep the word of His patience : Heb. x. 13 ; Rev. iii. 10.

Present *peace with God* is ours ; but *war with Satan* and his host ensues thereon. Trials in the flesh, trouble from the world, are the portion of him who would walk in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. *Every believer is called to make some sacrifice for Christ, if he will only obey His Lord.* Do not, believer, then, account it something strange, and an unheard of peculiarity, if *you* have to suffer, and to surrender the things of the world ! Our calling is *out of the earth, into the heaven !* And our present path is just the contrast to Israel's. If *they* had been obedient, they should have had the world's good word, and be prospered with every blessing of earth. But *we* are called to DO WELL, and to SUFFER FOR IT : 1 Pet. ii. 20, 21. *Why ?* Because this is the way which the Lord Jesus trod ! And if with Him we suffer now, with Him *one day we shall reign !* 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Seek, therefore, Christians, a place in this kingdom of glory and reward ! Matt. vi. 33. And under suffering and loss for Christ's sake, look up and *rejoice !* THE HOUR OF RECOMPENCE DRAWS NIGH ! Matt. v. 11, 12.

TRACTS ON THE KINGDOM.

No. 9.

BAPTISM AND THE KINGDOM.

ALL Christians perceive the deep importance of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus : John iii. Yet to the minds of many much darkness hangs over it. May the Lord by His Spirit enlighten us in the consideration of it ! For it is not incomprehensible in its meaning ; but the real meaning of it is unwelcome to the majority of readers, at some point or other. Hence the sense is apt to be eluded, or falsified, or denied.

It is given in close connection with the evangelist's notice of the effects of our Lord's early miracles at Jerusalem. Many believed, but their faith was shallow and feeble. Jesus would not trust Himself to them. And the reason of His distrust was, His almighty knowledge of man. As the prophet foretold, he should not 'judge by the sight of his eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of his ears.'

An example of this is at once given. Nicodemus comes to Christ by night. His faith is weak, and he is not prepared to give up Moses for the new Teacher. He begins with words that would have captivated most young teachers.

“Rabbi, we know that Thou hast come from God as a teacher; for none can do these signs which Thou doest except God be with him.”

Here is the respectful address of the elder to the younger. Nicodemus confesses Him a teacher of God’s sending, though He had never entered the rabbinical schools. He virtually confesses, that convictions favourable to our Lord’s person and message had been wrought on himself and on others beside himself, by His miracles. He beholds in these wonders a proof, that God was with Jesus, as He was with Joseph, Moses, or Joshua. But Jesus is not flattered, and answers him abruptly; displaying a knowledge of his desires, and above all, of his standing before God.

3. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, None, except he be begotten* from above, can see the kingdom of God.”

Probably, if John had introduced Nicodemus, he would have said to our Lord, ‘Nicodemus is desirous of obtaining instruction from you concerning the coming kingdom of God.’ But the Saviour needs no such information, and at once addresses Himself to the question of Nicodemus’ heart.

The words are strong and stern. They are the condemnation of *man* as *man*. They are uttered to one of the fairest specimens of mankind. Nicodemus was one of Abraham’s favoured race. He was a ruler, pre-eminent among his fellows, chosen to rule as aged, and wise and known: Deut. i. 13, 14. He was a teacher of Israel; and a Pharisee, strict in his observance of the law. Jesus, in excluding from the kingdom of glory this fairest specimen, shuts out all others. Here is the overturning of the law of Moses. The Law set the flesh on its trial before God. The Gospel is the flesh declared worthless: this is the ground on which the new message takes its stand. “The flesh profiteth nothing.” ‘All Israel shall have part in the age to come,’ said the Rabbis. That is here solemnly denied. Law

* Γεννωω.

recognised the flesh of Abraham and his seed. That foundation is here overthrown. A new *man* is needed for the new *kingdom*. And that change must be produced by God alone.

Man must be “begotten from above.” Thus John is proving by the adduction of our Lord’s words, the principle which He sets forth in His preface. He begins by stating, that Israel as a nation refused Christ. But there were some exceptions. These received the Son of God, and it was in consequence, not of any natural or birth-powers, but of their being regenerated by God. “Begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of *man*, but of *God* :” i. 12, 13.

‘But should it not be rendered—‘born *again*’? For Nicodemus seems so to have understood it. Surely he understood his own language.’

The word* used may have two significations. (1) It is a particle of *time*. ‘*From the beginning*.’ But this does not give a good sense. Man has already begun to be, before the Gospel addresses him. Some would substitute for it ‘*Anew*.’ But that is not the sense of the Greek word. (2) It must therefore be regarded as an adverb of *place*. ‘*From above*.’ This is its signification in the other passages of John’s Gospel, where it occurs: v. 31; xix. 11, 23. (3) It is expounded for us by what follows concerning the Spirit of God. That Spirit comes *from above*. (4) John in his Epistle speaks of it as the being ‘begotten of God :’ 1 John ii. 29; v. 1, 18.

Nicodemus’ words then are a reply to the *thing* stated. If man is to be regenerated from heaven, it supposes the need of a *second* birth. The being begotten of God implies a second life beside that of the flesh.

‘But *what* is the kingdom which cannot be seen, unless the person be so begotten of God?’

* Ανωθεν.

1. It is commonly understood to mean 'the kingdom of grace,' 'the church,' '*the present dispensation.*' Scott paraphrases it by—'He cannot understand true religion.'

But in this sense the words are not true. Unconverted persons do see the church; they even enter it, unchanged and not baptized. They do see the kingdom of grace; they behold the present dispensation.

Some would put it—'It is spiritually impossible for an unconverted man to receive the tidings, because the kingdom is spiritual.' And they would say it ran parallel with 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Now I doubt whether the kingdom is ever spoken of as 'spiritual.' But while this sense might be allowed in verse 3, how will it suit with verse 5? Can no one comprehend the spiritual kingdom, *unless, beside being regenerate he is immersed?*

2. I suppose, then, the phrase to mean, 'the kingdom of glory, *the dispensation to come.*' (1) But even then there may be a difference of view. Some would regard it as equivalent to 'eternal life,' or 'salvation.' But if so, then verse 5 announces that there is no salvation, no eternal life without immersion! And that is not true. For eternal life is God's gift at once on faith. The crucified robber was saved without baptism. (2) I believe further, therefore, that 'the kingdom of God' in its two occurrences in John iii. signifies—'*the kingdom of the thousand years.*' Rev. xx.

(a) That is the kingdom *in manifestation*. That is the kingdom which, according to the prophets' testimonies, the Jews were expecting: Isa. xi.; Psa. lxxii.; Matt. iii. 2. They were not expecting 'the church,' or the 'kingdom in mystery.' 'The church' was a secret concealed in God's bosom; hidden from the prophets of old: Eph. iii. The reign of Messiah visible on the earth at Jerusalem is what the Jews meant and mean, by 'the days of Messiah.' And wrongly is that term applied to the present dispensation.

The phrase 'the kingdom of God' refers back to the old covenant at Sinai. Jehovah promised to Israel, that if obedient, they should be to Him a "*kingdom of priests.*" Ex. xix. 5. That promise they could not win by their obedience. After two thousand years' trial, the proof is complete. Jesus then is showing to the ruler the altered conditions of the *new* covenant.

(b) The kingdom *in manifestation* was that which our Lord was always speaking of, until after the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; when, like Moses, He put on a veil, and began to speak of "*the mystery of the kingdom.*" This will appear, on comparing together the words of Matthew and Mark. The mother of James and John petitioned our Lord thus. "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, *in Thy kingdom.*" Matt. xx. 21. Evidently this refers to the kingdom of Christ's manifested glory. But Mark expressly so puts it. "Grant unto us that we may sit, the one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left, *in Thy glory.*" Mark x. 37.

It was the kingdom which was to come in *resurrection*; the kingdom from which the mere Israelite, child of the flesh, would be shut out. "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall *sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.* But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness:" Matt. viii. 11. This obviously supposes the day of the Saviour's appearing, and of the first resurrection. Compare with it also Luke xiii. 24—29.

Again in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul tells, how he affectionately exhorted them to "walk worthy of God, who is inviting (calling) us *to His own kingdom and glory.*" 1 Thess. ii. 12; see also Matt. xiii. 41—43; xix. 28; xxv. 31; Luke ix. 26, 27.

(c) The Saviour was pleased to give a specimen of what kind of kingdom He meant, by the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration. He foretold to His twelve

disciples, that some of them should not die, till they had beheld "*the kingdom of God:*" Luke ix. 27. Accordingly, on the eighth day after this promise, three of the apostles were taken by night to the top of an unnamed mountain alone. There Moses and Elijah appeared '*in glory.*' Peter and his fellows on awaking beheld the '*glory*' of Jesus; for His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white and glistening: 32. This then was no picture of the kingdom of grace, but of the day of *glory.* See also Matt. xvi. 28; xvii. 1—8.

(d) From several of these passages it appears, that the kingdom is something *desirable*, and to be sought by believers. It is a time of *reward:* Rev. xi. 15, 18. The Saviour will decide on those who shall be "accounted worthy" to have part in it. Not all, even of the renewed, will enter it: Matt. vii. 21. Even Paul, great and good as he was, did not feel certain of it, till the close. It was a "*prize*" to be adjudged to those who were observers of the Lord's commands to the end: Phil. iii.; Col. ii. 8, 18; 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. Jesus bids us *seek it foremost:* Matt. vi. 33; xi. 12; Luke xii. 31; Heb. iv. 11.

(e) This falls in with the preceding context of our evangelist. Jesus in the first chapter had hinted of the day of glory under the figure of Jacob's ladder, uniting the heaven and the earth. John had mentioned Messiah, as the Fulfiller of "Moses and the prophets." Jesus had changed water into wine, the sign of a better time than Moses' changing of water into blood. And the Saviour had shown himself in power at Jerusalem at the feast of the *Passover.* Now Jerusalem is to be the city of the Great King, and the passover is to be fulfilled one day, in the glory of the coming kingdom of God: Luke xxii. 16. Moreover, the Saviour's miracles are more strictly called "signs." That is, they betokened greater things to come. The casting out of evil spirits gave testimony to the day when Satan shall be cast out; the healing of sickness, and the resurrection of

the dead bore witness to the coming day of long life and resurrection.

But some may object—"You override the distinction between 'the kingdom of *heaven*' and 'the kingdom of *God.*'"

That there is some distinction between the one and the other, I grant. 'The kingdom of *heaven*' *in manifestation* means always, I believe, the millennial day. 'The kingdom of *God*' means generally the same time; though it does in some cases apply to the eternal state. However, the terms—"the kingdom of *heaven*' and 'the kingdom of *God*' are interchanged, even in Matthew. Jesus begins the parable of the Wheat and Tares with—"The kingdom of *heaven* is likened:" 24. But in the interpretation, describing the time of recompence He speaks of 'the kingdom of *the Son of Man:*' ver. 41; and 'the kingdom of the Father of the righteous:' 43. In the sixteenth of Matthew we have in verse 19, "the keys of the kingdom of *heaven*" given to Peter, excluding or admitting any into millennial glory. Then in the further development of the matter at the close of the chapter, we are taught concerning the coming and 'kingdom of the Son of Man:' 28. Where Matthew speaks of many coming and sitting down "in the kingdom of *heaven,*" Luke speaks of "the kingdom of *God:*" xiii. 18, 20, 28, 29. See also Matt. xix. 12, 14, 23, 24; xx. 1; and again xxi. 31, 43; xxii. 2.

If we so accept the phrase, the testimony of John is seen to run parallel with the witness of the other three Gospels in relation to the same future era.

'*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven hath drawn near,*' is only another form of stating the same truth which we find in the verse John iii. 3. And as John the Baptist assured his hearers, that it was not enough to be sons of Abraham after the flesh, so Jesus affirms to Nicodemus the necessity of a heavenly generation, in order to enter into that bliss to come.

If this be the sense of "the kingdom of God," our view of the word "*Cannot*" twice used (verses 3 and 5) undergoes a change. It does not intend, that the perception of the 'spiritual kingdom' needs spiritual senses. It means that God *judicially undertakes to keep out of that time of glory and of reward, all those who are not renewed in spirit.*

Nicodemus stumbles at this strong and solemn word.

4. "Nicodemus saith unto Him—'How can a man be begotten when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be begotten?'"

The ruler's objection in other words would be—'Your doctrine is impossible and absurd. How could regeneration be fulfilled in the case of an adult? say, an old man like myself.'

Nature stumbles at divine truths. To the unregenerate the things of God are foolish. The single eye shall have abundance of light. But the ruler's eye was not single.

5. "Jesus answered—'Verily, verily I say to thee, None, except he be begotten out of water and wind, can enter into the kingdom of God.'"

The Saviour, nothing daunted by the objection, that His doctrine was absurd, solemnly reasserts it. We must maintain the truth of God, however foolish the unrenewed think it. But He graciously expands His first sentiment, in order to do away with Nicodemus' objection.

That generation which was spoken of as one (in verse three), is now divided into two parts. The 'being begotten from above' is now enlarged into '*being begotten out of water and wind.*'

But how are we to understand these mysterious words?

I. Some suppose, that though two things are mentioned, only *one* thing is *signified*. They would therefore render it—'Except a man be born of water, *even* the Spirit.' The Holy Ghost alone and His work are intended; His cleansing power being intimated by the word, 'water.' So John says of the Saviour—'He shall immerse you in the *Holy Ghost* and in *fire*.' There the Spirit alone is intended, in His purifying and searching agency, resembling 'fire.'

To this we reply:—

(1) That by 'fire' was meant more than the Spirit alone. The Holy Ghost descended in fire at Pentecost, the fire being the visible element there, distinct from the Spirit, even as the water is here. The passage cited then turns against those who quote it. Two things were there, two are here also.

(2) Next we observe, that the rendering, 'Out of water, *even* the Spirit,' is quite unwarranted. It would teach—that the Holy Ghost was only water. If I say—'I gave him a guinea, *even* one-and-twenty shillings'—I mean, that the two are equal in amount, and so virtually the same. This is especially evident, if we translate the Saviour's words literally, 'Except a man be begotten out of *water* and *wind*.' Surely *wind* and *water* are not the same thing! The Spirit is indicated by the wind; and the water is not the same as wind.

Moreover, if 'even' be not the true rendering, the translation '*and*' supposes that two things are intended. 'Fire *and* hail, snow *and* vapour.'

(3) I observe again, that this does not meet Nicodemus' objection of impossibility, while the true view does. A man is born of *two* parents, and to this our Lord alludes.

(4) That *two* things are meant, is proved by the addition on the two sides of the sentence. To '*enter into*' a kingdom is more than merely to '*see*' it. Then the addition on the one side shows, that the '*water*' on

the other side is something additional. The kingdom may be *seen* by one begotten of *wind alone*. But *entry into* the kingdom there will not be, save by the *birth out of water as well as of wind*.

(5) This is confirmed to us by the first Epistle of John. The apostle tells us that Jesus went through* water and blood, and that the witnesses are three—‘The *Spirit*, and the *water*, and the *blood*.’ If now the water means only the Spirit (or ‘wind’) there are but *two* witnesses instead of three.

II. Some authors then prefer to say—‘That ‘*water*’ here is spiritually taken, and that it signifies, ‘*the Word of God*,’ and the inward cleansing which is effected by the reception of God’s truth.’

1. But this will not stand. For Christ is speaking, not only of the communication of a new life to man, but of the *visible birth* attached to that life; and that is something wholly different from an *inward and invisible cleansing*. Nor does it give any answer to Nicodemus’ objection, of the impossibility of the Saviour’s doctrine.

2. Again—What is it that is cleansed, according to your views?

(1) Is it the *old* man, that is purified by God’s truth? Then the doctrine of the necessity of the communication of *new life* to the dead in trespasses and sins is set aside. Your interpretation, when it descends to detail, overturns both your own principle, and Christ’s.

(2) Or is it the *new* man, that is purified? Then *birth* must come *first*. And it is of *birth*, and not of *cleansing* which *comes after birth*, that our Lord is speaking. The infant must be born, before it is bathed.

III. Let us try then if literal ‘water’ may not give a good sense.

* So it should be rendered. See a tract entitled—‘*The Three Witnesses*.’ Fletcher, Norwich.

1. This is a first principle of interpretation, *that every word is to take its usual and literal sense, unless some absurdity arise*. Now ‘the Fathers’ took it literally, and found no absurdity therein. One conversant with them says—they unanimously applied it to baptism. And if it be so applied, then Jesus teaches, that after the Spirit’s regeneration, immersion in water should follow, as a token of the invisible work of the Spirit which has preceded. Is there any thing absurd here?

But an acute writer, Mr. Mackay, of Hull, asserts it to be impossible, that water can be taken literally here. Let us hear him.

“It cannot in any way refer to baptism by water—the application of literal water to a man externally—as that would only wash his body, and could not touch his inner man.”

1. Whereto we reply, ‘We are speaking of *two* things. The *Spirit first* renews the inner man. May not *water*, *after that* be applied to the outer man? Does not the Saviour so command? “He that *believeth* [as the fruit of the Spirit’s work], *and is baptized* [the water coming second] shall be saved.”’

2. ‘Water’ (1) *literally* taken, and as (2) relating to *baptism*, occurs both in the *preceding and following context* of John’s Gospel. “I *immerse* in water:” i. 26. “Therefore am I come (says John the Baptist) *immersing* in water:” 31. “He that sent me to *immerse* in water:” 33. Here is the *preceding context*. Look now at the following context, the occurrences of the word ‘water’ being in the same chapter as our text. “After these things came *Jesus* and His disciples into the land of Judea, and there He tarried with them and *immersed*. And *John* also was *immersing* in Enon near to Salim, because there was *much water* there, and they came and were *immersed*.” iii. 22, 23. Moreover in the intermediate chapter which speaks of the miracle of Cana, *water* is literally taken.

3. In baptism, that is, in immersion, the man is visibly and emblematically *born out of the water*. Baptism comes in too just at the appropriate time to be significant of birth. After the soul is regenerate, the next step is baptism.

And herein is contained our Lord's reply to Nicodemus' objection. 'Thus is the birth of an adult possible, however old he may be, and even if his natural mother be dead.' This seems to be the reason why water, in our Lord's reply, is put first. Nicodemus had specified the mother's part in birth as the one which it was impossible to supply. It is shown, then, that as the Lord demands a new *birth*, and provides a *new life*, so He has provided the waters as the womb *out of* ($\epsilon\kappa$) which the regenerate man is to be *born*. Immersion of believers in water is then the answer to the ruler's cry of impossibility and absurdity. Had Nicodemus been obedient to God's command given by John the Baptist, and been immersed on a confession of his sins, he would not have started the objection. See, reader, how obedience to God removes many obstacles, both theoretic and practical!

Hence, too, we see why water is named *but once*. The Spirit's work is first spoken of (ver. 3), and after this fifth verse the Saviour insists again on it. Baptism has its place, though it is not the *chief* place.

4. The Saviour, in answer to the ruler, and as expanding God's own scheme of the new birth, presents to us *the two new parents*. The Spirit of God is the new spiritual *Father*; the water the new *mother*. Two elements are set before us. The one heavenly and invisible, 'the wind;' the other visible and earthly, 'the water.'

The superior one is beyond man's control; the inferior is under his power. The work of the Spirit is *secret*. The man is renewed we know not how. But his *birth* is visible. It is no inward and secret washing. It is a manifest coming forth out of the

visible water. "With the heart man believeth." With the mouth, and by the baptismal waters, *confession is made*, to the church and to the world.

The Spirit of God is the real and active Father of the renewed man. The water is only the apparent and emblematic mother. It is the perception of this difference which dissolves what might otherwise seem a very strong objection. It has been said—'In order to establish your views from this Scripture you run into absurdity. For but one preposition is used in the Greek text of this fifth verse, and that is equally connected with the words 'water' and 'Spirit.' So then, if the Greek preposition is to be rendered 'out of,' it must apply in the same sense to both 'water' and 'spirit.' A man then must come *up out of the Spirit* as well as come up out of the water!'

This supposes then, that there may be one good rendering of the Greek preposition ($\epsilon\kappa$) which will apply in the same sense exactly to both water and the Spirit. One attempted therefore to translate it—'through the agency of water and the Spirit.' But no! While the Holy Spirit is an agent, the water is simply passive. Here then the case fails.

In Greek the word means 'out of.' And a man is said in Greek to be born 'out of' both his parents: Matt. i. 5; Gen. xv. 4. They are the source of his existence. But each is the origin of his existence in a different mode. And our Lord is here giving emphasis to the mother's part in our existence. 'Out of' as referred to the Spiritual Father takes one sense; and 'out of' as related to the figurative mother takes another. There it refers to the believer's coming up out of the water. It is certain that none can be *born out of water*, who never was *in* it. The Spirit gives spiritual *life*, the water presents *birth*. The birth is commanded in order to manifest the new *life*, not to bestow it.

5. Thus again we are running on parallel lines with

the other Gospels. For John the Baptist called on those who accepted the testimony to a coming kingdom of the heavens, to be immersed in water. The Saviour then is upholding the mission of John the Baptist in this reference to water. As John the Baptist bore witness to Him, so does He to John the Baptist. In general too those only who accepted John's message, and the immersion which was the token of that acceptance, received Christ. Moreover, our Lord baptized in water, by means of His disciples, at the same time with John the Baptist, as we have seen.

Here then His practice tells us what is His meaning. He as well as John preached the coming kingdom of God, and used immersion as the token of men's acceptance of the hope: Mark i. 4, 14, 15.

John's Gospel does not give us our Lord's command appointing the rites, either of baptism or of the Lord's Supper; but he gives the fundamental principles, which relate to both. John vi. states the root-thoughts which lie at the basis of the *Supper*; it is then fitting, that a notice of baptism in its interior sense should appear in this place. The other Gospels touch chiefly on the *immersion*. John's Gospel shows us the significance of its other side, the *emersion*, or coming forth out of the water.

6. God raised up Moses in order to gather to Himself a new people, delivering them out of Egypt and its bondage, by the blood of the lamb, leading them on to a new standing before God in order to their becoming before Him a *kingdom of priests* and an holy nation, and alluring them onward by the hope of the land. Then He made known to all the separation of this people to Himself by His opening a passage for them through the waters. The sea was death to Egypt and the Egyptians; it was *new birth to Israel*, and a fresh start for the hope set before them.

But in our Lord's day Moses' law and Moses' people had failed. God then raised up a greater than the

leader of old, who should assemble to God a better people, to be delivered out of a worse Egypt, and from a more terrible Pharaoh, by the knowledge of a new name of God, and under the hope of the coming kingdom and glory of Christ. In His wisdom then the Most High appointed *another passage through the waters*; in token of the new work begun. This new work of God was refused by the Pharisees. They rejected against themselves the counsel of God: Luke vii. 29. And Nicodemus was a Pharisee. His coming by night shows, that as his party had refused John's baptism, so Nicodemus was himself ashamed and afraid to accept this unpopular command.

The deputation of priests and Levites sent to inquire of John the Baptist concerning his mission consisted in part of *Pharisees*. And they inquired about his right to immerse, or his meaning in it. "I baptize *in water*," is John's reply, but there was a greater than himself who was to follow, and a greater baptism than his own. Not that that baptism of the Spirit means regeneration. The parties who rightly received John's baptism were *already regenerate* and forgiven. But Jesus' baptism of the Spirit was the *bestowal of the miraculous gifts*.

It was then quite suitable that before the Jewish ruler should be thrown a hint at his previous disobedience. Moses, disobeying God's command to circumcise his son, had well nigh been cut off: Ex. iv. 24, 26.

7. The plans of the Most High are ordinarily framed on the same model. He created the earth by the Spirit's moving on the waters, and bringing the dry land out of their womb. He new created the earth after the Flood, by the wind which caused the dry land to reappear out of the waters. And Paul tells us, that the passage of the Red Sea by Israel answers to a believer's passage through the waters of baptism: 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. See also Tit. iii. 5, where the connection between the Spirit's renewal and baptismal waters is reaffirmed.

'But if the Spirit of God be meant in verse 5, why translate it "wind," as you have done?'

Because 'wind' is the literal sense of the word, although the Spirit be signified. Our Lord, I suppose, purposely used mysterious language, in order to humble the too lofty teacher, and to show him his ignorance. Thus too He brought His words into contact with those types of the Old Testament which the Jewish teacher should have known.

All then must be 'born out of water and wind,' or they 'cannot' enter into the future kingdom of glory.

The birth out of water was not alone *possible*, but *necessary* also; as Nicodemus would find to his cost in the coming day, unless he were obedient. The 'cannot' here refers to God's counsel and oversight in the matter. *The Most High will take care, that none but those who have complied with the conditions stated, shall attain that age of reward.* It is to be an entry "according to works:" Rev. xxii. 12; Matt. xvi. 24—27. The disobedient "cannot." It is God's menace of loss to come, on disobedience in this respect. For while the renewal of the soul is God's gracious sovereign gift, baptism is in our own choice and power. And therefore we are responsible, and shall be dealt with about it in a future day: Matt. vii. 21. "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven."

The disobedient in this respect will not be allowed to "enter into the kingdom of God." The King of the future kingdom, who Himself submitted to pass through the waters, attests it.

To 'enter into' the kingdom, is, as we see at a glance, more than to 'see' it. This advance in blessing is due to obedience. Thus the sons of God show themselves unlike to disobedient Adam, and like to Abraham our father, the obedient man of faith: Gen. xvii. 23.

'Do you mean, that none shall partake of millennial blessedness who have not received immersion in water?'

It is, not what *I mean*, but what *Christ says*. If 'the kingdom of God' be what I have, I think, proved; and if the birth out of water be baptism, as most commentators allow; then our Lord asserts the *exclusion from entrance into the millennial kingdom of all those not so obedient.*

Suppose that 'the kingdom of God' means 'eternal salvation,' and is the matter improved? Then our Lord asserts that '*without immersion none shall be saved!*' Exclusion from *something* is affirmed; if it be not exclusion from eternal glory, what is it that shall be lost?

This view, established on not a few passages of Scripture shows, that those renewed by the Spirit shall have eternal life; for that is the gift of God to His elect. But they will not attain reward.

One act of disobedience in Adam brought on us the vast ocean of woe which still engirdles our world.

For one act of omission Moses' life was in peril.

For one act of disobedience, Nadab and Abihu, though consecrated priests, were cut off in a moment.

For one act of disobedience Uzzah was smitten to death.

For two acts of disobedience Saul was *deprived of his kingdom*. (1) 'Tarry till I come,' said Samuel. He did not. (2) 'Go, and utterly smite Amalek.' He went, but did not utterly smite it. He is rejected from being king. 'Go up, possess the land,' said Jehovah to Israel. They would not. 'Then they shall die in the wilderness.' And so it came to pass. For one act of disobedience Moses is shut out of the land; and God will not listen to any supplication.

'Yes, but these things took place under *law*, and ours is the Gospel of *grace*.'

Yet Paul tells us, that what befel Israel in the desert is a type of ourselves. He warns us, that *like*

conduct to theirs will be followed by exclusion: Heb. iii., iv.; 1 Cor. x.

While eternal life is the gift of God against our deserts, yet the rewards of the day to come will be dispensed according to works.

6. "That which is begotten of the flesh is flesh, and that which is begotten of the Spirit is spirit. 7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be begotten from above.'"

The Saviour is still further answering the ruler's objection. His reply is—that even if the second birth of a man in Nicodemus' sense were possible, it would not avail. The stream cannot rise above its fountain, and flesh can only produce flesh, while that which God requires, is the being born of God the Spirit. Ever since the fall Adam's sons are begotten only in the likeness of the *fallen* man: Gen. v. 3. And of their inner man the Most High says—"Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually:" vi. 5; Gal. v. 19—21. Here then lies the force of the great necessity. "Ye MUST be begotten from above."

Observe the significance of that small change in the pronoun used. 'Ye must be born again.' It is no doubt primarily an indirect reference to Nicodemus' word, "We know."

But most preachers in our day would say—"We must be born again."

Why then does not Jesus say so? Why says He, 'Ye must'? Because, while all others are flesh begotten of fallen flesh, He was not so, but was the Father's Eternal Son; and, as it regards His manhood, was begotten of the Spirit.

8. "The wind bloweth where it wills, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that has been begotten of the Spirit."

The Lord Jesus begins by stating some characteristics of the wind as it occurs in nature, thence passing to

like peculiarities in the Spirit of God. We hear "the voice" of the wind; but whence it begins to move, and where it falls to rest, we know not. It seems to have a will of its own. Man cannot anticipate its movements or control them. It is unseen, but full of power. It moves the inferior element, the waters, but the waters do not move it. It is the heavenly element, as the waters are the earthly one.

Even thus the Spirit of God is unseen, but may be heard, and is full of power. He communicates spiritual life where He wills. He is sovereign and independent. He is beyond man's knowledge and control.

In this our Lord has designedly given us an antidote to the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*. He foresaw, that in the day that was to come, His followers would overturn the Scriptural order which He established. In the Gospels, and Acts, and Epistles, we find, that men were first led to believe by the preaching of the Word, then immersed in water. But in process of time, as Christianity became corrupted, a rite calling itself baptism was administered before faith had begun, and thence naturally it was supposed to *produce* faith.

Hence our Lord here lays down principles destructive of such deadly error. Baptismal regeneration asserts (1) that the birth* out of water is to be used *before* the Spirit has wrought the man's regeneration, and is to *produce* it. (2) That regeneration by the Holy Ghost, in the case of infants, [who are no proper subjects of baptism] always accompanies the use of the water. (3) But then it is added, that the act of baptism must be performed by one possessed of mysterious virtue; hence '*the priest*' comes in.

This conversation of our Lord then contradicts entirely the errors of our day in this matter. The

* With the change of the *doctrine* is associated a change in the *form* of the rite from that commanded by our Lord. It is now not 'birth out of water,' but a sprinkling of water on the face only.

Saviour and His apostles know nothing about 'the priest' and his virtue in baptism. Peter, when describing what is the essential and saving element in baptism, says not a word about the administrator, but confines its power to the spiritual state of the baptized. "Antitypically whereto [to Noah's salvation in the ark] baptism doth now save us also (*not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God*) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" 1 Pet. iii. 21. When he preached to Cornelius and his friends he did not himself immerse. He did not bring any ordained 'priests' to do it, but commanded the six simple brethren from Joppa to immerse the believers: Acts x. 23, 45; xi. 12.

The sprinkling then of unbelieving infants, far from its regenerating them, is a sin before God. The only acceptable baptism is the immersion in water of one on whom the life of the spirit has been previously bestowed by the Holy Ghost. Then to the *invisible begetting* of God by the Spirit is added in its due order the *visible birth* out of water.

In the other Gospels, baptism is presented from man's side, and as related to the washing away of sins through the open work of Christ. Hence man is called on to repent, and to seek the forgiveness of sins. But in this Gospel of John the matter is presented from the side of God the Spirit, acting after His sovereign counsels, unknown to man, and incapable of being controlled by him. It is the Spirit's acting, and man's passiveness in the reception of new life toward God, which this passage discovers to us.

Lastly, the two objects presented to the Christian, are—(1) ETERNAL LIFE, the one; and (2) THE KINGDOM, the other. Eternal life is the gift of God according to grace: Rom. vi. 23. But the kingdom of Christ is a *reward to works*. Hence New Testament writers speak oftenest about the connection of baptism with the *kingdom*. But the mention of baptism is not

confined to the connection of it with the kingdom. Paul in the Romans and Galatians is treating especially of justification; and of its consequence, eternal life. But he speaks of baptism there also. It is there treated of in connection with *Christ's* work, His death, and resurrection. We die to the old Adam, and have risen to the new: Rom. vi.; Gal. iii.

If then the believing reader desires to enter into the glory of the thousand years of Christ's reign, he will obey God's commands by Christ. And he will, if he has not been immersed already as a believer, at once obey this command. "For IF we became fellow-plants [with Christ] in the likeness of His death [which is effected in the believer's immersion with Christ: ver. 3, 4,] why we shall be also of the [first] resurrection:"* Rom. vi. 5. Here is a condition which not all believers fulfil. All believers *died* with Christ by faith. But none have been *buried* with Christ, but those who have been immersed with Him. The way into the time of reward is not by simple faith, but by "the *obedience of faith*." Disobedient Israel are shut out from the hope presented to them, by the oath of God! Heb. iii., iv.

The passage of a man's spirit from death to life, from Satan's empire to the kingdom of grace, is of such vast moment, that the Lord has appointed baptism as an outward sign of this transit. The believer is herein to show his obedience to God whose son he has by faith become. But the Most High designs immersion to be also a testimony to the world, and to the church, as well as to the man's own self. The believer says in effect, by His immersion, to the world—"I was once one of you, a servant of Satan, a subject of his kingdom. But now I belong to Christ. I give you the token then of my voluntary death and burial to the world, the devil, and the flesh, that I may serve Christ."

* Our translators have inserted words which spoil the sense.

To the church the believer's baptism says: 'I believe in One dead, buried, and risen; therefore I testify my faith by being buried under the waters of death. Receive me into the ranks of faith!'

Hence we set aside at a glance all such low objections, as—'Immersion of a believer was all very well and suitable in apostles' days, when a man bid adieu to idols, and to Judaism with its circumcision. But it has lost its significance now in Christian countries.'

We answer, 'Immersion bodies forth a truth which is of equal moment all through our dispensation, and in every land. It speaks not primarily of leaving forms and ceremonies, but of death to the old Adam, and of new life of the spirit in Christ the second Adam. It speaks of death and burial to 'the world,' of which Satan is the ruler, and which abides in its unchanged enmity to Christ still.'

If then, reader, you love Christ, prove it by obeying His commands! If you would be praised, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant!" you must be obedient to this the first of our Lord's commands after faith.

And if you regard only your own interests, from them too comes a loud call. If disobedient herein, you will be shut out of something. For "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, None, except he be born out of water and the Spirit, can enter into the kingdom of God.*"

[2ND EDITION.]

THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY.



'HAVE you a good Sabbath-school belonging to your chapel?'

We have not one at all. Indeed we don't keep the Sabbath!

'Not keep the Sabbath? What do you mean?'

Why, that we are Christians; and the Sabbath is for Jews!

'But don't Christians keep the *Sabbath*?'

No, friend: they keep the *Lord's Day*.

'But where's the difference? Both keep a seventh day. What if the Jew keep the Saturday, and you the day after? What does it matter?'

There is a world of difference; as great as between the Law and the Gospel. Let us consider it! The Sabbath is regarded in the New Testament as belonging to Moses and the Synagogue: Mark i. 21; Luke iv. 16; Acts xiii. 14, 27. "When *the Jews* were gone out of *the synagogue*, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them *the next*

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Sabbath :” 42, 44, 45. “For *Moses* hath of old time in every city them that *preach him*, being read in the *synagogue every Sabbath day* :” xv. 21. Paul and Silas “came to Thessalonica, where was a *synagogue of the Jews*. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and *three Sabbath days* reasoned with them out of the Scriptures :” xvii. 2.

‘But if we observe the seventh portion of time, what does it signify on which day we keep it?’

Let us regard the matter more closely. The observance of a day of rest carries with it great significance. The Mahometan expresses his dissent from both Judaism and Christianity, by observing *Friday* as his day of rest.

Why now was the Jew to observe his Sabbath? “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work : But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : thou shalt not do any work For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it :” Ex. xx. 8—11.

Here then is the reason on which the Jew’s observance of the day is grounded. He must keep *Saturday* : for in the six previous days God created all, and on the Saturday He rested. Therefore he is to rest on that day. To rest then on the *first day* of the week (or Sunday) would be a breach of the Law. It would be to *rest* on a day when Jehovah was at *work* ! It would destroy the very principle of the command. That was designed to try Israel *whether they could both work with God and rest with Him* ! The Sabbath then is fixed to the Saturday.

The Sabbath was first commanded to Israel in the desert, after their redemption out of Egypt, and its slavery.

It was commanded before the Law was given from

Sinai. God fed His people with manna six days, and gave them on the Friday a double portion ; forbidding them to go out and seek it on the Sabbath : Ex. xvi. At Sinai this command is repeated : therefore it is said—“Remember the Sabbath day.”

The Sabbath then had to the Jew two significations. In Exodus he was called to observe it, because his God had created all in six days and rested on the seventh. He was to work therefore when his God laboured, and to rest when Jehovah rested. In Deuteronomy another view of the matter is given. They were to labour six days and the seventh to rest—“*that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant [slave] in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm : therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day* :” Deut. v. 12—15.

This reason applied, as is evident, solely to Israel. No other nation was redeemed out of slavery in Egypt by miracle.

This command was repeated to Moses after he had gone up to God, when the covenant had been made with Israel in Horeb.

“Speak thou unto *the children of Israel* saying—Verily My Sabbaths shall ye keep : it is a sign between Me and *you throughout your generations* ; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”

The observance of the Sabbath then belongs to the Jews alone ; just as the covenant of Sinai was made with them alone.

“Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore ; for it is holy unto you, every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death ; for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord : whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, *he shall*

surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed:" Ex. xxxi. 12—17.

It was a sign between God and the nation of Israel only. It was death to break it.

This first covenant was broken by the sin of the Calf. But when the covenant is renewed with Moses as its mediator, the command re-appears. To break the rest it enjoined was death. A new element in the rest now appears. "Ye shall kindle no fire in all your habitations on the Sabbath day:" Ex. xxxv. 2. Do you light fires in your house on Sundays as well as other days? If you do, it is a breach of the Sabbath. A man was put to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath, with the view of making a fire: Num. xv. 32—36.

The Most High complains of Israel for breaking His Sabbaths: Ez. xx. 13—16. But He never complains of other nations for not observing them. Paul enumerates the sins of the Gentiles in Romans i. But he does not complain of their breaking the Sabbath, as one of the list.

In short the Sabbath is the command of Jehovah the God of Creation given to Israel His people, as the sign of the covenant in Horeb; and the meaning of it was, to try whether man in the *flesh* put under law, could by his obedience win rest to himself in the old creation, lying under the sentence of Adam. But law applied to man the sinner cannot give him rest. Nor can God find His rest in the obedience of Israel under law. On the contrary, a new curse and wrath came in hereby. "They polluted My Sabbaths; then I said I would pour out My fury upon them to accomplish Mine anger against them in the wilderness:" Ezek. xx.

At length, after much patience on Jehovah's part, they are driven out of the land. They are detained in captivity seventy years, till the land should have enjoyed its commanded Sabbaths. On the return from the captivity synagogues were built, in which the people might meet to read the law and the prophets, and to pray together. Jesus and His apostles honoured this arrangement: Luke iv. 16, 31; xiii. 10. After the day of Pentecost and the proclamation of the Gospel by Paul, apostles visit the synagogues on the Sabbath as furnishing the best opportunity of announcing to them the resurrection of Christ, and the blessings of His death. But when Paul visits the *disciples of Christ* to keep the rite of the Lord's Supper, it is on the *first day of the week*: Acts xx. 7.

'But I always understood, that Christians were bound to keep the Moral Law.'

What do you mean by 'the Moral Law'?

'The Ten Commandments!'

Where are they so called, in the Old Testament or in the New? They are called the covenant of Sinai. "He wrote upon the [two] tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments:" Ex. xxiv. 28. God "declared unto you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone:" Deut. iv. 13; ix. 9—11.

If you wish to be saved as the Jew, you are to obey every jot and tittle of the covenant and commands made by Moses with Israel, or you are cursed, as disobedient. "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse:" Gal. iii.

When our Lord came, He several times, and of set purpose broke the Jewish Sabbath, challenged Israel's zeal for it as hypocrisy, and bade the healed man carry a burden upon the Sabbath, a thing which the law forbade: Jer. xvii. 21. *For law and its rest cannot give life or righteousness to man the fallen.* It

was only designed to fill up the gap until the Seed of Abraham should come, who would bring righteousness and life.

Israel was indignant, that the old rest of Moses or the Sabbath should be broken through, and they sought to kill the Son of God, as a breaker of the Sabbath. His defence of Himself exasperated still further their rage. "My Father is working hitherto, and I am working.' Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also, that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God:" John v. 17, 18. The Saviour's plea then in effect is this:—"O Jews, see ye not, that your Sabbath cannot bring *rest*? Look at the poor palsied man! The Sabbaths of thirty-eight years have rolled over his head, yet have brought him no rest; not even in Jerusalem, the city of God. The law condemns him, and the Sabbath can bring him no healing. Do you imagine moreover, that *God can rest in you*, and your obedience to His law, of which the Sabbath is the sign? Far from it! For your disobedience to His law, wrath is about to visit you!' The rest of the Most High in creation was broken by Adam's disobedience, and since that time God has been at work to bring in a better rest than can be won by man's obedience under law. How could God *rest* in a world of sin and death? How could man rest in the world lying under the curse? Therefore the Father and the Son, pushing aside the broken Sabbath of law, were *working*, in order to bring in the better rest of grace, which rests on redemption through the finished work of Christ.

How then was the Sabbath of law brought to an end for the Christian?

Christ died, nailing to His cross the law of commandments and ordinances, after perfectly fulfilling them. Law put Him to death under its curse, as one hanged on a tree: Gal. iii. Law put Him to death,

and He remained in the tomb all the Jewish Sabbath: Matt. xxviii. 1. What does that teach us? That the baptized Christian has died with Christ and been buried with Him unto law, and to the old creation, which lies under sin and death. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath He quickened together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses. *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us*, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."

And then the consequence. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of feast (*εορτη*) or *new moon*, or *Sabbath day*, which are a shadow of the things which are to come, but the body (substance) is of Christ." Here then the Sabbath is assumed to be a part of the law of Moses, as much as the passover, or the feast of new moon: Col. ii. 12—17.

That teaches us then, that faith in Jesus takes and buries us out of the old creation and the powers of the flesh under law, to set us in a new creation under grace. Jesus on the first day of a new week rose out of death. Here begins a new rest in a new creation. Redemption through the victory of the finished work of Christ is begun. Jesus twice meets on the first day of the week His congregated disciples: John xx. 19, 26. A command is given concerning the collection for the saints which is to take effect on that day: 1 Cor. xv. 2. John the apostle is in the Spirit on the Lord's day: Rev. i. 10.

The question then is simple enough. Are you a disciple of *Moses* and *the covenant of the ten commands*? If so, be circumcised and keep the whole law, specially the Sabbath; or the Saturday. Seek your rest in the priesthood of Aaron, and the sacrifices

and festivals of the Law! Break one of its commands, and you are cursed!

Or are you *a disciple of Jesus?* Then you have died and been buried to Moses, his law and his curse. You rest in the Saviour's obedience for you, and His resurrection out of the old creation into the new. There can be no compromise between law and grace, between Judaism and Christianity. The rite of immersion which is to follow at once on faith tells us of death and burial to law, in order that we may become sons of God in Christ; observing His commandments, which are not grievous. For here is the point at which most stagger. They suppose that any one who says, we are not now under the Ten Commandments, is bringing in all immorality. To such we say—The Christian is not under law, but under grace. Law can neither justify any one, nor SANCTIFY HIM. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are *not under law, but under grace.* What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? God forbid:" Rom. vi. 15. "*The strength of sin is the law:*" 1 Cor. xv. "I through law *died to law,* that I might live to God:" Gal. ii. 19 (Greek).

The Most High now seeks and calls for *the obedience of sons in observing the commands of Christ:* John xiv. 15, 21; xv. 10.

The Christian then observes the first day of the week, as believing in the righteousness, the death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Here is a new day, observed in token of the accomplishment of a better work than that of creation. The Christian's observance of the Lord's day then says in effect:—

'I have done with *the old man,* and the vain attempt of the *flesh* to be righteous under *law.* I have given up all hopes of rest in the old scene—the world, as the realm of sin and death. I belong to *the new man.* I am no longer in Adam, or in Moses, but in Christ.'

'God rests in this work of Christ, achieved in resurrection. He finds it very good, better than His creation-work. And here I can rest too. I have righteousness and pardon herein, and I celebrate the Lord's day, as partaker in spirit of the rest brought in by the Lord Jesus. But while the soul is through grace redeemed, the body is not. It is still a part of the old creation, and in it and in this scene there is no rest. Hence I am looking on to the better Sabbath-rest which remains for the people of God: Heb. iv.'

'Then the men of faith, the workers with God and the sufferers for Christ after God's redemption-work of six thousand years is over—will rest a thousand years with Him. He shall accept their work, and they shall rest in Him, and He in them.'

While then, Christian, you rest in the work of Christ already done, see that you are labouring to have part in the millennial rest to come. For not in every individual of the saved can God find complacency. Many are not working for Christ, who are yet redeemed by Him. Shall not such be excluded as "unprofitable servants"? Matt. xxv.

True or false religion then turns on our choice of the Sabbath, or the Lord's day, as our day of rest. While the millennial day shall be the accomplishment of the Law's Sabbath-rest, we as Christians look beyond it. The *eighth* day is to us the true day of rest. It was the day of the Saviour's resurrection, and began after the Law's Sabbath was over. So, after the millennial Sabbath-rest is ended, there shall yet be an eternal resurrection-rest to be enjoyed in Christ risen from the dead. There is a temporary kingdom to be enjoyed, in the shaken heavens and earth: Heb. xii. 26—29. Let us seek to have part in this: Heb. iv. 5—11. But after that is over, an unshaken kingdom in the new unshaken heavens and earth shall be for ever enjoyed by believers, as the gift of God in grace: Heb. xii. 26—29.

With this agrees the testimony of the Apocalypse. The men of the Church are exhorted by Christ to obey His words, that in the day when He takes the sceptre as the Son of man they may reign with Him : Rev. ii. 26, 27 ; iii. 21, 22. Accordingly, after He descends from heaven as King of kings, cutting off His enemies and binding Satan, those who are accounted worthy "reign with Him the thousand years : " Rev. xix, xx. But after that season is past, His saved shall reign in the heavenly city for ever and ever : Rev. xxii. 5. Glory to our God evermore !

THE CONSEQUENCES OF JESUS BEING SON OF DAVID.

I. GREAT PROMISES WERE ATTACHED BY THE MOST HIGH TO A SON OF DAVID.

The occasion of the promises was David's design to build a house for the God who had exalted him from the sheecot to the throne. The prophet Nathan at first encouraged his idea, but was afterwards sent with a message of grace, refusing his purpose, but promising to do great things for himself and his family : 1 Chron. xvii. The Most High had purposes of kindness towards Israel, and toward their king. He would fix Israel in peace untroubled thenceforward by foes. David must die, but a Son of his should be established in his kingdom by the Lord : 11. He should build an house for Jehovah, and his throne should be established *for ever* : 14. *He should also be the Son of God* : 13. God's mercy should never be taken away from Him. He should be settled in God's house and kingdom for ever : 14, 27.

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II. THESE PROMISES WERE NOT FULFILLED IN SOLOMON.

Solomon did indeed build the temple, and his kingdom was a time of prosperity and splendour, such as had never been enjoyed in Israel before.

But his reign lasted not for ever, but for forty years only: 1 Chron. xxii, 9, 10. Why was it cut short? Because of sin. He transgressed the laws of Moses relating to the royal authority. He multiplied wives to himself, and horses, and silver, and gold. He sent his subjects back to Egypt, a way which God had declared closed to Israel. He did not write out a copy of the law. And last and worst of all, he fell into idolatry; the sin against which the law warned men most.

This Son of *David*, then, was not in spirit and life, the Son of God, as promised. Solomon brought in only a partial fulfilment. The complete accomplishment of it was yet to come.

This counsel of Jehovah was established under oath: 2 Sam. iii, 9; Psa. lxxxix, 3, 35; cxxxii, 11. It cannot therefore be set aside. An attempt was made in the days of Ahaz to defeat it. The King of Israel and the King of Syria were confederated together to remove the line of David from the throne, and to set up another family. On this occasion the Lord offered to the representative of David's house, though he were a sinful man and an idolater, to work any miracle in heaven or earth which he might name, in pledge, that the plans of his foes should in this matter be defeated. Ahaz refused, in his wilfulness, to demand any sign. Then the Most High promised that a virgin should bear a Son, whose name should be 'God with us.'

III. THESE THINGS POINTED ONWARD TO THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

None was ever so born, but our Lord Jesus Christ. His birth in that way confirms all the promises made to David and to Israel: Rom. xv.

Moreover the Saviour's history again and again touches upon these promises. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke trace our Lord's genealogy up to Abraham and David the king: Matt. i, 1; Luke iii.

The angel promised to Mary, that the Lord God would give to her Son that should be born *the throne of David his father*, and that he should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, while of his kingdom there should be no end: Luke i, 32, 33.

Now David's throne is not in the heaven. We are carefully taught, that David himself has never gone to heaven: Acts ii. We are instructed, that he reigned in Jerusalem: the very city where Christ his Son experienced his sore trouble and death, being rejected with mockery and contempt both from Jew and Gentile, when he asserted his title to the throne over Israel.

The comfort addressed to Joseph in his perplexity concerning Mary turned upon the Lord's promise of the miracle to Ahaz. While the evil king refused it, God gave beside signs in the height and in the depth. He gave a sign in the height, by the darkening of the sun, and in the depth, by the earthquake at the Saviour's death. He gave a sign also in the height, by Jesus visibly ascending to the heaven; while His disciples looked on; and in the descent of the Holy Ghost in wind and fire.

Zachariah the inspired father of the Baptist, in his song celebrated the mercy of the God of *Israel*, who had visited his people; raising up to them out of *the house of David* a mighty Saviour, in fulfilment of the prophet's words. These promises bore, that Israel should be rescued from their Gentile foes, and should serve the Lord in holiness and peace for ever: Luke i, 67—80. As it is also said in Rom. xi, 26: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins."

In pursuance of this mind of God Cæsar's decree of

taxation takes effect, to lead Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, so that David's Son should be born, as foretold, in David's native town. They both went there, as being both of the family of David.

And while there was no room for the lowly pair in the inn, nevertheless the birth of Jesus was celebrated by angelic hosts with joy. To the shepherds guarding their flocks by night, an angelic messenger declared, that to them was born a Saviour who was Christ the Lord, in the city of David that day: Luke ii, 8—10. These were tidings of great joy, designed for all the people of Israel. But how should they know this infant? how distinguish Him from all others? Not by His abode in a palace, not by His reclining in a cot of ivory and gold; but they should find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Then burst forth the chorus of angels—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to the men of God's good pleasure."

Soon thereafter come the Magi from the east, inquiring about the Sceptre given to Israel. And lest any should say, that the prophecies in the matter were unintelligible, the scribes when inquired of where Messiah should be born, point at once to Micah v. Bethlehem, the town of David, was the destined place out of which should come the Governor that is to rule God's *people of Israel*. Has this ever been fulfilled? Never! But if God be true, it must one day be accomplished. What changes then must take place in the world and Israel!

The Magi *worship*. This Son of David is also the Son of God. So it was foretold. And this appears more fully, with the Father's own attestation, at the baptism of Jesus. God is seeking a man after His own heart to anoint Him king of all. Jesus is immersed in the Jordan, and lo, the Father's voice declares Jesus to be the Beloved Son. He is at once the Son of David and the Son of God.

The Saviour pointed again to His claims and His hopes in His residence at Capernaum. Thus had Isaiah foretold, that the land of Galilee beside the sea should see a great light. Thus it came to pass. That land not only heard the wisdom of Christ, and saw His miracles, but on one of the mountains on that land Jesus revealed Himself as the Risen One to His disciples, and thence sent them forth to bear witness of resurrection and pardon to all the nations.

But the passage of Isaiah indicated, bears witness to other scenes yet to come. Israel shall rejoice with great joy, after the great and strange battle of fire, in which the might of Israel's oppressors will be broken. The victory shall be on Israel's side, because the Conqueror shall be Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God. He shall bring in true peace, seated on the throne of David. The zeal of Jehovah, God of armies, will effect these promises given to Israel.

Let us look at another passage. The eighty-ninth Psalm is one of the most copious on this point.

It is in general a rehearsing of the engagements entered into by Jehovah to glorify the throne of David and of his Son. But there, side by side, is set forth the opposite state of things in fact. Thus is the Lord called on to remember His words, and perform them.

Who is the Son of David to whom these engagements shall be performed? He is marked out in verse 9. "Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." So Luke tells us of One, who when the mariners of the lake were terrified, and cried—"Master, master, we perish"—arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and they ceased, and there was a calm: Luke viii, 24.

Of this Son of David it is foretold, that He, the Holy One of Israel shall be King: 18. God's mercy toward Him shall be eternal. "His Seed will I make

to endure for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven :” 28, 29. These words shall at length be fulfilled in Jesus the King of Israel.

Let us take another passage, Psalm cxxxii. This asks God to remember David’s troubles, and his design to build a house for Jehovah. It recites God’s oath to David to set one of his family on the throne of Israel : 11. At this Peter glances on the day of Pentecost. Jesus was He who gave a foretaste of the good things promised here. He abundantly blest the provision of Israel in the miracle of Cana in Galilee ; and in His feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand, satisfied the poor with bread. This then looks onward to the day of the completion of the rest of the prophecy. It tells of a time when God shall choose Zion for His habitation, and dwell therein for ever. This was not effected at the Saviour’s first coming. On the contrary, Jerusalem, as the Saviour foretold, was for her sins to be given up to her foes ; and the house of God within her was to be desolate until they should say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The little glimpses of glory given at Cana and in the desert were swallowed up by the far more extended and terrible famine sent upon the people during the siege of the holy city.

There must then be a day when the priests of Aaron’s line shall be clothed with salvation, and when Jewish saints shall shout aloud for joy. There in Jerusalem the power of the house of David shall display itself : 17. There shall their foes be clothed with shame, but on David and his Son shall the crown prosper. As that was the spot where Christ’s enemies assembled in His day of humiliation, and the bitter cup was drank by Him, so there shall the Lord exalt this faithful Son of David.

Let us look again at another prophecy. It shall be Jeremiah xxiii. That declares God’s displeasure against the unfaithful shepherds of Israel. Of this

the Lord Jesus gave indications at His first advent : Matt. ix, 36 ; xxiii.

But better times were at hand. The Lord would raise to David a Righteous Branch, and a king should reign and judge *in earth*. Israel in that day shall be safe from foes and Gentile oppression, and the name of the Deliverer shall be—“The Lord our Righteousness.” Who is this Righteous One, this “the Lord our Righteousness,” no believer needs to be told. While of all others it is written—“There is *none righteous*, no not one,” of Him it is declared, that He is “*Jesus Christ the Righteous*, the Propitiation for our sins,” who is to us “the end of law unto righteousness.”

Now of Him this prophecy testifies, that He shall one day reign *as a King on earth*. And His kingdom shall be so glorious, and His deliverance of Israel so wonderful, that the eyes of the nation shall no more be directed to the rescue out of Egypt, but to the deliverance of the nation from their later scattering, to inhabit without fear or further molestation, their own land.

The xxxiii of Jeremiah occupies a like position. It foretells the restoration of Israel from captivity. God will cleanse them from their sins. Jerusalem shall be a place of peace and joy, after being the seat of war and desolation. The engagements of God toward Judah and Ephraim shall at length be made good. David’s Righteous Branch at length shall reign. Of Him it is written—“Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee.” “A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” These counsels of God concerning Israel and David are so firm, that a man may as well attempt to break through the regular order of day and night enjoyed through the covenant with Noah, as set aside God’s intents of good toward Israel and David.

Would you look at another testimony? Then take

Isaiah xi. Here the promise is to a Son of Jesse. What Son of His it was, that is indicated, we know from the Spirit's resting on Jesus at His baptism, and the fulness of wisdom and power then displayed by Him. He judged, not by the sight of His eyes, or by the words that met His ear, as men in general are obliged to do. For He knew the thoughts of His foes, and could abash them with His—"Why tempt ye me? hypocrites?"

But while this foretaste has been given, the rest of the prophecy halts, and awaits its fulfilment. It supposes another day than this Gospel day of grace. As yet Jesus is the Lord of mercy, not breaking the bruised reed, or quenching the smoking flax. But the limit of this time is distinctly attested, in the same prediction—"Till He send forth *justice* unto victory." Thus too this xith chapter announces the day in which Jesus shall judge in righteousness and make war, (Rev. xix,) when He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips slay 'the Lawless One, the Man of Sin, the Rival Christ.' Then shall the innocence of Eden return again, and the beasts of prey be contented with grass as their food, while the serpent shall be deprived of his fangs of death. *Then*, not till then, not till the reign of righteousness at the hands of Christ after the great enemy, even Satan, is stilled in the bottomless pit, shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Then shall come the rest that remaineth for the people of God, and that rest shall be glory: ver. 10. Then shall Israel be restored to their own land from the various countries into which they have been cast. Great as were the miracles of God by the hand of Moses on the river Nile, the river Jordan, and the Red Sea, greater ones shall yet take effect in the day to come, on Euphrates. And the tongue of the sea through whose depths Israel then passed shall be permanently dried up; while in the

burning sands over which Moses and his host toiled, fountains shall spring up, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and become part of Israel's land.

Jesus' acceptance of the title 'Son of David,' was not only passive, or enforced on Him by virtue of His parentage and birth; but He also actively asserted it, specially toward the close of His life.

At the opening of His ministry, after the first case of restoration, two blind men addressed Him as the Son of David, craving His pity. Jesus owns His title, and gives them sight. But alas! Israel was then blind, as foretold, and the next miraculous incident of the Saviour's life is met by the blasphemy that the Saviour's power was that of Beelzebub.

This acknowledgment of the title "Son of David" was not an idle thing, producing a like response from the Saviour by whomsoever uttered. When one of the cursed nations of Canaan destined to the sword of justice, bespoke his aid as "the Son of David," He answered not a word. Pressed on the point by the disciples, He explains, that He was, as Son of David, come to uphold the rights of Israel. And it was only when the woman displayed a faith not found in Israel, and professed her willingness to take a place outside the superior position of Israel, that help was bestowed.

On His last journey to Jerusalem, as He entered and passed through Jericho two more blind men address Him as "Son of David"—receive their sight, and follow Him as trophies of His power to be presented to the daughter of Zion, to the glory of her King. The Saviour's entry into Jerusalem on the ass was in attestation of His claims to be king of Jerusalem. He actively, and of set purpose entered, in the guise the prophet had foretold, and the crowd rejoiced over the kingdom of Father David and the king who was coming in the name of the Lord.

It was, however, at the Saviour's judicial appearing before the representative of the king of the Romans,

that His title of Son of David, and king of Israel came into critical question. "Art thou the king of the Jews?" was the question of intensest interest to our Lord. Could He have denied it, He would have been set free; and His cross would have lacked Pilate's accusation.—'This is Jesus the Nazarite, the King of the Jews.' Because of our Lord's good confession before Pilate, He suffered death. For He could not deny the Scripture. But out of the cross has sprung the resurrection, and the ascent, and the session at the Father's right hand, in the heaven of heavens.

Then Christians, let us not misunderstand the matter. Jesus here and there has fulfilled some of the promises made to Israel and the house of David in the historic books, the Psalms and Prophets. What shall we say then? That this is because the promise, privileges and glories spoken of Israel and Jerusalem really belong to the Church of Christ, and are all to be fulfilled to her spiritually? By no means! The Spirit of God testifies that Jesus Christ was a servant of circumcised Israel, and that His miracles were to be the pledge to Israel of the accomplishment one day of all the blessings predicted. Jesus was a servant of the chosen race of Jacob, to *confirm* (not to set aside) the promises made to the fathers: Rom. xv, 8. Thus has the Spirit testified in Luke i.

These promises are, by the resurrection of Jesus, set on assured ground never presented before. As Jesus lives ever, and is resurrection and life, He is Master of the "*sure mercies*" of David. How can the throne of David be held by any one "*for ever*," as it is promised? Only "in the power of an endless life."

To this day, then, Christians, let us look onward—the day of Israel's repentance, and of the Saviour's coming in power. The Gentiles are about by their unbelief to throw off the yoke and name of Christ! The days of mercy are waning. The days are at hand, when kings and nations shall set themselves in insane

perverseness against the Lord and the Anointed Son of David. Then will the Lord speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Then shall He break them in pieces like a potter's vessel!

But our portion is with the Son of David, the Son of God. "For we became *companions (fellows)* of the Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." For "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above *thy fellows*." (*Greek*.) The illumined eye of Paul discerned among the companions of Messiah in that day of His kingdom and glory, *ourselves*, who hold fast the good hope of the coming day. Then let us fix our eyes thereon, and endeavour to attain to the future kingdom of God, in the path of righteousness along which the Saviour trod. Then shall He at length say also to us—"Well done, good and faithful servants; enter ye into the joy of your Lord." How great shall that joy be which the Father shall pour on this Lover of righteousness, this Righteous Branch of David, this man after His own heart; a fulness of blessing never known by David.

THE VISIBLE GLORY OF GOD.

GOD has at all times moral and spiritual glory. But that is invisible to the eye. Of that this paper does not treat, but of the intense brightness visible to the eye, attendant on the manifestation of the Lord.

This glory is not spoken of as exhibited in the work of creation; nor to Adam in Eden.

When is it first named?

After God had redeemed His people out of Egypt. He destroys their foes at the Red Sea; but the glory, though resident in the cloud which led the children of Israel, was not then manifested. The Lord went before His people whom He had redeemed, in a pillar of a cloud by day, and with fire by night, to give them light. But the fire was not the glory of God. That glory appeared only occasionally, at certain emergencies.

I. GIVING THE MANNA.

I. The first instance occurs before the giving of the Law, and when Israel's supply of food was expended. Under this trial they murmur against Moses and Aaron. 'Why had they led them out of Egypt to perish in the wilderness?' The Most High answers this difficulty which Moses could not meet, by the

promise of bread from heaven. Moreover, He would give them flesh. "At even ye shall know, that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: And, in the morning, *then ye shall see the glory of the Lord*; for that He heareth your murmurings against the Lord:" Ex. xvi, 6, 7.

"And Moses spake unto Aaron—Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord; for He hath heard your murmurings.' And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED IN THE CLOUD." Out of the glory the Lord speaks, promising them flesh and bread. Thus they should recognize Him as Jehovah their God. The glory then is manifested in grace, and not in the destruction of the murmurers. The Lord does not show Himself openly; but a living person is present there, to whom their sins were displeasing.*

II. SINAI.

At Sinai God proposes that they shall be treated according to their deserts. If obedient, they shall be the first of the nations, kings, and priests. They accept the proposal, and the nation is gathered to hear His commands. He comes therefore amid physical terrors, designed to make them fear God, and dread to offend one so good and so great.

The covenant is duly made, and ratified by sacrifice. Half of the blood is given to Jehovah, half is sprinkled on the people. Moses, and certain representatives of

* In Gospel times, the Jews murmur against the Son of God shrouded in flesh. At times His divine glory breaks forth. He proclaims Himself the true manna, the bread sent down from heaven. They doubt, wonder, and disbelieve, as did their fathers over the manna. And Jesus meets them in grace, and not in justice.

the nation go up the mount, and feast before Him. Moses is called higher up into the mount. "And the cloud covered the mount. And *the glory of the Lord* tabernacled (*Hebrew*) upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it [the glory] six days, and the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud:" Ex. xxiv, 15, 16.

It would seem then from what follows, that the glory, concealed for seven days, burst out when Moses had been called up higher on the mount. "And the sight (appearance) of *the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire* on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel." The glory of God seems now to have changed its character. It is a *terrible* brightness, like devouring fire to the eyes even of His covenant people. God will manifest His glory against offenders even of His own redeemed Israel. There was perpetual peril, lest the fire of His glory should burst forth and consume them. With how little appearance of truth are men now crying out, that God is only love!

Israel offends by the idolatry of the calf, and but for Moses' intercession, they had been all cut off. The sword is sent upon them: "And there fell of the people *that day about three thousand men*." Have we not a blessed contrast in God's Gospel-work? Our Mediator ascends, and the Spirit descends in wind and fire (the fire not a destroying fire), and tabernacles upon the hundred and twenty disciples. Peter preaches. "And *the same day* there were added *about three thousand souls*!" "The Letter *killeth*, but the Spirit giveth *life*." That is, Law brings death, and the Gospel, life!

After the ravages of the sword of man, the Most High sent plagues on them. But, in grace, upon Moses' plea, the people is spared, and a new covenant is made with Moses alone, as the representative of Israel. It is a 'covenant of marvels,' for God accord-

ing to it is engaged to send on Israel more terrible miracles than they have ever known. These are recounted in the Book of the Apocalypse: Ex. xxxiv, 10.

III. THE TABERNACLE.

(1.) PROMISE.

Before the sin of the calf, the Lord promises to dwell with Israel as their God, moving about with them in a tent as they did. How then could Jehovah, who hates sin, dwell in the midst of a sinful people? Through the priesthood and its sacrifices. Daily, twice a day, were lambs offered, that Israel's many sins might be atoned for. They were to be offered through God's chosen priests of Aaron's line.

“This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. AND THERE I WILL MEET WITH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND THE TABERNACLE SHALL BE SANCTIFIED BY MY GLORY. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God:” Ex. xxix, 42—45.

(2.) PERFORMANCE.

The royal tent being completely prepared according to God's written instructions, and the Spirit's teachings, Moses alone, as the mediator of the new covenant, puts its parts together.

The glory of Jehovah had (apparently) descended from the top of Sinai enveloped in the cloud, to speak with Moses at the tent door.* The pillar of cloud stood there, and thence Jehovah spoke with Moses: Ex. xxxiii.

* What 'tent' this was, we know not. It was not (of course) the tabernacle, which had not then been made. The LXX read '*his* tent'—Moses' own.

When all the parts of the tabernacle had been arranged and anointed, and the burnt offering and the meat offering presented by Moses, the Lord takes possession of His royal pavilion, as the King of Israel. “Then the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE.”

This is a great advance upon the Lord's appearing to Moses at first in the bush. It is an advance too upon the glory of Jehovah being seen on the distant top of Sinai. The brightness of the Lord's presence was not shown outside the tabernacle. But it dwelt *within* the veiled Holiest of the sanctuary.

Thus the tabernacle was hallowed by the glory of God's presence. But Israel might not enter His abode. Only the Mediator might go in and out. And after the cutting off of Nadab and Abihu, the High Priest alone may enter, with special ceremony, on one day in the year.

But as Jehovah had glorified the Mediator in setting up this tabernacle, He would also honour Aaron the priest, and the sacrifices of His appointment. After the death of Moses the mediator, how was this great and terrible God to be approached by sinners? How could He who hates sin, dwell with a people sinful by nature and practice?

(3.) GLORY SHOWN IN THE TABERNACLE.

Leviticus ix.

Jehovah would show how this difficulty could be overcome. He who made known the danger devised also the remedy. It was through the *sacrifices*, presented by the *priests* of His own appointment. For

none but God's chosen ones, peculiarly sanctified, might draw near to the Most High. Moses then is directed to say, that God would display His good pleasure in the sacrifices, and in the priesthood after its consecration, by causing the lustre of His presence to be seen by the whole of Israel. Aaron was to make atonement with a sin offering and a burnt offering for himself; and with a sin offering, and burnt offering, and peace offering for the people. Then was the promise fulfilled. God could now, as the Redeemer of His people, show them some of His glory. "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people; AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO ALL THE PEOPLE. And there came a fire out from the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat; which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

The splendour then which shone as devouring fire on the top of Sinai had now a lodgement within their camp. Its consuming energies were now stayed by the sacrifices and the altar. Sin was atoned for, and God was satisfied to dwell with His people. The glory which Moses alone at first could see, and which prevented His abiding in the tabernacle, is now displayed to all eyes, and Israel at the sight of the glory of God worships the God of glory.

(4.) THE GLORY DEFENDS THE FAITHFUL SPIES.

Israel has been led to Kadesh-barnea, on the borders of the land. The Lord bids them go in and possess it. They propose to send spies, to report on the character of the land, and its inhabitants. The spies return with some of the grapes of the land, of the pomegranates, and the figs. They confess it was a land flowing with milk and honey; and lo, what fruit it bears! But the

people were strong, the cities fortified, and giants dwelt there: Num. xiii.

Unbelief bursts out thereupon in sad measure. They weep in cowardice and despair. 'It was only in order to give them up into the hand of their enemies, that the Lord had led them thus far. They wish that they had died in Egypt, or in the wilderness. Their poor wives and children! what would become of them? Let us make a captain and return into Egypt!' Easily said! But how were they to get food and water, when they have cast off Jehovah and His word? How meet the Midianites and the Amalekites? How escape the fiery serpents and scorpions? How escape the wrath of Jehovah for His broken covenant? They had forgotten their solemn promise. "ALL THAT THE LORD HATH SAID WILL WE DO AND BE OBEDIENT."

Caleb and Joshua, the two faithful spies, seek to undo the pernicious effects of the unbelief propagated by the ten unfaithful spies. They are full of courage, and attempt to stem the tide by presenting to the people the power of Jehovah their God. They had left *Him* out of the account, and had measured their weak selves alone against the difficulties. 'Fear not the people of the land! They have no power against our God! But do fear to rebel against Jehovah.' "*But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.*" Great was the peril of the faithful two. How could they resist two millions of infuriated men?

Here was the crisis. Can their God defend them?

"AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED IN THE TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION BEFORE ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL."

The Lord speaks in displeasure. Their words and ways are known to Him. He is ready to cut them off with the pestilence. Moses pleads, and begs God to pardon, as He had done; lest foes should misrepresent His character and ways towards Israel.

The Most High pardons the nation so far, as to

spare them from immediate death. But the murmurers shall die in the wilderness, and not see the land. The ten unbelieving spies fall dead by the plague before the Lord. The Most High thus shows His glory in smiting unbelievers of His people, and in defending His faithful servants. The men of unbelief shall not see the earth "filled with the glory of the Lord," in the day of His power : Num. xiv.

(5.) THE GLORY DEFENDS MOSES AND AARON.

A new rebellion arises, striking at both the rulers of God's appointment. Korah the Levite would set aside the priesthood of Aaron. 'For were not the whole congregation holy? How was it then, that Moses and Aaron were exalting themselves at the expense of those who were as worthy as they were?'

Moses then bids them put their reasonings to the test.—'If they thought that they were as acceptable to God as Aaron, let them offer incense to Jehovah. Was it not enough that they were Levites; would they not be content, unless they usurped the priesthood?'

But there was another party, to whose ambition Moses' pre-eminence as leader of the people was peculiarly offensive. Moses sent to call the ringleaders of these offenders before him. They would not come. They were not going to own his usurpation by coming at his beck. "We will not come up! Is it a small thing, that thou hast *brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey*, to kill us in this wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!" Num. xvi.

This message was peculiarly full of unbelief toward God, and insolence toward His Mediator and Leader. It assumed that *Egypt was the true land of milk and honey*. Moses had been deceiving them all along. The wilderness was all they had got. Was that a land of milk and honey? A single glance of the eye at the burning sands around was enough to prove he was a liar.

God is left out. Their own sin, which was the cause of their sojourn, by God's sentence, in the howling wilderness, is forgot. The fault is that of Moses only!

This double rebellion is typical of the last days. There will be at last a refusal of Jesus, both in His character of King, and in that of High Priest. That will be the signal for the descent of the vengeance of God, of a like sort to that which is here described.

How was the controversy settled?

Korah and his two hundred and fifty princes stood at the door of the tabernacle with Moses and Aaron, censers in hand, and incense on them. "And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO *all the congregation*."

Out of the effulgence of His Presence the Lord speaks to Moses and Aaron: "*Separate yourselves from this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment*." The whole nation had been cut off, but for the plea of the two whom they had offended and slandered.

Out of the glory commission is given to Moses to call out all who would hearken, from the tents of the rebels of Dathan's party. At Moses' word, the earth opened, and swallowed them up alive. All around fled at their scream, as they went down into the deep abyss of earth: for they said—"Lest the earth swallow us up also." Thus these antagonists of Moses, though

members of the Lord's covenanted people, are dealt with, as were pursuing Pharaoh and his host. "Thou stretchedst out Thy hand, *the earth swalloweth them:*" Ex. xv, 12.

What of the Levites who rose against Aaron?

"*There came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense:*" ver. 35.

As refusing Aaron's priesthood and sacrifices, they are cut off, though they were God's chosen Levites, *as victims of God's wrath.* When the Lord's glory appeared before, *the fire from the Lord fell upon the sacrifices,* and thus spared the Levites and Israel; for the Lord accepted the priesthood of Aaron. But now these refusing Levites are slain. They sinned against their own souls. But their censers were holy, as being offered to the Lord. Hence they are made "vessels of dishonour." They are beaten into broad plates for covering the altar to testify that "no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he be not as Korah and his company." But (wonderful to tell!) the next day all the congregation of the *children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord."*

At this new and outrageous offence, "behold the cloud covered the tabernacle of the congregation; AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED."

Again, but for the intercession of Moses and Aaron the whole nation had been destroyed. But Moses directs Aaron to offer incense with fire from off the altar, and to go quickly unto the congregation and *make an atonement for them;* for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.

Aaron did so. He stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed. But fourteen thousand seven hundred were cut off, beside those that died in the judgment on Korah. This is the last

appearance of the glory in the wilderness. After Israel's entry on the land, priests and people sin, till the ark itself is carried captive. Dreary days of trouble, with occasional deliverances, fill up the times of the people, until the days of Samuel. Then comes the kingdom of Israel in the happier period of David and Solomon. Solomon was directed to build Jehovah a temple. He does so according to the pattern given him, erecting the most wonderful edifice the world has seen.

(6.) THE GLORY ENTERS THE TEMPLE.

1 Kings viii; 2 Chron. v, vii.

All is at length ready for the Lord's occupation of His *house.* Up till that time He had suited Himself to Israel's wanderings by dwelling in a tent, till rest was given to the land from war. The elders and the king assemble, and make a procession before the ark as the Lord entered on His new abode. Wiser than David, they offer sacrifices in order that no offence should be given and no death seize on them. The priest bear in the ark into the Holiest even under the wings of the cherubim. The staves of the ark, whereby it was carried, were drawn out, as no more needing to be used. The ark had entered into its resting-place! When the priests had left the sacred oracle, then the cloud filled the house of the Lord, "So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD."

The king of God's proclaiming and naming then offers praise and gives thanks. It was a great time of feasting, lasting fourteen days. It was typical of the greater day to come, when David's Son and Lord shall enter in glory into the rebuilt house, and God's accepted ones shall "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God. And many shall come from the east and from the west and from

the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." The Most High accepts Solomon's prayer, on condition of Israel's not falling into idolatry. If they so sinned, the house should be destroyed, and Israel cast out of the land: 1 Kings ix, 3—8. How sad that the very king that built this costly structure, and offered this prayer, was the first so to offend!

(7.) DEPARTURE OF THE GLORY.

Ezekiel traces for us the departure of God and His glory from the house He had entered. He leaves it not, till He has pointed out to His prophet the reasons of His so doing. The floods of idolatry in Israel at length had penetrated the house of the Lord Himself. Other gods were daringly worshipped within His courts. The mournful steps of His reluctant departure are given. At the north of the temple was the image of jealousy. "AND BEHOLD THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS THERE, according to the vision that I saw in the plain:" Ezek. viii. Men were saying, 'The Lord had forsaken the earth, and saw them not.' He would then send destroyers into Jerusalem. "AND THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS GONE UP FROM THE CHERUB WHEREON HE WAS, TO THE THRESHOLD OF THE GATE:" ix, 3. His messengers slay in the city. But there is no repentance. *Coals of fire* are now scattered over the city. But for a little remnant, it had been dealt with as Sodom and Gomorrah.

"The cloud next filled the inner court. THEN THE GLORY OF THE LORD WENT UP FROM THE CHERUB, AND STOOD OVER THE THRESHOLD OF THE HOUSE, AND THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH THE CLOUD, AND THE COURT WAS FULL OF THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE LORD'S GLORY:" x, 3, 4. There was something that resembles this in Solomon's day. But there it was Jehovah *entering* the house; now He is *leaving* it, because of sin.

"Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the

threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out the wheels also were beside them, and they stood at *the door of the east gate of the Lord's house, AND THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS OVER THEM ABOVE:"* Ezek. x, 18, 19.

The Lord there pronounces His judgments, and an Israelite falls dead. Ezekiel laments. God promises a remnant.

"Then did the cherubim lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; AND THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS OVER THEM ABOVE. 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"—'the Mount of Olives:' xi, 22, 23. "So the vision that I had seen went up from me:" 24.

Thus also the Lord Jesus in the days of His tabernacling on earth in the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, takes leave of the temple. He departs by the eastern gate, a moment pausing on His way. "And Jesus going out was moving away from the temple, and His disciples came to Him to point out to Him the buildings of the temple." He bids them look at them all, and foretells their entire demolition. He then departs to "the mountain on the east of the city," and thence delivers His prophecy of the judgments on the temple and city, and of the desolation till His return. Ezekiel did not see the glory ascend to the heaven. So neither did Jesus manifest His ascension to Israel. But to favored disciples it was given to see the Risen One ascend into heaven, and to hear the promise of His return.

Where is the glory of the God of Israel now?

(8.) THE GLORY IN HEAVEN.

It is now in heaven. Stephen's testimony to Israel that God was no longer dwelling in their temple, but

tabernacling on high, is met by their rage. "*But he being full of the Holy Ghost looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.*" His testimony to what he saw was answered by his stoning to death: Acts vii.

(9.) RETURN OF THE GLORY TO EARTH.

OLD TESTAMENT ASPECT.

1. Haggai testifies, that the heavens and earth, and the kingdoms of earth shall be shaken, and the Lord Jesus, as the desire of the nations shall come, "*and I will fill the house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.*" The latter glory of the house shall be greater than its former glory, and *then shall there be peace on earth.* Hag. ii, 6—9. Observe, as the strong contrast to this, that Jesus assures us He did not come at His first advent to give *peace on earth, but to send fire and a sword*: Matt. x; Luke xii, 49—53.

2. Zechariah testifies that Jehovah shall again choose Jerusalem, and be the glory in the midst of her: Zech. ii, 4, 5.

3. But Ezekiel, the witness of the glory's departure, is made a witness also of its return to a renewed temple. The temple is to be rebuilt according to a pattern given by God. As Jehovah left the temple by the east gate, by the eastern side He returns to it. "*Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and His voice was like a noise of many waters; and the earth shined with His glory.*" "*So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house:*" Ezek. xlili.

The temple once again entered, the Lord and His glory are to go no more out. "*Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet,*

where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile."

This is of course the millennial day of glory.

(10.) ITS RETURN. NEW TESTAMENT ASPECT.

Jesus, rejected by Israel, is coming again in His kingdom, possessed of the glory of His Father, and of His own glory. To that kingdom and its glory we are invited: 1 Thess. ii, 12.

"*THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN THE GLORY OF THE FATHER with His angels; and then shall He reward each according to his work:*" (*Greek*) Matt. xvi, 27.

That this was no vain boast was proved, *seven days after,** by the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration.

There "*He was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.*" The Father's voice out of the excellent glory owns Him as His 'Beloved Son.' In that glory Jesus is coming to reign. "*They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory:*" Matt. xxiv, 31. Clothed in it He shall judge the living nations: xxv, 31. "*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.* And before Him shall be gathered all the nations."

* Here the reference is to Ex. xxiv, 15. Moses was then on the Mount of God. On the *seventh day* after his going up the glory appears. Moses goes up alone, save with Joshua. The glory which dwelt on Mount Sinai is partially and by reflexion put on Moses as the mediator, after his tarrying forty days in the glory. It is put fully on Jesus after His forty days of resurrection have ended in His ascension.

(11.) FINAL ABODE OF THE GLORY.

God's eternal dwelling placé is in the heavenly city, the Jerusalem above. "The angel," says John, "showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD:" Rev. xxi, 10, 11. After a description of its 'lights and perfections'—for the High Priest's breastplate with its Urim and Thummim was a memorial of the City of God, John goes on to say:—

"The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine for it, for THE GLORY OF GOD DID LIGHTEN IT, and *the Lamb is the lamp thereof:*" (*Greek*) ver. 23.

Thus we have traced the glory of God from its first appearance to the ransomed people of earth amidst their tents, to its final abode midst the ransomed from the dead, in the city of Christ's eternal mansions.

The hope of our calling is to have part in the kingdom and glory of Christ. "We exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye should walk worthy of *the God who is inviting you to His own kingdom and glory.*" The apostle gives thanks because of God's choice of them as His elect to *salvation*, into which salvation he called the Thessalonians by his good news, "*with a view to your obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ:*" 2 Thess. ii, 13, 14.

The kingdom of glory is already won by Christ, and we are called through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth to seek to have part in that glory. God calls us to seek after it by "patient continuance in well doing:" Rom. ii, 7, 10; 2 Tim. ii, 10.

The Lord grant us to aim at this; if by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the righteous from among the dead, and to having a part in the kingdom of glory!

UNWATCHFUL BELIEVERS OF THE CHURCH

WILL BE LEFT IN

THE FUTURE GREAT TRIBULATION.

'*Believers of the Church left to the Great Tribulation!*' Some may say. 'Then the writer does not believe *in the rapture of the Church!*'

No, brother, he does not! He has heard and read a good deal about 'the rapture of the Church,' but *he never yet saw the passage of Scripture which speaks of it!* He admits with thankfulness the glorious place which God has given to believers of this dispensation. But he has never yet beheld the passage which states, that all the members of Christ will at one time be rapt to Christ; and that this is one of the privileges attached to simple saving faith in Christ. Let us then look into the matter!

First of all, neither of *the two Epistles which speak of 'the Church' mention the rapture!*

1. Paul in Ephesians tells us of God's gracious counsels toward the Church, the body of the Risen Head. He does not name the rapture. That silence then gives us to understand, that the rapture is not one of the privileges attached to this wonderful calling.

'Oh, but the reason why it is not named, is, because we are there considered as being already in the heavenly places with Christ:' Eph. ii, 6.

Could not the Holy Spirit, when telling us of God's counsel concerning the fulness of times (i, 10) have

thrown in a clause, stating, that by the one all-inclusive rapture saints would enter it? Was there no other way in which the All-wise God could show us, in the same epistle *both* privileges, if they were really attached to simple faith?

2. There is no notice given in the Colossians, that the rapture is one of the privileges belonging to simple faith in Christ.

'How can you say so? when it is written there— "When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory:"' Col. iii, 4. Now in order that the saints may appear on high with Christ He must have previously come for them. Moreover God has *already translated* believers into the kingdom of the Son of His love: i, 13.'

It is true, that all believers are translated as soon as they believe, into the kingdom *in mystery*, during the present time of *grace*. But the rapture takes place in *another day* of an opposite character; in the *day of justice*, when each is to be rewarded according to his works: Matt. xii, 18—26; 2 Thess. i, 5; 1 John iv, 17. Of which more by and by. And the question is, Will all believers enter the kingdom *in manifestation*?

Next, the Epistle to the Colossians has some strong warnings of possible loss to the believer arising from disobedience. Let us look at them. The apostle tells us of believers already reconciled to God through the death of His Son, and of their presentation, "holy and unblameable and irreprovable in His sight, IF AT LEAST (ΕΙΥΕ) ye (1) *continue in the faith grounded and settled*, (2) *and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel* which ye have heard:" i, 22, 23.

Now, are all believers grounded and settled in the faith? Have none been moved away from the hope of the Gospel? Do not many refuse the personal coming of Christ at any moment, and look rather for death as their hope?

Again, after presenting to the believer the glory of

the Mystery of God and the necessity of our cleaving to Christ as Head, what says He?

"*Beware lest any man spoil (rob) you through philosophy and vain deceit*, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:" ii, 8.

Are there no Christians led away from simplicity in Christ to philosophy and the traditions of men? These then will suffer loss as it regards the Christian's reward and hopes. The believer is to remember his completeness in Christ, with whom he was "*buried in baptism, wherein also he rose again by faith in the operation of God who raised him from the dead*:" ii, 12.

Here again is another opening for loss. How few believers have been immersed after their faith in Christ slain, buried, and raised again! And if Moses, God's commissioned deliverer of Israel, had nearly been slain by the Lord because of his neglect of the first rite of the law (Ex. iv, 24—26), how much more shall these lose privileges attaching to obedience, in the day of the Lord?

But inspired warning to disciples steps in again.

"*Let none beguile you of your reward in a voluntary (affected) humility and worshipping of angels*, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, and not holding the head, out of which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. IF, therefore, ye died with the Christ," why listen to the commands of men, as if still alive in the world? They may have a show of wisdom, but as being to the satisfaction of the flesh, are not to be honoured by any Christian. "*If, therefore, ye rose with the Christ, seek the things which are above.*" Set your affection there, and not on things of earth. For you died, and your true life is on high with Christ. And when He shall be manifested, then shall you too be: ii, 18; iii, 4.

Here then is another opening of responsibility, at which disobedience may come in. Nay, all these warnings discover to us points at which many believers have *actually* gone astray. Hence they will not partake of the privileges attached to obedience. And this promised manifestation with Christ is presented in the hortatory part of the Epistle, under three 'ifs.' Moreover, the Epistle witnesses of certain sins on which the wrath of God is coming,* and into which many believers have fallen. It also assures us, that while the obedient will receive the reward of the inheritance, yet that the wrong-doer, believer though he may be, shall receive for the wrong he has done; and God is, in that day of justice, no respecter of faces: iii, 22; iv, 1. According to *deeds* He will render to each, whether elect, or non-elect.

While then all Christ's people are to be presented before Him "at His Presence," yet that does not decide the question, whether all believers will be rapt together. For "the Presence" of Christ (*παρουσία*) covers a considerable space of time, during which the Antichrist is manifested, and the Day of Great Trouble takes place. So that, during that time more raptures than one may take effect.

We come then to the passages which speak of rapture.

1. 1 Thess. iv.
2. 2 Thess. ii.
3. Matt. xxiv, xxv.
4. And the passages in Revelation: Rev. iii, 3, 10; xi, 12; xii, xiv.

I. Let us look then at 1 Thess. iv, 13—v, 8.

* iii, 6. "On the children of disobedience" is to be *omitted* here. See the critical editions of the New Testament. Wrath is coming on *all* doers of these evils.

"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. 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, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 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. 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. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

Now does this passage give us the rapture of the whole Church, as the result of grace to men possessed of faith?

Nothing of the kind! It answers the question which was then troubling the Thessalonian Christians—Whether death and burial were not effectual hindrances to enjoying a place in the millennial kingdom of Christ. And the answer is, 'By no means! This *physical* barrier will in an instant be overcome by the power of Christ at His advent. The living will gain no step upon the departed; both will be secretly caught up ["in clouds"] to meet the Lord in air.'

May we now regard all modern Christians as occupying the same spiritual level with the Thessalonian Christians? Far from it! The Spirit of God praises

their "work of faith, labour of love, and patience of the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ." 3. Could Christ praise all believers thus? The Thessalonian Christians had "*turned to God from idols, to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath:*" i, 9, 10.

Now, are all converted persons serving God? Are they all waiting for God's Son from heaven? Are there not many who have turned away from the hope of Christ's coming to idols, who will in consequence be left in the coming day of wrath? Are there not converted men among the Ritualists who worship the bread and wine, the Virgin, and the saints?

The world will be overtaken by the day of wrath ere they expect it. The Thessalonians would not, because they were awake to God's invitation to his kingdom and glory: ii. 12. But most Christians are not aware of what the hope of their calling is, and are not seeking it. The majority of believers are spiritually asleep, like Sardis. And, as spiritually asleep, and like the world, they will be dealt with in the day of justice, as being of it. The rapture, as here shown, then, is something *not attaching to the Church as a privilege of simple faith*. The moral question is not directly touched on. But it is evident that Christians in general do not answer to the attainments of grace here given. And the raptures are in connection with the *kingdom of glory*, and the *day of judgment*, not with faith and eternal life.

2. What says the Second Epistle?

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken from your intelligence as that the day of the Lord has set in." 2 Thess. ii, 1, 2. See the critical editions.

Here is rapture of saints, but not of "the Church" as a body. Is the Church in general in the state of

grace here depicted? "We are bound to thank God always for you brethren, as it is meet *because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth:*" i, 3. These then were watchful saints, whom God was about "*to count worthy of the kingdom,*" since they not only believed in it, but suffered for it. 5.

They had been troubled by means of false testimony from three different quarters, to the effect, that that great and terrible period—"the Day of the Lord"—had already set in. And, if so, they were called to *hide* and to *howl*: Isa. ii, xiii. But no! This time of the Church's recognition by God is the day of God's embassy of grace; and the day of justice cannot come without the watchful saints being caught away to the secret presence of Christ. The indignation of God cannot descend on the sinners of earth, till its sin has come to the height, and the False Christ, sweeping all the wicked into Satan's net, have appeared in his power.

But the Apostle does not say that none of the believers of the Church can be in that day. The contrary possibility was implied in the former epistle. It is implied here. While *watchful* saints, such as the Thessalonian Christians and Paul, who joins himself with them, would not be left on earth, he intimates the possibility of the unwatchful being left to that day. The opening for this appears in the word "*soon.*" He does not say, 'that no evidence ought to prevail on the Christian to believe, that the dread day of God has begun; because none of the Church will be caught in that day.' He only gives them indications of the evidence which should convince any believers so left, that the day had begun. They were not *soon* to be frightened out of their wits, as if the day had begun.

Before the wrath of the day be poured out, the waiters for Christ will be caught up to Him. Therefore, until a rapture of saints has taken place, we may be

sure that the day of grace is lasting still. But as soon as the sudden disappearance of the watchful saints has taken place, all believers left on earth may know, that the Christ is secretly present, and the day of woe has set in. The removal of the watchful and prayerful ones will hasten on the full iniquity of earth. The Holy Spirit returns on high; He who now hinders the spirit of lawlessness will have departed. And with the removal of "the light of the world," the world plunges into its deepest darkness. By the removal of the salt of the earth, the earth sinks into its deepest corruption. The careless and lukewarm believer, as the salt that has lost its taste, no longer retains his place, but is cast out and trodden underfoot: Matt. v, 13, 14. Speedily will come the rejection by whole nations of the name of Christian, and out of that open wickedness and lawlessness springs the Lawless One, whom Christ at last 'paralyzes by the *manifestation* of his presence,' which had so long taken place over earth in secret.

Let us now look at the evidence derived from our Lord's prophetic parable: Matt. xxiv, 36—42.—"The Days of Noah."

"But of that day and hour knoweth none, no, not the angels of the heavens, but my Father only.

"But as the days of Noah were,

1. "So shall be also **THE PRESENCE** of the Son of Man.

"For as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,

2. "Until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

"And they understood (it) not,

3. "Until the Flood came, and took away all.

"So shall be also **THE PRESENCE** of the Son of Man.

4. "Then two shall be in the field; one is taken, and one is left. Two (women) grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left."

How are we to understand this parable? On two accordant principles. 1. This is **THE PRESENCE** parable. 2. It is to be interpreted by the **HISTORY OF NOAH**.

The points of resemblance between the days of Noah,

and the times yet future, as declared in the parable, are these:—(1) The time of God's patience, in which we stand. (2) Judgment is threatened now, as it was by Noah then. (3) Mercy was promised to some before the judgment, and the instrument of that mercy was the ark. (4) Till judgment came, men expressed their unbelief by a life after the flesh. So it is now, and will be increasingly so. (5) The sign given of God, was 'Noah's entry into the ark.' That was a sign to the world, of wrath at the doors. (6) It was God's last call to men to repent. But it was not understood, and passed unheeded, till judgment overwhelmed the unbelievers. (7) Then came destroying wrath on the world. (8) The answering sign then that is to be given—what is it? The taking and leaving!

1. But how are we to expound these? Some say, that it is the *Jewish* or earthly deliverance, that is here described. The taken are those cut off by judgment; the left are those who survive the judgments, and people the millennial earth.

2. To me it is certain, that the *heavenly* escape is before us; that which is designed for the Church of Christ. The taking is the deliverance in mercy; the left, are those who have to pass through the Great Tribulation.

How shall the matter be decided?

1. The general subject of the prophecy on Olivet is our Lord's coming in reference to his two peoples: (1) Israel and (2) the Church. Now, in order to meet His coming aright, the Saviour has commanded believers to maintain the attitude of watchfulness.

2. The *Jewish* deliverance is described in the first half of the prophecy. They are to escape by great activity. The sign once given, they are to flee without looking back: 16—18. In the parable there is no activity on the part of the escaping. "One is taken, one is left." Both are *passive*. This then is *not* the *Jewish*, but the *heavenly* rescue.

3. Next, the word which describes the taking* does not mean destroying. The reader must distinguish between two very different words used in this parable. The one signifies "to take us a companion." That is the word employed concerning the one taken.* The other signifies "to take away, to destroy." "The flood came, and took away† them all." This is paralleled in Luke xvii, 27, 29, by the usual word for "destroy."‡ "One is taken," then describes the favourable alternative. He is "taken as a companion." This is the usual sense of the word. So Abraham "took with him" to the Mount "two of his young men and Isaac his son:" Gen. xxii, 3. (2) So Joseph took five of his brethren to the royal presence of Pharaoh: Gen. xlvii, 2. It is the same word which in the New Testament our Lord employs concerning his reception of his people. "I will come again and receive you to myself:" John xiv, 3. For some other passages the reader may consult Acts xii, 25; xv, 37, 38; Gal. ii, 1; where there is an added preposition, which points out companionship still more definitely.¶ Moreover, the matter is to be expounded by the history of Noah. Now, in Noah's day the distinction of Jew and Gentile did not exist. The flood overswept the whole earth, and the witness of coming judgment embraced the whole earth. The Saviour's title here is not Jewish. He calls Himself "Son of man." That is the title which he takes when He puts away his Jewish title: Matt. xvi, 20, 27, 28. It is one which describes Him as acting upon the whole earth.

4. Watchfulness against an expert thief is not an

* Παραλαμβάνω. † Αἶρω. ‡ Απώλεσεν.

¶ Two passages have been cited as exceptions to this sense: Matt. xxvii, 27; and John xix, 6. Here wicked men took the Lord as their companion. But the question is easily decided by asking, *Who takes here?* It is the Lord of "the Presence," even as Noah was the taker of old.

attitude given to Israelites; as it is here: v, 42. They are men of *sight*, not of *faith*. They are to flee when they SEE the idol lifted up on the temple. They are to see the Son of man coming in the clouds: Matt. xxiv, 5, 30.

5. The scene is to be expounded by the days of Noah. Was there any taking and leaving then? Yes! "Of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee. They shall be male and female; of fowls after their sort, and of cattle after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive:" Gen. vi, 19, 20.

6. *The taking* then was by Noah, and in mercy. So was it also in the days of Lot, to which in the parallel passage of Luke xvii, our Lord compares these days: Gen. xix, 16. "The angels laid hold" on Lot and his family and led them out from the place of danger.

The taking here is to be expounded by Noah's day. Who took? Noah! Who will take then? *Christ!* into whose "Presence" the saint is to be ushered. In the old-world escape, Noah and his family had to enter the refuge on their feet. For the ark was then on earth. But now the ark of our Noah is "the Presence" in the air. And into that our powers of natural progression will not enable us to climb. Therefore, the words describing the believer's entry on the Presence of Christ are passive. "Watch, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to be set before the Son of man:" (Greek) Luke xxi, 36. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:" Thess. iv, 17. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him:" Gen. v, 24.

7. The taking in Noah's day has *two aspects*, according as we look at it as affecting the taken, or the left.

(1) To the taken, it was an *escape* from wrath. (2) To those left, it was a *sign*.

Observe, our Lord is referring, not to Noah's entry on the new earth after the Flood was past, but to his entering into the *ark*, in the days previous to the Flood; and to the destruction wrought by the Flood on those outside the refuge of the ark. Those left where they were, perished. Those who perished were those who remained where they were, and who were not transferred to the new sphere of safety. Those left outside were the *taken away* by judgment. So the saved are the taken to Christ's Presence.

8. *Whither* were the rescued taken? To the ark. For what purpose? To be kept alive. They were led out of the place of sin, on which woe was coming, into the place of mercy. The left outside the ark on earth were left to the flood. There was then a needed *transfer* from the scene of trouble to the scene of peace. Noah and his saved ones abandoned their previous place to enter on the provided refuge. It is so here. The words, "The one *was taken*," denote the needed transfer out of the world, which lies under sin and death, into the Presence on high. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty:" Psa. xci, 1-4. All others perished in the flood: Gen. vii, 23. "Thou shalt bring *into the ark to keep them alive with thee*." The taking then, as viewed in the light of Christ's choice of his companions to enter the Presence, is one of honour. Hence the leaving is comparative *dishonour*. Viewed as the act of Christ coming as the thief (v. 43), it has the same signification. The expert thief discriminates between the more and the less valuable article, and while he takes the one, he leaves the other.

9. Now, as he who was left outside the ark, was *left to the terrors of the flood*, so it is here. The one left must pass through the Great Tribulation, which answers to the flood of old. The feasters and the marrying ones

are left outside the refuge, to pass through the day of trouble; and the left one is left to the same time, and in the place of danger and dismay.

10. What was the *time* of that taking and that escape? "*In the days that were before the Flood.*" So it is to be in the days that are coming. The taking is the *sign* of the coming judgment, and so cannot be the effect of the judgment already come. It is the deliverance out of the woe by Jesus. Now, as we are taught to pray, that we may be "*accounted worthy*" of this escape, so Paul comforts the watchful believer with the assurance of it. The Presence of Christ shall gather him to Himself, and so he shall not be in the tempest of that evil day. "Now we beseech you brethren, by *the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to him*, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled . . . as if the Day of the Lord (great and terrible) had set in:" 2 Thess. ii, 1.

11. Let us now regard the taking and the leaving as **THE SIGN**.

The entry of Noah and his family into the ark, conveying thither the furniture and crockery of their house, was a sign to the world. It said: "The hundred and twenty years of God's promised patience are over. The clock of God is striking; judgment is at the door!"

12. *A sign was needed* in order to show where our day of mercy ends, and "the days of vengeance" begin. The removal of the watchful of the Church tells men that the Church's standing and testimony are then by God removed. The Church is the witness of God's mercy; of the acceptable time; of the day of salvation: 2 Cor. v.

13. The sign in Noah's day was *a disappearance of the favoured ones* in the ark. It is so in the coming day. The taken is caught away to the Presence in the twinkling of an eye, and is no more seen. "*He was not found, for God took him:*" Gen. v, 24.

14. The sign to the world in Noah's day was a *miraculous* one. That birds, beasts, reptiles, the wild and tame of every sort, should come, and in the prescribed numbers, trooping to the one refuge of the ark, was a miracle. The taking here is miraculous also. It is the Lord's lifting up to himself his people out of earth into heaven. In Luke xvii another feature of the wonder is given. From within the locked house and the barred chamber of midnight, one shall be stolen away; so that, in the morning, of two in the same bed only one shall be found. Walls, doors, and roof remain as they were, but this Master-thief has abstracted one of them: Luke xvii, 34.

15. It is a sign to *Israel*. It is the sign of the unseen Presence. "Ye shall not *see* me till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They need then a sign of what they see not. It is the miraculous absence which betokens the heavenly Presence of the Son of man. One of God's two people is made a sign to the other. The rapture of one of the superior people into the heaven is the sign of Christ's love to his watchful saint; a love greater far than that to Israel: Rev. iii, 10. It was also foretold that so it should be. "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for *signs* and for *wonders* in Israel from the Lord of Hosts:" Isa. viii, 18. "What shall be the sign of thy Presence?" said the disciples to our Lord. Here it is given: 'As Enoch was taken to heaven, and as Elijah, *so* shall Christ's watchful ones be accounted worthy to disappear from earth.'

16. It is a sign also to *the unbelievers of the world*. It calls to them to cease marrying and feasting, to be upon their knees in sackcloth and ashes; for the day of judgment on the living is come. But the men of the old world disregarded the sign given. They were so enwrapped in the things of time, as to be insensible to this call of the Most High. They had refused the testimony of wrath coming, and were blind to the meaning of its

sign. It will be thus, when this marvellous sign shall be given. Faith will see in the sudden disappearance of the Lord's diligent seekers the reward which God gave of old. Faith will interpret it of the Lord's hand of power. But the men of unbelief will see in it only the fraud of man, and will ridicule the idea of a miracle. For nothing is *seen*. And they will lay themselves to slumber afresh, with "Peace and safety" on their lips, till judgment, not to be escaped, swallows them up!

17. On the opposite view, the taking and the leaving are only the result of judgment in men's destruction, and therefore are no sign at all. All are involved in the same tempest, and who is to be cut off and who to be spared can only be known when the wrath is past.

18. Look also at the significance of *the two* in the light of Noah's day. "Of every living thing of all flesh, *two* of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee. They shall be *male and female*." "There went in *two* and *two* unto Noah into the ark, *the male and the female*, as God commanded Noah." "They went in *unto Noah* into the ark *two and two* of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in went in *male and female* of all flesh, as God had commanded him, and the Lord shut him in: Gen. vi, 19; vii, 9, 15. Accordingly we have "*the two*" prominent here, and the male and the female are set side by side. "Then shall two (*men*) be in the field: one is *taken*, and one is *left*. Two (*women*) grinding at the mill: one is *taken*, and one is *left*." Noah took only a selection from the animals, and those *left* outside the ark were cut off.

The same prominence is given to *the two* in the rapture of Elijah. The two cross the Jordan, and are close one to the other, when a chariot of fire appears and Elijah is caught up by a whirlwind into heaven: 2 Kings ii. Four times in the Hebrew occur the "*two*."

19. The two are quite distinct from the world in its feasting and marrying. They are of the poor, working in the sweat of their brow. And such are those whom in general God has chosen to His Kingdom and glory: Luke vi, 20. They are the few, in comparison of earth's many rioters. And it was the few (that is eight souls) that were saved in the ark.

20. What shall we say is the *spiritual character of the two*? Are they to be distinguished thus? 'The taken is a believer; the left one is an unbeliever.' No; *both are believers*. This is proved by the closing words of the parable, "*Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord is coming.*" This gives us the certain key to the interpretation. It is not the Lord in his sovereignty dealing with some in his good pleasure. Then the lesson would have been to bow with submission to Him who is not bound to render a reason of his dealings to any. But no! 'tis the day of rewarding each according to his obedience to Christ. And so it is intimated, that the reason of the difference is, that the one is watchful, the other is not. Now, if they thus differ, *both are believers*. The same follows from the words, "Your Lord is coming." The Presence is the Presence of Christ "the Master" of both; that is, both are his servants. Else the appropriate call to the one left had been to bid him turn to God. But the cry, "*Watch,*" supposes the possession of *life* in both. They differ as the "ready" from the unready. Here again we tread on certain ground. *That* is the feature of the accepted of that day. "Therefore be ye also ready:" 44. "*They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins.*" Here is again the *entry into the Presence of those rapt to Christ*, and the *left* are the *foolish, who are kept outside*. But the distinction of "ready" and "unready" is not a radical difference, like that between the renewed and the ungodly. It is a circumstantial difference only; such

as obtains between two believers, the one of whom accepts all Christ's truth, the other does not.

21. It has been proved, then, by many arguments, that the taking is the favourable alternative. The parable refers all to the Saviour's coming and presence; and to be taken to that is honour and blessing. The being left, then, is dishonour and trouble. What in Noah's day came after the entry of the favoured ones into the ark? The Flood! The left one, then, is left for that which answers to the Flood, the period of the Great Tribulation to come.

Accordingly the parable which next follows, of the robbed householder, unfolds to us the case of the left one. He is dishonoured, for his Lord in choosing his companion has passed by himself. He has lost the hope given in prophecy. He has not "watched and prayed always;" and as the consequence he cannot now escape the troubles coming on the world, while his companion has been set before the Son of man with joy: Luke xxi, 36. Had he been watchful, his house would not have been broken into. He differs from the favoured householder, in having slept, when he should have kept awake; and the issue is his being left amidst the increasing and outbursting sinfulness of men, and the last judgments of God. The article left by the intelligent thief is always less valuable than the one taken. And Christ is here the thief: 43.

22. The same truth comes out in a view of the Steward: v. 45—51. That is not a Jewish parable. For God is not now owning Israel. But there the steward is by Christ set over his household, and is recompensed according as he is watchful or not. The same thing appears on a study of the Virgins. That presents to us the presence of Christ, as it affects the dead in Christ: "the sleepers" of 1 Thess. iv. But I will not enter minutely into either of these.

23. This view of the taking and leaving is so greatly confirmed by three incidents of our Lord's life, which

I call 'the Three Companionships,' that in justice to the argument I must exhibit them. They are all—so important does the Holy Spirit consider them—narrated by the three first Gospels, and in each of the three incidents occurs the Greek word here used.*

I. THE FIRST COMPANIONSHIP: Mark v; Matt. ix; Luke viii. Jesus has called a publican to be an apostle, and the men of the old covenant are stumbled at the Saviour's eating with sinners, a grace suited only to the new dispensation. He is advised to give to His disciples orders to fast, as did the law and its followers. The Saviour refuses. The time was not suitable. Moreover, His doctrine was not a clearing of the law from the misapprehensions of its teachers; He brought an entirely new doctrine. And any attempt to mingle the new truths with the old rites would only bring destruction upon both.

Two incidents, then, at once occur, to illustrate to us, that the Saviour is ruler alike of the old things and the new. 1. He is asked to go and raise the dead; and He leaves the house of the feast, in order to effect this purpose. 2. On the way, one unclean in the sight of the law, and unable to obtain a cure, touches the hem of our Lord's robe, and is healed at once. This is typical. Unrighteous Israel, that has in vain sought righteousness by law, obtains righteousness by touching in faith the robe of righteousness woven by Christ, the Righteous One. The woman confesses her cure, and is accepted for her faith.

Jesus then moves onward to the house of Jairus. *But He allows neither the healed woman, nor any of the spectators to enter the house. He takes as His companions into the scene of resurrection only three even of the apostles—"Peter, James, and John."* He next tests the faith of those within the house. This,

* Παραλαβανω.

which they are lamenting as death, is, in the presence of the Lord, only sleep. They laugh Him to scorn. *And He puts them all out of the house.* He enters then into the chamber of the dead, and at His word and touch, she arises. The woman is unclean for *twelve years*. The girl raised from the dead is *twelve years* of age. The Church began to enter on life, when Israel was wholly rejected as unclean. She is restored to life, when the remnant of Israel finds Christ to be the Lord our righteousness.

In this instance both the taken and the left are believers; the three taken are the honoured disciples. The nine left outside are dishonoured. And the Saviour requires this first of the resurrections to be kept a secret.

II. THE SECOND COMPANIONSHIP: Matt. xvi, xvii. Israel has blasphemed the Holy Ghost; and the Lord puts on the veil of parable. They will not repent, despite His awful words. He then draws out of the mouth of the twelve the evidence of His nation's unbelief in Himself. He demands what is the disciples' view of Him, and Peter proclaims Him the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Saviour owns this confession as the result of living faith, bestowed on the beloved of the Father; and declares *that* to be the creed of the Church which He is about to build. "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," for the Lord Jesus will open the gates for the dead in Christ; and then shall begin "the kingdom of heaven," or the day of the millennial reign. Those who wish to have part in *that* must deny themselves, and follow in His steps. For He is coming again, and that day will be the day of justice, in which he will render to each according to his conduct! In order that it may be seen that these are not empty words, He would give to some of those listening to Him a picture of that coming kingdom of glory, of which He was so continually speaking.

Accordingly, on the *seventh day* after, He chooses Peter, James, and John, as His companions, and “takes them up* into an high mountain apart” by night. Here is then a type of the rapture. But it is not a taking of all the disciples. *Not all even of the apostles are taken*, nor the major part of them. The three favoured ones behold Jesus in His glory, and two others in glorified bodies also; one, representing the dead raised (Moses); the other, those who shall be caught up without death to His presence (Elijah).

What became of the nine apostles? They were *left* at the foot of the Mount till the next day. They are powerless against a demoniac brought to them. Cavers are there taunting them with their want of power, when Jesus descends. He comes with a word of strong rebuke in His mouth. “O *faithless* and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?” Thus the nine apostles are addressed, as among the rest. At all events, our Lord does not discriminate them.

Here again, *both the taken and the left are believers*. The taken are the honoured; the left, the dishonoured ones. The left are found below in circumstances which typify the time of unbelief and of trouble.

III. THE THIRD COMPANIONSHIP, OR GETHSEMANE. After the Last Supper Jesus assures the apostles, that Satan had obtained permission to sift them, and that the whole of them would that night stumble at His arrest. Peter and the others refuse to accept the warning. Peter especially is possessed with the spirit of the Old Covenant. “All that the Lord hath said, we will do.” He is not, then, one of the poor in spirit, for whom the kingdom of glory is prepared. He has to learn his need of strength divine to be able to stand in

* Παραλαμβάνω used by all three Gospels. Also αναφέρω, Matt. xvii, 1.

the day of trial. Such is the temper of some Christians now, who think themselves competent to face the coming storm of unbelief.

The Saviour enters the garden, and bids the disciples to watch and pray, that they might be kept out of temptation. He then takes as His companions the same favoured three, Peter, James, and John, tells them of the awful weight and anguish which are oppressing His soul, and bids them to stay there apart from the remaining eight, and watch with Him.

He goes alone, and earnestly beseeches, that, if possible, His Father would remove the bitter cup.

He comes back to the disciples, and finds them asleep. He wakes them, and addresses a word of rebuke, especially to Peter—“So you could not watch a single hour with me!” “Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”

He departs again and prays the same prayer. Returning the second time, He finds them asleep once more. “*And He left them and departed.*”

There is a brief interval, during which He prays the third time. Returning again, and finding them once more asleep, He assures them, that there was now no escape. The hurricane was upon them! While He yet was speaking, Judas and his band came. Peter for a moment resists with the sword, and is rebuked. “Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.” Peter venturing in to the assembly of the Saviour’s foes, is drawn into denying his Master with oaths and curses!

Can any, in view of “the days of Noah,” mistake the bearing and lesson of this incident? Here Jesus by *facts* the most striking confirms His solemn warnings to believers: Mark xiii, 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 cockerowing, or in the morning: *Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.* And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

In these words we see what will be the result to the unwatchful disciple. He who is seen on the former occasions as Light scattering the darkness, and as Life undoing death, is in the garden left to endure (while innocent) the burthen of *sin*. There Light is wrapt in darkness, and Life is pressed almost to the gates of death

The hour of the Saviour's foes, and of Satan's power of darkness will once again be upon the sleepers, ere they are aware, and in the storm the left ones will fall, as did Peter and the others. The three privileged to be in the former two scenes of power and glory, were then left to the day of trial. It is not with impunity, that any disciple, however favoured, can disregard any command of the Master. Something more than the simple faith which avails for salvation is required to escape this tempest. And the watchfulness which our Lord calls for is not possessed by the great majority of believers; while some leaders in His Church are defeating by their teaching this special injunction of our Lord.

Let us now examine some of the testimony of the BOOK OF REVELATION to the same truth.

In the phrase, then, 'the Rapture of the Church,' two fallacies lie couched.

(1.) It is assumed, that there is to be a rapture of the Church, as the Church. It is not so. The rapture of reward takes effect on the *watchful* of the Church; the unwatchful being left to the Day of *Trouble*.

(2.) The second assumption is, that only *one* rapture is to take place. Now the Book of Revelation will show *seven* raptures; or at all events, there are seven distinct notices of rapture; though it may be, that two or more notices may refer to the same rapture.

'In the Apocalypse the Church is not seen after chapter iii.'

True! But it does not therefore follow, that all the Church are rapt at once, in grace. Nor does it follow, that the twenty-four elders are the Church.

After chapter iii, the Church has lost its standing as God's witness on earth. For the Church bears witness to the day of God's mercy: 2 Cor. v, 18; vi, 12. Its standing is lost, as soon as the day of judgment begins. And this is the force of 2 Thess. ii. The testimony had gone forth at Thessalonica, that the day of judgment had set in. Paul denies it, and denounces the falsehood. Else we ought not to be rejoicing in God, but to be hiding and howling: Isa. ii, xiii, 6; Jer. iv, 6—10. The Apostle could not deny, that to be in the terrible day of wrath was woe; but he is able to comfort us with the assurance, that till the watchful of the Church are carried above, the day with its sins and its punishments, cannot come. With Rev. iv, the throne of judgment is set, and the day of grace and of the Church is past.

When the ready ones of the churches are stolen away from on earth, the great body of believers, lukewarm and careless, will be left; and while the kernel has been scooped out, the shell looks much as it was. So, after Christ had reduced the temple of the Lord to be only Israel's house, it yet looked to all outward appearance the same as before.

The Apocalypse gives us the government of God in relation to heaven, Hadees, and earth. It views every thing in the light of the coming day of the Lord. The Saviour in the first vision is not presented as the Lord of grace, but as the Risen High Priest of the heavenly places; with eyes of fire, feet of brass (Mic. iv, 13), and sword of double edge.

CHAPTERS II, III.

The book of Revelation is divided by our Lord into three parts: i, 19. The first consists of the vision of

Christ, the stars, and the lamps. Then come "the things that are," or the churches in their varied states, during the time that God is pleased to recognize them. Then comes the prophetic portion, "*the things which are about to be after these things.*" (Greek.)

The seven churches are all assemblies of believers. No others are God's assembly. No others are *lights* on high. It is not 'the Church of Thyatira,' or 'of Ephesus,' but 'the Church *in* Ephesus,' 'the Church *in* Thyatira.' It is, therefore, manifestly to err, to suppose any of these churches to signify 'Protestantism,' or 'Popery.'

State establishments are Babylon, or 'confusion.' The angel is the apostle or chief pastor. He is not the representative of the Church. He is an individual distinct from the rest of the body, ruling them. The separate symbols of the stars and the lamps prove this at once to the candid.

The Church, in view of the coming day, is *not one*. Paul discovers it to us as one; for he is the witness of its standing in the day of grace. But in view of Christ's demands on believers as the answer to privileges given, the Church is divided into *seven* contemporaneous portions. And the spiritual response to Christ's claims given by each Church is different from that given by any other Church. Responsibility is not one, but diverse, and local. Ephesus is not responsible for Sardis, nor Sardis for Laodicea.

Let us now look at the four last of the seven churches. For in these the readiness or unreadiness for Christ's appearing comes into view.

THYATIRA.

This Church, like all the others, is divided into over-coming believers, and believers overcome. The promises are made to the conquerors, and the things promised are exclusive of all those who do not fulfil the

conditions supposed in them. The promises belong to the Government of God as "the Righteous Judge."

In this Church, amidst much that the Saviour could approve, the wife of the apostle (or chief pastor) was a grievous offender.* She was not only evil herself, but by false doctrine and alluring arts, she led *Christ's servants* (believers only are Christ's servants) back into heathenism and its corruption. Now, while the Spirit promises to those 'who turn from idols to serve the living God, and to wait for His Son from heaven' that they shall escape the wrath coming on the living world, this of course does not include those believers who, as in this case, turned *from Christ to idols*: 1 Thess. i, 9. If any are of the world's works and on the world's level in that day, when God in government is not regarding faces, they will be treated as the world; and left amidst the judgments which are to overtake it, after the watchful of the churches have been caught away: 1 Thess. v.

Accordingly our Lord threatens judgment on her, her paramours, and her children. He alludes to Jehu's vengeance on Jezebel and her sons. To this refer his eyes on fire with indignation. And, as Jehu trod Jezebel underfoot after she was cast down, so the Saviour significantly speaks of his feet of brass.

"I will *cast* her into a bed, and *them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation.*" Here then some of Christ's servants of the Church will be cast into great tribulation sent in displeasure. Much more then, may some of Christ's people in the Church, less grossly offending, be *left* in great tribulation if they be

* Γυναικα σου. That this is the true reading is clear. (1) What power had the angel (or the church, if you will) over a "woman" merely? (2) The documentary evidence for the reading is good. (3) The probability arising from the later doctrines current in patristic times, was that the obnoxious "thy" would be removed. (4) It is the more difficult reading.

found after such warning impenitent, as Jezebel was.*

'Ah, but no time is specified, as that in which the Great Tribulation here threatened shall take place.'

Therefore it leaves *all times* that suit the Lord open. The woe *must* be fulfilled some day; it may be fulfilled any day. And there is no time so suited, as that when the throne of judgment (chap. iv.) is set, and the day of patience is over. *Here then our proposition is proved.* Some of the Church will be offenders in like sort in the latter day, and retribution will be dealt out to them as here foretold; that is, they will have to pass through the Great Tribulation, which is the consequence of the erection of God's throne of judgment.

How clearly this is the result of the great principle announced by our Lord's own lips in v. 23. "*All the churches shall know that I am the searcher of reins and hearts, and I WILL GIVE TO EACH OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.*" As the conduct of each believer of the Church deserves, Christ will measure to him. If so, then, believers who have fallen to the world's level will be treated as of the world.

The Saviour goes on to notice that not all the Church in Thyatira had thus fallen. Hence he discriminates, "To you I say, *the rest in Thyatira.*" "I will put upon you no other burden; but *What ye have already, hold fast till I open.*"† That is, while some would find the ark door shut, to others it would be open, and their escape of the day of trouble secure.

The reference, "till I open," is probably to the scene of Jehu's anointing. He is God's *avenger*. To him is sent a messenger prophet with a box of oil, which he was to pour on his head. "Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel." "*Then*

* This come to its height is Babylon, as seen in Rev. xvii, xviii. In xviii, 21, we have her casting down. In ver. 7—10 the Trouble, and the 'Death' (or 'pestilence').

† I read *Ἀνοιξω*. (1) It is well supported, and is (2) the more difficult reading.

open the door, and flee, and tarry not:" 2 Kings ix, 3, 10. So, when Christ opens the door, His obedient ones will escape, while his Avenger takes His terrible course.

Jesus is seen fulfilling this word, as soon as the churches are dismantled, and the throne of judgment is set: iv, 1, 2. "After these things, I saw, and behold, *a door was opened in heaven*, and (there was) the first voice which I heard as it were of a trumpet talking with me [Christ, i, 10], saying, *Come up hither*, and I will show thee the things which must take place after these things." "Immediately I became in the spirit, and behold *a throne was being set in the heaven, and upon the throne a sitter.*" This throne is like Mount Sinai. Out of it proceed lightning, thunders, voices; and from it go forth messengers of death and judgment.

To reign with Christ in his millennial day is a promise to the obedient and victorious ones of the churches. "He that *overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end*, to *him* will I give power over the nations."

SARDIS.

Jesus as Son of God addresses with solemn words this leader of the Church in Sardis. Great was his reputation, but his liveliness of faith was gone. Life was still there, and he was to become watchful, and strengthen whatever of good in himself or in the Church was left: for his duties before God had been left unfulfilled. He was to repent of his coldness; and to hold fast what he retained of former truth and practice. But, "*If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will arrive over thee** as a thief, and thou shalt not *recognise what hour I arrive over thee.*" The angel then of Sardis, and the main body of the Church there would be left in the day of Great Trouble. For Christ

* *Ἡξω ἐπὶ σε.*

will have descended secretly from His Father's throne into the air. He has arrived over the earth as the Thief. He has put forth His hand, and has taken away from earth His watchful ones. But the spiritual sleepers are not aware of his arrival. Had they been caught up to his Presence, they would have known it in the best way. But here the warning of our Lord, and the history of Gethsemane lend us full light. "Lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping." And so in the eventful night of the Lord's betrayal He came to the *disciples*, found them *asleep, and left them*. Thus will it be with believers of the Church who are spiritually asleep. They will be caught in the Day of Trouble as were the eleven apostles. How many *disciples* (not "mere professors") are in darkness, so that "the day will overtake them as a thief!"

So Moses and Joshua arrived over the camp quite unexpectedly, and saw the feast, the idol, and the dancing; and judgment encircled both Aaron and the seventy elders who had left their lofty place against orders (Ex. xxiv, 14), as well as the multitude in general (Ex. xxxii, 17—29). Were *apostles* in the trouble that began in Gethsemane? Much more shall sleeping private saints be found in the Trouble to come.

But this Church also has a remnant. "Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their raiment. And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He that *thus overcometh* (Greek) *shall be clothed in white raiment*." Some of the Church of Sardis then are on high, caught up among the Great Multitude of chapter vii. But of this bye and bye.

PHILADELPHIA.

Here is a chief pastor and a Church without rebuke. Jesus presents himself to them as possessed of all the treasures of David, for He holds the key of them. It is His to open and none can shut; to shut, and none

can open. It is He who opens the door into heaven, at which John enters, while the throne of judgment is being placed on high. If any then be taken up by Christ, Satan cannot hinder. And if Christ leave any, he cannot enter.

"*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of the temptation that is about to come on the whole habitable earth, to try the dwellers upon the earth.*" Behold then a *special reward* annexed by our Lord to a *special excellence*. The angel had kept 'the word of Christ's patience.' This may be taken either as signifying 'the doctrine of Christ's awaiting his kingdom,' or (2) 'the doctrine of the Christian's patiently waiting for Christ's coming and kingdom.' Either way, the sense is nearly the same. Now, are all Christians keeping this word of Christ's patience? Do all teach or own Christ's kingship as "Son of David?" The large majority of *believers* (not 'mere professors') do not accept this truth. How then can anyone, instructed in the Scripture, assume so quietly: "Therefore *the Church* will not be in the Great Tribulation?" *It is a special promise to some believers*. Some Christians openly profess themselves "citizens of earth," instead of being "pilgrims and strangers." As then the promise embraces the latter, the former are excluded. The hour of temptation will seize upon those who are morally and spiritually "dwellers upon the earth." The escaping by rapture that Day of Trouble then is not a matter of grace, but the result of a being "*accounted worthy to escape*:" Luke xxi, 36; 2 Thess. i, 5, 11. It is fulfilled by being rapt to heaven.

LAODICEA.

Laodicea occupies the lowest point at which Christ can recognize a church. It is characterized by high thoughts of itself, and low thoughts and affections toward Christ. It is the lukewarm water, which is

about to be cast out of Christ's mouth. It is the tasteless salt, which is to be cast out of the house, and to be trodden underfoot by men. Thus from the beginning of His ministry our Lord foretold the falling away of some of the disciples from their love and obedience to Him, and to His words, and their consequent loss of standing before God and man: Matt. v, 13. Behold, then, the ground on which He will discriminate in the day to come. He will not act in the same way towards a Philadelphian, and towards a Laodicean believer. Their difference of lot will make known to themselves and others what Christ thinks of them. When the Philadelphian is caught on high, the Laodicean is spued out below. Some Laodiceans will be left on earth even till the last vial. The shame of their nakedness will appear. Compare iii, 18, with xvi, 15.

No better portion of the Church, no remnant appears here. It is only, 'If any one hear My voice.' Nevertheless the Lord ceases not to love them, and therefore rebukes, (19) and will chasten them, by leaving them to the fierce persecution of the coming day.

THE THRONE AND ELDERS. CHAPTERS IV, V.

As soon as sentence is passed on Laodicea and its angel, the scene changes. A new throne is set in the heaven, and to it John is caught up: iv, 1, 2. Here is the first rapture. It is apparently destined for those who occupy the moral place of the apostle, as partakers in the tribulation and kingdom, and patient waiting for Christ: i, 9. The first rapture, then, takes place just *after the day of grace is over*. It is a blessing, to be meted out to the watchful ones by the new throne of judgment. It is a thing to be attained by watchfulness, and prayer to escape: Luke xxi, 36. It is certain, then, that as the great majority of Christians have not this attitude, they will fail of the blessing attached to

it. That day will come upon them as a snare, for they are in spirit dwellers on earth, and occupied with its cares: Luke xxi, 34, 35.

The throne of God here is the throne of government, and therefore of justice, which awards to each his place according to works. The kingdom is given to Christ as the worthy One, and to His disciples, if accounted worthy: Rev. v, 9; Luke xx, 35; 2 Thess. i, 5, 11; Rev. iii, 4; 1 Thess. ii, 12.

The resurrection and entry of any one into the kingdom of the Christ is not granted to any as a 'believer' simply, but as 'righteous,' or a 'saint:' Matt. x, 41. The resurrection is "the resurrection of *the just*," or "of the righteous:" Luke xiv, 14. The kingdom is that of 'the saints:' Dan. vii; 1 Cor. vi, 2—11; Matt. v, 6, 20; vi, 33; xiii, 43, 49; xxv, 37, 46; 1 Pet. iv, 18; Heb. xii, 14. The day is that of "*the manifestation of God's righteous judgment*:" Rom. ii. Now that cannot be shown except God deal with elect and non-elect alike, according to their works. The principle affects first Christ Himself (Heb. i, 8, 9; Phil. ii), then His members, and then both Israel and the Gentiles.

The elders and living creatures first celebrate the worthiness of God as Creator, and then the worthiness of Christ.

Who are these elders? Some say, 'The Church.' What is the evidence for it? The interpolated 'us' in v, 9. But critics are now satisfied that we should read: "Thou art *worthy* to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and redeemedst [us] to God by thy blood (some) out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest *them* to our God kings and priests, and *they* shall reign over the earth." Now, if that be the true reading, the 'us' must be rejected, not only as unnecessary and as having the air of a gloss; but as making *one* party to be redeemed by blood, and *another*

party to reap the fruits of it in their kingly and priestly dignity.

No other evidence is adduced in proof that the elders are the Church. But there is plenty of evidence against it. (1) Their number 'twenty-four.' The Church's numbers are 'one,' and 'seven.' How do you make out the twenty-four? (2) They praise *God for creation*: is that the Church's calling? iv, 11. (3) They appear enthroned and crowned, before Christ is seen as the Lamb. (4) They never give Christ the glory of their salvation and their exalted station. (5) They speak of those redeemed by the blood of Christ as about to supplant them as God's kings, and priests. Will the Church ever be so superseded? (6) They never appear when the accepted ones of the Church reign with Christ: xx, 4—6. (7) They do not make their appearance in the eternal state.

Who are they then? The chiefs of the angels. And they exhibit the beauty of our Lord's words: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." They confess their own unworthiness to reign in the presence of the slain Lamb. They retire without a murmur, and leave their dignities to Him and them. The settling of this point is of much moment; for if you place the Church where it is not, you have to deny evidence of its existence, and to displace it, where it does really appear.

THE GREAT MULTITUDE. vii, 9—17.

Here are the results of the Second Rapture. Peter at Pentecost cites the signs which are to *precede* the great and terrible day of the Lord: Acts ii, 19—21. Until they have come, it is the time of the proclamation of forgiveness of sins, and present salvation may go on. But in the sixth seal we have the "wonders in heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath." "The sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," as Peter speaks.

The elect out of Israel's tribes are first shown us: Rev. vii, 1—8. They are on earth, and are sealed on the forehead, that they may escape the woes coming on the earth.

Then we have the Great Multitude gathered out of all the nations. *Who* are they? Accepted ones of the Church of Christ are among them. *Where* are they? Mr. Darby strangely says, 'they are on earth.' He gives no proof. Only his theory requires that they should not be the Church, for the twenty-four elders are in heaven already, he says, as representatives of the Church.

It is, however, perfectly clear that the Great Multitude is in heaven.

1. Else they could not be "in front of the throne and of the Lamb." Wherever this phrase is used, the things or persons so described are in heaven. (1) Grace and peace . . . "from *the seven Spirits* which are *before the throne*:" i, 4; iv, 5. Is not the Holy Spirit hereby shown to be in heaven? (2) "Before the throne is a sea of glass:" iv, 6. That is a part of the temple of *heaven*. (3) The elders worship "before the throne:" ver. 10. Are not they in heaven? Mr. D. supposes they *are*. They are 'the rapt Church then found in heaven.' *If so, then, this multitude also are in heaven.*

The temple is in heaven. The throne is the centre of the temple. They stand in front of the throne. Was Israel still in Egypt when they stood before the Presence of the Lord at Sinai? Neither then is this Great Multitude in front of the throne.

2. This Great Multitude are the priests risen from the dead. For they "serve God day and night in His temple:" ver. 15. Now the flesh could not sustain such continuous service.

3. Moreover, the temple in which they minister is in heaven. "A door is opened in heaven:" iv. 1. John ascends, and is within the temple, and beholds in

its centre the throne. See also xi, 19 ; xiv, 17 ; xv, 5 ; xvi, 17.

'But I saw no temple,' says John.

No, not in the final state and place, the City of God. But till the millennium is past, the temple abides. Till then, the Great Multitude is keeping "the feast of tabernacles" on high ; God himself spreading tent over them : ver. 15. They are "the tabernaclers in heaven," and therefore they are rejoicing because they are out of the reach of Satan, who in that day is cast into earth : xii, 9. It is because of this deliverance from his power that Satan's king blasphemes them, for he cannot in any other way assail them. "He opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle—those who are tabernacling in the heaven : " xiii, 6. (*True reading.*)

4. Some, if not all of them, are of the Church. They know the Father and the Son, before whom they stand. This is characteristic of the Church : 1 John.

They celebrate the praises of the Father and the Son, ascribing to them their salvation. Salvation and the kingdom are now come to heaven.

5. As possessed of white robes, they are justified. The Church is washed, as they are, from sins, in the blood of the Lamb. White robes, to be procured by Christ, were needed by Laodicea. The remnant in the Church of Sardis should walk with Christ in white, as worthy.

These then whom Christ robes in white, and leads, are of the Church : ver. 17 ; iii, 4, 5. The knowledge of the blood of the Lamb is characteristic of the Church.

6. The expression, "the blood of the Lamb," is only found in this book in connection with the Church : i, 5 ; v, 9 ; vii, 14 ; xii, 11 ; xxii, 14.*

* I adopt the preferable reading : "Blessed are they that wash their robes."

'But these have all come out of 'the Great Tribulation.' And the Great Multitude (some may say) are saints risen and in heaven before the last seal is broken. Now the Great Tribulation does not begin till the first of the woe-trumpets—the fifth : viii, 13. How can these have come out of the Great Tribulation ?'

There are *two* Great Tribulations. For Abraham has two seeds : (1) the seed as the *sand* of earth, and (2) the seed as the *stars* of the heaven : Gen. xxii, 17. And God owns the two seeds as His two people. Their history, founded on God's principles of grace and government, is similar in respect of both, and is presented to us in the covenant of faith made with Abraham and ratified to Christ : Gen. xv, 5, 6, 18 ; Gal. iii, 17. "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them ; and they shall afflict them." These words may apply to Abraham's heavenly seed, fixed in glory like the stars. While away from their land they are troubled by the seed of the serpent. The time of the Church is throughout one of persecution and trouble : John xvi, 33 ; Acts xiv, 22 ; Col. i, 24 ; 2 Tim. iii, 12. This, its characteristic, appears in the Lord's epistles. None of the Churches are exempt from trouble, but those who have left their standing and are under rebuke by Christ. Two persons are named in the seven epistles as martyrs. All the occurrences of the word "tribulation" in Revelation refer to the Church : i, 9 ; ii, 9, 10, 22.

The trouble of Abraham's fleshly seed was to last but four hundred years. The trouble of the heavenly seed has lasted near two thousand, and with far greater severity than that endured by Israel in Egypt. But when the sixth seal has been opened, the time of mystery has ceased for the Great Multitude.

The history of their deliverance is like that of Israel. The interview between John and our Lord in the first chapter, when He is seen walking amid the golden candlesticks, is like that between Moses and Jehovah at

the bush. John, like Moses, is sent with a message to the elders: Ex. iv, 30. But the issue is not like that of Moses's and Aaron's embassy: 31. The Church of Christ occupies in grace the standing which was offered to Israel, as the result of their own obedience. To Israel it was promised that, if obedient, they should be priests and kings. Of us it is written, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, *and made us kings and priests* to God and His Father:" i, 5, 6.

The Church has already in baptism passed through the Red Sea. The Lord in the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation is remembering His covenant with Abraham: Ex. ii, 23—25. And from the throne proceed the active measures whereby the world is judged, and His people are rescued. The sixth seal, whereby earth and heaven are shaken, answers to God's call to Pharaoh, to let His people go. One of His two people is thereon delivered by power. Their time of trouble is over. The other people has yet to undergo theirs: for their sins are not forgiven. "It is a terrible thing that I will do with thee," is the chief sentiment of God's 'covenant of marvels' made with Moses: Ex. xxxiv, 10.

The throne of Rev. iv, in relation to the Great Multitude, is Sinai, or the Mount of God. It is also the tabernacle completed, and opened by the Moses of the better covenant. He is designated as "the Lamb." For it is His blood, the blood of the true Passover, which has brought them near. This Lamb of God once slain and bearing the marks thereof is the deliverer out of Egypt; for He is risen, and in resurrection is become the new Moses and Aaron, the leader and high priest of the better people.

Rev. vii, 9, gives us "the third day" in the morning: (Ex. xix, 16), for with the Lord a thousand years is as one day, and the Great Multitude are sanctified by the better Moses. They have washed their robes,

not in water, but in the blood of the Lamb. Thus the commands of the Passover in Egypt, and of the Lord at Sinai, are united. In Egypt the blood was put on the doors; at Sinai the robes were washed in water. Jehovah then descended from heaven to earth. But the heavenly people go up to their God in heaven. The Mount of God under the better covenant is still resonant with voices, thunders, lightnings; and the sixth seal recalls the day of Israel's unwilling approach to the fiery Mount. Then notice was given, that none should touch the Mount, and the priests were commanded to sanctify themselves, lest the Lord should burst on them in fire: Ex. xix, 22, 24. But the Great Multitude are God's rescued ones, "borne on eagle's wings" above the sky, and "brought unto Himself" in a higher sense than of old. They answer to the seventy-two elders who after the sprinkled blood go up to the presence of God: Ex. xxiv. They are consecrated priests also, of a better order than Aaron's; for they draw near to the centre of the true Holiest of heaven without fear. This, their superiority, is due to "the blood of the new covenant" in its atoning and consecrating power.

The Great Multitude are also like Israel at Sinai, in that they are in tents, keeping the heavenly feast of Tabernacles. For they are still on their journey. They have not yet reached the new heaven and earth, nor are they arrived at "the fountains of life's waters," which spring out of the throne of God in the new city, the Holy Jerusalem: xxii. But the perils and troubles of the wilderness encountered by Israel are no more to touch them. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them or any burning. (*Greek, Cf. Num. xi, 1—3.*) For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to life's fountains of waters."

They once felt these troubles while on earth, as

Paul testifies : 1 Cor. iv, 11 ; 2 Cor. xi. Some were even put to death by burning. These troubles likewise befall those left on the earth through the judgments sent by the Lord.

This Great Assembly was also typed by "the Great Multitude" described by John and the three first Gospels who went up with our Lord to the temple, at His last visit to Jerusalem. The disciples, a very great multitude escorted Jesus with enthusiasm both to the city and the temple. The source of the interest awakened in Jerusalem at His coming was, that He had lately raised Lazarus from the dead. But now the whole assembly consists of those raised from the tomb, and Jesus as Resurrection and Life, leads them. The first multitude shouted, 'Save now!' (Hosanna.) But this assembly rejoices over *salvation come!* Jesus and His attendant people did not take the priest's place in the temple, but abode in the outer court. But now that the temple is the true one on high into which Jesus has entered, He and they are priests there evermore.

That glad throng of yore bore fronds of palm trees, for there was in it some of the joy of Tabernacles, a token of the "rest that remaineth for the people of God," as shown in the resurrection of the saint, Lazarus. But it was primarily the procession attending Christ as the Lamb of the Passover, and its setting apart for sacrifice, on the tenth day, before its offering on the fourteenth. At that entry into the temple they washed not their robes, but strewed them, such as they were, before the Saviour's presence as the King. He had then to hunger, thirst, and weep, that we and they might be freed from these troubles.

Jesus led that multitude to the temple ; but it was garrisoned by Pharisees, elders, and chief priests, who scowled at the intruding crowd and their leader. But now all is changed ; the twenty-four *elders of heaven* lift up their voices in praise of the Lamb, and the

angels add their attestations, as did the children of old in the temple.

On that occasion, certain Greeks wished to see Jesus, and the notice of their inquiry was borne to our Lord. He thereupon utters His comparison of Himself to a grain of wheat which must die and be buried, ere it can multiply itself. Behold, then, in this vast assembly of the redeemed out of every nation, the proofs of the Saviour's foresight, the merits of His blood, the reproductive power of His death and resurrection.

III. The next rapture is that of the two martyred prophets : Rev. xi. Their spirit is that of the law, while their history is like Christ's. For three years and a half they work miracles, overcoming the enmity which arises against them by slaying their foes. At length they are encountered by one who rises from among the dead ; and He prevails against them, when the power of mortal men availed not. Joy bursts forth at their death. They are not allowed burial, but their corpses lie in the street of the city that slew their Lord and ours. For three days and a half they thus lie, till corruption has set in on their ghastly, pale, bruised, discoloured bodies. Then the Spirit of life from God enters them, and they stand up, to the amazement and dismay of those that rejoice over their death. But ere the breathless pause of surprise which chills their persecutors is past, they are called up to the heaven, and like their Lord ascend thither in the cloud. As an earthquake attended the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, so does it wait on their arising. But the latter earthquake, unlike that at the Saviour's coming forth of the tomb, is the swift messenger of death to millions. Seven thousand of the first-born of the Gentiles, and of the city spiritually called Egypt, 'men of name' out of all lands gathered there are cut off ; and great is the woe and the consternation.

If their resurrection be like that of our Lord in

another point of view, "many bodies of saints" will arise with them, and probably ascend with them too.

THE MAN-CHILD. REV. XII.

We come next to the vision which extends from chapter xii to xiv inclusive. It opens with a "great sign in the heaven." We have before us the carrying out of the scene in Eden—the Woman and the Serpent. The time when the Woman's Seed will bruise the Serpent's head, is come.

The apostle sees a Woman "clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Who is this Woman?

Not the Church. That was set aside before the prophetic part of the book began. The Church is a chaste virgin: 2 Cor. xi, 2, 3. This is a wife with several sons.

(1) It is a mystic Woman, a city. There are two others of like quality in this book. (2) Babylon, the city, which in John's day was ruling over kings: xvii. (3) The heavenly Jerusalem: xxi, 9.

This Woman is Jerusalem, a point which can be proved by many considerations. She is the centre of God's previous three great dispensations, and has been glorified by God in them all. These three dispensations appear in the three classes of heavenly glory which cluster round her.

1. She is "clothed with the sun." For Christ is her righteousness. And Jerusalem under the Gospel was glorified by the Holy Ghost's coming down to testify of Christ and His salvation. The evil aspect of Jerusalem was shown us in the previous chapter as being the place of Satan's synagogue, of slaying the Lord's prophets and crucifying the Lord of Glory Himself: xi, 8. But this chapter shows us Jerusalem as the holy city, the place of disciples.

This is not the first Woman vainly clothing herself with fig leaves. But she, as Eve was afterwards, is clothed by the Lord; only her clothing is much superior to the coat of skin there given.

2. "The moon is under her feet." By the moon is signified the Law. For as the moon derives all its light from the sun, so the Law borrowed its brightness from a coming Christ: 2 Cor. iii, 7—10. In our Lord's day Israel stood upon the Law as their righteousness, and refused to receive Christ as "Jehovah our righteousness." But now, Jerusalem has the moon under her feet. Under the Law, Jerusalem was glorified as the centre of government and worship; the place of the palace and the temple.

3. "On her head a crown of twelve stars." This refers to the patriarchal dispensation, characterised by the twelve sons of Abraham and Jacob. Under that dispensation God glorified Jerusalem as the abode of Melchizedec, the priest and king, who blessed Abraham.

She is in the pangs of pregnancy. She has conceived great hopes from the promises of God in His word. But the time of crisis is come. "In sorrow," according to the sentence of the Garden, she is "to bring forth children." Her faith draws out the enmity of the men of unbelief in the city. Moreover, the enmity of the world is now at its height. The Holy City is being trodden down by the Gentiles: xi, 1, 2. Here then are the sources of her pain. And this attitude is given to Jerusalem by her own prophets: Is. -xiii, 1—13 shows it. Still more clearly is it discovered to us in Is. xxiv—xxvi. Chapter twenty-four gives us the great and terrible day of the Lord, when earth's trial is come: 17—19. Satan and his hosts are punished: 21, 22. Then Christ and his twelve elders ("ancients"), or apostles, shall reign: 23. In the twenty-fifth chapter we have Christ come. He shall spread the feast in Jerusalem: 6. The blindness cast by Satan over all the

nations' eyes shall then be removed : 7. Then is come the resurrection of saints and the consolation of God : 1 Cor. xv, 54. Jesus has appeared in person to those waiting for Him : ver. 8, 9. The twenty-sixth chapter gives us the song of joy in Judah. Other lords than the Most High have ruled over Israel. But they shall not rise at the resurrection of the just : ver. 13, 14. The nation of Israel is now increased by God : 15. But there is the day of trouble, which must precede. "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee ; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. *Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs ; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.*" Then comes resurrection. "*Thy dead men shall live ; my dead body shall they arise.* Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust :*" ver. 19. Next comes a notice of the other, or earthly escape, by the flight from Jerusalem, which our Lord commands. "*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." The little moment of her hiding is the forty-two months of her residence in the desert, which is the time also of the Great Tribulation. See moreover Micah iv, 6, to v, 3.

Another great sign appears. Satan is presented to us as possessed of power, both on earth and in heaven. He is the great Dragon ; for he is the Prince of the world, the chief of rebel angels. He is the "red" dragon ; for he is the murderer from the beginning. It is through him that the martyrs were slain.

* In the Septuagint, "They that are in the tombs shall arise." Much better. So John v, 28.

And this tells us that God is about to make inquisition for blood, as He promised in his covenant with Noah : Gen. ix, 5.

Satan is the liar who deceives all the nations of the earth. His are the seven heads of Anti-Christ. The last of the Emperors of Rome who is to be in antagonism to Christ will then have come, and he is crowned. This had not taken place in John's day : xvii, 9—11. Nor has it yet. Nor can it take place, till the Church is cast off as no longer God's witness on earth.

"His tail draws the third of the stars of heaven," for he is the ruler of the fallen angels. With these he fights against the *Man-child* ; as with his kings of earth he troubles the *Woman*.

Satan stands before the Woman ; for he is aware of the crisis. He sees in the Child to be born the one who will supplant him in his rule over the earth, and the conqueror who is coming into the heavens to dwell there. He attempts, therefore, to prevent by force the Child's ascent on high. The kingdom of God's glory is at the doors ; that is, the overthrow of the kingdom of Satan. He is therefore all on the alert to destroy, if he may.

Who is this Child ?

1. Some say it is *Christ*. Now there are so many points in favour of this, that it is well to look at them. Jesus has indeed, in the counsels of God, traversed the road to be passed over by this Child.

At the Last Supper there was a pre-figuration of the Woman, and her attitude. *The twelve stars* were represented by the twelve apostles, to whom were promised thrones over each of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were gathered in Jerusalem, trusting in Christ, who was for them *the Sun of righteousness*. For his sake they put aside the Passover of the Law for the Supper of the Lord. *The moon was under their feet*.

They and their Great Master were in pain and sorrow like that of a parturient woman : John xvi.

Great were their hopes, conceived from the prophets, and the Saviour's words. But it was the hour of the wicked, and the power of Satan, the Prince of Darkness. That was the night of the Saviour's sore agony. The Chief Priests, Herod, Pilate, were against him. The horn (or sub-ordinate potentate) of the Cæsar (the head) was to condemn Him to death. But Jesus would be born out of the tomb, and ascend to the Father's presence, as King of kings. Satan and his emissaries attempted to keep Him in the sepulchre, but prevailed not. He ascended as the Conqueror, possessed of all authority in heaven and earth. He went up to God and to His throne.

In his earlier years our Lord exemplified the Flight. He and his mother were compelled to flee from the treacherous king, across the desert into Egypt. He withdrew again into the wilderness to meet the devil, and was, after His hunger, fed there by angels.

When his forerunner was slain, Jesus withdrew into the wilderness with the crowds who believed in Him, and there He fed them miraculously twice, while His own ministry lasted for 1260 days, or three years and a-half.

But the Child here is not Christ. If any would assume the Woman to be the Virgin Mary, and Christ to be the Child, they are refuted by the consideration that both Mother and Child are mystic beings, and not literal persons. Jesus again was his mother's first-born, while this woman has had sons previously. Jesus, moreover, was not born at Jerusalem. His mystic birth (or resurrection) did indeed take place there. But that was in the day of grace, and this takes place in the day of righteousness. Hence, at the Saviour's resurrection, no battle took place on high, nor has Satan been yet ejected: Eph. vi.

The ejection here takes place only three and a-half years before Jerusalem is delivered, and the kingdom comes at the seventh trump.

'But may not the Child be the Church? That would be a mystic Child. That is to ascend to heaven, and to reign over the nations.'

This Child is the promised "Seed of the Woman." Its heel has been bruised, for it has suffered unto death. And now is come its turn to bruise the serpent's head. Compare this with the previous chapter. There are the two prophets (who overcome) witnesses to the Lamb. "*My two witnesses.*" They are sent because of the word of testimony which they are to bear, and they are faithful to it even unto death. One of these two is Enoch, belonging to the patriarchal dispensation, or that of the stars. The other is Elijah, belonging to the Law. Those who wish to see the proof of this will find it in the *Apocalypse Expounded by Scripture*: Vol. ii. Their resurrection and ascent tell us what are the birth and rapture of the Child. These two prophets are indeed caught up later than the Man-Child, for when they are slain the second woe trumpet is past: xi, 13, 14.

Such as the Mother is, such is the Son. The Mother is an unity, glorified in three dispensations of God. So then, I suppose, her Son is a body of conquerors out of these dispensations. But not all Christians are conquerors *dispensationally*.

And if some of the Church are delivered by the rapture from the days of woe coming on the earth, some are left to go through them. Wherefore, after the heavenly and earthly escape have been shown us, we are made to see that two dispensationally different bodies are concerned in this vision. 1. The Woman's flight speaks of Israel. It pursues the path of old. 2. The rapture tells of the heavenly people, who follow Christ in His resurrection and ascent. Some then of both classes are found on earth, after the two escapes have removed a part of each of the two bodies.

It is not every believer of the Church that is to reign with Christ, but those who suffer with Him,

those who obey, and those who are "accounted worthy:" 2 Tim. ii, 12; Rev. ii, 26, 27; Luke xx, 35.

It is, however, clear, that some or many of the Church belong to this mystic Child. It seems to consist principally of martyrs for the truth and for Christ. "They loved not their lives (souls) unto death." That is not true of every believer. The "testimony" of some believers does not resist the devil, for it is both defective and untrue. The Child wholly consists of conquerors. "They overcame" the devil. But the Seven Churches are by our Lord divided into conquerors, and conquered.

Some of the Church are found in the mystic Child. For some are overcomers, and these are destined to rule the nations with Christ, as the promise to Thyatira shows: ii, 26, 27. Some have kept the word of Christ's patience, and they shall be preserved, as this Child is, out of the hour of the Great Temptation which is to attack the whole habitable earth: iii, 10.

Their birth is the mystic birth from the tomb. The time of their ascent is somewhere between the sixth seal and the fourth trumpet. For the first woe trumpet brings Satan upon the earth as the "star fallen out of heaven," and he opens the door of the pit to allow his false Christ to come up: Rev. ix, 1, 11. As these conquerors are destined to supersede Satan in his power over earth, they are peculiarly the objects of his hatred. Unlike the twenty-four elders, Satan refuses to part with his power. It is only when superior force wrests it from him, that he succumbs. But it is God's counsel, and it must prevail. The devil has bruised their heel in death; they in return, shall, in conjunction with Christ, bruise his head.

In spite of Satan's intelligence and force, these are "caught up to God and His throne." Thus is the man "born into the world," and thereat arises joy: John xvi, 21. They are caught up to God and the throne of God. "To God," for they are His approved children. "To the throne of God," for that is the

refuge for the oppressed and the righteous: Psa. ix, 7—9, 13, 14. God thus begins to act in judgment. There they are secure from the devil's enmity and his power. And thus we bring this verse into connection with what has preceded. John, by divine command, has measured the temple in heaven, the altar, and the worshippers in the inner court. That is marked out for safety from attack, whether by angels or by men. The outer court on the other hand, which is the temple of Jerusalem below, is exposed to the wrath of Satan and to the nations' power. The Holy City also is unsafe: xi, 1, 2.

Thus this mystic Child is identified with the Great Multitude of chapter vii. Those who would follow this point further will find it drawn out in *The Apocalypse Expounded by Scripture*, Vol. iii, 39—41. In chapter vii the saved are seen as the *priests* in the temple above. Here they are beheld in relation to the *kingdom* of God. The elders had anticipated this their two-fold dignity, when Christ took the book: v, 9, 10.

The Woman flees into the wilderness; for she is the city of earth, and is under guilt, so that she is unable to resist Satan's onset. Thus she fulfils the types of the law. (1) The woman after her confinement was to be unclean: if she had borne a male, for forty days; if a female, for eighty days. But Jerusalem's defilement is so far greater, that she becomes a 'removed woman' for 1260 days: Lev. xii. (2) The manslayer was bidden to flee to a city of refuge from the avenger of blood, and on entering that, he would be safe till his cause was tried. Jerusalem in its unbelief slew the Two Witnesses, and the Lord Jesus, and called down the vengeance of that blood on its head. But these disciples of Jerusalem are to be cleansed after their flight. The refuge now, is not in the land of Israel, nor in any city of the habitable earth, for these are the days of vengeance, and only in the uninhabited solitudes of Arabia can she find safety. Satan pursues her, as of old he pursued

the children of Israel on their flight out of Egypt. But as Pharaoh and his host were then swallowed up in the deep, so shall the mystic river of the dragon—or the army of pursuit—be by a miracle, and through the opening earth, swallowed up. The Avenger of blood is not allowed to slay. She is not to be slain as the murderess; but to be forgiven. Still she has to flee, like David before Absalom, till the days of her purification are past. This flight is foretold in the Jewish prophets: Jer. iv, vi.

The Woman, again we see, is not the Church. The Church has not to flee, but to be caught up out of earth into heaven. The Saviour's prophecy on Olivet gives us a view, both of the rapture of the watchful man of faith, and of the flight of the Jewish disciple in the day of great trouble.

For 1260 days the fugitives are fed in the desert, as Israel of old was fed forty years. The number 1260 is compounded of $3\frac{1}{2}$ multiplied by 12, and the product further multiplied by 30. Now these three numbers are all implied in the three heavenly glories of sun, moon, and stars, which encircle the woman. Twelve are the stars around her head; thirty is indicated by the moon (the month of 30 days) beneath her feet; three and a-half are the years measured by the sun with which she is clothed. For so many revolutions of the sun she is to be severed from her land.

The time of trouble in its various forms is stated in three ways—as (1) $3\frac{1}{2}$ years (Rev. xii, 14); (2) 42 months (xi, 2; xiii, 5); and (3) 1260 days (xi, 3; xii, 6).

The observance of "days, months, and years," is characteristic of Judaism (Gal. iv, 10), and is another contribution toward the proof, that the woman is Jerusalem.

Again, what is the Woman's "place" in the wilderness? Her place, as under the old covenant is at Mount Sinai. There was the characteristic attitude of Israel in Exodus, (Heb. xii, 18—21,) and Galatians. "For

these (women) are the two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai, which begetteth into bondage, which is Hagar. For this (word) Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage together with her children:" Gal. iv, 24, 25. And conversely, if the Woman have a place in the wilderness, it is Mount Sinai that is the place; and that identifies the Woman as the old covenant with her children."

We have in chapter xii, first, the sketch of the Woman and Child; then, in the after-part, a more detailed history, first of the Child, and after it of the Mother.

War in heaven speedily followed the ascent of the Child. It was the natural consequence of it. This is intimated to us by the phrase, "There followed war in the heaven." (*εγενετο*). By this word is defined the effect of the trumpets and vials (bowls). "The first angel sounded, and *there followed* hail and fire." "The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea; and *it became* blood as of a dead man."

Satan opposes by *accusation* on high the *prayers* of the saints while they are below. But when his accusations are proved false, and the martyr-saints are to be lifted up to their place and power, he attempts to resist their entrance by force. They are not able to cope with force so great. Therefore the angels meet his power, and war ensues. He loses the battle, is cast out of heaven, together with his angels, and is never able to return thither. He is cast into the earth, and has but $3\frac{1}{2}$ years in which to act before the coming of Christ.

Then follows joy in heaven. A voice cries: "Now is come the salvation and the might, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ; for the accuser of *our* brethren is cast down, who used to accuse *them* before the throne of *our* God day and night." The voice is angelic; it is not "*Our* accuser

is cast down, who used to accuse *us* day and night." It is in the style of the elders: "Thou hast made *them* kings and priests unto *our God*, and *they* shall reign over the earth." These words give us the reason of the joy. The victory has cast out Satan the accuser of the Child, and Satan's fellows, introducing the Child. This tells us, then, indirectly of what the mystic Child consists. All its constituents are overcomers. Some are victors of the Church. For, who is it that are called to fight spiritually against Satan and his evil spirits in the heavenlies? The Church of Christ: Eph. vi.

As long as the Church is recognized below, so long does God's day of patience with earth extend. With the casting out of Satan from on high, and the entrance on the heavenlies by those who are the lively members of Christ, the standing of the Church ceases.

These conquerors are victorious, not by their own blood, though all or most were martyrs; but by the blood of the Lamb. They are no time-servers, as Satan alleges; they have kept the faith, though death was the consequence: ii, 10, 13.

The kingdom of God has come to heaven, and "a man is born into the world." Great is the joy. The angels take the place of Jethro at Sinai, after Israel has been brought to God: and they are glad. This is again mystically the birth of Isaac (laughter). "God hath made *me* to laugh," says Sarah, "so that all who hear will laugh with me." But, as then, Ishmael and Hagar laughed, not in joy, but in mockery, and were therefore cast out: so it is here. The sons of the two covenants shall not inherit together: Gal. iv. The Son has the heritage of heaven, the Mother of the earth.

Christ had long replied to the Accuser on high as the Advocate, plea against plea. But now he shows himself the Lord of Hosts, and His angels cast out the Evil One.

But while there is joy in heaven, there are sorrow

and woe on earth. For the fiend has come down with deadly hate and rage against his foes on earth.

Thus come into view two principles announced in a previous vision. John ate the book that had been opened, and that was given him by the angel. The (1) eating had two opposite effects; in his *mouth* it was *sweet*, in his *belly bitter*. (2) He is furnished with a measuring *reed*, but it is like a *rod*, for it has two aspects. The temple above is secured from the attacks of Satan: (that is sweet), but the part which is on earth is given up awhile to his rage: (that is bitter). Satan hurls his forces against the temple above, and loses the day. It may not be forced. But woe to the temple and city of God on earth! And John is informed, as soon as he has eaten the book, that he is to 'prophesy again.' Accordingly he does. He goes over the same field from another point, and by another road: chapters xii—xiv.

Cast down from heaven, Jerusalem the City of God is the place of Satan's vehement hatred and attack. The Woman, instructed by Christ, flees. Satan pursues rapidly with his forces of earth. To the Woman are given more rapid powers of flight still. And the host which he sends against her is swallowed up in the opened earth, as were Dathan and Abiram's party in the days of Moses.

God interposes, not indeed by visible leaders as in the escape out of Egypt, but He makes good His people's flight into the desert.

Satan scowls, but in vain, with baffled rage, at these who have been rescued from his grasp. But some friends of God and of Christ are still within his reach. "He went away to make war with *the remnants** of her seed, (1) who keep the commandments of God, and (2) hold the testimony of Jesus."

* Των λοιπων.

The heavenly and the earthly escapes do not remove the whole of either class. There are two remnants. (1) The one is *Jewish*. They keep the commandments of God by Moses. (2) The other is *Christian*. "They *hold the testimony of Jesus*." One should have thought this phrase to be clearness itself. But it refutes a theory, and so must defend itself before it proves victorious.

The testimony of Jesus has been sent by God. Do you receive it? You are a Christian. You *hold* that testimony. You *have* it both in your hand and your heart. Do you refuse it? You are an unbeliever. Paul was so once. He so refused the witness as to hate the witnesses, and to slay them. He accepted the testimony afterwards, and bore witness to Jesus. He wished to press this truth on others at Jerusalem. But Jesus warned him away. 'They would not receive Paul's testimony concerning Him:' Acts xxii, 18. In consequence they abode in their Judaism and unbelief. This view of the words holds good, whether we understand "the testimony of Jesus," to signify, (1) that which Jesus gave, or (2) that which is given concerning Jesus; as in the passage last quoted.

'But might not unbelieving Jews be said to have the testimony of Jesus, seeing that they were in possession of the Old Testament prophecies, which testified concerning Messiah's coming; for witness to Jesus is the very spirit of prophecy?' Rev. xix, 10.

No! The very passage cited in its defence condemns it. The first part of the sentence is omitted, and that says, as the angel's reply to John's worship of him: "See thou do it not; I am fellow-servant of *thee, and of thy brethren which have (hold) the testimony of Jesus*. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy:" Rev. xix, 10. There is no doubt that John held and suffered for the witness to Jesus (i, 9). He was a Christian, and the angel links with John his fellow-Christians. They, too, held the testimony of Jesus.

The possession of the writings of the prophets or of Moses in the house or the hand is not the having or holding them meant in Scripture. Prophecy is not received unless its meaning, as given of God, is accepted. Paul, as refusing the prophets' testimony to Jesus, was an unbeliever, though he had possession of them, and knew them by heart.

Moreover, in the Millennial Day, these who so practically have and hold the testimony of Jesus as to die for His sake, are distinguished beyond others by reigning with Christ. "I saw the souls of them that were *beheaded for the witness of Jesus* and they lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years:" xx, 4.

But we have further evidence in the context. The dragon calls up from the bottomless pit his false Christ, and gives him his throne and power: xiii.

The False Christ blasphemes the God of heaven, and the tented camp on high of those who have escaped by rapture. But then he applies himself to war against "*the saints*," (ver. 7) whether those of Israel, or of the disciples of Christ. Some of these fight against him, but they are warned not to do so. God has given for awhile all power into the enemy's hands. The resisters will find judgment descending on themselves. Patience and prayer is their only allowed attitude: 9, 10. In the next chapter a warning angel proclaims with a loud voice the terrors of the Lord against all who shall worship this Wild Beast. Then follows the word, "Here is the patience of the saints that keep (1) the commandments of God, (2) *and the faith of Jesus*:" xiv, 12. Here the matter is clearer still. We have the same two people of God. The Jewish body comes first, and is described by the Law and its commands as before. But the Christian body is described still more evidently. "*They keep the faith of Jesus*." In these words there is no loophole of escape by reason of the supposed ambiguity of 'have' and 'testimony.' It is *the keepers of the*

Christian faith. "I have kept the faith," is Paul's account of his course as a Christian: 2 Tim. iv, 7.

Thus then our view of the taking and leaving in Matt. xxiv is confirmed. The taken is the Man-Child; the left are the Woman, and the remnants of her seed. The Jewish escape begins from Jerusalem, and takes place by strong physical effort, being consummated when the desert is reached. Those left on earth, and unable to enter the desert are caught in the hurricane of that day of temptation which enwraps the whole of the inhabited lands of earth. The Christian on the other hand is to *pray*, that he may be "*accounted worthy*" to *escape* that time of sin and woe. That is then, the majority of Christians, as neither watching nor praying so to escape, are *left to pass through the Great Trouble of that day.* (1) Those who would have part in the earthly escape must beware of *physical* hindrances, impeding swiftness of flight. There is, therefore, a remnant of the earthly people who are not able to flee into the wilderness. (2) The heavenly saints are warned against *spiritual* perils. If asleep in spirit, they will be left to be overtaken by that day, which will entangle in its net all those that have their affections settled in the earth: Mark xiii; Luke xxi. Does any one need further witness? See it in the next verse. "I heard a voice out of the heaven, saying, 'Blessed are the dead who *die in the Lord* henceforth:'" xiv, 13. Are not the dead in Christ Christians? Yet some of them were left to cope with Anti-Christ in his day, and were by him slain.

THE FIRST-FRUITS. REV. xiv.

The earth has been described in chapter xiii as it will be when left under the rule of Satan, his False Christ and False Prophet, who require all to mark themselves with the name of the Wild Beast on their forehead or hand. Then God's counter-work is shown to us in chapter xiv.

A hundred and forty-four thousand stand with Christ on Mount Zion. Who are they?

Mr. Darby says, that they are a *Jewish* company found at Jerusalem in that day; to be blessed with all temporal blessings on earth in the Millennial Kingdom.

Set the Church out of its place, and you must deny its place, and the place of its parts where God has really placed them.

This company is *distinctively Christian*, and belongs to the Church of Christ. The proofs are clear and numerous. Let us consider the statements of the Apocalypse about them.

1. What is the *place* of this company? "The Mount Zion." Is not that on earth? No; not in this book. This prophecy regards the heavenly things as the real things. The seven candlesticks are not those of the temple of earth. The temple, the priests, the city of "the book of this prophecy" are "in heaven." And as they are heavenly, so is the Mount Zion: Heb. xii, 22. The hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter vii are *Jewish*. They are sealed with the seal of God by an *angel*. *These* are sealed with the Christian name of God. The others are "servants of God." These are companions of the Lamb. They are more honoured than the Great Multitude.

The earthly Holy City and its temple have been given up by God to the nations; yea, over all the earth Satan's king has power. The nations tread it underfoot all the time that the Wild Beast (or False Christ) is reigning: xi, 2. Then Christ's two martyr-prophets are slain, and lie unburied. This great company then could not be standing in Jerusalem without a battle. But their employment where they are, is the peaceful one of singing a hymn to God. Hence they are in heaven, the place of safety. They are standing with Christ, as the Lamb, "before the throne." Now, "the Lamb" is not Christ's Jewish name. It presents Him

as the slain through weakness, and Israel refuses Him in that character.

2. This company "*has the name of the Lamb and the name of His Father* written on their foreheads." That name of God is distinctively Christian. Jesus in the Gospel of John is seen continually witnessing of the Father and the Son, and is perpetually refused in that testimony. The Great False Christ is specially to deny the name of the Father and the Son: 1 John ii, 22. These as strikingly assert it, by way of antagonism to the devil and his king. The name of the Father and of the Son belongs especially to the Church, and is the basis of John's Epistles: 1 John i, 3; ii, 24; 2 John 9.

3. They sing a peculiar song which none can learn, but themselves. This song is not Jewish; for those of Israel are already written and known.

They sing it in heaven, for John on earth hears the sound come "*out of the heaven:*" ver. 2. They sing it "*in front of the throne, the four living creatures and the elders.*" They must then be in heaven; as truly as the seven torches of fire, and the sea of glass: chap. iv. They are the Levites of the new covenant, to whom it is given to play on harps and sing before the Lord in His temple: 1 Chron. xxv, 1—7. They answer to the Levites and the priests of Hezekiah's day, who give praise in the temple and on the way to Berachah, because of their assured victory over the forces of Edom that are coming against them. They sing in faith, the victory is given by God, and His rest follows it: 2 Chron. xx.

4. Their chief characteristic, instead of being Jewish, is in the *most entire contrast therewith*. They are a company of virgins. Now, that condition was one of *disgrace under law*. One of the distinctively Jewish promises was, "*There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land:*" Ex. xxiii, 26. "*Thou shalt be blessed above all people; there shall not be*

male or female barren among you, or among your cattle:" Deut. vii, 14. Jephthah's daughter "*bewailed her virginity*" before she was offered up: Judges xi. That the Jewish maidens were not given to marriage, was a curse: Psa. lxxviii, 63. The picture of the blessed fearer of Jehovah was that of one with wife and children around His table: Psa. cxxviii.

But Jesus was not married, nor was John. Our Lord called some to be Christian Nazarites: Matt. xix.

Paul, unmarried likewise, confirms the call: 1 Cor. vii. How strange that any will *symbolise* the plain words of *explanation*, which the Spirit of God has given to instruct us as to their standing: ver. 4. "*Not defiled with women*" does not mean '*bad women,*' or '*sin.*'

This company are designedly in contrast with "*the dwellers on the earth.*" The dwellers upon earth rejoice in the slaughter of the two prophets: xi, 10. They also accept the Wild Beast who slays them, and they render him worship: xiii, 8. Now the description by our Lord of that day is that men are "*marrying and giving in marriage,*" and they are ready to be swept away by the flood of wrath. But these are the moral contrasts to such a class. In the resurrection there shall be neither marrying nor giving in marriage. These then are of the first-ripe ears. They exhibit in their life on earth that state into which all the risen are to arrive. And that being the day of reward, they are presented in resurrection with honour before the throne of heaven, their character now completely established, for the mortal life is past.

Three times the Holy Spirit explains to us the peculiarity of this body, introducing each statement with, '*These are*' or '*These.*' The first gives us the peculiarity of their standing, from which the other points flow. '*They are virgins.*' The second explanation describes their reward. They were like Christ in their unmarried life. They then are made His companions

in the glory, following the Lamb in His transits between heaven and earth, "wheresoever He may go."

"The Lamb" is not the Saviour's Jewish title.

The third statement concerning this company (ver. 4) refers to their origin. Are they said to be of Israel? No; the very contrary. God has two people, and out of each people He has a first-fruits. The hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter vii are expressly said to be taken out of each of the twelve tribes. But here it is declared that they are "redeemed from the *earth*," "redeemed from among *men*." They belong then to the Great Multitude which in that seventh chapter follows upon the first-fruits of Israel, and is a Gentile body gathered out of all nations. They are "redeemed." They are 'the first-born' of the Church—the Lord's other people. And the commands to Israel about the first-fruits and first-born are our instruction concerning them. The feasts of Israel celebrated on earth have their parallels in the feasts of the heavenly people, celebrated in heaven. The redemption of the first-born is specially spoken of on two occasions. (1) In connection with the *Passover*. The Lord smote the first-born of Egypt; and peculiarly ransomed, by the blood of the Lamb, the first-born of Israel. In the Revelation the slaughter of the first-born of Egypt has already occurred. "Seven thousand names of men," (or 'men of name') have been cut off at a blow: xi, 13. These others then are the first-born of the new Israel, who now make their appearance, by strength of hand brought out of Egypt. And Egypt is now earth. (2) The first-born appear again in Num. xviii. They are God's gift to Aaron as priest. Accordingly, Jesus is presented in connection with them. He is both the Lamb of the true *Passover*, and He is also the Risen Priest. They stand beside Him risen too, redeemed by Him and to Him.

They are the "*first-fruits* unto God and the Lamb."

The presentation of a sheaf of first-fruits was a

part of the ceremonial of Israel. "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then shall ye *bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest*. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an *he-lamb without blemish* of the first year for a burnt-offering to the Lord:" Lev. xxiii, 10—12.

These then are now come into the *heavenly land*, and they are presented in the *temple*: Ex. xxiv, 19; xxxiv, 26. The priest who presents them is with them. He is also the Lamb without blemish, who is the burnt-offering accepted for them. This sheaf of the first-fruits then is the token of the harvest at hand.

Again, it was required of the Israelite after his entrance into the land of *promise*—the inheritance given by the Lord—that he should take of the first-fruits, and put them into a basket and present them at the temple to the priest. He was to say, "I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come into the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and shall set it down *before the altar of the Lord thy God*. And thou shalt speak and say unto the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm:" Deut. xxvi, 1—10.

Can any mistake the references here? These first-

fruits were in Egypt, but in trouble there. They are a part then of the Great Multitude who have come out of the Great Tribulation. Their affliction is over; they have entered into the land of their inheritance, redeemed by a hand of power out of earth into heaven. They are presented to the priest in the temple. The throne of God has now taken the place of the altar. For these are priests, and have access to the Holiest. The Israelite on offering his first-fruits was to utter before the Lord a special form of praise. These pour forth a special song.

They are "first-fruits *to God and the Lamb.*" God accepts them, not under the name Jehovah, but under one unknown to and refused by Israel, when the Saviour dwelt with them. The basket of first-fruits belonged to the priest: Deut. xviii, 3—5. Answerably hereto, these specially belong to the Lamb.

It would seem then that this does not exhibit another rapture, but that they form a part of the Great Multitude, and of the Man Child. Caught up to God and His throne, they pour out their song of joy before it.

The redemption here spoken of is not the purchase of all men. It is a purchasing *out* from earth, as the place; and from men, as the dwellers on earth. It is then truly redemption; deliverance by price paid.

They are redeemed "*as first-fruits.*" They are ripe ears *cut* and *bought* for God and His temple. They are in their *place* as accepted first-fruits to God and the Lamb. But the place of first-fruits presented to God is the temple. And the temple is now in heaven. They are risen then; for mortality and corruption cannot enter the place of incorruption. They were redeemed once by *price*; now by *power*. That power hath transferred them out of earth into the heaven.

The same conclusion follows from their song. Miriam and her fellows did not sing, till they were out of Egypt and past the Red Sea. These then are on the other

side of death and judgment; conquerors, no more to be tried.

THE HARVEST.

"And I saw and behold a white cloud, and one sitting on the cloud like a Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, shouting with a great voice to the Sitter upon the cloud, 'Send thy sickle, and reap; for the hour of reaping is come; for the harvest of the earth is dried up.' And the sitter on the cloud cast his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."

What is the Harvest? Mr. Darby says it is Jewish, a work of judgment. Who are the parties on whom it is exercised? The good or the bad? If the wicked, wherein does it differ from the *Vintage*, which is the next in succession?

No; it is not Jewish. That is proved by its being the same in kind as the First-Fruits which have preceded it. Such as the First-Fruits are, such is the Harvest: according to the principle of Scripture stated in Rom. xi, 16; Lev. xxiii, 10. This is that one of all the raptures which approaches nearest to 1 Thess. iv, or the removal of the watchful ones of the Church. Christ has come down from heaven to take His disciples to Himself. He is come as the Reaping Son of man, to complete the work which He began as the *Sower*. It was under this latter title that, after the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, He began a new work, suited to the Day of Mystery, which was then inaugurated. "He that soweth the good seed is the *Son of man.*" Matt. xiii, 27. By this title our Lord is also presented to His Churches in this book: i, 13.

He is come to reap the whole earth; for "the field is the *world.*" The wheat are Jesus' disciples, for "the good seed are the *children of the Kingdom.*"

“The harvest is the end of the age,” and that season of putting an end to this evil day is arrived. The wheat ‘is dried up.’ It is dead to earth, and so fitted for the heaven. Is that Jewish? Nay, in contrast thereto, Israel’s heritage is the earth. Unlike the first-fruits, the wheat in general is still on the earth. It is now to be garnered. According to the principle of the day of recompence, he who sowed, reaps, and reaps *what he sowed*. Then, as this is Christ, what he sowed cannot be anything evil. He is an accredited messenger of the temple and the throne. He is crowned, for He is the One who “goeth forth conquering and to conquer.” The sickle is a symbolic one, explained in the Lord’s parable of the wheat and the tares. “The reapers are angels.” “The *Son of man shall send His angels.*” “Then shall the righteous shine out as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Hence the expression used in the original, “*Send thy sickle, and reap.*” So also the matter is stated in a parable peculiar to Mark. “So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast the seed on the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, how he knoweth not. For the earth of itself brings forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit shows itself, immediately he *sendeth the sickle because the harvest is come.*” Mark iv, 26—29. Christ holds the sickle, because the angels are at His command. But as the “*Son of man*” He is the Father’s servant, and therefore waits His call. At length it is given: ‘Reap!’ With the utmost ease it is effected. The sickle is cast on the earth by the Sitter on the cloud; the earth is reaped!

But the wheat of the harvest is manifestly left up to that moment in the time of Trouble. The twelfth chapter gives us those who are rescued before the woe sets in. Then come Satan’s time of temptation of earth, and God’s time of vengeance. The False Christ and the False Prophet rule the earth: chapter

xiii. Then the First-Fruits are seen on high, while the Harvest has yet to be cut below. And the next event to the Harvest is the Vintage of wrath, which is another aspect of the Saviour’s coming as the Man of War against the armies of earth: chapter xix.

It was commanded, that the corners of the field in the day of harvest were not to be reaped: Lev. xxiii, 22. Accordingly some are left, as is proved by Rev. xvi, 15. At the very last of the bowls of wrath, while Satan and his angels are gathering the kings of earth to fight with Christ, the Saviour says—“*Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*” So Moses and Joshua came down unexpectedly into the camp, where Israelites were keeping their idolatrous feast, and beheld with displeasure the naked adorers of the calf: Ex. xxxii, 15—25.

The *Vintage* gives us the wrath of God on the followers of the False Christ. It is the gathering of the Tares, and binding them in bundles by the angels, preparatory to burning them. The field of earth is *the kingdom of the Son of man*. The kingdom which came to *heaven* in the twelfth chapter, has now arrived at *earth*.

Out of the kingdom of the Son of man it is time to remove the doers of iniquity. The two classes, of the disciples of Christ, and the followers of the Antichrist, are beautifully contrasted. The disciples of Christ when ripe, are dry, and dead to earth; for their ripeness is the ripeness of wheat. The followers of the False Christ resemble the grapes, whose ripeness is a fulness of the juices drawn from the earth. The wheat is borne away to the garner in the kingdom of the *Father*. The grapes are trodden down on earth; the kingdom of the Son of man.

Thus also after the Lord has caught up to himself His watchful ones of the Church (1 Thess. iv), you have in the next chapter the sudden destruction of the

men of the world in the midst of their unbelief: (1 Thess. v). And after the ingathering of the corn and the wine comes the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month, or the blest millennial day.

In conclusion, "the Scripture cannot be broken." That theory must be false, which runs counter to the promises and warnings of the Saviour and His apostles. Now, in the teaching of our Lord addressed to His disciples concerning His coming, He continually lays stress upon their being watchful and ready. To those in this attitude His coming will be joy and promotion. To those unready and asleep, it will be loss and sorrow. Do any doubt this, after the passages which have been adduced?

1. "One is taken, and one is left." "*Watch therefore* for ye know not what hour your Lord is coming:" Matt. xxiv, 41, 42. In the parallel place in Luke follows the parable of the Unjust Judge; to discover to us *the day of trouble* in its trial to the left ones, under the figure of a widow who has no resource in her affliction, but the importunity of prayer: Luke xvii, xviii.

2. Had the master of the house watched, he had not been robbed by the thief's coming. "Therefore be *ye also ready*, for in the hour ye think not, the Son of man is coming:" Matt. xxiv, 43, 44.

3. Blessed the steward found watching by the Master. But if he be found behaving like the unbelievers at His coming, the Lord will put him among them: Matt. xxiv, 45—51.

4. The *ready* virgins went in with the Bridegroom to the marriage. The unready believers were left, and the shut door kept them out from it. Nor would the Bridegroom open at their appeal: Matt. xxv, 10—12.

5. You know not when your Lord shall return. "*Watch therefore.*" "*Lest* coming suddenly He find you (disciples) sleeping:" Mark xiii, 35, 36. But

what if they should be spiritually asleep? Then fact comes in to tell us, that to be asleep is to be *left by Christ*, and to be left is to be caught in the tornado of the Day of Tribulation: Mark xiv, 40—72.

6. Blessed the disciples who are found watchful and ready for their Lord. Such shall be honoured and promoted. But woe to them if not: Luke xii, 35—46.

7. The rapture takes place, not in the day of grace, but in the day of reward according to works. Hence if you wish to escape, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged by 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 that are settled 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 be set before the Son of man:" Luke xxi, 34—36.

These seven examples will suffice for the candid, and will prove that any doctrine which says to the believer—'Fear not, son of God, elect unto eternal life, whether you be in pursuit of the world's riches, pleasures, or honours, sunk to the level of the world, or even below it, you will see Christ's face with joy, you will not be left to the coming day of woe,'—cannot be true.

May we take heed, that our God may count us worthy of our calling, that we may escape the hour of trouble, and behold the face of our Lord with joy!

THE END.

RESTING AND WRESTLING

IN our days has arisen the important inquiry : ‘ *How is a man to be sanctified ?* ’ To this two answers have been given.

1. It is by *faith*. By the same principle whereby a man is justified. *By faith* the sinner is justified, by faith too he is sanctified. He is grafted into Christ. He is in Him as the branch is in the vine, and therefore partake of its fulness. And so it is written : “ To them that are *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, called to be saints : ” 1 Cor. i, 2. Paul was sent to tell of the forgiveness of sins, and of “ inheritance among them that are *sanctified by faith that is in me* : ” Acts xxvi, 18. Now this is true. But it has been held that there is to be no effort towards sanctification ; so that a critic observed of this one-sided doctrine, that according to some, the way to holiness is—‘ Relax your muscles ! ’

2. The second reply is : That sanctification is *the result of effort* directed towards holiness, as an end in view. And the advocates of this doctrine can appeal to Scriptures still more numerous. They can plead, that the Christian’s whole life is a warfare, a fight for which God has provided celestial armour : Eph. vi. That we have to *wrestle* against invisible

foes, as truly as Israel of old against foes of flesh and blood. The Christian is a racer, like those in the Grecian games, and is called by God to put forth his best energies in pursuit of the prize: 1 Cor. ix, x. He has to put off the old man, and to put on the new: Eph. iv, 22. Paul rebukes those who were at rest, and not advancing: Heb. v, vi.

Now faith is not effort, but a sitting still, and receiving.

In short, we seem here to be led to the verge of a contradiction in so many words.

'How is a man to be *justified*?' (1) 'Not by works, but by faith,' says Paul. "Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*:" Rom. iii, 28. (2) 'Not by faith, but by works,' says James. "Ye see then, how that *by works a man is justified and not by faith only*:" Jas. ii, 24.

Have we not then the same contradiction also in regard of *sanctification*?

How then are we to reconcile these things?

Both sentiments are Scriptural; *both* are true.

There is, however, no contradiction; because *two* objects are set before the Christian, and each of those rests on opposite grounds.

I. One of these is a GIFT to him that believes; a *gift in opposition to his works and deservings*. "Not by works of *righteousness which we did*, but according to His mercy He saved us . . . that being justified by His grace, we should be heirs (according to hope) of *eternal life*:" Tit. iii, 5, 7. "For the wages of sin is death; but *the gift of God is eternal life*, in Jesus Christ our Lord:" Rom. vi, 2. Here then we have presented to us the first object—'Eternal life.' That, as the Scriptures attest, is a free gift. It belongs to him who believes. To attempt to win *that* by effort, would be unbelief. "To him that *worketh not, but believeth* on Him that justifieth the ungodly,

his faith is imputed unto righteousness:" Rom. iv, 4, 5. "What shall we do (said unbelievers to our Lord) that we might work *the works of God*?" "This is the work of God (said Jesus) that ye *believe on Him* whom He hath sent:" John vi, 28, 29. "*By grace are ye saved through faith*, and that not of yourselves, it is *the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast*:" Eph. ii, 8, 9. Hence already the believer possesses much: he has pardon, peace, eternal life, regeneration, the Spirit's indwelling, sonship, and an inheritance in heaven.

II. But a second object is set before him; a PRIZE, *to be sought for by effort*. Effort with an end in view is the very difference between a 'gift' and a 'prize.' The gift is ours at the moment we accept it. The prize is *not ours*, but is to be sought for, as obtainable in a future day. Towards this end effort is to be put forth. Care must be exercised, or we may lose the object set before us. "I press toward the mark (goal) for THE PRIZE of the high calling* of God in Christ Jesus:" Phil. iii, 14. What was that? The attaining of a place in the select resurrection of the just: ver. 11. For this Paul sought, as the racers in the games of Greece strove for the victor's crown. There, but one could receive the prize, and all was uncertainty. But with us many shall receive the prize, and to the candidate that obeys the laws of the games there shall be a sure reward.

This first resurrection is another name for the kingdom of the thousand years of bliss which is to be enjoyed by some, while others remain in their graves: Rev. xx, 4—6. The prize shall be awarded at last "according to works." "Behold I come quickly; and

* It should be—'The prize of God's *calling above* in Christ Jesus.' Ours is the *heavenly* calling, out of earth into heaven.

My reward is with Me to give each according as his work shall be :" Rev. xxii, 12. "For the Son of man shall come in His glory with His angels ; and then *He shall reward each according to his works :*" Matt. xvi, 27.

Hence there is a perfect reconciliation between the two things. 1. The *unbeliever*, in order to be justified and sanctified, is called on to believe ! He is fully justified at once, before he does a single good work. He is "in Christ Jesus," and his sanctification by the Holy Spirit has begun in his regeneration, and his union with Christ. He is *not to work, but to accept the work of another already accomplished, perfect, and accepted by God.* He has *eternal life :* John v, 24.

2. But the *believer* is then called, as a man alive in Christ, to put forth effort to attain a prize set before him. This may be won or lost. It depends on his conduct, and the award will be given by Christ to each individual at His appearing. Here then come in the calls to diligent service, zeal, carefulness. "Occupy (trade) till I come." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." "He that *overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.*"

Now these two objects spring out of the natures of God and of man respectively.

1. God is love. To believers, His sons, He is full of grace, and His gift is worthy of Himself—eternal life ! It is bestowed in its fulness at once on him who will accept it : John iii, 15, 16, 36. This perfection the Most High is manifesting now ; for it is "the throne of grace" on which He sits. "*Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life :*" Rom. v, 21.

The believer rests in safety and joy on the work of Christ completely accepted by God. He has access with boldness to God. His are the unconditional promises attached to faith.

Now the characteristic of man which answers to the grace of God is his *passiveness*. He is dependent, weak, wicked ; he cannot help himself in much that befalls him. He is capable, then, of receiving any amount of blessing out of the hand of God as the Benefactor. And the believer is one who rests upon the grace of God. He is at rest in the work of Christ. He is the possessor of eternal life, a member of Christ, chosen by God, assured of salvation through the bounty of the Most High. Here is ample ground for our repose of soul.

II. But God is not mercy alone, He is JUST also. As in the present day He is manifesting His grace ; so in the day to come He is determined to manifest His righteousness or *justice*. There is a second throne. "The Lord hath prepared *His throne for judgment ; and He shall judge the world in righteousness :*" Psa. ix, 8 ; Acts xvii, 3. This throne is shown in Rev. iv, and it is the moving force in that book. At the word of that throne, thunders, lightnings, and ministers of wrath go forth. Here then come in these promises of the New Testament to believers, which are *conditional*, and depend on their conduct. For the day that is coming is "the day of judgment," or of justice. It is a day in which God means to bring this attribute to bear upon "*every soul of man.*" It is "the day of *wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each according to his works :*" Rom. ii, 5—16. The land that bears useful herbs in answer to the rain from heaven, and the tillage of earth, receives blessing from God. But if it bear thorns and briars, as the result of all that care, it is disapproved, and is nigh unto a curse : Heb. vi, 7, 8.

Against this view, however, many rise up. (1.) 'The judgment of God and Christ is for the ungodly and unregenerate only. For it is said of the believer : "*He shall not come into judgment :*" John v, 24.'

Nay! If God is to manifest His righteous judgment, it must take effect on all. Partial justice is not manifestation of justice. The text from John too is quoted amiss, for it is wrongly translated. The translators have put the future, where the Holy Spirit has written the present. "He that believeth hath eternal life and doth not come into judgment." Christ will judge believers! He has said so again and again. "All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and the hearts: and *I will give unto each of you according to your works:*" Rev ii, 22, 23. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which *the Lord the Righteous Judge* shall give me in that day:" 2 Tim. iv, 8; Rom xiv, 10—13; 2 Cor. v. etc.

Some take up a further position: 'If there be a judgment of saints, it is only of their *good* works. Their evil ones are atoned for by the blood of Christ.'

The blood of Christ takes the sinner out of the place of enmity against God and consequent perdition. But the judgment of believers before Christ is a judgment not of enemies, but of servants, in order to assign them their place. And in order to this their conduct, whether good or evil, must come in: Matthew xxiv, 42; xxv, 30. "For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of the Christ, that each may receive the things done by means of the body, according to the things that he hath done, *whether good or bad:*" (*Greek*) 2 Cor. v, 10. "Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons:*" Col. iii, 24, 25. Twice does the Holy Ghost set before us Israel's history as the redeemed of the Lord: twice does He bring before us their provocations; and warn us, that as the Lord dealt with them so will He act towards like offenders of His new people: 1 Cor. x; Heb. iii, iv. Rev. ii, iii, give us further proofs.

II. The characteristics of man which answer to *justice in God* are his *activity and freedom*. He is responsible to God, as one who is under commands, and as one who is able to do as he pleases. He is entrusted by God with powers, for which he is to give account. He is capable of seeing his own interests too, and of pursuing them. He is more or less fond of glory and advancement; and Christ calls on His servants to seek the true glory of the kingdom to come. He may be faithful or unfaithful to his master and his orders. He is set in a world where dangers many and sore menace him. He may in their presence be watchful or unwatchful. He may be diligent or he may be slothful. In the battle to which he is called he may refuse to appear, or he may be wounded, or come off victorious.

Here then are ample fields for effort. Here God's exhortations come in to prudence, diligence, watchfulness, activity of all kinds.

Let us look then at some of the passages which call for *effort in order to attain the coming millennial kingdom of glory*. For while Christ our Lord is now seated on high as the Priest, and Intercessor, and Advocate, upholding us against our deserts, yet in a day close at hand He is to leave the Father's throne for the air, and as the King to call all His servants before His judgment seat, in order to dispense to them recompence according to their obedience or disobedience. There are accordingly two days of opposite character: "*Now* is the accepted time; now is *the day of salvation.*" "The acceptable year of the Lord" the Saviour proclaimed at Nazareth: Luke iv.

But the passage to which He appealed speaks of the day of *justice*. And in that the righteousness of God must be manifested to all by His dealings with each, whether believers or unbelievers. This is shown us in the parables of the Talents and the Pounds: Luke xix, Matt. xxv. The diligent servant is rewarded in

proportion to his service, when the nobleman returns as the king.*

We are invited by the Holy Spirit to contemplate Christ in two aspects: (1) as our LEADER—in that resembling Moses. Moses was sent of the Lord to lead on God's people to their *rest* and *inheritance*: Deut. xii, 9, 10. Even so the Lord Jesus is Leader of the men of the heavenly calling, summoning His people on to the rest of God, in the land. In one sense Israel rested at once on their arrival in the wilderness. They were delivered from the brickmaking and the lash. But they were not yet arrived at the land of promise. So the Christian, while resting on the work of Christ complete for his justification, is to push forward towards the hope of his calling. Here comes in the call to wrestle and to run.

(2.) But Jesus is to us HIGH PRIEST also: a greater than Aaron. By virtue of His perfection and His one sacrifice we have rest in God. He has "obtained eternal redemption for us:" Heb. ix, 12. Faith, looking at Christ's *past work*, is at *rest*. Faith, looking at Christ's *future coming and work* as the rewarder, is called to *wrestle*: Heb. iv. "Let us *labour therefore to enter into that rest* lest any fall after the same example of disobedience" [as Israel's]. (*Greek.*) "Let us run with patience the race set before us:" Heb. xii, 1.

The prize of our calling is a matter of *hope*, which is not to be devoid of all fear: 1 Pet. i, 17; Heb. iv, 1;

* Those who speak much of sanctification by faith speak also much of the Christian's *consecration* of himself, and generally by a special act of it. Has then Christ forgotten this matter, and left it to be supplied by His people's greater wisdom? By no means! Jesus calls for an act of consecration and it is to come at once after faith. *It is the immersion which He has commanded*: an entire surrender and burial of the old Adam, and a rising up of the new man to walk with Christ in newness of life: Rom. vi, 1—5. That same act too looks onward to the *first resurrection, as the prize of our calling*: ver. 5.

Luke xii, 5. The *gift* of our calling is ours already and none shall pluck us out of God's hand. Hence the same epistle speaks of two "full assurances." There is "the *full assurance of faith*." That refers to our confidence of constant present welcome in drawing near to God in the Holiest through the perfect priesthood and past sacrifice of Christ: Heb. x, 19—22. But the same apostle threatens with deep solemnity and awfulness those who were drawing back instead of advancing onward, even although he was assured of their being finally saved and of the present acceptance of their works before God: Heb. vi. Hence he urges them to diligence, in view of the reward. "But we desire that each of you should show the same diligence [that some display] up to the close, *with a view to the full assurance of hope*:" Heb. vi, 11. Here he refers to the case of Abraham.

(1.) Abraham believed and was justified: Gen. xv, 6.

(2.) But after that God expected "the *obedience of faith*," and Abraham showed it. The Most High demanded the sacrifice of his son, and Abraham *obeyed*. Then came God's irrevocable oath to fulfil to him the promises He had made him. These were the "two immutable *transactions*" (*πραγματα*), on which Abraham's future glory rests. First, the *formal ratification of the covenant* of justification upon faith (Gen. xv, 17, 18); and second, the *oath* over Isaac slain and risen, in a figure: Gen. xxii.

The future prize is to be sought across many difficulties. Hence they to whom the kingdom is proclaimed are to be "violent men," seeking to bear it away by force: Matt. xi, 12. Thus Paul sought it, refusing to be daunted by any perils in the course even though attaching to life itself: Phil. iii.

For our calling is to be soldiers of Christ, and our conflict is not against men as our enemies, but with mighty spirits of evil in heavenly places: Eph. vi. These never slumber, and hence we need ever the

armour of God's supply. The Christian has *attained* something, and about that he is at *rest*. The Christian is *seeking* something which he may win or lose, according to his conduct. Hence he is to wrestle. 'Looking unto *Christ*' is good, and is taught us by the Holy Spirit: Heb. xii. But "Look to *yourselves*," is also good, and is taught us by the same Spirit: 2 John, 7. "*Look to yourselves that we lose not the things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.*" 'Rest on the finished work of Christ' is good. "But let each *prove his own work*," is also a command of the Holy Ghost: Gal. vi, 4.

For we must each give account of himself to Christ; and on Him it depends, whether we be "accounted worthy" of the prize of our calling, or no: 2 Thess. i, 5, 11; Luke xx, 35, 36. With the faithful and diligent ones Christ will be well pleased. To such there will be great reward, as the result of effort.

But some will be disapproved, and cast out as "unprofitable servants:" Matt. xxv. Some will be found unfaithful, as the steward, eating and drinking with the drunken, while he beats the manservants and maidens: Matt. xxiv.

Let us then accept both parts of God's testimony. "God is love" towards His redeemed, and let us *rest* in God's love. The Most High is also "a consuming fire" to those that fall under His justice. Let us therefore hold fast grace both in order to present acceptable service, and also that we fail not of the eternal and unshaken kingdom: Heb. xii. Neither *rest alone* nor *effort alone* expresses the true position of the Christian. As it regards righteousness and eternal life he is at *rest* through *the perfect work of Christ*. As it regards the reward of the millennial glory he is to be working, for that depends upon "*his own works*:" Gals. vi, 4.