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# ABDIEL'S ESSAYS

ON THE

## ADVENT AND KINGDOM OF CHRIST,

AND THE EVENTS CONNECTED THEREWITH.


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AND CONSIDERABLY ENLARGED.

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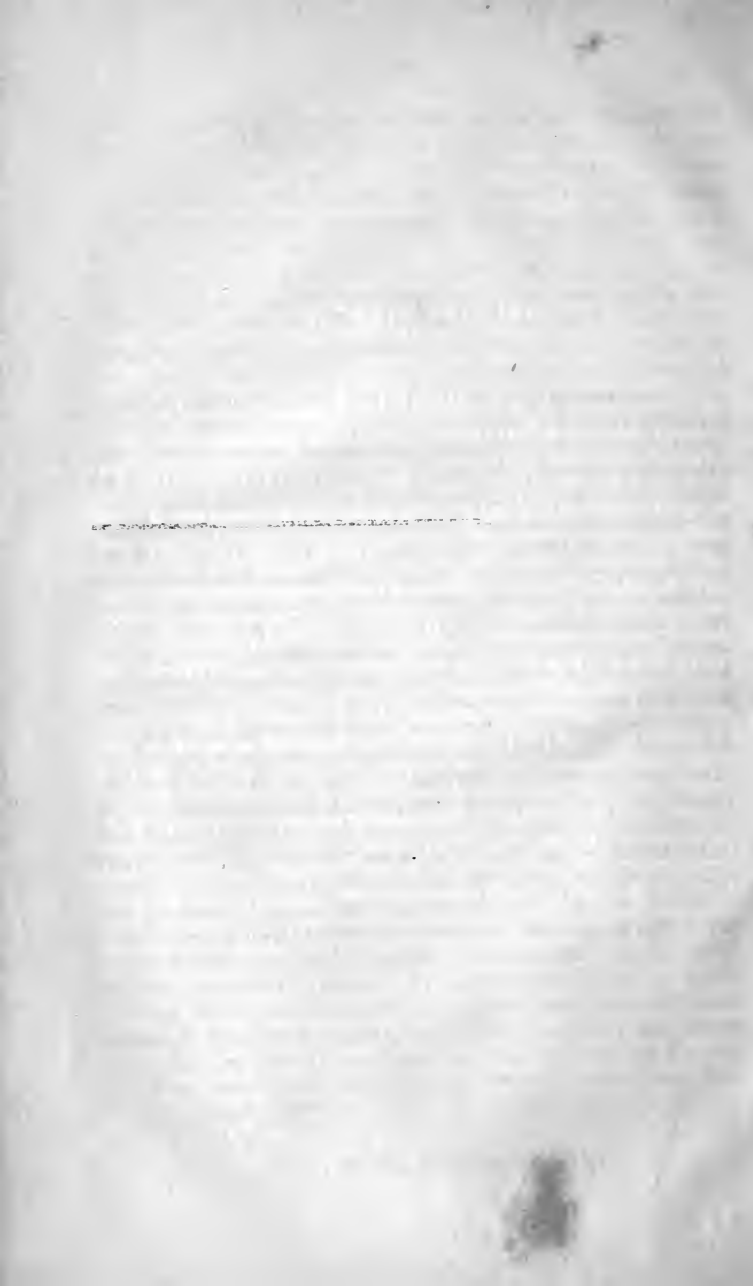
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# ON THE ADVENT AND KINGDOM OF CHRIST, AND THE EVENTS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

## Essay I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

I enter on the present discussion with somewhat mingled feelings. Looking at my subject, I have a pleasing confidence, that my heart is inditing a good matter; since I am about to write of the things that are made touching THE KING: but when I consider, on the other hand, (what it were disingenuous to conceal,) that there are excellent and learned men, followers of the Lord Jesus, who are decidedly opposed to the views which I have adopted, I cannot but be diffident in myself; and am led, with increased conviction of its need, to seek the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Not however that I would for a moment give place to the notion, entertained by some, that because there are eminent ministers of the Gospel, who have not cordially embraced these views, therefore they cannot be important, nor even true: the case of Peter and Barnabas in respect to the circumcision of the Gentiles,<sup>a</sup> in which was involved the vital doctrine of justification by faith, plainly shews, that men of the highest attainments in piety, who have been pillars in the Church, and ordinarily under the influence of inspiration, have nevertheless been slow of heart in regard to truths of infinite moment.

These circumstances however move me to commence this series of essays, with the notice of two or three serious objections, directed against the subject in general. Other objections, which affect particular points only, I shall endeavour to meet as those points come to be considered; but these, I repeat, affect the whole subject, and are of that character, that, if the mind be under their influence, it will be predisposed against the clearest and most scriptural statements, and thus prevented from properly weighing any thing which may be advanced.

<sup>a</sup> Gal. II. 10—16.

I. The questionable propriety of studying and of discussing prophecy, especially *unfulfilled* prophecy, is one of those objections, which must be met in the outset.\* It chiefly consists in the alleged impossibility of understanding or judging of a prophecy, until *the event* has proved its meaning. But how contrary is this to the experience of the Church! *Promise*, the greater portion of which is unfulfilled *prophecy*, is declared in the New Testament to be a principal means whereby we are made partakers of the Divine Nature ;<sup>b</sup> which could not be, were it entirely vague and indefinable : and under the Old Testament dispensation, the Church was chiefly sustained and nourished by prophecy ; most of the burning and shining lights raised up in it being prophets. The very first promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, was an unfulfilled prophecy, to which the Church took heed for 4000 years. Noah prepared his ark, moved by the fear of an unfulfilled prophecy or promise ; and Abraham saw afar off and rejoiced in the day of Christ by means of another. Joseph would not have directed his bones to be removed, had he not depended on prophecy for the going out of his people : to which prophecy the Lord afterwards referred Moses and Aaron, as the pledge, that he would redeem them. The Israelites were encouraged to labour for their deliverance from captivity, by the prophecy concerning it : for as Jeremiah had prayed for and obtained an understanding of the restoration of his people, when they were about to be led into captivity ;<sup>c</sup> so Daniel understood the times from the study of the writings of Jeremiah ;<sup>d</sup> just as the faithful were afterwards waiting for the Consolation of Israel from the study (as is presumed) of the book of Daniel. It was through attention to unfulfilled prophecy, that the christians left Jerusalem and escaped to the mountain, when the city was beseiged by the Romans : and the Lord hath, equally for our admonition, foretold the signs of that greater destruction, of which the overthrow of Jerusalem was but a type.

I am aware that there are difficulties attending the interpretation of the prophecies ; and that, although some are to

\* The notice of this first objection was waived by me in the first number of my papers which appeared in the INVESTIGATOR, because it was taken up in the Editorial article ; and it is now copied nearly verbatim from that article.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Pet. i. 4. <sup>c</sup> Jer. xxxii. 16—25, 36—44. <sup>d</sup> Dan. ix. 2.



be literally understood, many are figurative or allegorical, whilst others are constructed of the literal and figurative intermixed : but of those which are not declared to be *sealed up*, the difficulty has chiefly arisen from the extravagant practice of spiritualizing or allegorizing *all* passages which relate to the future. And great is the advantage which this system has given to the enemies of Revelation. They tell us that Scripture is not a proper guide, because every man hath his own interpretation—his own way of explaining or accommodating it. The imaginations of commentators, or the sentiments of friends, have too frequently been made the key to modern expositions ; whilst the plain text, which is the safest guide, has been neglected.

The apostles are often brought forward, as an instance of men who erred in regard to the proper understanding of those prophecies, which related to the first advent ; and from *their* mistakes the impossibility of *any* being able to understand what is foretold of the second advent is confidently insisted on. But I am of opinion that this circumstance is commonly misstated and still more misapplied. I cannot think the apostles and first disciples *misunderstood* the general scope of the prophecies, which led them to expect at that time a manifestation of the kingdom of Christ on earth ; though they might have had much confusion and obscurity in regard to the *time*, and *details*, and *nature* of that kingdom. The fault of the apostles was, that—though repeatedly warned, that there were *other* prophecies, which shewed that Messiah must first suffer—they *overlooked* these, and suffered their attention to be absorbed with one class of predictions only. What was there to have prevented them from comprehending such prophecies as the following : viz.—that Jesus should be born of a virgin ;—that he should ride upon an ass ;—that he should be betrayed by one of his followers ;—that they should pierce his hands and his feet ;—that they should part his garments and cast lots for his vesture ;—that he should be numbered with transgressors ; and many other things, which being plainly foretold were literally fulfilled ? The sharp rebukes of Jesus, because the disciples did not understand that he *ought* to have suffered these things, and because they were “slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets had written,” appear inconsistent, if they really *could* not have been understood. Indeed the whole Sanhedrim, ungodly and darkened as they were,

did nevertheless answer Herod most correctly from the prophets, that Christ should be born at Bethlehem : and it seems difficult to give a satisfactory reason therefore, why *we* may not previously derive some knowledge of circumstances which will attend the second advent ; seeing that they are spoken of in Scripture, apparently as free from any figurative structure as the passages already quoted. If the apostles erred, we have at least the benefit of their example : which is undoubtedly recorded,—not to lead us to conclude, that we must inevitably mistake likewise ; but that we may profit by their errors and avoid them. There is another series of prophecies, relating to God’s dealings with the Jews, which are applicable to the question before us ; and which would lead to the conclusion, that one eminent use of *fulfilled* prophecy is, to argue from it as certain and literal an accomplishment of *unfulfilled* : provided, as we are throughout assuming, that the *evident* structure of it be not allegorical or emblematical. How remarkably, for example, has *wrath* fallen upon the Jews, without one jot or tittle having failed ! They are sifted among the nations ; they are become a by-word, a hiss, a proverb, a reproach ; they abide without a prince, an altar, a sacrifice ; not to mention other peculiar sufferings which they endured of old time. Now Joshua lays it down as a rule, “ that as not one thing had failed of all the good things which ‘ the Lord had spoken concerning them ; but all had come to ‘ pass : so therefore would the Lord bring upon them all the ‘ *evil* things.” Seeing then that the evil has now been brought to pass, and not one thing has failed of that ; by what rule, (it may be asked,) upon what consistent principle, can any man venture to say, that the promises of that good, now again to succeed, is only a *figure* ; and that we are not justified in expecting a literal fulfilment ?<sup>e</sup>

I do not deny that *there are difficulties* attending the exposition of prophecy ; and that, if this be true in regard to the *events* predicted, it is more extensively the case with regard to *times* and *dates*. As respects the *day*, or even the *year* of an event, I am quite persuaded, that God has purposely obscured it. But our Lord would not therefore have us indifferent and careless, either to the event or the period of its fulfilment ; but, on the very ground that we know not the

<sup>e</sup> Compare Josh. XXIII. 14, 15, and Jer. XXXII. 42—44.

hour, He commands us to *watch*.<sup>f</sup> And though the *day* cannot be known, something of the *signs* of its approach may be ascertained, with sufficient correctness for us to be assured “that the time of our redemption draweth nigh.” St. Paul assumes of the Thessalonians, that they had so much of acquaintance with “the times and the seasons,” as to supersede the necessity of writing to them on that subject;<sup>g</sup> insomuch, that, though the day of the Lord would come upon the *world* as a thief in the night, it would not overtake *them* in like manner. The Scriptures teach us that there are prophecies, which were not intended to be known by the christians of former ages, which nevertheless will be known by that generation for whom they are written; of which Psalm cii. 18; Daniel xii. 4 and 9; and 1 Peter i. 10—12 are remarkable instances. Let us bear in remembrance therefore, that it is declared to be one of the special offices of the Holy Spirit, “to guide us into all truth, and to *show us things to come* ;”<sup>h</sup> and that the prophets, who prophesied of the sufferings and glory of Christ, did themselves “*inquire and search diligently*” concerning it, —searching,” even when the words were scarce uttered by them, “*what, or what manner of time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.”<sup>i</sup> On the other hand there were men who *neglected* the prophets, and were rebuked by our Saviour because they knew not the *signs of the times*;<sup>j</sup> and the burden of his lamentation over Jerusalem was, that they knew not *the time* of their visitation.<sup>k</sup>

II. The second objection I shall notice is, that the doctrines of modern millenarians are a *novelty*;—that they were not entertained by the early christians, nor inserted by the orthodox Church in any creed or confession of faith.

Now in regard to the christians of the two first centuries, there is not a solitary instance of any one of them *contradicting* the doctrine: all of those, whose works are extant, (unless they be some small fragments to be found in other authors,) explicitly *teach* it.\* And it should also be observed, that the doctrine does not rest upon the judgment or discernment of those men, but upon their veracity; for some of them

\* I refer for ample quotations on this subject to *The Resurrection Revealed*, by Dr. Homes, first published in 1654, and now reprinted by the Editor of the Investigator.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxiv. 36—42,      <sup>g</sup> 1 Thess. v. 1—4.      <sup>h</sup> John xvi. 13.  
<sup>i</sup> 1 Peter i. 10, 11.      <sup>j</sup> Matt. xvi. 3.      <sup>k</sup> Luke xix. 44.

profess to have received these things direct from the apostles. Justyn Martyr lived before John the apostle died; and Irenæus was the hearer of Polycarp, the disciple of John. This Irenæus, in his second book against *heresies*, clearly maintains the doctrine; and the reason of his noticing the subject in his work on heresies was, that none denied the doctrine but heretics, who altogether denied the resurrection, and held that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But I have less need to insist upon this point, because the chief of the modern opponents of these views has himself admitted, though indirectly, that all the fathers of the two first centuries maintained them\*.

In the third century Nepos wrote a book against the *Allegorical Expositors*, or those who explained the promises relating to the Millennium figuratively.<sup>1</sup> For Origen had now introduced that vicious system of spiritualizing the Scriptures, by which he drew over many to his views, who were perhaps disgusted at the preposterous things which some carnal men had added to this doctrine.† Dionysius, a disciple of Origen, perceiving that the views of Nepos overthrew the principle of his master's expositions, endeavoured to refute them; in doing which he was led openly to deny the canonical authority of the *Apocalypse*, because the testimony of that book stood in his way! Mosheim in his History of the Church admits, "that long before this controversy, an opinion had prevailed, that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution

\* See Dr. Hamilton's work against the Millennarians, page 308. The Doctor says indeed, that the principles of Millennarianism were *opposed and rejected* by almost every Father of the church *with the exception of* Barnabas, Clement, Papias, Justyn Martyr, Irenæus, Nepos, Apollinarius, Lactantius, and Tertullian!—That is, with the exception of *all* the Fathers whom he knows of before Origen, and some who were contemporary and subsequent to Origen! He prefers the Fathers of *later* date, because "their *learning and talents* far surpassed any in the first centuries of the church."—That is to say, the further from the fountain, the more pure he considers the waters!

† For proof that eminent christian writers always held the system of interpretation adopted by Origen to be most pernicious, see Luther, Annotations in Deuteronomium, cap. 1. fo. 55; Mosheim, Ch. Hist. cent. III, pt. II. sect. 5, 6; Milner Ch. Hist. Vol. I. p. 469. Extracts may be found at length in the Investigator, Vol. II. p. 202.

<sup>1</sup> Eusebii Hist. lib. vii. cap. 24.

‘ of this world ;’—that this opinion “ had hitherto ” (i. e. up to the middle of the third century) “ met with *no* opposition ;”—and that now “ its credit began to decline principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, *because it was incompatible with some of his favourite sentiments.*” Vol. I. p. 284.

One might conclude, from the remainder of Mosheim’s account, that Dionysius was completely successful in overthrowing this doctrine ;\* but we have unquestionable proof that the Millennarians still formed the greater part of the Church till the latter end of the *fourth* century. For in the year 325 sat the Nicene council, attended by all the bishops in Christendom, and drew up the form which is now used in the communion service of the established church, called the Nicene creed. The last clause of this creed is as follows : “ I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come ;” which the council thus expounds.—“ The world was made inferior (*μικροτερος*) because of foreknowledge : for God foreknew that man would sin. Therefore we expect new heavens and a new earth according to the holy Scriptures ; the Epiphany and Kingdom of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ then appearing. And as Daniel says (chap. vii. 18) the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom. And there shall be a pure and holy land, the land of the living and not of the dead : which David foreseeing with the eye of faith, exclaims, I believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living—the land of the meek and humble. Blessed, saith Christ, (Matt. v. 5,) are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. And the prophet saith, (Isa. xxvi. 6,) The feet of the meek and humble shall tread upon it.”† Later even than this period Jerome (who was no friend to the doctrine, but the contrary) admits, “ that many christians and martyrs had affirmed the things which he denied ; and that a great multitude of christians agreed in them in his own day : so that though he did not follow them, he could not condemn them.”

\* The terms “ *learned and judicious* ” applied to the publications of Dionysius on this subject in the English translation of his History, are not in the original Latin, but are foisted in, (as many other things are most unwarrantably,) by the Translator.

† See the forms of the Ecclesiastical Doctrines in the Hist. Act. Con. Nic. Gelasii Cyziceni.

The conversion of Constantine, and the protection which he gave to christianity, appears to have tended the most to render this doctrine unpopular. Rome had been considered by christians as the seat of *antichrist* and destined to destruction. Lactantius, who lived in the time of Constantine, in his Book on the Divine Institutes, says,—“The Roman authority, by ‘which now the world is governed, (my soul dreads to speak ‘it—but it will speak it, because it shall come to pass,) shall ‘be taken from the earth, and the empire shall return into ‘Asia, and again the East shall rule and the West obey.”<sup>m</sup> This opinion was now therefore by timid and temporizing persons suppressed, or explained away after Origen’s manner. Eusebius, (who also questions the Apocalypse,) proceeds so far as to make Rome the *New Jerusalem*, because Constantine turned the temples into christian churches.<sup>n</sup> And the popes in after ages discountenanced the doctrine, as militating against their usurpation and dogma, that the Millennium commenced with Romish domination in the Church.

Thus the doctrine was thrown into the back-ground until the time of the Reformation, when it was again revived; but owing to the fanatical turbulence of the Anabaptists on the continent, and the fifth-monarchy men in this country, it again fell so much into disrepute, that many timidly kept it out of view, until succeeding generations lost sight of it. In the meanwhile however the doctrine was by no means generally *denied*: many eminent men were raised up from time to time who advocated these truths in the established church; and the dissenters still continued to hold it so generally, that at last to broach these opinions exposed a man to the imputation of being a dissenter.

And to show that these opinions were entertained by chief persons in the Church, and generally taught at the time of the Reformation, I shall finally bring forward two extracts from the CATECHISM drawn up by the prelates in the time of Edward VI, and authorized by that king in the last year of his reign.<sup>o</sup>

“Q. How is that petition, *Thy kingdom come*, to be understood?”

“Ans. We ask that his kingdom may come, for that as ‘yet we see not all things subject to Christ: we see not yet ‘how the stone is cut out of the mountain without human

<sup>m</sup> Book VII. c. 15.    <sup>n</sup> Eccl. Hist. Vol. III. p. 24.    <sup>o</sup> 20th May, 1553.



prehension, that I should explain,—that so far as the mere circumstance of the *thousand years* is concerned, the orthodox reformers disclaimed it, and were evidently alarmed at the term *Chiliasm* or *Millennarian*, owing to the disrepute brought upon the name by the conduct of the Anabaptists of Germany. Following, therefore, Jerome and Eusebius, they supposed that what we call *the Millennium* commenced with Constantine. Thus the more avowed antagonists who afterwards sprung up, taking it from Grotius, referred to this period the binding of Satan and the reign of the saints : and this, notwithstanding the apostasy of Julian and the Arian and Popish persecutions (so foreign to the notion of a Millennium) came within those thousand years ! Prideaux and Whitby try with all their might to reconcile these things with the circumstance of Satan being nevertheless *bound in the bottomless pit* ! In this respect the doctrine has made a great and decided advance of late years ; since modern opponents do now hold the thousand years or Millennium to be *future*. But mark the effect of this error upon the views of such men as Latimer, Bradford and others ; for it is important as a clew to their real sentiments on this question. They held that the world would only last *six thousand years* ; (taking no notice of the *seventh* thousand ;) and that the final Restitution, the Advent of Christ, the manifestation of the Kingdom, and the Judgment, were all to take place at the end of that 6000 years. So that they were in fact looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus at that very period of time, at which the millennarians of the present day expect him. Observe how remarkably this appears in the following extracts from Latimer's third sermon on the Lord's prayer. Having spoken of a *Parliament* different from the parliaments of this world, to come at the last day ;—“ a parliament in which Christ will bear the rule and not men ; ”—“ which the righteous pray for when they say ‘ Thy Kingdom come,’ because they know that therein reformations of all things shall be had ; ”—he presently after has these words :—“ Let us therefore have a desire that this day may come ‘ quickly ; let us hasten God forward ; let us cry unto him ‘ day and night, ‘ Most merciful Father, *thy Kingdom come.*’ St. Paul saith, ‘ The Lord will not come till the swerving ‘ from faith cometh ;’ (2 Thess. II. 3,) *which thing is already ‘ done and past* : Antichrist is known throughout all the world. ‘ Wherefore *the day is not far off.* Let us beware, for it will



‘ one day fall upon our heads. St. Peter saith, ‘ The end of all things draweth very near.’ St. Peter said so at his time : how much more shall we say so ? For it is a long time since St Peter spake these words. The world was ordained to endure (as all learned men affirm and prove it with Scripture) *six thousand years*. Now of that number there be passed 5552 years, so that there is no more left but 448. And furthermore *those days shall be shortened : it shall not be full six thousand years* : ‘ the days shall be shortened for the elect’s sake.’ Therefore all those learned men, which without doubt God hath sent into this world in these latter days to give the world warning, all those men do gather out of Scripture, *that the last day cannot be far off.*”\*

I cannot forbear giving a few brief and scattered extracts from his sermons for the second Sunday in Advent. Having observed again, that the days before the Advent will be shortened, “ so that peradventure (saith he) *it may come in my days, old as I am, or in our children’s days ;*” he goes on : “ There will be great alterations at that day ; there will be hurly burly, like as ye see when a man dieth, &c. There will be *such alterations of the earth and the elements*, they will lose their former nature and be endued with another nature. And *then* shall they see the Son of Man come in a cloud with power and great glory. Certain it is that he shall come to judge ; but we cannot tell the time when he will come.” Then quoting 1 Thess. iv. to show that the living saints “ shall be rapt up into the air and so meet Christ our Saviour,” he adds ; “ all those, I say, who be content to strive and fight with sin ; these shall in such wise be taken up into the air and meet with Christ, *and so shall come down with him again.*”—“ I pray God, that we may be of the number of those, which shall hear this joyful and most comfortable voice of Christ our Saviour when he will say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which is prepared for you before the foundation of the world was laid.”—“ That man or that woman that saith these words ‘ thy kingdom come,’ with a faithful heart, no doubt desireth in very deed that God will *come to judgement, and amend all things*

\* The Editor of a recent edition of Latimer’s Sermons, Dr. Watkins, says in a note on this opinion of the world’s duration for six thousand years only—“ *At the time of the Reformation this notion was very prevalent.*”

‘ *in THIS WORLD*, to pull down Satan that old serpent under  
‘ our feet.’\*’

III. The last objection to which I shall reply is, that although it may be admitted, that the doctrine is scriptural, it is not of a *practical* character, and therefore not profitable or to edification.

The first point to be determined, in order to refute this objection, is—In what does a *satisfactory* proof of the practical tendency of the doctrine consist. If I appeal to my own *personal* experience of its salutary influence, or to its stirring and edifying effects upon others, (either of which I can most conscientiously declare,) there would not I fear be that confidence in the minds of many, as regards the integrity of the proof, which is essential to conviction. The most proper and unexceptionable mode is to turn to the Scriptures and to notice, what practical use the writers of the Bible, and of the New Testament especially, make of the subject. This it is my intention to perform, if God will, as I proceed to bring forward and support from Scripture the doctrine itself: until which even *this* mode would not be satisfactory; because some of the testimonies, which I shall hereafter adduce, might not at present be considered to the point. As regards therefore this one particular mode of considering the objection, I shall only premise, that I fearlessly challenge the production of a greater number of independent passages, practically applying any other Scripture doctrine or connected series of doctrines, than I can bring forward in behalf of those in question; and that if we are to judge of them by the frequency with which they are made the ground of exhortation, or by the variety of duties or graces which they specially call into exercise, they must be deemed among the most practical and highly important truths in the Bible. But I must for the present entreat the patience of the Reader.

In the mean while I do not think the objection,—that a doctrine (admitted to be scriptural) is not profitable,—at all consistent, nor fit to be advanced by persons professing to receive the Scriptures as divinely inspired: and I must here therefore beg to submit four short observations, for the candid consideration of the Reader.

\* The Reader who desires to see Millennialian Doctrine traced from the Reformation downward, may consult the whole of the article in reply to P. R. Investigator, Vol. I. p. 163.

1. First, it is plainly written, that “ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is *profitable* &c.”<sup>p</sup> It is affronting to the Deity to suppose, that he would reveal anything to the Church, which is not calculated to edify it; or which individual members of it may wilfully neglect, without great damage to their souls. Some points are indeed more prominent than others; and there are some also, which we may justly call “first *principles* of the doctrine of Christ:”<sup>q</sup> but because I acknowledge the foundation stone to be that on which a building rests, can I therefore safely wrench a principal stone or timber from the breast work of that building? The doctrines of Scripture are so essential to each other, that, if one be removed, some other loses its utility also. For example, John the Baptist preaches the necessity of *repentance*, that we may flee from *the wrath to come*.<sup>r</sup> No one will deny repentance to be a fundamental: but make men indifferent in regard to the wrath to come, (which is prophetic, and on which John grounds his call to repentance,) and you remove from multitudes the most powerful motive to it.\* Another class of persons is perhaps led to repentance by a view of the *goodness* of God:<sup>s</sup> so that it is impossible for any man to say, what may be profitable or not, or what most profitable, to others; nor indeed how far the cordial reception of a truth may conduce to the salvation of his own soul.

2. Secondly, I observe, that, presuming the millenarian doctrines to be scriptural, that system which deprives them of the *degree* of importance, (whatsoever it may be,) which the Word of God hath assigned to them, must be so far *wrong*: and whatsoever is wrong in doctrine must be to that extent mischievous in practice, however plausible. It may be that individuals are notwithstanding saved: but its pernicious ef-

\* I call repentance here *fundamental* in reference to Heb. vi. 1, 2, where it is applied together with *the resurrection and eternal judgment*, as among the incipient essentials of christianity; but as far as its relative importance when compared with the wrath to come is considered, if we keep strictly to figurative propriety, that on which the call to repentance is *grounded* is rather of the two the fundamental doctrine; and, according therefore to metaphorical consistency, the revelation, that there is wrath to come, supersedes in importance the call to repentance and fruits meet for it.

<sup>p</sup> 2 Tim. III. 16. <sup>q</sup> Heb. vi. 1 <sup>r</sup> Luke III. 7, 8. <sup>s</sup> Rom. II. 4.

fects upon the generality of hearers, and to a great degree upon real believers, are nevertheless incalculable.

3. Thirdly, I notice, that men cannot, from the very nature of the thing, judge of the practical tendency of a doctrine, until they have first embraced it and experienced its power. Till then they either regard it with indifference, or they decidedly oppose it as dangerous and liable to abuse. Many, for example, conceive the doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law to be unfavourable to holiness ; and that the preferable course is, to keep it in the back-ground and insist on the moral duties. And many imagine again, that to preach the need of the Spirit's aid for every good thought and word and work, is calculated to paralyze the exertions of men, and to deaden the motives to personal diligence. And how much greater a number of professors cannot conceive of the doctrine of *election*, "that it is full of sweet comfort to godly persons ;"—"that it doth greatly establish and confirm the faith of eternal salvation ;"—and "that it doth fervently kindle their love towards God." Yet many, I am persuaded, of those, who object to the doctrines of the Millennium, because they cannot see their *practical* use, would deny to the last the reasonableness of objecting to those other doctrines on the same ground.

4. Lastly, I would earnestly caution my christian brethren to pause before they take up this objection : for I cannot but consider it to be among the symptoms of that leaven of *infidelity*, which prevails among so many professors in these awful days, that the *practical use* of a scripture doctrine is by many demanded, before they will seriously entertain it. It is thus that the authority of Scripture is first degraded and then undermined. Men do not recognise that chief and all important feature of the Bible,—that it is not the word of men, but THE WORD OF GOD. I am sure that all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity would be horrified at the thought of turning away from his *personal* instruction, and telling him to his face that his sayings were hard or unprofitable : and yet, when men deliberately make light of portions of his acknowledged Word, or consider themselves entitled to neglect it, they do in effect "turn away from him that speaketh from heaven ;" and they betray that their minds are not brought into that implicit subjection to divine truth, which they profess.

ABDIEL.

## Essay II.

## ON THE SECOND ADVENT.

It happens, in regard to some of the more important subjects of prophecy, (at least it has been my own case,) that we have not so much to learn as to *unlearn*. The traditions of men have, in some respects, rendered void the Word of God: and it may be useful, if I previously endeavour to show, in respect to one important doctrine, how much at variance the opinions of many christians are with the mind of the Spirit. I advert to the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus with his saints; which, instead of occupying the place assigned to it by the New Testament, has been superseded by an unscriptural mode of calling upon sinners to repent because *death* is at hand; and exhorting believers with a promise of entering into their glory immediately after their decease.

If the Reader will suspend his judgment, until I have gone through the whole series of essays which I am now bringing before him, he will find, that I do most unreservedly entertain the opinion, that the souls of believers do, immediately after death, enjoy a blessed and a conscious *rest*; and that they do visibly behold the Lord: but this is not the *great promise* of the Scriptures;—this is not *the glory* which the New Testament holds up to believers. *That* glory (whether it refer to their throne, their crown, their inheritance, their degree, or their incorruptible body) is *invariably* deferred by the apostles until the coming of the Lord. I know not of one Scripture, which clearly and directly speaks of the believer, as entering into his *glory*, or partaking of the *promise*, at death.

Neither do I mean to assert, that christians generally deny the Advent, Resurrection, &c. Distinct admissions of it may be found in most writers; and a deferring also of what they call the *complete* reward and glory, until the period of the resurrection. What I mean to insist on is, that christians, in their ordinary expositions and discourse, make these truths *subordinate*, and the intermediate prospect of death *pre-eminient*; whereas the Scriptures make the advent and resurrection *principal* features, and death is only mentioned incidentally.

But to the proof: let us begin with St. Paul. In 1 Corinthians xv. he labours to show, that, if there be no resurrection hereafter, our faith is *vain*. But what force would there be in such an argument as this, if the believer entered into his reward at death? What need should we have, in such case, to trouble our heads about a future resurrection? Alas! it is wonderful to think how little practical influence this doctrine really has with the majority of professors! The thoughts of it does not give them one atom more of power, nor supply to them one additional motive, to mortify their sinful lusts: a plain proof to me that it cannot be believed *with the heart*.

Let us take another passage. I have preferred that in Corinthians, just considered, because it is plain and explicit.\* The object of the Apostle was to *show* them the *mystery* of the resurrection; and therefore I must suppose that he expounds it in as plain and literal a manner as possible. And we may hope for equal distinctness in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Thessalonians, for here he expressly instructs the disciples in regard to the state of those, who are dead in Christ; declaring, that he would not have them ignorant concerning them, and thus sorrow for their departure, as those persons sorrow who never hope to see their dead again. Does he then comfort them with the assurance, that they are now in glory? Does he even say any thing about the living

\* A respectable writer has disparaged the importance of the second advent, on the ground that St. Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, determined to know *nothing* but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; leaving us to infer, that the mere circumstance of the crucifixion, and the doctrine of the atonement, were all which he resolved to bring forward among them. It is not a little remarkable, that in this very Epistle he praises these same Corinthians, "because they came behind in no gift, *waiting for the coming* of the Lord Jesus Christ;" (chap. i. 7;)—he upbraids them for not remembering, "that the saints shall judge the world;" (chap. vi. 1, 2;)—and one whole chapter of it (one of the longest in the Testament, chapter xv.) is devoted to an exposition of the *order* and *nature* of the resurrection; concerning which he says, that if the dead are not to rise, then are they *perished!* (v. 18.) These passages prove beyond a reasonable question, that much more is involved in the preaching of a crucified Saviour, than the one single fact of the death of Jesus: were we to keep to this *only*, we must exclude regeneration, sanctification, election, the judgement, and many other topics, which (like the advent, and resurrection, and reign of the saints) though intimately connected with the atonement, may, nevertheless, be distinguished from it,

being presently with their departed friends in heaven? Not a word of the kind! though surely this were the very opportunity for such consolation, were it God's will, that the hearts of his people should be fixed on this truth. He gives them to understand, that they shall see their friends again *here, in this world*; he reminds them that the resurrection of Jesus is the pledge of theirs; and that, when the Lord comes, he will *bring them with him*. "I would not have you 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*."—Then he goes on to assure them, that the promises are not for those only, who shall be alive at the coming of the Lord, but for the departed saints as well:—that, when the lord shall descend from heaven, the dead in Christ shall rise *first*.

The same thing is stated in the same way by the other apostles. St. James encourages not those to whom he writes with the hope of their reward at death; but exhorts them to be *patient* until the coming of the Lord.<sup>a</sup> St. Peter also tells his people: "when the chief Shepherd shall *appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away."<sup>b</sup> So St. John;—"we know that, when he shall *appear*, we shall be like him."<sup>c</sup>\*

a Jas. v. 7. b 1 Pet. v. 4. c 1 John III. 2.

\* The personal hope of two of the apostles, constituting, in some measure, their *experience* in the immediate prospect of death, has been handed down for us by the Holy Ghost. St. Paul says: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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. 6—8.) St. Peter, when admonished by the Lord, "that he must shortly put off his fleshly tabernacle," thinks it proper to write an Epistle to the faithful, *the whole burden* of which is, to confirm them in the expectation, that these present heavens and earth shall be dissolved, as those in the days of Noah were, and again be succeeded by new heavens and a new earth;—that he had followed no cunningly devised fable, when he made known to them the power and coming of the Lord; but had had a visible specimen of it, when he beheld the transfiguration on the Mount;—and that apostate men would arise in the last days, treating the promise of his coming with scoff. (See the Second Epistle of Peter throughout.) He finally confirms all by the testimony of St. Paul, who, (he says,) *in all his Epistles* makes mention of *these things*.

These things are consistent, and what we should expect, if the great recompense were generally deferred till the second appearing of Jesus Christ; and if it were the prize chiefly held up to view. We shall in that case not only find it laid down in the New Testament as a doctrine of the apostles; but we shall perceive the primitive church in general to be affected with this view of the subject; and either speaking, or spoken of, as looking eagerly forward to such an event. There will be *other* marks of grace discernible; but *this* mark, at a time when I am presuming their hopes to have been bound up in the doctrine of Christ's second appearance, and not in the rest entered into immediately after death,—this mark, I say, would then be an essential one: the want of it would imply the grossest ignorance of the prevailing tenets of the Church; or the grossest unbelief of those which were perceived. This feature, however, pre-eminently marks the character of the scripture saints, as I shall evince by a few passages from the Epistles of St. Paul.

In Romans the earnest expectation of the new creature is said to be “*waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God—groaning within itself and waiting for the redemption of the body.*”<sup>d</sup> In Corinthians, as we have seen, he thanks God, “*that they came behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”<sup>e</sup> And of the Thessalonians he says, “*that they turned from idols, to serve the living and the true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.*”<sup>f</sup> To the Philipians he thus speaks of himself and them:—“*For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*”<sup>g</sup> Yea, in one passage, already in part quoted, the Apostle so decidedly makes *loving the appearing* of Christ a mark of grace, that he seems in a measure to *limit* the reward of righteousness to those only, who partake of this desire: “*A crown (saith he) which the Lord shall give me at that day; and not to me only; but unto all them also that love his appearing.*”<sup>h</sup> A text in the Epistle to the Hebrews appears to make the same distinction and limitation: “*Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*”<sup>i</sup>

We have much more to the same purport in the Epistles,

<sup>d</sup> Rom. VIII. 19, 23.    <sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. I. 7.    <sup>f</sup> 1 Thess. I. 9, 10.    <sup>g</sup> Chap. III. 20.    <sup>h</sup> 2 Tim. IV. 8.    <sup>i</sup> Heb. IX. 28.



especially in those of St. Paul, without insisting on numerous passages in the Gospels. Whether the Apostle speaks of himself, of his followers, or of both together, he still keeps holding forth to their view the end of this present dispensation; and he treats of it, as though, in regard to the Church, a succeeding generation might not be recognised. Is it to himself he refers?—His words are: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against *that day*.”<sup>k</sup> Is it them he speaks of?—“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until *the day* of Jesus Christ.”<sup>l</sup> Does he include himself with them? then he says: “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* shall be changed;—*we*, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”<sup>m</sup>

The greatest and most ordinary objects of religious interest and expectation are also deferred for their completion unto this time. Is it *grace*?—though given now; still, as to its consummation, “it is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>n</sup> Is it *rest*?—it is “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”<sup>o</sup> Is it *salvation*?—in numerous instances it is described, “as ready to be revealed *in the last time*.”<sup>p</sup> “Finally, *the Spirit and the Bride* [the universal Church and the Holy Ghost in her,] say, COME. And let him that heareth say, *Come*.” “He which testifieth these things saith, *surely I come quickly* :” and one who was in the Spirit responds—“Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus.” Rev. xxii. 17, 20.

I shall now, by way of shewing the *practical tendency* of the second Advent, and the consequent importance of this truth to every christian who desires edification, bring forward some of those testimonies, to which I adverted in the former paper, when I pledged myself to show the use which the writers of the New Testament make of it.

We have already seen, that they apply it, as the legitimate source of consolation, to those who mourn for the dead; “that they may not sorrow, as those who have no hope” of seeing their friends return.<sup>q</sup> We have likewise seen an apparent limitation of the reward to them that love his appearing;<sup>r</sup>—

<sup>k</sup> 2 Tim. i. 12.    <sup>l</sup> Phil. i. 6.    <sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 17.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. i. 13.    <sup>o</sup> 2 Thess. i. 7.    <sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5.    <sup>q</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.  
<sup>r</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 8; Heb. ix. 28.

an application of the subject, which, if it be not to be insisted on to its full extent, is nevertheless calculated to awaken heart-searchings. In regard to those passages which remain, I shall, to avoid circumlocution, only quote them at length; so heading them, as to point out the evangelical duties and graces to which they call us, and consequently the *practical use* made of them.

*As a call to Repentance,—*

“ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and *he shall send Jesus Christ, &c.*” Acts III. 19, 20.

*to love Christ ;—*

“ If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha;” which, being interpreted, is, “ Let him be accursed—*our Lord cometh.*” 1 Cor. XVI. 22.

*to love one another ;—*

“ And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*” 1 Thess. III. 13.

*to the mortification of earthly lusts ;—*

“ When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear*, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify *therefore* your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry;” &c. Col. III. 4, 5.

“ The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us—that denying ungodliness and unworldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; looking for that blessed hope, [*even*] *the glorious appearing* of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Titus II. 11—13.

*to general Obedience & Holiness ;—*

“ For *the Son of Man shall come* in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matt. XVI. 27.

“ And now, little children, abide in him, that, *when he shall appear*, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him *at his coming.*” 1 John II. 28.

“ We know that *when He shall appear* we shall be like him;”

for we shall see him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." Ibid<sup>1</sup> III. 2, 3.

"Behold, *I come quickly*; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. XXII. 12.

*to Spirituality of mind* ;—

"For our conversation is in heaven; *from whence also we look for the Saviour*, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, &c. Phil. III. 20, 21.

*to Works of mercy* ;—

"*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 nations; and he shall divide them one from another as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Matt. xxv. 31—36.

*to Watchfulness* ;—

"Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not *the Son of Man cometh*." Matt. xxiv. 42, 44.

"Watch therefore: for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein *the Son of Man cometh*." Matt. xxv. 13.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord *when he cometh* shall find watching." Luke XII. 35, 37.

"Behold *I come as a thief*: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Rev. XVI. 15.

"But ye brethren are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief: ye are all the children of light and of

the day : we are not of night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others : but let us watch and be sober." 1 Thess v. 4, 6.

"Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this Book." Rev. xxii. 7.

*to Patience and Long-suffering ;—*

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them ?\* I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, *when the Son of Man cometh*, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke xviii. 7, 8.

"We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure ; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgement of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer : seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ; and to you who are troubled rest with us, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven*, &c." 2 Thess. i. 4—7.

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

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto *the coming of the Lord*. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient—stablish your hearts—for *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*." James v. 7, 8.

"Wherein (in the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time) ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations ; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory *at the appearing of Jesus Christ*." 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

\* This text may be explained by 2 Pet. ii. 9, 15, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is *long-suffering* to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."—"Account the long-suffering of the Lord salvation."

“ Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you ; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings ; *that when his glory shall be revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.

*to Moderation and Sobriety ;—*

“ Let your moderation be known unto all men : *the Lord is at hand.*” Phil. iv. 5.

“ Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you *at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” 1 Pet. i. 13.

*to ministerial Fidelity and Diligence.*

“ Who is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season ? Blessed is that servant whom his lord *when he cometh* shall find so doing.” Matt. xxiv. 46.

“ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, *at his coming ?*” 1 Thess. ii. 19.

“ I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things ; and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession ; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.

“ I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead *at his appearing* and his kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.” 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

“ The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker *of the glory that shall be revealed* : feed the flock of God which is among you ; taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock : and *when the chief Shepherd shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 Peter v. 1—4.

*Against censorious Judgment.*

“ Therefore judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, &c.” 1 Cor. iv. 5.

I reserve those passages which practically improve the doctrine of the Resurrection of the saints, until I come to treat more fully on that subject: in the mean while I earnestly beseech the Reader, especially if he be a minister, dispassionately to consider what has been already advanced. It may be that in regard to some five or six texts, he may differ from me, as to their interpretation and consequent pertinence: but the great mass of evidence is such, as I am persuaded cannot be successfully controverted.

I would therefore humbly but seriously ask, Is the general tone or style of preaching consistent with these extracts? Has not the wisdom of man substituted its own invention for the wisdom of God? I grant that to the *natural* man an object of sense will always appear better suited to exercise a practical influence, than an object of faith; and therefore, to press home upon the thoughtless the certainty of death, of the truth of which event they have daily evidence, will seem a more likely method of awakening them, than to plead an Advent and a Resurrection. But to act thus is surely inconsistent in the *spiritual* man, who is the minister of a Gospel that especially addresses itself to the eye of faith: and a ministry thus conducted must be proportionably less fruitful, than one which more implicitly relies on what is written.

I say not that death is altogether an unscriptural subject of exhortation; but that it is a truth not to be compared, in regard to its prominency, with the Advent, Resurrection, &c. I must admit, also, that so far as the mere determination of a man's future condition is concerned, the day of his death is virtually to him as the day of resurrection or judgment: but without entering into the proof, that it is not so influential in other respects, it ought to be enough for every christian mind to know, that it is not the *Scripture* mode of stating these truths. It may be tolerable as a *private* opinion, or in the way of *additional* argument; but the reverse is acted upon: this private opinion has ejected the testimony of the Spirit from its place in the pulpit; and the Advent and Resurrection and Kingdom of Christ are degraded to the private station.

May the voice of the betrothed spouse of Christ again be heard, crying, with the Spirit, *COME!* May those who have the first fruits of the Spirit be found in every instance "groaning within themselves, and waiting for the adoption, —to wit, *the redemption of their body!*"

ABDIEL.

## Essay III.

## THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

In proceeding to the more immediate consideration of the *Millennium*, the circumstance which I shall first notice is the KINGDOM, concerning which so much is said in the Scriptures; and in regard to which I must beg the patient attention of the Reader, while I endeavour to lead him step by step through what is written respecting it. If our views are not clear upon this point, we shall never arrive at a proper conclusion in regard to other matters. For the view to be taken of the doctrines of the Advent and Kingdom of Christ, and of the Resurrection of the saints, depends not (as some would insist) upon doubtful passages in the Book of Revelation; nor shall I rest my interpretation upon any symbolical or merely figurative texts: but if there are passages in the Word of God, which must be understood in a plain and literal sense, (abating of course that tropical use of words, which is inseparable from ordinary conversation,) to such I shall appeal, and by such I purpose to direct my course.

I. I need not occupy time by proving, that the Messiah or Christ, according to the Old Testament Scriptures, was to be a *king*, as well as prophet and priest; and that in various places, more especially in the Book of Daniel, the said Scriptures speak of the *dominion and power* which should be given him. A slight acquaintance only with the New Testament will likewise satisfy us, that the Jewish mind was prepossessed with the notion of a *king and a kingdom*, connected with their Messiah. Thus Nathaniel, when brought to believe in Jesus, confessed,—“Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the *King* of Israel.”<sup>a</sup> Thus, when the Lord exhibited his power by feeding the five thousand, the whole multitude would have taken him by force and made him king, had he not withdrawn from them.<sup>b</sup> Thus again, when he rode into Jerusalem on the ass, the people cried: “Blessed be *the King* that cometh in the name of the Lord!”—“Blessed the *kingdom* of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord.”<sup>c</sup> And what is more to the point, when Christ was accused before

<sup>a</sup> John i. 49.    <sup>b</sup> John vi. 15    <sup>c</sup> Mark xi. 10 and Luke xix. 38.

Pilate for claiming to be a king, he plainly declared that he *was* a King, and that he expected a kingdom.<sup>d</sup>

It must be still more obvious to persons familiar with the New Testament, that it does continually and almost exclusively refer the blessings and the glory therein announced to this *kingdom*. Jesus we are told went about preaching the Gospel (or glad tidings) of *the kingdom* in all the cities and villages of Judea;<sup>e</sup> he sent his disciples to preach the same;<sup>f</sup> he spake of the things pertaining to it after his resurrection; <sup>g</sup> St. Paul resolves his preaching into the same subject; <sup>h</sup> and, in brief, the whole Word of God is called "*The Word of the kingdom.*"<sup>i</sup>

Against this part of the statement an objection must be noticed: viz. that "the kingdom of *God*" and "the kingdom of *heaven*" are constantly spoken of in Scripture; but that these cannot mean "the kingdom of the Son of Man," or of "Christ." A comparison however of scripture testimonies will shew, that these expressions all refer to one and the same kingdom.—

For instance; that the kingdom of *heaven* and the kingdom of *God* are one and the same, will be evident from a comparison of the following parallel passages. St. Matthew says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of *heaven*:"<sup>k</sup> St. Luke says, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of *God*."<sup>l</sup> Again St. Matthew says, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of *heaven*:"<sup>m</sup> the parallel passage in St. Mark is, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of *God*."<sup>n</sup> The phrase "kingdom of *heaven*" is indeed a form of speech peculiar to St. Matthew, and only to be met with in his Gospel: the same thing being invariably called by Mark and Luke "kingdom of *God*." And even St. Matthew himself uses the two phrases indiscriminately in the following passage: "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter 'into the kingdom of *heaven*. And again I say unto you, it 'is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than 'for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of *God*."<sup>o</sup>

That the kingdom of *God* and the kingdom of *Christ* are

<sup>d</sup> John xviii. 36, 37.    <sup>e</sup> Matt. ix. 35.    <sup>f</sup> Luke ix. 2    <sup>g</sup> Acts i. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Acts xx. 25; xxviii. 23, 31.    <sup>i</sup> Matt. xiii. 19.    <sup>k</sup> Matt. v. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Luke vi. 20.    <sup>m</sup> Matt. xiii. 11.    <sup>n</sup> Mark iv. 11.    <sup>o</sup> Matt. xix, 23, 24.



the same, will appear from a similar process. Speaking of the Transfiguration, St. Matthew says, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the *Son of Man* coming in his kingdom:"<sup>p</sup> which latter sentence St. Luke has—"till they see the *kingdom of God*;"<sup>q</sup> and St. Mark—"till they have seen the *kingdom of God come with power*."<sup>r</sup> Again, in the parable of the tares, St. Matthew says, "that at the end of the world the *Son of Man* shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend;" and immediately he adds, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their *Father*:"<sup>s</sup> thus making the kingdom of the *Father* and of the *Son of Man* the same; even as St. Paul calls it, "the kingdom of Christ and of God."<sup>t\*</sup>

From these various passages I conclude, that only *one* kingdom is spoken of; and that if it be sometimes called the kingdom of the *Father*, it is in regard to His having expressly appointed it to the Son of Man; even as Jesus says, "I appoint unto *you* a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto *me*."<sup>u</sup> And the object of Christ in that kingdom is to bring all on earth to do his Father's will, even as it is done in heaven; and then, when he hath thus put all things under his feet, to surrender up the kingdom to God, even the Father.<sup>v</sup>

I must notice also, in regard to this subject, that divines often speak of the kingdom of *grace*: though it is not a *scriptural* expression. This is done by way of distinguishing those passages which refer to the visible church, or present dispensation, during which souls are prepared, by the means of grace and the Holy Spirit, to become meet partakers of the inherit-

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xvi. 28. <sup>q</sup> Luke ix. 27. <sup>r</sup> Mark ix. 1. <sup>s</sup> Matt. xiii. 41, 43. <sup>t</sup> Ephes. v. 5. <sup>u</sup> Luke xxii. 29, 30. <sup>v</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

\* I feel convinced, from a perusal of Granville Sharp's Treatise on the use of the definite Article in the Greek New Testament, that the original of this passage, *εν τῇ βασιλειᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ και Θεου*, should be translated, "*In the Kingdom of the Christ and God*;" the relative positions of the article and conjunction indicating, that one and the same person is meant. But this, instead of making against my argument, will confirm it: for as it proves that God and Christ are the same; so, by parity of reasoning, the *Kingdom* of God and Christ are one. Lactantius in his Treatise *De Institutionibus*, in the seventh book of which he enters at large upon the subject now before us, repeatedly speaks of *God* and his kingdom, when he evidently intends *Christ*.

ance to which God has called them. Our Lord seems to refer to this dispensation of grace, when he likens the kingdom of heaven to tares growing with the wheat, and to good and bad fish caught in a net. In several other passages it is thus spoken of;<sup>w</sup> and I deem it important to affirm constantly, that the glorious kingdom of our God and Saviour can never be enjoyed by any other, than those in whose hearts he now reigns by the Spirit. But though this is an obvious and undeniable use of the terms "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of heaven;" yet can they only refer, in such case, to an imperfect or embryo state of it. The great purpose of God in regard to this kingdom is the MANIFESTATION of the power, glory, and sovereignty of Christ, in such manner as that all flesh shall visibly behold it, whilst the righteous shall shine forth in it like the sun.<sup>x</sup> It is to this manifestation of the kingdom, (which is called its "coming with power,"<sup>y</sup>) that the great majority of those passages seem to refer which speak of the kingdom; and to which *all* are subordinate: and, certainly, those Scriptures which advert to it as yet *future*, must at least refer to a dispensation different from the present.\*

We may imperfectly illustrate these two conditions of the Kingdom by the case of a prince in exile, who is nevertheless making formidable preparations to assert and vindicate his rights. The king, though not enthroned, is acknowledged by many partisans; over these he already rules, and these he receives under his protection: but he is not yet acknowledged by the nations over which he claims sovereignty; and he waits for the time when they shall say, like Judah to David, "Return thou and all thy servants."<sup>z</sup>

II. I next proceed to inquire concerning the *time* when this Kingdom may be properly said to have been set up; a right apprehension of which will materially assist our determination of other points.

1. Many consider the kingdom of God to be His now reigning by his power and providence,—over-ruling so much of the

\* Since I wrote this, the translation of a Treatise on the same subject by Koppe has appeared in the Investigator; Vol. II. p. 207. It is ably and impartially written, as regards the question of the personal reign; and fully bears out the statement I have advanced.

<sup>w</sup> See for example, Matt. XXI. 43; Mark XII. 34; Luke X. 9, 11; XI. 20. <sup>x</sup> Matt. XIII. 43. <sup>y</sup> See Mark IX. 1, 2; and 2 Pet. I. 16. <sup>z</sup> 2 Sam. XIX. 9—14.

wrath of ungodly men, as he suffers to escape, and restraining the remainder of it. Thus, say they, the Jews unconsciously obeyed, even when crucifying Jesus; whereof the Holy Ghost cries in anticipation, "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? yet have I set my King upon my 'holy hill of Zion.'"<sup>a</sup> Now it must be admitted, as beyond dispute by those who believe the Scriptures, "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men;" "and that God is the governor among the nations:"<sup>b</sup> but if this be the kingdom intended, it was set up at the creation of the world; for there never was a period since the creation, in which God has not thus ruled and over-ruled mankind. But the Kingdom of which I am speaking was the subject of *promise*, certainly as late as the time of Daniel;<sup>c</sup> a circumstance 'quite incompatible with its existence then and previously.

2. Neither could it have been set up at any period between the time of Daniel and our Lord's incarnation: for it is the *Son of Man* to whom, according to Daniel,<sup>d</sup> the dominion is given; and it is impossible he can have reigned as *man*, before he was made man.

That the Kingdom and glory to be manifested are especially assigned over to him as MAN, is evident from other scripture testimonies. In Corinthians, the Apostle says of him, "that God hath put all things under his feet:"<sup>e</sup> which saying is indeed a quotation (as also Hebrews II. 5—8) of Psalm viii; wherein he is thus spoken of,—"What is *man* 'that thou art mindful of him? or the *Son of Man* that thou 'visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower [or for a little 'while lower] than the angels: Thou crownedst him with 'glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thine 'hand: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." Thus Jesus declared, "that authority was given to him to 'execute judgment also, *because he was the Son of Man.*"<sup>f</sup> And St. Paul affirms, "that God hath given to him (on account of his obedience and humiliation in the flesh) a Name, 'which is above every name; that at the name of JESUS 'every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in 'earth, and things under the earth."<sup>g</sup> He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, must have previously pos-

<sup>a</sup> Psalm II. 1—6.    <sup>b</sup> Psalm XXII. 28; Dan. IV. 17.    <sup>c</sup> Dan. VII.   
 <sup>d</sup> Chap. VII. 13, 14.    <sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. XV. 27.    <sup>f</sup> John V. 27.    <sup>g</sup> Phil. II. 9—11.

sessed that sovereignty of the universe, which has been mentioned: but this Kingdom is the reward of the righteous obedience and humiliation of the Christ; in consequence of which the Father hath determined for a while to make manifest his own glory in HIM, and to put ALL THINGS under him; He only being excepted, who thus puts all under him.<sup>h\*</sup>

3. A more common notion in regard to the kingdom is, that it was set up at the *birth* of Jesus: for indeed it is written, "Where is he that is *born* king of the Jews." Something may be conceded to this opinion, in regard to that Gospel and means of grace so soon afterwards provided; which, as I have before observed, is called by divines *the kingdom of grace*: but, surely, if the acknowledgement of authority, and if obedience to authority, be essential to the honor and reality of dominion, the kingdom was not set up then. Who can name the nation, which acknowledged the Lord as king at the time of his first appearing? Even the Jews did not acknowledge him: "He came to his own, but his own received him not!" They declared that they *would not have* this man to rule over them; and insisting, that they had no king but Cæsar, they *crucified* the Lord of glory!"

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28.

\* It is to be regretted, that, owing to an excessive jealousy, the *humanity* of Christ is not so much meditated on by Christians as it ought to be; though the consideration thereof, as also of his godhead, is full of comfort to the soul. The Unitarians, looking too exclusively on those texts which speak of Christ's humanity, have invented a system which shuts out his deity; and thus they have "denied the LORD that bought them." But Christians frequently go to an opposite extreme, and by viewing Jesus exclusively as God, they are sometimes led *practically* to deny, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. It is a most wonderful and edifying truth to ponder in the heart, that A MAN is now exalted far above thrones, and principalities, and powers! Yet there are some who neglect and fear to speak of Jesus *as man*;—as though they considered it would *degrade* Him so to do. Numbers would set him down as a Socinian, who, upon his first preaching to a people who had never heard of Christ, should speak of Him as "*that man*, whom God hath ordained to judge the world in righteousness:" yet this is no more than what St. Paul did at Athens, (Acts xvii, 31.) I hope the Reader will pardon this digression, from one heartily believing in his Lord as GOD; and as heartily denying the sinfulness of his humanity. But a right apprehension of Jesus, as '*very man*,' will lead us to a more correct understanding of those Scriptures which speak of His Kingdom; and especially one Scripture, (1 Cor. xv, 24.) which cannot be well explained without it.

Louis XVI had the legitimate *title* to the kingdom of France when he was guillotined; and there were also individuals, who adhered to him among the people: but it is extravagant to say, that he was in *possession* of the kingdom, when the nation disowned and executed him. When Christ's kingdom shall be set up, it shall be of such a character, as that none can mistake, that the Lord is ruler in it—"His glory shall be *openly* shewed in the sight of the heathen." But Isaiah testifies of the adversaries of the Lord, "Thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name:" and of the Lord he says, in respect to his first advent, that he is to be "a *servant* of rulers."<sup>i</sup> Indeed our Lord himself spake a parable, because some then thought that the kingdom of God was *immediately* to appear, in which he compares himself to a man, who had first to go into a far country.<sup>j</sup> To which I will only add, that the very prayer which he taught his disciples proves, that the kingdom was *then* future; for he directs them to pray, "Thy kingdom *come*."

4. The parable just adverted to might be sufficient to prove further, that the kingdom did not commence immediately after the ascension of Christ: which many do nevertheless suppose; and likewise that the *saints* do now enjoy the kingdom and reign with him.—"Would to God (saith the Apostle) that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."<sup>k</sup>

It is necessary however to consider here the present condition of our Lord Jesus. I cannot dispute, that *He* is now glorified; that *He* is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high; that the principalities and powers in *heavenly* places are subject to him; and that he *reigns* as the Mediator, Advocate, and Saviour of his *people*. But I must repeat, that this is not *that* glory nor *that* reign, which are the special subjects of promise both to him and his saints. If those passages in Revelation (chap. v. 10, and vi. 9—11,) refer to the state of the redeemed Church in heaven, it is manifest, that theirs is a state of expectation, in which they look for the time when they "*shall* reign;" and, therefore, that they are *not now* reigning with their Lord. In the same Book the Lord clearly distinguishes between that throne on which he is now seated, and the throne on which he shall hereafter be manifested: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me

<sup>i</sup> Isaiah XLIX. 7; LXIII. 19.    <sup>j</sup> Luke XIX. 11.    <sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. IV. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Rev. III. 21.



We have further evidence, that the period of the manifestation of this kingdom is yet future, by a comparison of a passage in the first Epistle to the Corinthians with one in Hebrews. In the former it is declared of Christ, "that all things shall be put under Him:"<sup>r</sup> in the latter the Apostle notices, "that we see *not yet* all things put under him:"<sup>s</sup> whence we must conclude, that his kingdom is not yet come. In another part of the same chapter in Corinthians he says, "that *flesh and blood cannot inherit* the kingdom of God; but that we must first have our immortal and incorruptible body."<sup>t</sup> There are other Scriptures equally tending to show, that the kingdom did not commence at the *Ascension*; for in the very hour of his ascension Christ was asked by his disciples, if he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel; and his reply plainly leads to the inference, that it was not to commence at that period; but that they were to be witnesses of him to the uttermost parts of the earth:<sup>u</sup> just as in another place he declares, that the *Gospel* of the kingdom must first

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 27.    <sup>s</sup> Heb. ii. 8.    <sup>t</sup> *vv.* 50, 53.    <sup>u</sup> Acts i. 6—9.

consideration of those who agree in the *general* correctness of the expositions of commentators, in regard to the meaning of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. ii, 31—45. The stone cut out without hands, which smites the image and *then* becomes a great mountain and fills the earth, is usually interpreted to signify Messiah's kingdom; which, according to the notions of some, smote the image at the establishment of christianity. But such a view does in no way accord with the description given. For, 1st, the smiting is *destructive*, even to annihilation; "no place is found for it:" (v. 35;) whereas the Roman or fourth monarchy, symbolised by the legs and feet of the image, has, in some shape or other, continued ever since. 2dly. The stone smites the image on the *feet*; (v. 34,) the toes of which signify the *ten kingdoms*, into which Rome was divided. These must therefore be in existence at the period of attack: whereas they existed not until after the days of Constantine. 3dly. The whole *four* monarchies, symbolised by the gold, silver, brass, iron, &c. must, in some way or other, be upon the stage together, each in an independent form; both when the smiting takes place, and when the God of heaven sets up his kingdom. (Compare verses 25 and 44.) This was not the case at the first coming of Christ, neither in the time of Constantine, nor at any period since. There appears indeed a probability of the thing occurring now: Persia has all along been preserved; the power which holds Euphrates has long since become independent; and the Greek monarchy is reviving. 4thly. No sooner does the stone smite the image, than these kingdoms are succeeded by the fifth monarchy *solely*—a state of things never yet witnessed, and which can only come to pass after the destruction of Antichrist.

be preached in all nations for a testimony unto them.<sup>v</sup> The apostle Paul exhorted the Thessalonians “to walk worthy of God, who had called them to his kingdom and glory;” and—to walk, so as that they might be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffered;”<sup>w</sup> and James speaks of believers, “as being *heirs* of the kingdom which he hath *promised* to them that love him:”<sup>x</sup> all which passages imply, that the kingdom was yet future, when they were ministering. And, finally, the words of Jesus to Pilate (as I apprehend them) completely set this point at rest: “My kingdom is not of this world.”<sup>y</sup>\* Satan is “the prince of this world;” and has a kingdom in it at variance with our Lord’s.<sup>z</sup> Which kingdom is *now* set up must be judged of, not by inquiring into the respective *power* of the princes of each kingdom; but into the prevalence of the *principles* of each. No doubt will then remain, that Satan still rules. We know that there is one stronger than the strong man armed, who could at any time put out his power to bruise his adversary under his feet; and even *now* he proves himself greater in the hearts of his people, than he that is in the world. Yea, when he was on

<sup>v</sup> Matt. xxiv. 14.    <sup>w</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. i. 5.    <sup>x</sup> James ii. 5.  
<sup>y</sup> John xviii. 36.    <sup>z</sup> Luke xi. 18; John xiv. 30.

\* In a question of this kind, which concerns the universal Church, the doctrine held in any one individual church cannot be with propriety advanced in the way of argument. As most however who are members of the Church of England admire her, because, among other things, she speaks on many controverted points in the generalized language of Scripture, it may be interesting to such to notice, how, in all her offices, she speaks of the kingdom as *future*:—

At BAPTISM the prayer for the neophyte is: “that *finally*, with the ‘residue of thy Church, he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom.’”

At CONFIRMATION the bishop prays: “Defend, O Lord, this thy ‘child, &c. may he daily increase in thy Spirit more and more, until he ‘come unto thy everlasting kingdom.’”

At the COMMUNION we pray for grace to follow the good example of those departed this life, “that with them we may be partakers of thy ‘heavenly kingdom.’”

At MATRIMONY the prayer for the newly married couple is: “Grant ‘them to inherit thine everlasting kingdom.’”

And in the BURIAL service the prayer is: “That it may please Thee ‘of thy gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of thine ‘elect and to *hasten thy kingdom*:’”—a testimony quite decided, as respects the point I am aiming at.



earth, he gave some striking and open indications of his future kingly power; as when he cleansed the temple, ruled the elements, forbad the devils to speak, &c. Nevertheless, the time is not yet arrived when this kingdom is to shine forth in splendor; we still have to wrestle, not only with flesh and blood, “but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places: wherefore (Reader) “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.”<sup>a</sup>

III. Let us now inquire, at what particular time this kingdom *shall* appear; which I infer to be at the *second advent* of the Lord Jesus.

For, first, the Apostle informs us, when describing the order of the resurrection, that those that are Christ’s shall *at his coming* be raised: and then follows the *end*, when he shall *deliver up* the kingdom.<sup>b</sup> Now there *must* be *some* period of time in which the saints shall possess the kingdom and the Lord shall reign.—We have seen, that this period cannot be in the present dispensation; and after the advent, which closes this dispensation, is to follow ‘*the end*,’ when HE SHALL HAVE REIGNED. The interval therefore *must be* between the advent and that resigning of the kingdom unto God, who shall then be all in all. This period I shall call the *millennial* dispensation; and endeavour at least to prove, that at the Lord’s *coming* is the manifestation of his kingdom.

Jesus tells us, “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 further on he adds, “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come ‘ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for ‘you from the beginning of the world.”<sup>c</sup> From these Scriptures it is evident, that Jesus will then, (let the time be when it may,) be *personally* on the throne of his glory; and that the saints will only then receive the kingdom.

Hebrews 1. 6 is, in the original, “And when He *bringeth* ‘*again* the first begotten into the world, He saith, and let all ‘the angels of God worship him:”<sup>\*</sup> which refers to his coming a second time into the world.

<sup>a</sup> Ephes, vi. 12, 13.    <sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24.    <sup>c</sup> Matt. xxv. 31, 34.

\* Not *παλιν δε σταν*, but *σταν δε παλιν*, &c.

In St. Luke's gospel the Lord describes the signs which shall terminate the times of the Gentiles, and usher in the coming of the Son of Man with power and great glory; upon which, when they see them come to pass, they are to understand, that their redemption and the kingdom of God are nigh at hand."d

The advent and the kingdom are connected together when our Lord first declares to the disciples, that it is the good pleasure of their heavenly Father to give them the kingdom; and then exhorts them to sit so loosely to the things of this world, that they may be as men that *wait* for their Lord, *when he will return from the wedding.*e

That saying of the thief upon the cross is, literally, in the original, "Lord remember me, when thou comest *in* (not *into*) thy kingdom."f\*

Again, the Apostle Paul gives a solemn charge to Timothy, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ; who (he says) shall judge the quick and dead *at his appearing and his kingdom*;g thus making the appearing of Christ, the kingdom, and the judgement of quick and dead, to be events all commencing or conspiring at the same period.

This view of the *time* of the kingdom will be further cleared I trust, when I come to consider the *place* or scene of its manifestation, &c. I shall now therefore bring this Essay to a close; first requesting the Reader, whilst I recapitulate the sum of the argument, to keep his eye upon Corinthians xv. 24, 28—"Then cometh the *end*, when he shall have *delivered up* the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall 'have put down all rule and all authority and power:'—" "When the Son also himself shall be subject unto him that 'put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

1. The Kingdom of Christ has evidently a beginning subsequent to the creation of the world, because it is the subject of *promise* at various periods since. Therefore the unacknowledged sovereignty of God, who ruleth and over-ruleth, cannot be what is intended by the Kingdom of Christ, because that *did* exist from the beginning: and further, to this sovereignty there will never be an *end*.

d Matt. xxi. 24—31, e Luke xii. 32—36. f Chap. xxiii. 42.  
g 2 Tim. iv. 1.

\* Μνησθητι μου, Κυριε, οταν ελθεις εν τη βασιλεια σου.

2. The reign and kingdom of Christ cannot be that spiritual dominion, which he exercises in the hearts of his people; whether it relate to this present time, or to a larger measure of it in the Millennium. For first, this spiritual power has been exerted in the hearts of his people from their first acquaintance with him by the Spirit: whereas the kingdom whereof I inquire did not commence, as we have seen, either at the birth or ascension of Christ, but is still future. And, secondly, the rule of Christ is to *end*; whereas this ruling by the Spirit in his people is *never* to end. It will be “He in ‘them and they in Him” throughout eternity.

3. And if any would nevertheless insist, that the kingdom is no more than a great revival of religion in the generation which shall live at the Millennium; I would again point to those Scriptures which shew, that the kingdom is introduced by the *personal advent* of the Lord Jesus, and entreat of them either to prove, that these several passages do not relate to the personal coming of Christ, or to endeavour to reconcile with them their notions of the Millennium.

I shall now notice two or three places of Scripture, which may be objected to this view of the kingdom.

1. The kingdom of heaven is sometimes spoken of as being “at hand”—“nigh”—“even at the doors;” &c.<sup>h</sup> from which some infer, that it must have existed either in our Saviour’s time, or soon after. But this is no more than is stated of other events, which we nevertheless believe are even yet to come. For example; “The LORD is at hand”—“the *coming* of the Lord draweth near”—“the *end of all things* is at hand.”<sup>i</sup> The former places concerning the kingdom, may indeed have some reference to the work of preparation—the introduction of the *gospel* kingdom; but they may also be explained in that way, in which we are compelled to explain the latter viz. by concluding that the Holy Ghost would have us speak of these events in such manner, as that we may stand prepared for them and waiting their approach; and not, because we may presume, or even be assured, that the end is not by and by, to divert men’s attention from it, by telling them that their only concern is with *death*.

2. Another objection is grounded upon that Scripture,—

<sup>h</sup> Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17; x. 7; Mark i. 15, &c.

<sup>i</sup> Phil. iv. 5; Jas. v. 8; Pet. iv. 7.

“ There be some standing here who shall not taste of death, ‘ until they see the kingdom of God come with power ;”<sup>j</sup> from whence it is concluded that the kingdom must have been set up, and even manifested, before all the persons died, who were then standing in the presence of Jesus. I doubt not but the passage has a direct reference to the glorious manifestation of the kingdom ; because St. Matthew calls it “ seeing the Son of Man *coming in his kingdom*”—another proof that the advent and kingdom take place together.<sup>k</sup> But attention to the context, and a comparison with it of another Scripture, will shew, that it is not the commencement of the period of glorious manifestation that is meant ; but a visible *earnest* and *specimen* of it. This saying, in all the three Gospels where it occurs, is *immediately* followed by the relation, that Jesus, about eight days *after* (that is, eight days after this *saying*,—as if to mark its connection with the event narrated,) took Peter, James and John up into a mountain apart, and appeared unto them in glory, together with Moses and Elijah. And this very transaction, St. Peter, who was one of the three, calls the POWER and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ ; the majesty of which (he says) he was an eye witness of, when he was with him in the holy mount.<sup>l</sup>

3. The next objection is grounded on the words of Jesus to Pilate,—“ My kingdom is not of this world.” I copy here the opinion of Koppe, whose able *Excursus* on this subject has been published in the *Investigator* since I wrote the present Essay. He says—“ In fine, John xviii. 36, I cannot ‘ see to signify any thing but this, (which we learn from the ‘ whole tenor of the life and doctrines of Jesus,) that the ‘ kingdom of Christ would not be like the kingdom of men : ‘ that is, especially, it would not be established by human ‘ power, nor by the might of human armies. This was the ‘ only thing that was required to be stated to the Roman Pro- ‘ curator to deliver him from the fear that Jesus might in any ‘ degree assail the authority of the Roman empire. From this ‘ place at least no proof can be deduced on either side to deter- ‘ mine the nature of that kingdom whose king Jesus acknow- ‘ ledged himself to be ; and whether Jesus meant and wished ‘ to be understood by the formula ‘ my kingdom,’ only a new

<sup>j</sup> Mark ix. 1.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xvi. 28.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Pet. 16—18.

‘ religion delivered to men, or a kingdom hereafter to be set up in the new heavens and earth, after the face of the whole earth shall have been entirely changed. And certainly interpreters have no reason to appeal to the words *v.* 37 ‘ For this cause was I born, that I might bear witness to the truth,’ as a vindication of ‘ kingdom of God,’ signifying the true religion; for the whole of that verse contains just this assertion; that he spoke the truth, in declaring himself a king. ‘ My character and my whole office is to be true in all that I speak: wherefore, thou mayest rely upon it, I am a king.’ ”

4. The last Scripture, which I shall now notice as an objection, is the answer given by our Lord, when demanded of the Pharisees, When the kingdom of God should come. “ The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you.”<sup>m</sup>

There is an acknowledged difficulty with this passage, whatever interpretation may be given to it; and did it seem to speak more clearly for the other side of the question than it does, yet, considering the mass of testimony brought forward in support of the view I have taken, sound principles of exposition require of us, that we should seek a meaning in this text *reconcilable* with, and not *destructive* of, the numerous places I have adduced. The ordinary explanation given by commentators is, that the kingdom of God *within* them, must signify the dominion of grace in the heart; against which interpretation the following exceptions may be taken. First it would imply, that Joseph of Arimathea, who was still *waiting* for the kingdom,<sup>n</sup> was *without* this inward grace, whilst the Pharisees possessed it. Therefore some would interpret it, the kingdom of God is *among* you: but it does not appear that the word rendered *within* is ever used by the Greek writers of the Old or New Testaments in the sense contended for; and it is extremely doubtful if profane writers so use it.\* Certainly Joseph could not have been waiting for the kingdom in that spirit of faith, which the mention of him seems to imply, unless the kingdom of God had been also within him in a spiritual sense: nor could he with propriety

<sup>m</sup> Luke xvii. 20, 21.

<sup>n</sup> Mark xv. 43.

\* See Parkhurst on the word *εντος*; and see likewise this objectionably treated in the Investigator, Vol. I. p. 99.

have been said to be waiting for it, had it been *among* them. And this plainly indicates, that the promises concerning the kingdom are not to be limited to the means of grace, or to the work of grace, though they may include it; but that they have a reference to its glorious manifestation and prevalence. In the spiritual sense, the kingdom cometh not with observation; for the Spirit is like the wind: "we cannot see from whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." But in regard to the *manifestation* of the kingdom, our Lord has described the signs, by which we may *observe* its approach, and *know* that the kingdom of God draweth nigh. And he clearly shows that it was not manifested in his days, since he spake *a parable* for the express purpose of correcting the notions of those who thought "that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." (Luke XIX.) Let the Reader examine himself, whether he have this spiritual "*earnest* of the inheritance;"—whether it may be said of *him*, "that the kingdom of God is not in word only but in power;"—and "that God hath thus *translated him* into the kingdom of his dear Son."<sup>o</sup>

ABDIEL.

o 1 Cor. iv 20; Col. i. 13.

## Essay IV.

## THE PLACE OF MANIFESTATION.

Having proved, as I trust, in my last essay, that the manifestation of the kingdom of God is yet future, I proceed now to inquire into *the place or scene* of that manifestation. This, I do not hesitate to say, will be *on earth*; and that *Palestine*, or *the Holy Land*, (particularly the region of *Mount Zion*,) will be the spot where Christ and his risen saints will more especially be revealed.

1. In regard to the *Land* in general, let us consider the terms of the covenant made with Abraham and the patriarchs—that very covenant of grace, under which the christian church is now walking. God repeatedly promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, *personally and respectively*, as also to their *seed*, that he would give them the land in which they were strangers.<sup>a</sup> It is to the repetition of these promises and their amplification St. Paul seems to refer, when he speaks of ‘the covenants of promise’ in the plural:<sup>b</sup> and certainly he refers to these in the Epistle to the Galatians,<sup>c</sup> when he insists that the promise to Abraham and his seed continues in full force under the Gospel; not allowing that the covenant afterwards made with Moses had any power to do away or alter these.

The question then arises,—Has this promise been fulfilled to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob? Some will reply, “Yes; their posterity possessed it, and thus the patriarchs themselves may be said to have enjoyed the land:” but this reply will neither suit the terms of the covenant, nor the faithfulness of God, who declares, that not one jot or tittle shall fail of all that he hath spoken. I must repeat and beg particular attention to the circumstance, that the promise to each of the three patriarchs is—“to THEE will I give it AND to thy SEED;” which, if words can plainly express a thing, does clearly imply, that there must be a special fulfilment of the promise to *them*, as well as to their posterity. They all indeed dwelt in the land, but not as proprietors; for, excepting a burial place,

<sup>a</sup> Genesis XIII. 15; XVII. 8; XXVI. 3; XXVII. 13; Exod. VI. 3, 4.

<sup>b</sup> Ephes. II. 12. <sup>c</sup> Gal. III. 16—19.

they had no possession of it at all, "but confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims." This very fact St. Paul instances in order to prove, that they *sought* a country, yet died *without receiving* the promises.<sup>d</sup> And St. Stephen notices also, "that though God promised to give the land to Abraham for a possession, and to his seed after him, yet, that he gave him none inheritance in it—no not so much as to set his foot on."<sup>e</sup> It is unwarrantable therefore to say of them, that the promise *was* fulfilled; when these two places of Scripture so clearly contend that it was *not*.

2. Secondly, in regard to the *seed*; though I grant that Abraham's posterity was led up into the land, and possessed it; yet I contend, that even these never held it according to the full terms of the promise, and that *their* possession of it was but the type and pledge, which the Lord usually grants, when the great promise is deferred to a distant period. Thus the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, argues,—that if the rest in the land, into which they were led under Joshua, were the real rest covenanted, then would not God afterwards have spoken of a *future* rest, as he does in David.<sup>f</sup> And in the Epistle to the Ephesians he reminds children of the promise attached to the fifth commandment; (*viz.* that their days may be long in the land;) which would be unmeaning, as regards *gentile* children, were it applicable only to the Jews; and the more so, as the Jews themselves were then just about to be again *rejected* from the land. As to that interpretation which refers it to the comparative longevity in those times of obedient children, it is contradicted by the fact, that persecutions *shortened* the lives of christians below the ordinary term, instead of their "living *long* upon the earth."

In regard to the terms of the grant also—the land was given to Abraham from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates:<sup>g</sup> but his seed did not possess it to this extent, unless it were for a short period during the reign of Solomon. And if we understand that grant to Abraham as St. Paul explains it—*viz.* "that he should be heir of *the world*"<sup>h</sup>—it has plainly *never* been fulfilled. It was likewise given to them for an *everlasting* possession; and Amos therefore speaks of a time when Israel "shall no more be pulled up out of their land;"<sup>i</sup> which of necessity points to some future occupation, since they

<sup>d</sup> Heb. xi. 13—16, 39.   <sup>e</sup> Acts vii. 4, 5.   <sup>f</sup> Heb. iv. 7—9.   <sup>g</sup> Gen. xv. 18—21.   <sup>h</sup> Rom. iv. 13.   <sup>i</sup> Amos ix. 15.



have possessed it only to be twice ‘pulled up,’ and now for nearly two thousand years peeled and scattered among the nations.

The early christian Fathers fully concur in this view. Treating of the blessing pronounced by Isaac on Jacob,—“God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, &c. Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee, &c.”—Irenæus says, “that it was not made good to him ‘in this life, and therefore without doubt those words had a ‘further aim and prospect on the times of *the kingdom*, when ‘the just rising from the dead shall reign, and when nature ‘renewed and set at liberty shall yield plenty and abundance ‘of all things, being blessed with the dew of heaven and great ‘fertility of the earth.” Likewise in his fifth book against heresies, he takes Ezekiel xxxvii. 11—14, to signify a literal resurrection. The descendants of Abraham are described in this place as captive at Babylon; and the promise to *them* appears so hopeless, that they cry, “*Our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts.*” Then the answer of God comes to them, “Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and ‘cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you ‘into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the ‘Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and ‘brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit ‘in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own ‘land; then shall ye know that I the Lord have *spoken* and ‘*performed*, saith the Lord.”

The words of St. Paul (Acts xxvi. 6—8) plainly evince, that the expectation of the Apostle in regard to the promised land was, that it should be fulfilled to the patriarchs by a resurrection.—“And now (he says) I stand and am judged for ‘the *hope of the promise* made of God unto our *fathers*; unto ‘which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day ‘and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King ‘Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be ‘thought a thing incredible with you, that God should *raise the dead*?” Here the *promise* to the Fathers is coupled with the resurrection of the dead, which are both evidently in the mind of the Apostle. But what was the promise to the Fathers? There is no express mention to *them* of a resurrection; and though several things are included in the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yet there is not one of them

which requires a resurrection to fulfil it, except the promise of the land. It was this which must have led Paul to couple the promise of the Fathers with the resurrection from the dead. Agreeably with which expectation Daniel, when favored with divers revelations concerning Christ's kingdom and the reign of the saints, is assured, that his intermediate decease shall not prevent him from participating; but that many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,—and that he shall rest, yet stand in his lot at the end of those days, which were then specially numbered to him. J

3. In regard to the *seed* it must further be observed, that, in the interpretation of the promises given in Genesis, St. Paul insists, that they specially refer to Christ.—“Now to ‘Abraham and *his seed* were the promises made. He saith ‘not ‘And to *seeds*’ as of many; but as of one—‘And to ‘thy *seed*,’ which is CHRIST.” Therefore the remaining posterity are only the seed, in as much as they are in Christ, being of the faith of Abraham :<sup>k</sup> they are members of Christ's body and blessed in him. Indeed I may say, that Abraham himself, to whom the promise is addressed, is only partaker of it in Christ; who, as he is the *root* as well as the *branch* of David, was before Abraham.<sup>l</sup> To Christ the world especially belongs, being created “by him and FOR him :”<sup>m</sup> that is to say, when it shall be redeemed from the curse and renovated; “for it is the world to come whereof we speak.”

4. Before I pass on to the next head I must notice an objection, which may still operate on the minds of some readers; viz. that the New Testament Scriptures declare of the kingdom that it is to be *in heaven*, whilst the exposition I have given makes it to be *on earth*. In reply, there is no such phrase in Scripture as “kingdom *in heaven* :” it is always “kingdom *of heaven* ;” which I have shown in my last Essay to be peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel.\* And I would here further observe, in regard to those instances which I have admitted may refer to the Gospel dispensation, that this very circumstance disproves the necessity of interpreting the phrase “kingdom of heaven” as of a kingdom *in heaven* : for if these

J Dan. XII. 2 and 13.    <sup>k</sup> Rom. IV. 11—18.    <sup>l</sup> Rev. XXII. 16; John VIII. 58.    <sup>m</sup> Compare Rom. XI. 36; Col. I. 16; Heb. II. 5—10.

\* Nearly thirty times repeated, and always in the plural,—ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

refer to the *Gospel dispensation*, they clearly speak of transactions which are to take place *on earth*.

The kingdom, however, which is assigned in Daniel to the Son of man and to the saints, is "the kingdom, dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, UNDER the whole heaven."<sup>n</sup> St. Paul speaks of the Lord's *heavenly* kingdom,<sup>o</sup> and of a heavenly *country*, i. e. the heavenly *Jerusalem*; <sup>p</sup> which leads us to the proper meaning of the phrase kingdom of *heaven*; viz. that it is a kingdom of a *heavenly nature*. It is heavenly because it is "set up by the *God of heaven*;"—it is heavenly because the God-man *from* heaven will rule in it;—it is heavenly because all things, both in heaven and earth, will be at his command, being put under him;<sup>q</sup>—and, finally, it is heavenly because its principles, its laws, its spirit is heavenly, being "the will of God done *on earth* as it is in heaven."

It is declared that the saints in that kingdom shall have heavenly bodies: a heavenly body however does not necessarily signify a body *in* heaven, but a body of a heavenly nature. 2 Corinthians v. 1, 2, will further prove this, and make evident likewise, that the glorious body of believers (though now, as it were, *reserved* in heaven) is first to be enjoyed on earth. Speaking of the present body, which the Apostle calls "our *earthly* house of tabernacle," (vv. 6, 8,) he says; that if it were dissolved, "we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in *the heavens*:" and then immediately adds, that in this tabernacle we groan, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is *FROM* heaven." This shews, that the very house prepared *in* heaven, is ultimately to be revealed *from* heaven. Not that I suppose, there are as many bodies prepared in heaven, as there are saints who have existed and who shall be born on earth; but that in heaven is the great *exemplar* of them all—the Lord Jesus. For thus also in 1 Cor. xv. the Apostle tells us, "The *first man* (by which, from the context, he 'means our first *body*, made in the likeness of the first Adam) 'is of the earth, *earthly*: the second man is the Lord *FROM* 'heaven;—and as we have borne the image of the earthy ' [man], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [man]." And this will be effected by his descending from heaven, and

<sup>n</sup> Dan. vii. 27.    <sup>o</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 18.    <sup>p</sup> Heb. xi. 16; xii. 22.

<sup>q</sup> Heb. ii. 8; Phil. ii. 9, 10.

“changing our *vile* body, that it may be fashioned like unto ‘*his glorious body*, according to the working whereby he is ‘able to subdue all things to himself.” Phil. III. 20, 21.

There are many other things which are said to be ‘*prepared*,’ ‘*laid up*,’ and ‘*reserved in heaven* ;’ which are nevertheless to be enjoyed on earth, and which will be made manifest in the day when the Lord shall appear. Thus St. Paul, speaking of temporal goods, says of the saints, “that they joyfully ‘suffered the loss of them, knowing that they had *in heaven* ‘a better and an enduring substance.”<sup>r</sup> And this Peter explains to be “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, ‘and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven* for you, who ‘are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ‘*ready to be revealed in the last time*.”<sup>s</sup>

I have necessarily anticipated in these remarks some things, which belong more immediately to the doctrine of the *Resurrection* ; but I trust the Reader will perceive, that what is proved in regard to the heavenly *body* or *house* of the believer, is equally applicable to the heavenly *kingdom*.

II. I proceed now to the second point ; viz. that *Zion* is to be a special place of manifestation.

Every reader of the Scriptures must be familiar with the numerous promises and glorious things spoken of Mount Zion and Jerusalem ; but owing to the unhappy mode of spiritualizing (or, rather, of explaining away) these passages, their force and significance are lost. But I must first, in order to prevent confusion from the use of different terms, shew that Zion, Jerusalem, the Mount of God, and House of the Lord, all mean one and the same thing ;—that is to say, they all refer to the region of Mount Zion, or to some particular place within that region. This I shall prove by three different texts.

The first is in Isaiah II, 1, 2, “And it shall come to pass ‘in the last days, that the *mountain* of the *Lord’s house* shall ‘be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be ex- ‘alted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it, ‘And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go ‘up to the *mountain of the Lord*, to the *house* of the God of ‘Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk ‘in his paths : for out of *Zion* shall go forth the law, and ‘the word of the Lord from *Jerusalem*.”

<sup>r</sup> Heb. x. 34.    <sup>s</sup> 1 Peter I. 4, 5.

In Micah iv. 1, 2, there is a similar passage; "the mountain of the Lord" and 'the house of the God of Jacob' being made the same; and Zion and Jerusalem also the same.

The third place is Isaiah xxvii. 13, where, speaking of the return of Israel, it is said:—"They shall worship the Lord in the *holy mount at Jerusalem.*"

Now the first mention which we have of this place is in Genesis, in the account of Abraham returning from the overthrow of the kings.<sup>t</sup> It is here called *Salem*, (which signifies *peace*, i.e. the place of peace,) and Melchizedec was king of it. This Melchizedec is held up as an eminent type of Christ on various accounts; but among the reasons is, that he was a priest and king, and specially as being king of Salem:<sup>u</sup> for "in Salem also is [Messiah's] tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion."<sup>v\*</sup>

The next mention which we have of this region is also in Genesis, when the Lord commands Abraham, who had seen the type of Christ *reigning* at Salem, to take his son Isaac, another type of Christ, and offer him up for a burnt-offering on a mount, which he should point out in the land of Moriah:<sup>w</sup>

<sup>t</sup> Gen. xiv.    <sup>u</sup> Heb. vii. 1—3.    <sup>v</sup> Psalm lxxvi. 2.    <sup>w</sup> Gen. xxi.

\* The Rev. H. Blunt, in his Lectures on the History of Abraham, page 98, takes occasion to deny that *Salem*, of which Melchizedec was king and priest, could be the same as Jerusalem; on the ground, that the supposition is irreconcilable with the geographical situation of Jerusalem, in regard to the route of Abraham, when Melchizedec came out to meet him. He therefore concludes with Jerome, that well known opponent in after times of millenarian doctrines, that *Salim* (which was the ancient *Scythopolis*) must be intended. The assertion, however, instead of being borne out by the facts of the case, is decidedly contradicted by them. The route of Abraham *homeward* (for he was returning to *Mamre*, and not to *Sodom* as Mr. Blunt states) from Damascus, would necessarily lead him either right through Jerusalem, or close by it. So that, whether Melchizedec came up in company with the king of Sodom to Shaveh, *the kings' dale*, (as it was afterwards called,) and which was in the west of Heshbon; or whether he came out from Salem only upon the approach of Abraham to that place; the situation of Jerusalem corroborates the opinion, that it was the *Salem* here mentioned. If he were in company with the king of Sodom, it is still more unlikely that it should have been Salim. The Fathers *before* Jerome always considered Salem to be Jerusalem; (which opinion the learned Heidegger supports in his *Hist. Patriarch.*) and there ought to be much stronger grounds, than those brought forward either by Jerome or Mr. Blunt, to lead us to conclude, that *in all the four places of Scripture* in which Salem is mentioned the text is incorrect.

for Abraham must also be instructed, that the Son of Man must *suffer*. And this land or region of Moriah is no other than Sion and Jerusalem; for in 2 Chron. iii. 1, we are told, that Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at *Jerusalem*, in *Mount Moriah*; where the Lord appeared unto David his father.\* And Abraham after this transaction on Mount Moriah calls the name of the place *Jehovah-Jireh*; which is thus explained in our translation, “In the *Mount of the Lord* it shall be seen.”

Of the circumstances which caused this region to fall into the hands of the Jebusites we are not informed; only it appears to have been possessed sometimes by the Israelites, sometimes by the Jebusites, or by both together, until David besieged and took it and made it the royal city.† He now gave, or restored to it, the name of Jerusalem; which Cruden says is made up of the two former names Jireh-Salem, the first of which may refer to the two appearances, (the one to Abraham, the other to David,) both pledges of future manifestation. The Jebusites called it *Jebus*, which signifies “despised or trodden under foot;” which it now is again, and will remain so, till the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled; and then “the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.” (Zech. ii. 17.)

Observe then now a remarkable prophecy concerning this mountain in Isaiah.—“In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death in victory*, and the Lord God will *wipe away tears from off all faces*, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day,—Lo, this is our *God*; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

\* The floor of Araunah, or Ornan, the Jebusite was the spot; and the appearance of the angel to David when the pestilence was stayed, and his being openly answered on this spot by fire from heaven, are, I presume, the circumstances intended. 1 Chron. xxi. 18—28.

† Compare Joshua x. 1, 42; xv. 63; Judges i. 23; 2 Sam. v. 6—9; 1 Chron. xi.

‘ For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest.’ (xxv. 6—10.) Passing by the ordinary explanation of the feast of fat things, I shall notice only the usual interpretation of death being swallowed up in victory in this mount; viz. that it was fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus. And, in as much as he was the first fruits of the victory, I agree, that his resurrection was an earnest of a more complete fulfilment of the promise. But 1 Cor. xv. forbids me to say more.—“ Behold (saith the Apostle) I *shew* you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* (i.e. the saints who shall then be living,) shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So WHEN this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, *then*—THEN shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ‘ Death is swallowed up in victory.’” In this very mountain, therefore, if Christ rose, the saints shall be manifested in immortal and incorruptible bodies; as it is written—“ The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and *sorrow and mourning shall flee away* :”—just as before written, “ He shall wipe away tears from off all faces.”

As the historical part of this subject shews, that this place has been designed and pointed out to the Church at various periods as a place of manifestation; so the prophetic passages just quoted prove, that all these different circumstances were but as the earnest of a future glorious manifestation and possession of it by Christ and his saints,—who are the real house of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, who shall come down from God out of heaven.

There are many other circumstances, which evince a peculiar appropriation of this place to the Lord Jesus. As he, by anticipation, was said to have been slain before the foundation of the world;<sup>x</sup> so, by a similar anticipation, he is said to have rejoiced in this earth (*οικουμένη*) before it was made.\* It is

<sup>x</sup> Rev. XIII. 8.

\* A comparison of Proverbs VIII, 23, 31, in the Septuagint version will shew, that it is *ἡ οικουμένη γη* here spoken of—the habitable land or earth; *οικουμένη* being also the word, which, in Hebrews II. 5, is translated “ *world*” to come.

called, by the same anticipation, the *holy land*,<sup>y</sup> the *Lord's land*,<sup>z</sup> and *Immanuel's land*.<sup>a</sup> Zion is declared also to be 'the city of God,'<sup>b</sup> 'God's hill,'<sup>c</sup> 'the mount which he loveth,'<sup>d</sup> 'the perfection of beauty,'<sup>e</sup> 'his rest for ever, where he will dwell, because he hath desired it.'<sup>f</sup> Here indeed he is said to have dwelt already, before he became flesh;<sup>g</sup> giving to his people the *cloud*, as the symbol of his presence—the very symbol also of his return.<sup>h</sup> Here we know, likewise, he did sojourn, when *in* the flesh, loving more especially to retire to that part of it called 'the Mount of Olives,'—where was 'the garden;' from whence also he took his departure on a *cloud*; and where he will again descend; as it is written, "His feet 'shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is 'before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall 'cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the 'west; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the 'north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to 'the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the moun- 'tains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye 'fled before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah king of 'Judah: and the LORD MY GOD shall come, and ALL THE 'SAINTS WITH THEE.'"<sup>i</sup> What can be more explicit than this prophecy? Mr. Faber, who does not concur with me in the view of the personal reign, admits, nevertheless, of this prophecy, that it must be literal, "and designed, by its circumstantial clearness, to cut off the possibility of figurative interpretation."<sup>k</sup> And immediately after this prophecy it is added—"And the Lord shall be KING *over all the earth*"<sup>l</sup>—proving most decidedly, *when* the kingdom will be manifest; (*viz.* at his coming with the saints, before named;) and *where*, *viz.* on *earth*.

Many other Scriptures prove that the Lord's kingdom is to be manifested on earth: for example, Jer. xxiii. 5,—“A king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in *the earth*.” Again, Ezek. xliii. 7, when the Lord, on granting to him a vision of Jerusalem, says,—“Son of man, the *place* of my *throne*, and the *place* of the *soles of my feet*.” Wherefore our Lord forbids his disciples to *swear* by Jerusa-

y Zech. ii. 12. z Hosea ix. 3. a Isaiah viii. 8. b Ps. lxxxvii. 3.  
 c Ps. lxxviii. 15. d Ps. lxxxviii. 68. e Ps. l. f Ps. cxxxii. 14.  
 g Ps. lxxiv. 2, 3. h Acts i. 9—11; Rev. i. 7. i Zech. xiv. 4, 5.  
 k Vol. vii. p. 267. l Zech. xiv. 9.



lem, because it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.<sup>m</sup> Nor must I omit to notice, when speaking of the *throne*, that Isaiah says : “ Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, ‘ upon the throne of DAVID, and upon *his* kingdom.”<sup>n</sup> Thus the angel Gabriel announces to Mary ;—“ He shall be great, ‘ and shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord ‘ God shall give unto him the throne of *his father* DAVID.”<sup>o</sup> And where was the throne of David ? surely not in heaven ; for St. Peter tells us plainly, “ that David is *not ascended into ‘ the heavens ;*” but that, “ being a prophet, he knew that God ‘ had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, ‘ according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on *his ‘ throne.*”<sup>p</sup> The Lord, however, certainly did not sit on David’s throne at his first coming ; for Herod was then in it : and this promise therefore remains to be fulfilled at his second coming.

2. It is now time that I should notice an objection, which it will be useful to consider, not merely in reference to this particular argument, but likewise as affecting in some measure general principles of interpretation.

There are passages of Scripture, relating to this matter, which are undoubtedly to be understood only in a spiritual sense, and must be so interpreted. Such, for example, as when St. Paul says of gentile believers, “ that they are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, ‘ and are *built* upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief *corner stone* ; in ‘ whom all the *building* fitly framed together groweth unto a ‘ *holy temple* in the Lord ; in whom ye also are *builded* together for a *habitation of God* through the Spirit.”<sup>q</sup> And St. Peter also, speaking of Christ as of ‘ a living *stone,*’ adds, “ Ye also are built up a *spiritual house.*”

Persons who do not consider, that such a spiritual view is reconcileable with other texts, which must, for reasons equally manifest, be *literal*, at once conclude, that *every* reference to the house, or city, or mount of God must be figurative : just as some others, collecting a few passages, the nature of which is unquestionably literal, thence conclude that *none* are figurative. There are passages, which speak of a spiritual *resurrec-*

<sup>m</sup> Matt. v. 35.    <sup>n</sup> Isa. ix. 7.    <sup>o</sup> Luke i. 32.    <sup>p</sup> Acts ii. 30, 34. &c.

<sup>q</sup> Ephes. ii. 19—22.

*tion*, relating to the raising of the soul from the death of sin, unto the life of righteousness ; whence believers are said to be already risen with Christ :<sup>r</sup> but we must not thence conclude that there is not a *bodily* resurrection revealed also. The spiritual resurrection is the *pledge* and earnest of the bodily one, rendering it more sure ; just as things which are first literally fulfilled, are pledges of the like spiritual things. It was the exclusive consideration of such Scriptures that caused many among the Corinthians to err, supposing the spiritual resurrection to be the *first* resurrection promised, and therefore that it had taken place : which opinion is apparently the very one St. Paul denies and combats, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to them ; wherein he insists, that their faith was vain were this the case.

Prophetic Scripture, and all Scripture, must be judged of by its context and general scope. For example, when it speaks of a *man*, we understand a being who possesses a spiritual soul, dwelling in a mortal body. The chief commands and promises of Scripture are addressed to his spiritual part ; but that does not prove, that the soul will not hereafter be manifested in a body, any more than it proves, that it is not now in the body. When therefore we use the word *soul* for *man*, we include his body as a matter of course. For who would suppose, because it is written, “ that Abram took Sarai, and ‘ Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had ‘ gathered, and the *SOULS* that they had gotten in Haran, and ‘ they went forth to go into the land of Canaan ;”<sup>s</sup>—who, I say, would conclude, that they took only the spirits of these persons, and left their *bodies* behind ? And who again, because St. Paul exhorts the brethren to present their *bodies* a living sacrifice unto God,<sup>t</sup> would suppose that he does not include the *soul* ; without which they would be a *dead*, and not a living, sacrifice ?

Now apply this principle to the *house of God*,—which we have seen is the *city*, the *New Jerusalem*, the *holy mountain*. A city is, strictly speaking, a number of persons dwelling together under certain laws and immunities. Whether they dwell in tents, in ceiled houses, or have the sky only as their canopy is indifferent : *houses* come to be called the *city*, only because they are the place of abode of the citizens ; just as

<sup>r</sup> Rom. VI. 4, 5 ; Col. III. 1.    <sup>s</sup> Gen. XII. 5.    <sup>t</sup> Rom. XII. 1.

we call a pile of stones a church, because the real Church of God are presumed to assemble in it. The houses are no more a city when without inhabitants, than a body is a man when the spirit is fled: both are their ruins only. Thus it is written—"Then went out to him Jerusalem, &c. and were baptized of him in Jordan"—which evidently means the *inhabitants* of Jerusalem; and when therefore a city is said to be preparing in heaven, the *saints* must be intended, who are destined to form it, and are now called "Jerusalem which is *above*;" and which is the same Jerusalem which it is said shall "*come down—from God—out of heaven.*"<sup>u</sup> But because they are the *real city*—the *lively stones*—it does not follow therefore that they are to have no place of manifestation: on the contrary, there *must* be some place of visible dwelling if they come in the body, whatever the nature of that place may be. Those who can see *nothing* but figure in Scripture are compelled to explain, that the great city, the holy Jerusalem, *coming down out of heaven*, signifies the *ascent* of the saints *into* heaven. But this is not only a perversion of language, but a perversion of figure. The scripture figures are remarkable for their appropriate significancy; whereas in this case they would be remarkable, as meaning the very reverse of what they seemed to describe.

It may clear this point to observe further, that there are texts which beyond question refer to a *material* city, so far as literal language can express it; and yet they primarily aim at the *persons* who compose such cities, without which they would have no meaning. For instance,—“Then began he ‘to upbraid the *cities* wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin,” &c.<sup>v</sup> “And when he was come near he beheld the ‘*city* and wept over it saying, if thou hadst known,” &c.<sup>w</sup> It is here evident that it was the *material* city—the pile of stones with its towers and domes, which first caught the eye of Jesus; and he appears only to address this mass of materials. But any man of understanding must be aware, that it was the *inhabitants* of Chorazin, &c. against whom he pronounced the woe; and the *inhabitants* of Jerusalem over whom he wept. It was her “*children*” whom he would have gathered: but the one part is included in the other.

<sup>u</sup> Rev. xxi. 2.    <sup>v</sup> Matt. xi. 20—24.    <sup>w</sup> Luke xix. 41.

Thus am I led to conclude, when Daniel, on “presenting his supplications for the holy mountain of his God,” couples together the following phrases—“thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain;”—“Jerusalem, *even* thy people”—“thy city, *even* thy people,\* are called by THY NAME,”<sup>x</sup>—that these terms are in the first place explanatory of each other; and, secondly, that there is a reference in them, both to the *household* of God, and to the *place* of their congregating and future manifestation. So in the following passage, “Remember thy ‘congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of ‘thine *inheritance*, which thou hast *redeemed*; *this mount ‘Zion*, wherein thou hast dwelt;”<sup>y</sup> mount Zion and the congregation are made as one by implication; whilst yet the context shews, that Zion literally, as well as the congregation, are both distinctly referred to.

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I add here some texts, shewing the *practical use*, which the Apostles made of the doctrine of the Kingdom and Inheritance to be manifested on the earth. I could greatly increase the list were I to turn to the Old Testament; (particularly in reference to the *land*, the promise of which, in one Psalm only,<sup>z</sup> is practically applied six different times;) but, for obvious reasons, I prefer keeping at present to the New Testament. Grounded then on these truths are Exhortations  
to *Repentance*.

“And saying, Repent ye: for *the kingdom of heaven* is at hand.” Matt. III. 1.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit *the kingdom of God*? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit *the kingdom of God*.” 1 Cor. VI. 9, 10.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also

<sup>x</sup> Dan. IX. 16—20. <sup>y</sup> Ps. LXXIV. 2. <sup>z</sup> Ps. XXXVII.

\* In both these instances, I take the *vau* of the Hebrew, and the *kai* of the Septuagint necessarily to mean *even*, (as they often do,) not *and*.

told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit *the kingdom of God.*" Gal. v. 19—21.

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in *the kingdom of Christ and of God.*" Ephes. v. 5.

*to Holiness and to seek Grace.*

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see *the kingdom of God.*" John III. 3.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into *the kingdom of God.*" John III. 5.

"Wherefore we, receiving *a kingdom* which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Heb. XII. 28.

#### PARTICULAR GRACES EXCITED.

##### *Obedience to God,*

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into *the kingdom of heaven*; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. VII. 21.

##### *Obedience to Parents,*

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother; (for this is the first commandment with promise;) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long *on the earth.*" Ephes. VI. 1—3.

##### *Humility,*

"Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven.*" Matt. v. 3.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren; Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and *heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised* to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor." James II. 5, 6.

##### *Meekness,*

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall *inherit the earth.*" Matt. v. 5.

##### *Patience,*

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is *the kingdom of heaven.*" Matt. v. 10.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers

and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly, that they seek *a country*." (πατρίδα.) Heb. xi. 13, 14.

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing *city*, but we seek one *to come*." Heb. xiii. 12, 14.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you *the kingdom*." Luke xii. 32.

*Perseverance,*

"He that overcometh shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Rev. xxi. 7.

*Diligence,*

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and *a new earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Pet. iii. 13, 14.

*General Holy Walking,*

"Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of *our inheritance* until *the redemption of the purchased possession*, unto the praise of his glory."—"Grieve not [therefore] the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto *the day of redemption*." Ephes. i. 13, 14; and iv. 30.

"Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto *His kingdom and glory*." 1 Thess. ii. 12.

*Thankfulness,*

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the *inheritance of the saints* in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into *the kingdom of his dear Son*." Col. i. 12, 13.

*Prayer.*

"And he said unto them, when ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. *Thy kingdom come*. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so *in earth*." Luke xi. 2.

NOTE, that almost the whole of these texts, by making the kingdom and inheritance the subjects of *promise*, do likewise expressly make them *future*.

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## Essay V.

## THE PARTICIPATION OF THE SAINTS.

Though much of the evidence brought to bear on the points which have now been considered, must already have led to the conclusion, that the *saints in general* will participate in the glorious state of things to be revealed in the Millennium; yet I consider it to be a matter of so much importance and interest to the Church, that I have reserved many Scripture testimonies for the purpose of proving it more distinctly; which testimonies will likewise further corroborate the view I have taken of the Kingdom of the Son of Man. I proceed therefore to shew, that the promises of this glory belong equally to the saints of the Old and New Testaments, and of every age of the Church.

I. This point is the more necessary to be insisted on, because there are many, who, whilst they admit a Millennium of glory on earth, confine it nevertheless to a portion only of the Church of God. Some, for instance, limit it to the Jews; some to those only who have suffered martyrdom for Christ; and some to that generation only, who shall be living at the commencement of the Millennium, excluding all the departed saints, and the Lord Jesus himself, from any visible participation. I conclude, however, that the whole of the saints, from the days of the first Adam up to the period of the glorious advent of the second Adam, will together enjoy their resurrection glory at the beginning of the Millennium; and that their glory is altogether distinct from the condition of that portion of Israel, who will then be redeemed in the flesh; and also from the spiritual state of those gentile nations, who shall then likewise still be in the flesh. I have only to request of the Reader, if difficulties and objections present themselves to his mind on the perusal of this statement, that he will at least suspend them, until I have gone through the whole series of Essays in which I am now engaged; in the course of which it is probable, that some of those difficulties may be removed.

I trust it is not necessary to dwell long upon the *antediluvian* saints: these may be all included in one verse of Jude's Epistle;—" Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied

‘ to these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with *myriads of his saints*, to execute judgement, &c.”<sup>a</sup> This was therefore the expectation of the Church in Enoch’s time. And as respects the saints from the time of Noah to Abraham, we may clearly infer *their* expectation from the eleventh chapter of Hebrews : Noah being instanced, at the seventh verse, as one of those of whom, in the thirty-ninth and following verses, it is said, that they obtained a good report through faith, but received not the promise ; God having designed, that they without us should not be perfected.

In regard to the promises to Abraham and to his seed, I have already proved that Christ is “the *seed*” principally intended, and, by a necessary consequence, all those who are his members. This is further evident from the Epistle to the Romans. The Millenarian will not I think deny, that the *glory* to which the Apostle frequently alludes in this Epistle, is that which is to be revealed at the manifestation of the sons of God, treated of in chapter VIII ; and of course the *promise* spoken of has reference to that glory. Yet in chap. IV. the apostle contends, “that the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed *through the law*, (which has especial respect to the Gentile dispensation,) but through the righteousness of faith.—That it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to *all* the seed : not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is *of the faith* of Abraham ; who is *the father of us all*.” And again in the ninth chapter he argues, even as respects the seed of Abraham according to the flesh ; “that they are not all Israel who are of Israel ; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children ; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called : that is, they which are the children of the *flesh*, *these* are not the children of God ; but *the children of the promise* are counted for the ‘seed.’” And afterwards he goes on in the same chapter to argue, that the purpose of God was “to make known the ‘riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had ‘afore prepared unto glory,—even *us*, whom he hath called, ‘not of the Jews only, but also of the *Gentiles*.” So also in Galatians : “Know ye therefore, that they which are of *faith*, the same are the children of Abraham.”<sup>b</sup> And again,

<sup>a</sup> v. 14. προεφητευσεν ττοις.

<sup>b</sup> Gal. III. 7.



“ Ye are *all* the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus, &c. there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; for ye are *all one* in Christ Jesus: and if ye be Christ’s, then are ye *Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.*”<sup>c</sup>

When the Church afterwards assumed a still more distinct and separate form in the Israelitish nation, to whom all the promises then appear to be more immediately addressed, I grant that a greater degree of obscurity is thrown over this circumstance. Nor do I mean to deny, (though we are now enabled clearly to infer the facts above stated,) that in the previous periods the mystery of the fulness of the Gentiles was in great measure hidden: for the Apostle plainly tells us, “ that in other ages was *not made known* unto the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the *Gentiles* should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same body*, and *partakers of his promise* in Christ by the Gospel.”<sup>d</sup> And thus St. Peter, alluding to the period when the Jews only were the recognised people of God, says to the “strangers” to whom he writes,—“ Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood; &c. which in time past were *not* a people, but are now the people of God.”<sup>e</sup> And though some have concluded from certain passages, that strangers and foreigners were not to partake of the *same* promises with Israel; yet I apprehend, as far as the *resurrection* Church is concerned, that these passages do always apply to aliens from the commonwealth of Israel in their unnaturalized and unproselyted state. This is indeed evident from what is said about the institution of the Passover, one of the most sacred of their ordinances.—“ And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the ordinance of the Passover: there shall *no stranger* eat thereof, &c.” Exod. xii. 43. After which, at verses 48, 49, it is written: “ And when a *stranger* shall *so-journ* with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be *circumcised*, and *then let him* come near and keep it; and he shall be *as one born in the land*: but no *uncircumcised* person shall eat thereof.”

In due time, however, the Lord sent forth his Apostles to call those other sheep, which were not of the Israelitish fold; but who were to be made one fold under one Shepherd.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Gal. iii. 26—29.

<sup>d</sup> Ephes. iii. 5, 6.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Peter ii. 9, 10.

<sup>f</sup> John x. 16.

Then we find it openly declared, “ that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but the new creature, and faith which worketh by love ; and that those who thus walk are the *Israel of God*.”<sup>g</sup> And the Apostle bids us “ *Remember*, that though we are Gentiles in the flesh, who are called UNCIRCUMCISION by the Jews ; being, when without Christ, *aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel and *strangers* from the covenant of promise ; we are now by the blood of Christ made *nigh*, he having broken down the middle wall of partition, and made of *twain one new man*, thus making *us no longer strangers and foreigners*, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.”<sup>h</sup> Thus, as Abraham is called “ the *father* of us all,” so “ Jerusalem which is above” —that Jerusalem “ which shall descend from God out of heaven” —is also called “ the *mother* of us all.”<sup>i</sup>

The next point for consideration is, whether that generation only, which shall be living at the commencement of the Millennium, shall partake of it ; or whether the departed saints will equally share in it. The latter view I shall prove to be the correct one, by an argument which will equally *disprove* the notion of a Millennium separate from a resurrection. It is by a comparison of two passages (the one in Hebrews, the other in Thessalonians) which mutually reflect on each other.

Let us suppose (as some do) that the Lord and his saints are *now* in the enjoyment of the kingdom promised, and that every believer enters into it at death : in this case it is plain, that the saints on earth are *for the present* excluded from it. But the Apostle, to prevent such an imagination, tells us, “ These *all*,” (including Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, &c. who are instanced,) “ having obtained a good report [or, ‘ rather, having borne witness\*] through faith, received *not* ‘ the promise ; God having provided some better thing for us, ‘ that they *without us* should not be made perfect.”<sup>k</sup> This proves, that, whether the enjoyment of the promise is to be on earth or in heaven, the whole Church will be glorified together ; the saints of one generation not receiving the promise without the saints of other generations.

On the other hand, let us suppose that the generations

\* *μαρτυρηθεντες*, agreeing with *νεφος μαρτυρων*, the “ cloud of witnesses,” in the first verse of the next chapter.

<sup>g</sup> Gal. v. 6 ; vi. 15, 16.    <sup>h</sup> Ephes. ii. 11—22.    <sup>i</sup> Rom. iv. 16  
and Gal. iv. 26.    <sup>k</sup> Heb. xi. 39, 44.

alive at the commencement of the Millennium are to enjoy the promise of the kingdom:—that *then* only, and to *them* only, is to be fulfilled what is written, “that the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High.”<sup>l</sup> It is plain, that the *departed* saints, though most of them have lived in expectation of the promise, must be shut out from it. But *this* also the Apostle says to us “*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.”<sup>m</sup> Thus again both are to rejoice together;—and this at the *coming* of the Lord: for the Lord will descend and bring the Church above with him, whilst the Church below will undergo a change: even as it is written, “When Christ who is our life shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with him in glory.”<sup>n</sup>

The opinion which limits the reigning in this kingdom to the martyrs only, is the last which I shall consider, and a brief notice of it will be sufficient. For it entirely rests upon Revelation xx, 4, which is supposed to confine the first resurrection to those “beheaded for the witness of Jesus.” But here are also included, when we come to examine the subject more accurately, those “which had not worshiped the beast, neither received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands.”\* This may be clearly inferred from chap. xi. 18, which extends the reward then to be given to “all that fear the name of God, both great and small.”

II. Having shown that the saints in general are to partake of the kingdom, it will greatly confirm the view which I have taken of its being on *earth*, to glance at some of the promises which are made to the saints; keeping in mind, that they belong to the *whole* of them.

Isaiah says to the righteous, in one place,—“Thine eyes shall see *the king in his beauty*; they shall behold *the land that is very far off*:”<sup>o</sup> and in another, “that God should cause him to ride upon the high places of *the earth*, and feed him with the heritage of *Jacob his father*.”<sup>p</sup> David declares,

<sup>l</sup> Daniel vii. 27.    <sup>m</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 15.    <sup>n</sup> Col. iii. 4.    <sup>o</sup> Isa. xxxiii. 17.  
<sup>p</sup> Isa. lviii. 14.

\* See Whitby *in loco*; who, though a decided anti-millennarian, makes here two distinct classes;—viz. the souls of those beheaded, and the souls of those who had not worshiped the beast.

‘ that “ the righteous shall be exalted and inherit *the earth* for ever ;”<sup>q</sup> and says of himself, “ that he had fainted, unless ‘ *he* had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in *the land of the living.*”<sup>r</sup> The Lord Jesus repeats the assurance under the Gospel, “ that the meek shall inherit *the earth.*”<sup>s</sup> St. Paul, as we have seen, reminds children of the promise annexed to the fifth commandment, (viz. “ that thy days may be long ‘ in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,”) “ that it ‘ may be well with *thee* (he adds) and that thou mayest live ‘ long on the earth.”<sup>t</sup> This latter testimony is the more satisfactory, if we apply to it a rule of interpretation laid down by St. Paul in Hebrews. He contends, that because it is written in David—“ If they shall enter into my rest,” there must *remain* a rest for the people of God. For he argues, that the Lord could not mean the Sabbath rest at creation, neither the rest in the land given them under Joshua ; seeing that after these had taken place he still speaks of a rest to come ; saying, “ If they *shall* enter into my rest.”<sup>u</sup> This is the Apostle’s principle of interpreting prophecy ; and it would violate this principle not to conclude, that as he promises length of days in the land to Gentiles, at the time when the Jews were just about to be cast out of it, there must *remain* an inheriting of the land to the people of God.

Those who presume these promises to be figurative thus explain how the meek shall inherit the earth : viz. that they are contented with their *present lot* ; and that, if they *needed* more, God would give it to them, even unto the possession of the whole world. But such an interpretation appears objectionable on various grounds. *First*, it offends against the plain grammatical sense of the promise ; which is, that the meek *SHALL* inherit the earth : whereas, if they *now* possess it through contentment, it should rather be written, “ Blessed are the meek for they *do* inherit the earth.” The whole argument indeed of St. Paul, just noticed, loses its cogency, if, when our Saviour, after so long a time, promises that the meek *shall* inherit the earth, we are to understand it of the *past*. “ For (to paraphrase the reasoning of the Apostle,) if they had always thus inherited the earth, then would he not afterwards have spoken of a future inheriting : there remaineth, therefore, an inheritance of the earth to the meek.” *Secondly*,

<sup>q</sup> Psalm xxxvii. 9, 11, 29, 34.

<sup>r</sup> Ps. xxvii. 13.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. v. 5.

<sup>t</sup> Ephes. vi. 2, 3.

<sup>u</sup> Heb. chap. iv.

it contradicts the whole scope of unfulfilled promise ; which, as I have demonstrated, regards a future kingdom to be manifested on earth. *Thirdly*, it lowers and degrades the promises of God ; as if we were afraid to trust him, when marvellous power must be exerted to fulfil the word ; and therefore placed a meaning upon it which is accomplished in the ordinary course and moral nature of things, without any promise at all.

We shall next find the saints included in the promises under every particular, in which we have been led to consider them in regard to Christ.

1. The Father has appointed unto him a *kingdom* ; and he tells his disciples, “ I appoint unto *you* a kingdom, as the ‘ Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink ‘ at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the ‘ twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>v</sup> He tells them also, “ that when ‘ the Son of Man shall come in his glory, the King shall say ‘ to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, ‘ inherit the kingdom prepared for *you* from the foundation of ‘ the world.”<sup>w</sup> And “ then shall the righteous shine forth as ‘ the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”<sup>x</sup>

2. Again, Christ is declared to be a *king* : so in Psalm XLV. 16, the promise to the Church is, “ Instead of thy fathers ‘ shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make *princes* in all ‘ the earth.” Agreeing with which is that passage in Revelation, (put into the mouths of the departed saints) “ Thou ‘ hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we *shall* ‘ reign on the *earth*.”<sup>y</sup>

3. Once more, a *throne* is prepared for the Lord, which I will call a throne of *glory* ; because it is said, that when he shall come with his angels, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. Now Hannah is made to prophesy, that the Lord “ raiseth up the poor out of the dust and lifteth up the beggar ‘ from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make ‘ them inherit the throne of glory :”<sup>z</sup> which agrees with that in Revelation ;—“ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit ‘ with me in *my* throne ; even as I also overcame and am set ‘ down with my Father in *his* throne.”<sup>a</sup> And if any inquire, How so *many* can sit on the throne of Jesus, I answer with Jeremiah : “ At that time they shall call *Jerusalem* the throne ‘ of the Lord ;”<sup>b</sup> “ for there also (saith David) are set thrones ‘ of judgement.”<sup>c</sup>

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<sup>v</sup> Luke XXII. 29, 30. <sup>w</sup> Matt. XXV. 34. <sup>x</sup> Ib. XIII. 43. <sup>y</sup> Rev. v. 10. <sup>z</sup> 1 Sam. II. 8. <sup>a</sup> Rev. III. 21. <sup>b</sup> Jer. III. 17. <sup>c</sup> Ps. CXXII. 5.

## Essay VI.

## THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

Having shewn, that *all* who are "called to be saints" are to participate in the millennial kingdom and glory, the question will immediately arise in the minds of some,—How is this to be accomplished in regard to those who are asleep in Jesus? A satisfactory answer may be drawn from 1 Cor. xv. St. Paul there argues that our faith is altogether *vain*, unless there be a *Resurrection*; and having largely treated on this subject he concludes by assuring them, "that therefore their labor is *not in vain* in the Lord." I reply, therefore, that the departed saints are to be brought into the enjoyment of this blessed and glorious state by means of a *resurrection*, prior in order of time to the resurrection of the wicked, and distinguished in Scripture as the *first* resurrection;—not first (as some would imagine) by a priority of a few hours only, but by a period of at least a thousand years. The former circumstance would in itself confer but little pre-eminence; since it would not matter, whether the saints were raised a few hours before, or even *after*, the wicked, provided they did but rise to the enjoyment of glory, honor, and immortality. Nor indeed would a precedence, which merely regarded the order of time, even to the extent of a thousand years, avail much: it is the circumstance, that all the promises of God for good (so far as they are at present revealed) are connected with this period, that gives to it such peculiar importance. To be privileged to enjoy this Millennium declares us to be "blessed and holy;"<sup>a</sup> whilst to be excluded from it, will mark us "as unjust and filthy still."<sup>b</sup> Within this period is concentrated that *special* glory which results to Christ as MAN-MEDIATOR: and he, therefore, who is not included in that heavenly company which shall descend at the archangel's shout, will not "be with him, where he is, to behold that glory which God has given him."<sup>c</sup>

It is true, that there are one or two passages in Scripture which might lead us to suppose, that the resurrection of the righteous and wicked take place together. I refer to that description in Matt. xxv. of the Son of Man on

<sup>a</sup> Rev. xx. 6.    <sup>b</sup> Rev. xxii. 11.    <sup>c</sup> John xvii. 24.

the throne of his glory, and all the nations gathered before him, which he separates into two classes; one of which goes away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. And secondly, to a passage in John v: "The hour 'is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear 'his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good 'unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil 'unto the resurrection of damnation.'" These are the only places I deem it needful to dwell upon: for though the notions of some are so unaccountably mystified on this subject, that I have met with many who interpret Christ's coming to judge the "quick and the dead," as if *quick and dead* meant *righteous and wicked*; yet it is so evident to all who only reflect for a moment, that it means those *living* when our Lord shall come, and those who have *died* in the mean while, that I need not consume time in refuting the mistake.

I mean not now to enter into a particular exposition of the above two passages: I shall content myself with examining the principal point connected with the difficulty; viz. the apparent fixing of the two events, or the two actings connected with one great event, to the same point of time. In order to this I must bring before the notice of the Reader a principle of interpretation, which we may gather from Heb. II. and 1 Cor. xv.

In Heb. II. St. Paul quotes Psalm VIII. applying it to the reign of Christ; ("Thou hast put *all things* in subjection under his feet;") and he then argues: "For in that he put 'all in subjection under him, he left *nothing* that is not put 'under him." This appears very absolute; as if all, not even excepting God himself, were to be put under his authority. But in 1 Cor. xv. 27, where the same Psalm is applied, we have this qualification; "When he saith *all things* are put 'under him, it is manifest that HE is excepted which did put 'all things under him." From the Scriptures therefore we infer, that if at any time we meet with a text, which seems to contradict some other plainly revealed fact, "it is manifest" that we must qualify that text, according to the nature and necessity of the case; taking care that we *reconcile* one Scripture with another, and do not *destroy* one by another.

To illustrate this I must draw your attention to some prophecies of Scripture, about which there is little or no dispute, and which seem to refer to one event only, or to two events

taking place at one period of time ; but which we are compelled to admit, from other passages and from facts, refer to *two* distinct events, between which a considerable interval of time must necessarily elapse.

I will begin with the captivities of the Jews, which sometimes are so blended, that careless readers of God's word often suppose the prophecies which speak of them to refer only to the Babylonish captivity ; and need to have pointed out to them those circumstances which prove, that the present dispersion of the Jews must be included or primarily intended.

The same may be said of the restoration from Babylon, when their city and temple were rebuilt under Zerubbabel ; and of their final glory, when Jerusalem shall put on her beautiful garments ;—distinct events, which are nevertheless so blended together, that it requires careful observation in order to point out the distinguishing marks.

Next I may instance the Advent of our Lord Jesus. Many texts might be brought forward, which seem to include his first and second coming as one event ; and we know that the Jews, because they did not distinguish these, were led into error, and rejected our Lord when he came to suffer. I will instance one passage, (Job, xix. 25,) connected with the *resurrection* ; in which Job says—“I know that my Redeemer liveth and he shall stand *in the latter day* upon the earth ; and though after my skin worms shall destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,—whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another.” Many might suppose from *this* text, that the point of time when the Redeemer should stand on the earth—‘the *latter day*’—was the period of the general resurrection, in which Job should have his lot : and it is only from other texts, and from the fact, we find, that *two* comings were to take place, with a long interval between, reconcilable with the phrase *latter day*. Were not indeed the principle for which I am contending to be received, a Jew might deny from this text the reality of any standing of the Redeemer upon earth prior to the time, when Job should be raised to behold him in the flesh.

The next important event which I shall notice is that prophecy of Joel, quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and beginning—“It shall come to pass *in the last days*, saith God, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.’” Let any man.



unacquainted with the history of the apostolic times, look at this prophecy, and hit the joint if he can, which shall separate between the first and second outpouring of the Spirit : though we all seem to expect a further fulfilment of it, and allow that an interval must be interposed.

I shall only instance further the prophecies concerning Antichrist. The second advent of Jesus was thought by the Thessalonians, from Paul's occasional language, to be immediately at hand. And no wonder : for he speaks of himself and them, as if they were to survive till that event should happen—"we which are alive and remain." But he reminds them in another Epistle, that he had taught them, how that event should not take place, except there should come a falling away first, and the man of sin should be revealed : so that the time for Antichrist to grow up, seize the dominion, and reign, must of necessity come in before the glorious appearing of the Lord : which the Thessalonians certainly might have inferred, had they carefully considered *other* Scriptures, or remembered *all* that the Apostle had taught them.

Now I claim for the general doctrine of the Resurrection the exercise of this same principle of interpretation ; and if I can show, that in many places the doctrine of a resurrection of the saints is revealed, altogether distinct from that of the wicked, we are bound to receive that doctrine in such manner as shall fall in with the general scope of Scripture.\*

1. I begin with 1 Cor. xv. 22—26, which explicitly gives the order in which all shall rise. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall *all* be made alive ; but every man *in his own order* : Christ the first fruits ;—afterwards, they that are Christ's, at his coming ;—then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom, &c. and shall finally 'destroy the last enemy, *death*.'" Here are three degrees in

\* It is worthy of remark, that most of those expositors, who, from the two places of Scripture now under consideration, insist on the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked as one in point of time, do nevertheless, in their interpretation of our Lord's prophecy in Matthew xxiv, generally contend for two *judgements* ; (the one on Jerusalem, the other at the second advent ;) though they confess them to be so involved the one in the other, that it is difficult to distinguish them. I differ entirely from such an interpretation of that chapter, as makes it an *involved* prophecy ; but I mention it now merely to show the inconsistency of their objection, when urged against the millenarian doctrine of the Resurrection.

the order of the resurrection. (1) First we have "Christ the first-fruits." St. Paul tells Festus and Agrippa, that Moses and the Prophets had testified, "that Christ should suffer, 'and that he should be the *first* that should rise from the 'dead :'"<sup>e</sup> which was typified by the offering of the first-fruits of the harvest. And in this first-fruits may perhaps be included those saints, who came out of their graves after the resurrection of Christ, and went into the *holy city*, and appeared unto many,\*—a blessed earnest of their own future manifestation in the same place. (2) Secondly we have it—" *afterwards* they that are Christ's, at his coming :"<sup>e</sup> or as I would paraphrase it,—“ Afterwards, at the coming of Christ, those that belong to him.” For some read this (or at least so interpret it) as if it were—“ Afterwards those who, at the coming of Christ, shall be his ; as if those only are intended, who shall *at that time* be walking in the faith of Christ. But forasmuch as these will be then already living in the flesh, the promise of a *resurrection* cannot have reference to them. They will undergo a *change* ; and they will be privileged, like Enoch and Elijah, never to see death. All those must therefore be intended, who shall be *asleep* in Jesus, and whom, *at his coming* he will raise and bring with him. Let it be observed however, that there is no mention of the *wicked* dead ; —“ those *that are Christ's*.” (3) Next it follows,—“ *Then* (after that) cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom ;”—a plain proof that the kingdom is to be between his *coming* and this *end*.

2. I shall take a second testimony from 1 Thessalonians iv. 13—18 ; because there can be no doubt that this passage, like the former, is to be understood in a plain and literal sense. For as in the former instance, the Apostle *expressly* instructs them in the nature of the resurrection, to guard them against the error of those who denied it ; so here he teaches them plainly concerning those who sleep in Jesus, that they may

\* Another instance of negligent exposition, which I have more than once heard from the pulpit, is the making these saints come out of their graves at the *crucifixion* of our Lord : in which case Jesus would not be the *first* that rose from the dead to die no more. The Evangelist, though he mentions it in connexion with his narrative of the crucifixion, does nevertheless distinctly state, that they came out of their graves *after his resurrection*. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

not sorrow as men without hope of seeing them again. To suppose that in either instance the language is symbolical, allegorical, or figurative, beyond what belongs to our ordinary use of figure, is to offend against the context and common sense of these passages.

The Apostle, then, assures those, who were disposed to sorrow without hope of seeing their believing friends again, that “the Lord Jesus will *bring them with him* when he comes ; —For that 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.” Note how exactly this agrees with the former testimony in Corinthians :—the dead in Christ *only* are raised—those living in Christ are *changed*—and at the *last trump*, announcing the coming of the Lord.\* (See 1 Cor. xv. 22.)

\* As the learned Dr. Wardlaw, in his recently published volume of sermons, attacks the millenarian view of this text, a few observations on his argument may not be unacceptable. I will first give his exposition verbatim. “The following expression, in 1 Thess. iv. 16, has been sometimes adduced in evidence of the resurrection of the righteous preceding that of the wicked :—and by many, indeed, who do not hold the tenets of millenarianism, it is often inconsiderately quoted as if it conveyed this meaning :—‘For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the **DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST**.’—But it requires only the reading of the passage to satisfy any candid mind, that there is in it no reference to the resurrection of the wicked at all. The preceding verse—the 15th, stands thus : ‘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.’—In this verse, the word ‘prevent’ means to *anticipate*, to *get the start*, or *take the precedence*, of another. Of the statement thus given, the 16th and 17th verses are an explanatory amplification. ‘We who are alive and remain,’ says the Apostle, ‘shall not **PREVENT**,’ that is, shall not anticipate, or take precedence, or get the start of ‘them that are asleep : for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall first rise ; then’—what ? a thousand years after the wicked shall rise ? Not at all :—‘then, ‘we who are alive and remain shall be caught up **TOGETHER WITH THEM**,’ (this is the explanation of their not preventing or anticipating them,) ‘to meet the Lord in the air :—and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’—The living saints, at the Lord’s coming, shall await the rising of those

3. The next circumstance I shall notice is, that the Scriptures particularize some one resurrection by certain phrases, added for the sake of eminence. For example: “the resurrection of *life* ;”<sup>f</sup>—“The poor cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of *the just* ;”<sup>g</sup>—

f John v. 29.      g Luke xiv. 14.

that are dead, and all shall then ascend together. Such is the Apostle’s own explanation of his own language.” P. 513.

The chief circumstance which I complain of in this exposition is, that Dr. Wardlaw, after stating “that it requires only the reading of the entire passage,” &c. *limits* the entire of the passage to the previous verse, instead of beginning at the 13th verse; and thus he wrests the passage from its real context. The Apostle’s object is evidently to prevent the Thessalonians from sorrowing for the dead, as though they had no hope of seeing them again: not, as the Doctor would have us infer, to correct erroneous notions of their getting the *start* or *precedency* of the dead. (See a further exposition of this text at page 61 of my last Essay.) Secondly, I would ask, How it is consistent with showing, that there is to be no precedency in the resurrection, to expound this passage, as if, after all, the dead are to get the start of those remaining in the flesh? Thirdly, if “the living saints, at the Lord’s coming, ‘shall await the rising of those that are dead, and all shall then ascend together ;’” how are we to understand the Apostle, when he says, “them ‘also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring* with him ?” This is their *descent*, not their *as-cent*. The same is expressed in Zechariah ;—“The ‘Lord my God shall come and all the saints *with thee* .” and also in Jude ;—“Behold the Lord cometh *with* myriads of his saints.” Fourthly, I have an observation to make upon the words—“to *meet* the Lord ‘in the air.’” The word used in the original is *απαντησις*—not the verb, but a noun; and literally is “caught up into the air to the meeting of the Lord.” The word *απαντησις* occurs in three other places in the New Testament, and invariably signifies a meeting for the purpose of receiving and welcoming the individual and to escort him back. Thus it is in Matthew xxv. where the ten virgins are first said to go forth and *meet* the bridegroom, (v. 1.) and then are surprised in their slumber by the cry, “Go ye out to *meet* him.” (v. 6.) It occurs the third time in Acts xxviii. 15 :—“And from thence, when the brethren heard of ‘us, they came to *meet* us, (*εις απαντησιν ημιν*) as far as Appii Forum . ‘and the three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took ‘courage. And when we came to Rome,” &c. It is evident here, that they met Paul, not to stay with him at the three taverns, but to continue with him by going back with him. And the whole context in Thessalonians seems to require, that we explain it of the saints going out to welcome the Lord in the air: not to continue in the air with him; but to accompany him on his visit here, and therefore to return with him. For unless the saints *return* with Christ, the wicked must also be caught up for that *judgement*, which the anti-millennarians always suppose happens at the same time with this event. I may add here, in defence of

“ They accepted not deliverance that they might obtain a *better* resurrection.”<sup>h</sup> Now what can this *better* resurrection, this resurrection *of life*, this resurrection *of the just* mean, but something eminently distinguished from the resurrection of the wicked? Yea, such an emphasis is generally laid upon this one, that we might with more reason conclude against any resurrection of the wicked at all, than against a resurrection of believers separate and distinct from it. Thus our Lord says of the risen saints, “ that they are the children of God, being the children of THE resurrection.”<sup>i</sup> In John’s Gospel he three times declares it to be the special privilege of a believer, “ that he will raise him up at the *last day* :”<sup>j</sup> but the single circumstance, that he should be raised at the last day, would cease to be a distinction, were the wicked to be raised at the same time. A similar argument may be raised on a passage in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians,<sup>k</sup> where he says, that he sought to know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, &c. “ if by any means he might attain unto THE resurrection of the dead :”<sup>\*</sup> for St. Paul knew well, and had declared, that there should be a resurrection both of the just and

this view of *απαντησις*, that, on referring to Schleusner, I find he interprets it—“ *cum quis alteri obviam procedit (vel rapitur) ad eum ex-cipiendum.*”

\* Phil. III. 11. It is not unimportant to notice, that the Greek word used in this instance by St. Paul, for the resurrection unto which he was so desirous to attain, is not *αναστασις*, the usual phrase employed; but *εξαναστασις*—*την εξαναστασιν των νεκρων*—implying, as some argue, the resurrection of a part *out of* many dead ones. So far as emphasis is laid upon the peculiar use of the word in this one place, I must confess I attach no peculiar importance to it; not seeing why the preposition *εκ* should imply a partial resurrection when attached to *αναστασις*, more than when used separately. We meet with it in connexion with the resurrection in every possible position, that is consistent with grammar: e. g. in composition, *εξαναστασις*, as in the text;—detached from *αναστασις* yet before and governing it, as in Acts xxvi. 23, where it is spoken of Christ, who was *πρωτος εξ αναστασεως νεκρων*; and in Luke xx. 25, and in other places, *η αναστασις η εκ νεκρων*. In all which places there does appear to me a special signification intended; viz. that in them mention is made, not of the abstract doctrine of a resurrection of dead ones, (*αναστασις νεκρων*,) nor merely of a resurrection from *death*; but *εκ νεκρων*, *from or out of* dead ones, leaving therefore dead ones behind.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. xi. 35. <sup>i</sup> Luke xx. 36. <sup>j</sup> John vi. 39, 40, 44. <sup>k</sup> Phil. III. 11.

*unjust*.<sup>1</sup> it could not therefore be merely a resurrection that he was so earnest about; but *the* resurrection—the resurrection of the *just*.

The Old Testament also affords us evidence of this doctrine. The angel Gabriel informs Daniel, “MANY of *them* that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.”\* This is to be at that time when the archangel Michael is to stand up for the deliverance of the people of Israel—the same archangel, I apprehend, at whose voice the Lord descends: and it is important to observe, that all those commentators who oppose the millenarian view do nevertheless place the restoration or conversion of the Jews at the beginning of the Millennium. And to Daniel himself was promised, that he should rest and stand in *his* lot at the end of the days;<sup>m</sup> viz. at the end of a period of 1335 years, the beginning of which had just been specified to him; and as all confess, that at the end of that time the *Millennium* begins, therefore again the resurrection must be at the beginning of the Millennium. Ezekiel also assured the pious Jews who were at Babylon in his day, that the Lord would fulfil his promise to them, by opening their graves and bringing them into the land of Israel.† Isaiah seems to refer to this period, and to have had the same personal assurance, when he says of the wicked, “They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise:” and then of the just, “Thy dead men shall live—together with MY dead ‘body shall they arise: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the

\* Dan. XII. 2. Since writing this an able writer in the Investigator, under the signature of Edinensis, has thrown great light on the latter part of this text, as it stands in our English version, viz. “some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” He says—“These *many* (adverting to the former part of the verse) are the saints; and the next clause ought, we think, to be thus understood and rendered: “—These (raised ones) are destined to everlasting life: and the others (the *οι λοιποι* of John) to shame and everlasting contempt.” Afterwards he adds in a note, that the Jewish Rabbi Saadias Gaon takes the same view in his commentary, interpreting the passage thus: “This ‘is the resurrection of the dead of Israel, whose lot is to eternal life; ‡ but those who do not awake, they are the destroyed of the Lord, who ‘go down to the habitation beneath, that is Gehenna, and shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”—Investigator, Vol. III. p. 8.

† Ezek. XXXVII. 12—14. Such is the general interpretation of this passage by the Rabbins.

<sup>1</sup> Acts XXIV. 15.      <sup>m</sup> v. 13.

‘dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.’<sup>n</sup> For we have seen that the wicked *are* to rise and live again: when Isaiah therefore says they shall *not*, it must be understood as signifying, not at the *morning* of that great and glorious day, which is with the Lord as a thousand years: but at the *end* of it: even as David says in the *XLIXth* Psalm;—“Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on *them*, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem *my* soul from the power of the grave; &c.”<sup>o</sup>

It will be perceived, that I have not in this essay made use of a great testimony to the doctrine in question in Revelation *xx*, 4—6. My reason for omitting it is, that the opponents of the views which I advocate commonly direct their chief attacks against this text, and indeed sometimes entirely confine themselves to the consideration of this one passage, as if the whole of the controversy hinged upon it; whereas I am persuaded, that the doctrine of the first resurrection may be decidedly proved, were this text entirely taken from us. At the same time I am sensible, that the Scriptures which I have brought forward derive increased light from this passage in the Revelation; as also that this passage derives a light from them, and is in great measure inexplicable without them: for it is the nature of the Oracles of God mutually to reflect on each other. Much undue advantage has also been yielded to the assailants of this truth, from the circumstance of Millennarians themselves resorting to it, as if it were their principal strong hold: a mode of proceeding, in reference to the doctrine they maintain, which has always to me appeared injudicious. I hope, if spared, to enter at some future opportunity into a full discussion of this passage: at present however I will only touch upon one single point; which is important, as connected with the general structure of the Apocalypse; and which has not received that attention from the generality of expositors which it deserves. “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thou-

<sup>n</sup> Isa, *xxvi*. 14.      <sup>o</sup> *rv*. 14, 15.

‘ sand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut  
 ‘ him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the  
 ‘ nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled :  
 ‘ and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw  
 ‘ thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgement was  
 ‘ given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were be-  
 ‘ headed for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,  
 ‘ and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image,  
 ‘ neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in  
 ‘ their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thou-  
 ‘ sand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until  
 ‘ the thousand years were finished. This is the First Resur-  
 ‘ rection. 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.”

Now it is much disputed, whether this description is to be understood figuratively or literally. This however does not appear to me to be the proper question ; and I again lament, that some of the advocates of millennarian doctrine, by thus taking up the subject, have given their opponents *another* advantage. I am persuaded, that it is a passage which is both figurative and symbolical, and that it cannot be successfully defended on the ground of a strictly literal interpretation. But admitting it to be figurative, the question which then presents itself for discussion is,—What is intended to be *signified* by this figure ? To which I answer, that the thing signified is, in the *plainest* and most *literal* sense,—THE FIRST RESURRECTION. I maintain that the words, “ *This is the first Resurrection,*” are expository, and intended to be literally understood ; which, I think, may be clearly demonstrated.

In order to prove this I observe, that the Apocalypse is figurative throughout ; with the exception, that there are incidental passages of a literal character, such as are necessarily interwoven with all prophecies, and without which they could have no definite meaning or application : and with the further exception also—that there is disposed throughout the Book a complete series of explanatory indices, which, like buoys and lighthouses at sea, are intended to afford us special intimation of our bearings. I will instance some, and terminate with the passage in question, marking what I consider to be literal expository matter in italic letters.



“The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.”  
—Chap. I. 20.

“There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”—IV. 5.

“In the midst of the elders stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.”—v. 8. See also Zechariah iii. 9 and IV. 16.

“The four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.”—v. 8.

“What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?”—“These are they which came out of the great tribulation, &c.”\*—VII. 13—16.

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, &c.”  
“These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth.”—XI. 3, 4. See also Zechariah IV. 2, 3, & 11—14.

“Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, &c.”—XI. 8.

“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the dragon, beast, and false prophet.—For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, &c.”—XVI. 13, 14.

“The ten horns which thou sawest—are ten kings.”—XVII. 12.

“The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”—XVII. 15.

“The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”—XVII. 18.

“The fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”—XIX. 8.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”—XIX. 10.

“The dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan.”—XX. 2.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, &c.—This is the first resurrection.”—XX. 4, 5.

Now, without going further, it is clear to me, that this last example is of the same nature with the former; and the expository clauses must necessarily have a reference to something plain and obvious to all, or to subjects which were, or ought

\* The article exists in the original, and is important to be noticed, seeing that some refer it to the great tribulation spoken of by Daniel and the other prophets.

to have been, familiar to believers, or they would not serve the purpose of explanatory marks. I conclude therefore by asking, what could the index "*This is the first Resurrection*" point to? What notion could those to whom these things were revealed have had upon the subject, unless it was derived from those very texts of Scripture, to which I have appealed in defence of the doctrine of THE FIRST RESURRECTION?

ABDIEL.

## Essay VII.

## THE JUDGEMENT.

An objection of some weight appears, at first view, to lie against the doctrine of the *first resurrection*, arising from the numerous Scriptures which set forth Christ, as coming to *judge the world* at his second advent; which circumstance is thought to be incompatible with the wicked not being raised and judged at the same time. The difficulty however consists in the circumstance of our having departed from the *scriptural view* of Judgement; which commentators have been gradually compelled to do, from the necessity of evading the obvious testimony of a host of texts to the personal reign of the Lord on earth: for there is perhaps no doctrine of Scripture which more directly *supports* this view, than the doctrine of the *Judgement*, if only it be rightly understood.

I. The single idea entertained by most persons on this point, is that of a great assizes, at which the Lord Jesus will preside, and at which all mankind will be put upon their trial. But God has revealed to us far more than this. The characteristics of a JUDGE, as given to us in Scripture, are as follow: *to rule and govern as a king—to deliver and protect his people—and to avenge them on their enemies*: whence it follows, that judgement must consist, not only in vengeance or punishment, but also in deliverance and government.

In proof of this I observe, that the Judges who were over Israel before the time of Saul, the first king, were all of them men raised up as deliverers and avengers;<sup>a</sup> as Gideon, Sampson, Jephtha, and others; in which character they were also *types* of the Lord Jesus. And when the Israelites demanded a *king*, it was not so much a change in the nature of the *office* which they desired, as a more complete and fixed state of it: for they would not be any longer dependent upon the Lord, either to fight their battles, or to *raise them up Saviours*; but they cried, “We will have a *king* over us, that we also may ‘be like all the nations; and that our king may *judge* us, and ‘and go out before us, and fight our battles.”<sup>b</sup> Thus the king was still to be the judge: just as St. Paul, speaking of our

<sup>a</sup> Judges II. 16—18.<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. VIII. 19, 20.

all standing before the *judgement* seat of Christ, says—"that to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be LORD both of the dead and living"<sup>c</sup>—the same thing as "*Judge* both of quick and dead."

The chief prophecies concerning the Christ as Judge will further shew, that *princely rule and government* are connected with his judgement; and that it will be a *continued* office among or over the nations. Take the following passages in the Psalms; and let it be observed in them, that the judgement or righteous government spoken of therein is evidently to be upon the *earth*. "Give the *King thy judgements*, O God, 'and thy righteousness unto the King's son. He shall judge 'thy people with righteousness, and thy *poor with judgements*. '—For he shall judge the *poor* of the people, he shall *save* the 'children of the needy, and shall *break in pieces the oppressor*."<sup>d</sup> "Arise, O God, *judge the earth*; for thou shalt *inherit all nations*,"<sup>e</sup> "For He (the Lord) cometh, for he cometh 'to *judge the earth*: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."<sup>f</sup> "For the Lord cometh 'to *judge the earth*: with righteousness shall he judge the 'world, and the people with equity."<sup>g</sup>—"He shall judge the *world* in righteousness, he shall *minister judgement* to the people in uprightness."<sup>h</sup> "O let the *nations be glad* and sing for joy! 'for *thou shalt judge* the people righteously, and *govern* the 'nations upon earth."<sup>i</sup> Other prophets afford a similar testimony. Thus Isaiah and Micah declare of him: "He shall *judge among many people* and rebuke strong nations afar off:"<sup>j</sup> and Jeremiah says "Behold—a king shall reign and prosper; and shall execute *judgement* and justice in the *earth*."<sup>k</sup> The same truth may be gathered also from that text in Corinthians, which speaks of the termination of his judgment: for the Apostle says, that he shall then lay down all *rule, authority* and *power*; <sup>l</sup> which shews, that rule, authority and the like are connected with his previous judgement: even as Christ himself says,—that the "Father hath given him *authority* to execute *judgement*."<sup>m</sup> This testimony may be summed up in one passage of Scripture: "The Lord is our *Judge*—the Lord is our *Lawgiver*—the Lord is our *King*—he will save us."<sup>n</sup>

And as we have seen, that though he declared he was a KING,

<sup>c</sup> Rom. xiv. 9. <sup>d</sup> Ps. lxxii. 1 and 4. <sup>e</sup> lxxxii. 8. <sup>f</sup> xcvi. 13. <sup>g</sup> xcvi. 9. <sup>h</sup> ix. 8. <sup>i</sup> lxvii. 4. <sup>j</sup> Mic. iv. 3; Isa. ii. 4. <sup>k</sup> Jer. xxiii. 5. <sup>l</sup> Cor. xv. 24. <sup>m</sup> John v. 27. <sup>n</sup> Isa. xxxiii. 22.

being born to that end; ° yet that he refused to let the people come and make him a king, and would not at that time exercise his royal prerogative: p so also, though he declared that all *judgement* was committed to the Son, q yet did he not then assume the *character* of judge. He tells Nicodemus, that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world. r He *refused* to judge in the case of the woman taken in adultery; s and he rebuked another, who would have anticipated his rule, with the words—"Man, who made me a *judge* or a divider over you?" t

It will be further evident, that what is most frequently called in Scripture "*the judgement*," is no other than the kingdom and rule of Christ, when it is considered that the *saints* are to have part in it. For first Enoch prophesied, "Behold ' the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, to *execute judgement* upon all." u David says, "that to *execute the judgement written* is an honor, which *all the saints* are to have." w Isaiah says, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and '*princes shall rule in judgement.*'" x In the vision which Daniel had, "*judgement was given to the saints* of the Most High, ' when the ancient of days came." y And, finally, St. Paul declares most positively, "that the saints shall *judge* the world." z And it should be observed in these passages, that the participation of the saints in the judgement is not confined merely to their receiving "power over the nations" to *rule*; but they are apparently to be made instrumental in inflicting the *vengeance* also. Such is the burden of the testimony in the 149th Psalm, which declares that they have "a ' two-edged sword in their hand, to *execute vengeance* upon ' the heathen and punishments upon the people; to bind their ' kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron." Such is implied in Rev. II. 26, just referred to, where in addition to "power over the nations" it is said, "they shall ' rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall ' they be broken to shivers." Again it is written, "Ye shall ' tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the ' soles of your feet;" a and "the righteous shall wash his feet ' in the blood of the wicked:" b all which passages, though studded with metaphor, and in the Revelation veiled in sym-

° John xviii. 37. p vi. 15. q John v. 22. r iii. 17. s viii. 3.  
 t Luke xii. 14. u Jude 14, 15. w Psalm clix. 5—9. x Isa. xxxii. 1.  
 y Dan. vii. 22. z 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. a Mal. iv. 3. b Psalm lviii. 10.

bols, do signify a coercive power and restraint, which shall be exercised at that time by the righteous.

Those who deny the future kingdom of our Lord and his saints are nevertheless compelled to admit, that the saints will in some way or other be joined with him in the judgement. But how?—If the judgement is only to be a kind of trial, in which rewards and punishments are to be determined by the Lord, the saints will themselves stand before the judgement seat of Christ, and give account of the deeds done in the body: and then, the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and every one shall be rewarded according to his works.<sup>c</sup> Besides which, it is evident that there is to be a difference in degree of rank and authority among the saints in this judgement; as when our Lord says of his apostles, that “*they shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel;*”<sup>d</sup>—which tribes I apprehend to be the redeemed Israel, and therefore themselves to partake in the judgement.

But if we understand by the judgement *rule and authority*, then these things are perfectly reconcileable. And an eminent pattern is afforded us, how one star may differ from another star in glory, in that great monarchy of Darius; wherein, besides ordinary governors and captains and sheriffs and the like, there were appointed over the whole kingdom one hundred and twenty *princes*, and over these three *presidents*, and over these the *king*. I can only reconcile with this view of it the Lord’s declaring, that one shall be ruler over *five* cities, and another shall have authority over *ten* cities, &c.<sup>e</sup>

Having thus far, as I trust, cleared this matter, I would next notice, that the period of judgement must necessarily include the whole period of the saints’ rule on earth; and likewise that tribulation or wrath upon the nations which ushers it in; together with that final visitation which closes it. *This*, whatever may be the events to be enacted of a judicial character—whether the wrath by plague, pestilence, famine, sword, revolution, or fire upon the wicked; or the authority, power and government given to the saints;—all this, I repeat, is in my apprehension of it intended by THE JUDGEMENT. Before however I enter more particularly upon the consideration of the events included in the judgement, I

<sup>c</sup> Rom. xiv. 10—12; 2 Cor. v. 10,   <sup>d</sup> Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30.  
<sup>e</sup> Luke xix. 17—19.

will first meet the objections which are made to this extension of its period.

First then it is argued, that the whole time of judgement is called "the *day* of the Lord," "that *great day*;" which expressions are considered incompatible with its continuance through upwards of a thousand years. But this objection proceeds from the want of acquaintance with the scriptural import of the word *day*. Though often, in historical narrative, it includes no more than a space of four and twenty hours; yet, in prophetic language, it has a very different meaning, and frequently even in narrative. Any period of time, during which events or actings of a uniform character take place, are called the *day* thereof. There are innumerable passages which speak of such a duration of time as a day; but, as many of them may be said rather to mark the *commencement* of such a period than its continuation, (which perhaps is not unfrequently the case,) I will instance some which are the least ambiguous.

First, as to *narrative*. The work of Creation is divided into periods called *days*, and said to be finished in *six* of them: but in Genesis II. 4 the *whole period* in which the heavens, the earth, the plants and herbs were created is called a *day*. This augmentation of the term, however inconsiderable it may be, at least proves, that a day is not necessarily to be limited to a period of twenty-four hours; but that its duration must be determined by the context. So in Psalm xcv. mention is made of the "*day of temptation (or trial) in the wilderness*;" which is stated in the context to have continued *forty years*:<sup>f</sup> and this period is likened by the Apostle to the whole period of trial to the christian Church,—“while it is said, *to day if ye will hear his voice*.”<sup>g</sup> This is still clearer in the following chapter of Hebrews; for he there argues, that because David had limited a certain day, (saying in David, *to day*, after so long a time,) there must remain a rest—a *SABBATISM*—to the people of God.<sup>h</sup> I will not dispute, whether this sabbatism refers to rest in the Gospel promises or ordinances, under the christian dispensation; to the rest of disembodied or of glorified saints in heaven; or to the great septennary of a thousand years; all of which have been variously contended for: but, let a man select which he will, this must be evident, that a period of at least a

<sup>f</sup> vv. 8—11.    <sup>g</sup> Heb. III. 7—15.    <sup>h</sup> Ibid. IV. 1—11

thousand years must in this instance be intended by the term *day*.

In the latter testimony I have already stepped beyond the bounds of strict narrative; but I have one or two other instances under the next class which I must still urge. In Ecclesiastes XII. 1, we read,—“Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the *evil days* come not;” and these evil days are immediately after explained to be “*the day* when the keepers of the house tremble, &c.”—alluding in highly figurative language to the whole period of declining life and its infirmities. Another Scripture saith, “I have heard thee in ‘a time accepted, and in the *day* of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the ‘day of salvation.”<sup>i</sup> This is generally interpreted to refer to the whole period of divine forbearance under the Gospel dispensation; which is therefore called—“the day of salvation.” In another place the Apostle says, “The night is far spent, the *day* is at hand”<sup>k</sup> which words *night* and *day* have a double meaning; for first they evidently refer to the *character* of two different dispensations, the one being a time of darkness and trial, the other of light and glory; and they as clearly refer to *duration of time*, the night being spent, and the day approaching. This night is the whole period of trial to the Church, and the day is the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

Some further object, (and among them the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw,) that in John v. 28, 29, the resurrection and judgement are limited to an *hour*;—“the *hour* is coming in the which all ‘that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come ‘forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, ‘and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation;”—and therefore (they argue) that the day of judgement must necessarily be limited to a small portion of time. It happens however that the term *hour* has precisely the same indefinite sense attached to it, in a great variety of instances, as the word *day*. It is obvious that in the text containing the objection, it is not to be limited to the twenty-fourth part of a day; but corresponds with the day of the resurrection and judgement, whatever period of time that may prove to be. Owing however to the word *hora* (ώρα) not being always translated *hour*, but sometimes rendered by the words *season*

<sup>i</sup> 2 Cor. VI. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. XIII. 12.



and *time*, the English reader is not aware of those numerous passages, in which it is placed for an independent period. I must therefore instance a few. It is translated *season* in the following passages; John v. 35; 2 Cor. vii. 8; Philemon v. 15. In the first instance it signifies the whole period of John Baptist's ministry; in the second, the time which elapsed between the reception by the Corinthians of the two Epistles of St. Paul written to them; and in the third instance, the whole term of the desertion of Onesimus from his master Philemon. In John xvi. 2. and 25, 26; also 1 John ii. 18; it is translated *time*. In the first instance it applies at the least to the whole period in which the Christians were persecuted by the Jews, who blindly thought they were doing God service. In the second instance it relates to the whole period (according to Beza's interpretation) from the ascension of Christ to the end of time; in which the Lord teaches men by his Spirit, and they pray to the Father in his name.\* And here it is to be remarked, that the phrase "the time (*ώρα*) cometh" in verse 25, is from the context exactly equivalent to the words "at that *day*" in verse 26, and applied to the very same period. The third instance, "Little children it is the last time," (*ώρα*) is interpreted by Scott and other commentators to signify "the last *dispensation*;" and therefore must be taken to extend through the whole space of years from the time of John to the second Advent of our Lord.†

The conclusion therefore at which I arrive is this: that as the whole period of depression and vengeance on the Jews is the day of their visitation; so the day of judgement is the period of their restoration and triumph. And again, that as the whole Church of Christ has been conflicting through a long *night* of trial in various ways: so, 'that great day' is to con-

\* Beza on this place says "Spiritus sanctus ab ascensione Christi in Apostolos effusus, summa quæque mysteria et solutis nostræ arcana, tum ipsos, tum etiam Ecclesiam per ipsos, erudiit, et ad finem usque seculorum erudiet."

† In further corroboration of this sense of the word *ώρα* I would observe, that the Seventy most commonly translate the Hebrew *רַב* by it; which is the more remarkable because Legh, in his *Critica Sacra*, says it answers to the Greek *καιρος*. Parkhurst states concerning this same word *רַב* "That it particularly denotes the time of vengeance or punishment." He instances Jer. xxvii. 7; Ezek. vii. 7, and xxx. 3; and directs us to compare Luke xxi. 24, which relates to the whole period of "the times of the Gentiles."

sist in bringing all her enemies under her feet;—she shall be no more oppressed, but triumphant and glorious to the end.

II. Having shewn that the Judgement of Christ will consist in the deliverance of his people, and in a rule or reign of righteousness, I have now to show that it is also a period of VENGEANCE on his enemies.

The passages are so numerous in the prophets, which speak of a time of signal wrath upon the ungodly, and of awful slaughter and bloodshed, that the most cursory reader must be acquainted with them. My present object therefore will be, not to bring before the Reader the mere fact of this period of tribulation; but, in order that he may form some notion of the *uniform* testimony of the prophets to this event, to select a few of the more remarkable passages, which are linked and tied together, like the curtains in the tabernacle, by certain obvious and peculiar expressions. And I will further beg him to observe, that this vengeance or indignation is in many instances so connected with the period of the *glory* which the Church shall enjoy, as to justify me in saying, that it will immediately precede or usher in that dispensation.

First we will take Isaiah xxiv, of which I shall give the principal features. It opens by solemnly inviting the attention of all flesh. “Come near, ye *nations*, to hear; and hearken, ye *people*;—let the *earth* hear, and all that is therein;—the *world*, and all things that come forth of it. For the *indignation* of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them: he hath delivered them to *the slaughter*. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the *mountains shall be melted with their blood*.” Then at verse 5: “Behold it shall come down upon *IDUMEA*; (i. e. *Edom*;) and upon *the people of my curse*, to JUDGEMENT.”—“The sword of the Lord is *filled with blood*—for the Lord hath a *great sacrifice* in *BOZRAH*, and a *great slaughter* in the land of *Idumea*—the land shall be *soaked with blood*, and their dust made fat with fatness—for it is the day of the *Lord’s vengeance*, and the year of recompenses for the *controversy of Zion*.” Then (after dwelling upon the manner in which the land shall be desolated) it bursts out, in the next chapter, with a rapturous description of the way in which the earth shall afterwards be renewed for the righteous.

In this passage I will chiefly call attention to the circum-

stance, that the judgement therein spoken of falls on *Idumea*, (or *Edom*,\*) of which *Bozrah* was the capital. This will clearly connect the prophecy with another in Isaiah LXIII. 1—5; which informs us also *who* is to be the great actor in the tribulation.

“Who is this that cometh from *Edom*, with dyed garments ‘from *Bozrah*? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling ‘in the greatness of his strength?’ Answer.—“I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”—“Wherefore art thou *red* ‘in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the ‘winefat?’” Answer.—“I have trodden the *winepress* alone; ‘and of the people there was none with me. For I will tread ‘them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and *their* ‘blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all ‘my raiment. For the day of *vengeance* is in mine heart, and ‘—the year of my redeemed is come.” Here, in addition to *Idumea* and *Bozrah*, is introduced *the treading of the winepress*, and that evidently by *Messiah*, and the staining of his *garments* thereby with blood: now mark how this identifies the words of Isaiah with those of St. John.

In Rev. xiv. we have a description of “the vine of the ‘earth, which is cast into the *great wine-press of the wrath* of ‘God; and the *wine-press is trodden* without the city, and ‘blood comes out of the wine-press *even unto the horse bridles*, ‘by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs:”—a symbolical and figurative description; but calculated to afford us a most awful notion of the great slaughter and destruction alluded to! In Rev. xix. we may recognise further circumstances: *Messiah* is introduced “clothed with a *vesture dipped in blood*, and his name is called *THE WORD OF GOD*, &c. ‘and he *treadeth the wine-press* of the fierceness of the wrath ‘of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his ‘thigh a name written, *KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS*. ‘And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with ‘a loud voice, saying to *all the fowls* that fly in the midst of ‘heaven, *Come and gather yourselves together* unto the *supper* ‘of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of *kings, captains, mighty men, horses, &c.*”

\* The ancient, as also the modern, Jews, and after them various expositors, interpret *Edom* to be *Rome*; but as my object is not now so much to apply the prophecy, as to mark its character, I enter not into this question.

I add the latter part of the above passage, in which the fowls of heaven are called to a great supper, for the purpose of shewing, that this again connects St. John with a well known prophecy in Ezek. xxxix. concerning the destruction of Gog and Magog, the slaughter of whose armies will be so great as to require seven months to bury the dead. At verse 17 are these words: "And thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, *Assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice* that I do sacrifice for you, even a great *sacrifice* upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat *the flesh of the mighty*, and drink the *blood of princes* of the earth—ye shall be filled *at my table* with *horses* and chariots, with *mighty men*, and with all men of war saith the Lord God. And—I will set my *glory* among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my *judgement* that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them."

In this manner we might glance at many other prophecies, and shew their evident relation to the same period of destruction, by similar internal and conspicuous marks: particularly a variety of passages, which shew the destruction to be *sudden* as well as extensive, coming upon the nations with the fierceness and rapidity of a *whirlwind*; which is the figure frequently used to describe it. "He shall take them away as with a *whirlwind*, both living, and in his wrath.—The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth *the vengeance*: he shall *wash his feet in the blood of the wicked*: so that a man shall say, verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth."\*

III. There is another important feature connected with the judgement, which must also be noticed; viz, the effect to be produced by the supposed agency of FIRE at this period.

Most christians admit, that there is to be a conflagration of the world; and it was the opinion of the early Millenarian Fathers, as also of many of the Reformers, that it would be the great agent employed to regenerate the material globe, to purify and restore it to its pristine state (yea *more* than its

\* Psalm LXVIII. 9—11. See also Prov. i. 23—33; Isa. xvii. 12—14; xl. 18—24; xli. 14—16; lxvi. 15, 16; Jer. xxv. 15—38, but especially verses 31—33. Compare also Jer. xxiii. 19, 20, with xxx. 23, 24; Hab. iii. throughout. but especially verses 12—15.

pristine state) of beauty and salubrioness, and thus to fit it for the abode of the righteous. But it has been and is disputed, whether this conflagration is to take place before or after the Millennium; and secondly, among those who believe it to be *pre-millennial*, it is further disputed, whether it is to burn up the *whole world*, or only the *prophetic earth*, or only the region of Palestine in its utmost limits.

As to the *extent* of the conflagration, I have no clear light vouchsafed to me. And though I incline from various considerations to conclude, that there will be a judgement by fire *before* the Millennium; (whatever may take place after it;) yet I confess, that great difficulties present themselves, and much may be said on the other side of the question. So that on this point I submit certain particulars more in the way of inquiry, and of communicating what may be gleaned from Scripture, than as a demonstration of the truth.

First then let me observe, that a judgement by *fire* is not always in the Scriptures to be understood *literally*; but it is a figure used by the prophets to denote tribulation and wrath. Thus Isaiah says, "The Lord shall purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the Spirit of judgement, and by the *spirit of burning*:"<sup>l</sup> upon which bishop Lowth observes, that these are bold figures to set forth the Lord's wrath. Of this we have a convincing proof in the promise which Moses makes to the children of Israel, just previous to their taking possession of the land under Joshua. "Understand therefore (he says) this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee: as a consuming *fire* he shall destroy them, (thine enemies,) and he shall bring them down before thy face."<sup>m</sup> It is not unlikely therefore, that some places, which speak of fire, only respect that time of bloodshed and trouble we have considered: as where it is said in Zephaniah, "All the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy."<sup>n</sup>

It is also worthy of remark, as proving fire to be frequently a symbol, that whereas in St. Luke's Gospel Jesus says, "I am come to send *fire* on the earth;"<sup>o</sup> the parallel place in St. Matthew is—"I came not to send peace, but a *sword*."<sup>p</sup> And indeed Luke himself afterwards explains it of the divisions and persecutions which would accompany the Gospel. I cannot however understand St. Paul as speaking otherwise than *liter-*

<sup>l</sup> Isa. iv. 4.    <sup>m</sup> Deut. ix. 3.    <sup>n</sup> Zeph. iii. 8.    <sup>o</sup> Chap. xii. 49.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. x. 34.

ally, when he says, "that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed 'from heaven, with his mighty angels, in *flaming fire taking vengeance* on them that know not God, and that obey not the 'Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'"<sup>q</sup> Nor can it be figure when St. Peter says, "that the heavens and the earth, which 'are now, are reserved unto *fire* against the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men."<sup>r</sup> And Isaiah appears plainly to distinguish between the judgements of *fire* and the *sword* when he says, that "the Lord will come with fire, and 'with his chariots like a whirlwind,—to render his anger with 'fury and his rebuke with *flames of fire*: for by *fire* and by 'his *sword* will the Lord plead with all flesh."<sup>s</sup>

IV. Another point remains for inquiry which is of intense interest to the Church of Christ; viz, What becomes of the Lord's people during this time of tribulation?

1. Previous to shewing their safety, it may be well to notice of the nations generally, that, however some Scriptures may apparently speak of their absolute and entire destruction, living creatures will nevertheless be left, both men and animals, from out of that dreadful time of desolation. This is indeed for the most part to be proved rather in the way of *inference*, from certain expressions in those passages themselves, which, in their first aspect, would lead us to conclude the contrary: for I apprehend, that the Spirit would have men's minds to notice chiefly the *tribulation* which is coming, that they may stand in awe and sin not.

First, let us take the prophet Isaiah. In chapter xxiv. 5, 6, we read: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed 'the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore 'hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore *the inhabitants of the earth are 'burned*, and—*few men left*." This at first view speaks as if *all* were burned; but afterwards it lets fall an intimation, that a *few* will be left.

In chap. LXVI. 16, when the same Prophet says; "By fire and by his sword the Lord will plead with all flesh," he adds—"and the slain of the Lord shall be *many*:" but that this does not mean *all*, though the prophecy relates to the great catastrophe under consideration, is evident from verse 19—"And I will send those that *escape of them* unto the nations,

‘ to Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, Javan ; &c.’ which is important as giving color to the opinion, that the nations on whom the desolation falls are those of Christendom, or of the prophetic earth, and does not include the tribes and families of the earth still called *heathen*, as Tarshish, Pul, &c.

Jeremiah XLIV. is worthy also of notice ; not as containing matter immediately bearing upon the Judgement, but as evincing how expressions must be qualified and determined by the general context. In verse 14 we are told, “ that *none* of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall *escape* or *remain*, &c. : ” yet at the end of the verse is added “ *none* shall return but such as *shall escape*.” Verse 27 is still more sweeping in its sentence of destruction : “ Behold I will watch over them for evil, and not for good : ‘ and ALL the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall ‘ be consumed by the sword and by the famine until there be ‘ *an end of them*.” But in the next verse it is added, “ Yet a *small number that escape* the sword *shall return*, &c.”

A similar instance occurs in Zechariah, chap. xiv. in which *all nations* are first described as gathered against Jerusalem to battle, (v. 2) then as smitten with a plague which consumes them ; (vv. 12—15) but afterwards there is mention of “ every ‘ one that is *left* of all the nations that came against Jerusalem.”

Our Lord’s intimation likewise concerning the tribulation, is to the point in hand ; “ that except those days should be ‘ shortened there should *no* flesh be saved : ” for they clearly intimate that *some* in the flesh will be saved.

I apprehend that what is spoken of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel xxxix. 2, before the whole prophecy concerning this war is set out, is the real key to this difficulty : “ I will leave but the *sixth part* of thee : ” and that the numerous passages which speak of “ them that *escape* of the nations,” “ the nations of them that are *saved*,” “ the *remnant* of them,” “ all that are *left*,” must be considered as referring to this circumstance.

Further, in regard to brute animals, the promise to Noah appears to justify the conclusion, that there will not be an *utter* destruction, any more than when the earth was destroyed by water : “ neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.”—Which is another instance also, that the words “ *every* thing living” must be qualified, and the contents of the ark deducted.

Psalm VIII. is likewise applied to the reign of Christ, both in Corinthians and Hebrews; and this states,—“Thou hast put ‘all things under his feet, all *sheep and oxen*, yea and the *beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea* :” so that if the conflagration be pre-millennial, there are animals preserved from it. By what means I presume not to state. Until God by his special power brought them to Noah into the ark, no man could have conceived how they should have been saved from the waters of a flood; neither have I a satisfactory perception of the mode in which all these things will be so brought to pass as to harmonize with the entire Scriptures.

2. But of the *safety of God's people* at this period of judgement, we have abundant and clear testimony. The world and the merely *professing Church*, will, alas! be taken by surprise. In the first instance all will appear going on as usual, in peace and security. As when the flood came in the days of Noah, and the burning in the time of Lot, they will be giving their chief concern to buying and selling, building and planting, marrying and giving in marriage.<sup>t</sup> The three angels, in the vision to Zechariah, report of a period apparently preceding this time: “We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold—all the earth *sitteth still and is at rest*.”<sup>u</sup> “But ‘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*.”<sup>v</sup> The most striking figures are made use of to show, how sudden and unexpected the Advent and Judgement will be to such: e. g. “the pangs of labor”—“as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west”—“as a snare or trap upon the nations;”—and “as a thief in the *night* :” just as in Pharaoh's time, the destroying angel went out at *midnight*, and a cry of distress was heard from the king on the throne to the captive in the dungeon.<sup>w</sup> Up to the moment of his coming, men will be refusing to look at prophecy, and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming?”<sup>x</sup>

Of the righteous, however, we are expressly told, that the day of the Lord shall *not overtake them* as a thief in the night: y they will be looking out for the Saviour's approach, satisfied, from the signs of the times, that their redemption draweth nigh.<sup>z</sup>

<sup>t</sup> Matt. XXIV. 38.    <sup>u</sup> Zech. I. Compare v. 11 and vv. 18—21.  
<sup>v</sup> 1 Thess. v. 3.    <sup>w</sup> Ex. XII. 29.    <sup>x</sup> 2 Pet. II. 4.    <sup>y</sup> 1 Thess. v. 4.  
<sup>z</sup> Luke XXI. 28.



They will apparently witness the tribulation, and it will be cut short for their sakes; but they will be spared in it. Consider first what David says of the righteous—"that in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto *him*."<sup>a</sup> So in another place—"In the time of trouble he shall hide me ' in his pavilion—in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide ' me—he shall set me upon a rock."<sup>b</sup> Psalm xxxvii. is throughout to this point, but especially verses 34, 38—40 : "Wait on the Lord, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the ' land : when the wicked are cut off *thou shalt see it*—The ' transgressors shall be destroyed together : the end of the ' wicked shall be cut off : but the salvation of the righteous ' is of the Lord, he is their strength in the time of trouble ; ' and the Lord shall help them and deliver them ; he shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they ' trust in him." Again in Psalm xlv. "God is our refuge ' and strength ; a very present help in trouble : therefore will ' we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the ' mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the ' waters thereof roar and be troubled ; though the mountains ' shake with the swelling thereof." Isaiah says of the Lord's people—"They shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in ' sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places ; when it shall ' hail, coming down on the forest, and the city shall be low ' in a low place."<sup>c</sup> And again, "Come, my people, enter ' thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee," (an exhortation to *prayer*, Matt. vi.) "hide thyself as it were for ' a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For be- ' hold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabit- ' ants of the earth for their iniquity—the earth also shall ' disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."<sup>d</sup>

There is also a remarkable prophecy in Jeremiah xxx. 4—9, concerning *Israel and Judah* at this time. "These (he says) ' are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and ' concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord : we have heard ' a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now ' and see, whether a *man* doth travail with child ? Wherefore ' do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman ' in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness ? Alas ! for ' that day is great, so that none is like it. It is even the

<sup>a</sup> Ps. xxxii. 6.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. xxvii. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. xxxii. 18, 19.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.

‘ time of Jacob’s *trouble* ; but—*he shall be saved out of it.*  
 ‘ For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts,  
 ‘ that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst  
 ‘ thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of  
 ‘ him : but they shall serve the Lord their God and David  
 ‘ their King, whom I will raise up unto them.”

The next promise I shall notice is Joel III. 16. After describing the time of trouble, he adds : “ The Lord shall roar  
 ‘ out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the earth  
 ‘ shall shake : but the Lord will be the hope of His *people* and  
 ‘ the strength of *the children of Israel.*” I shall only quote one more from Zephaniah, because it shows again the suitability of prayer at this time : “ *Seek ye the Lord, all ye*  
 ‘ *meeke* of the earth, which have wrought his judgement : seek  
 ‘ righteousness, seek meekness :—it may be *ye shall be hid*  
 ‘ in the day of the Lord’s anger.”

I do not consider arguments derived from *types* as suited to lay at the *foundation* of a doctrine ; but when we have direct testimony, similar to that which I have brought forward, they are very important collateral evidence. The analogy then of the types clearly confirms the testimony adduced. The deliverance, for example of Noah at the flood ; from which some argue, that (as the ark rose above the waters of the deluge, so in the fiery deluge,) the Church will rise to meet the Lord in the air, whilst the conflagration is going on below. The deliverance also of Lot at the destruction of the cities of the plain, set forth as a special example of the vengeance of eternal fire.<sup>e</sup> The Exodus from Egypt again typifies a way of salvation for the people, at the very time when their enemies shall be overthrown. The proceeding of Jehu,<sup>f</sup> in the destruction of the whole of the worshippers of Baal, just at the moment when they thought their cause was most prosperous ; and the previous careful exclusion from among them of the worshippers of Jehovah, I take to be another type. The well known escape of the christians to Pella at the destruction of Jerusalem may also be instanced ; and may other events.

To believers therefore I would say—yet, not I, but the Lord—“ WATCH ye, therefore, and PRAY *always*, that ye may be accounted *worthy to escape all these things* that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” Luke XXI. 36.

<sup>e</sup> Jude v. 7.      <sup>f</sup> 2 Kings x. 18—25.

## Essay VIII

## THE STATE OF SEPARATE SPIRITS.

No circumstance connected with modern theology has more affected me with surprise, than the vague and unsatisfactory notions entertained by most respecting the present and future conditions of *the dead*. In its first aspect, so far as our own individual happiness is concerned, it appears to be the object of all others in divine revelation of most intense interest, and most calculated to engage the inquiry of intelligent mortals : and indeed there are few persons that are not led by the ordinary afflictions or sympathies of life to entertain the subject at some period of their existence, however transiently ; and there are few ministers, in the habit of encouraging religious conversation, who are not repeatedly assailed by inquiries on this head. Yet how many preachers and writers treat the topic with hesitation, or mere conjecture ; not seeming to have any decided scripture testimony on which to base their hopes ; as if they rather *wished* their sentiments to be true, than that they have a decided *assurance* that they are so. The conclusion to which this has led me is, that Christians in general, owing to erroneous views concerning the resurrection state and the kingdom of glory, have likewise fallen into error in regard to some important circumstances respecting the present and future conditions of the dead. And it is remarkable, that they commonly speak with the greater degree of confidence concerning the state of separate spirits, which is really an *obscure* point, and respecting which but little is revealed ; whilst in regard to that other state, which is declared to be “ life and immortality brought to *light*,” and concerning which we have abundant *revelation*, they are inclined to discourage inquiry, as though it were altogether hopeless.

I trust I write not these things in a spirit of arrogance ; for I am deeply sensible that I have myself been precisely in this state, at a time when I was nevertheless desirous to ascertain and to communicate the truth : but I think it due to those holy doctrines which I advocate to avow, that it was only in proportion as their glorious light broke in upon my understanding that I was enabled to apprehend these other truths with any clearness.

As these Essays are chiefly intended to set forth the *future* condition of believers, I might have been justified in passing over the mention of the *intermediate* state: but as I consider it important, when advancing opinions opposed to the notions of many pious christians, not to let it be supposed that I entertain sentiments which I entirely reject; I shall preface my inquiry into the *resurrection state*, by a notice of *the state of separate spirits*—i.e. of the state of souls after death.

Some students of prophecy, dazzled perhaps by the first reception of light, were induced, when they embraced millenarian views, to consider the state of the disembodied spirit as one of unconscious sleep; and though most of them have now retracted this opinion, yet some hold it; whilst many have only modified it, and, as it appears to me, do still degrade the separate state below what the Scriptures have revealed concerning it. I shall therefore endeavour to prove, 1st, that the dead in Christ are in a state of *consciousness*, in the fullest sense of the term; and 2dly, that they are in a state of *holy enjoyment*, superior to any experienced upon earth.\*

I. That the spirit is in a state of unconsciousness is argued from the circumstance, that death is described in Scripture as a *sleep*, and that the dead are said to *awake* and *arise* from it. I doubt whether more be meant by such expressions than a figure, seeing that the very same phrases are applied by the Psalmist to God:—"Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise; &c."<sup>a</sup> The same writers scout, as "idle," the notion of such Scriptures having respect only to the *body*:<sup>b</sup> nevertheless all these Scriptures are ambiguous in regard to their applicability to the spirit; whilst Psalm xvi. 9 ("My *flesh* shall rest in hope,") appears quite unequivocal as respects the body: and therefore I feel justified, when the context does

\* I do not think it needful to dwell formally upon another opinion, held by Socinians, that at death the soul is *annihilated*. We may refute them with this text (if they will receive it)—"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not *able* to kill the soul; but rather fear Him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." For were the soul annihilated at death, its destruction would be placed within the power of man; so that he who killed the body would as certainly annihilate the soul: when therefore it is stated, that men are not *able* to kill the *soul*, even though they kill the *body*, it is clear that bodily death does not annihilate the soul.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. XLIV. 23; and see also LXXIII. 20; LXXVIII. 65. <sup>b</sup> See Morning Watch, Vol. II. p. 382.

not determine the point, in limiting all doubtful instances to the body likewise.

I apprehend Romans VIII. 10, 11 to be referable to this subject: "And if Christ be in you, the *body is dead* because of sin, but the *spirit is life* because of righteousness; but if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your *mortal body* by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Here observe that the *body* is condemned to death, whilst the *spirit* is redeemed from it; and yet it is said, that the body shall hereafter be likewise quickened: but where in the meanwhile is the eminent distinction between the body being *dead* and the *spirit life*, unless it be that in the intermediate state the body sleeps, whilst the spirit enjoys a living consciousness?\*

\* The Writers of the Morning Watch just referred to, when discussing the locality of Hades and Paradise, contend from Matt. XII. 38, and Rom. X. 7, that they are in *the heart of the earth*: nor am I disposed to question this part of the statement, which is generally supported by Scripture. But the application of the term *sleep* to the *body* appears to them idle on this very account; because the body soon becomes dissipated into *dust* and cannot therefore have a *locality*. To me however the return of the body to the *dust* confirms the view which I have taken: for we are expressly told, "that many of them that *sleep* in the *dust* of the earth shall awake;" (Dan. XII. 2;) and Isaiah exclaims, "Awake and sing ye that dwell in *dust*." (Isa. XXVI. 19.)

There are difficulties however in the way of my *full* conviction, in regard to Paradise or Hades being in the heart of the earth. These writers lay great stress, and justifiably, upon the numerous passages of Scripture which speak of the dead as *descending*, or *going down* into Hades. But that which creates the greatest difficulty in my mind is, that there are other passages, referring to separate *spirits*, which describe them as *ascending* or having *ascended*. Thus: "All are of the dust and all turn to *dust* again.—Who knoweth the *spirit* of man that goeth *upward*, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth." (Eccles. III. 21.) "Then shall the *dust* return to the earth as it was, and the *spirit* shall return *unto God* who gave it." (Ibid. XII. 7.) "Jerusalem which *is above* is free, which is the mother of us all."—What is this, but the Church, the spirits of the just made perfect, the New Jerusalem which is to come *down* from God out of heaven? (Gal. IV, 26; Rev. XXI.)

For the information of some Readers (and others I trust will excuse it) I may here explain, that the ancient doctrine concerning Hell or Hades does not limit it to a place of *torment*, as is generally intended by the word *Hell* in common use; but includes the places of disembodied spirits, both of the righteous and the wicked; between whom there is a

It is objected by some, that in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the latter is represented as lying in Abraham's bosom; and that as he is not made to speak, he must be in a state of repose, and consequently of *unconsciousness*. This objection, however, arises from not understanding what is meant, in the Eastern style, by lying in the bosom of any; which was with them the place of favor and distinction. Thus the apostle *John* is described as lying in the Saviour's bosom; and thus the Jews, before the time of Christ, said of the righteous dead that they were gone to *the bosom of Adam*, and *the bosom of Abraham*; and, after Christ, believers were said to lie in *the bosom of Christ*. Besides, the rich man is evidently conscious and *does* converse; it must therefore be *his* body only that slept; and shall we say that the damned enjoy a consciousness which the righteous do not?

II. This point, the consciousness of the spirit in the intermediate state, will be more fully established when we consider *secondly*, that the dead are in a state of holy enjoyment, *superior* to what they experienced when on earth: for that which proves the latter point, does more eminently confirm the former.

St. Paul declares, "that for him to *live* is Christ, and to die is gain."<sup>c</sup> I have carefully attended to the arguments which would explain this text otherwise;—viz. that the Apostle here overleaps the intermediate state, as of no account, and refers his gain by death to the *resurrection*; but I cannot at all concur with this view. Surely death would, *in the mean while*, be a loss to the man, who could say, when living, "*To me to live is Christ*;" unless that conscious union with Christ were still continued to him: for in regard to any merely *natural* circumstances we may say, "a living dog is better than a dead lion."<sup>d</sup> And this continued enjoyment of Christ—yea, and this *increased* enjoyment of him—is fully borne out by the 33rd verse, where the Apostle says, "that he has a desire to depart and be *with* Christ, which is *far better*" than remaining in the flesh.

separation, likened in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to "*a great gulf*." The receptacle of the righteous is called *Paradise*; to which place the spirit of our Saviour went when he gave up the ghost, as is evident from his assuring the thief—"This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The receptacle of the wicked is called *Tartarus*.—The phrase in 2 Pet. II. 4, "Cast into *Hell*" is in the original, "Cast into *Tartarus*."

<sup>c</sup> Phil. I. 21.

<sup>d</sup> Eccles. IX. 4.

There is a text even still more explicit ; for it proves, that what the Apostle means by being with Christ is, the enjoyment of his *visible* presence.—“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are *absent from* the Lord ; (for we walk by faith, *not by sight* :) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and *present with* the Lord.”<sup>e</sup>

These two Scriptures are very embarrassing to Dr. Burnet and those writers who follow him in this particular ; and they struggle greatly to get rid of their force. I cannot pretend to follow them through all their arguments : I shall select one or two which appear to me to be the strongest. Another Writer in the Morning Watch has translated and given in that work the fourth chapter of Burnet “*De statu Mortuorum, &c.*” adding copious notes ; and as he does full justice to the original, and handles the subject ably, I shall quote from his translation.—

“Again, in such expressions as we are considering, the object is evidently an antithesis : as indeed may easily be remarked, both in Corinthians and Philippians ; the words “*to be with Christ*” being contrasted with our continuance in this world. For, indeed, when we quit this life, we are not extinct, we are not annihilated ; and where are we ? *With God, with Christ* : we live unto God. (Luke xx, 38.) We are present to Christ ; and he will bring us back, flourishing and full of life, with himself also, to the theatre of this world. We therefore shall not wonder to find St. Paul exclaiming, “*For to me to die is gain.*” (Phil. i, 21.) We are rather surprised that he says so little than that he says so much in favor of death, when so many evils, so many troubles, so many perils, so many labors, encompassed him ; who had endured both hunger and thirst, with cold, and nakedness, and wounds and stripes, and prisons, and rocks, and shipwrecks, and every sort of affliction, both by sea and land. That death should be esteemed more desirable than such a life, who can wonder ? If it be only rest, and a remission of trials, still it is so far “*gain.*”—Let us, then, learn to think somewhat more moderately concerning our wretched selves and our reward ; and no longer promise to ourselves and others the beatific vision of God upon the instant of our eyes being closed ; when we see the Apostle of the Gentiles

‘ (who of all men best merited any reward which the christian religion holds forth) presenting no such hope, either to himself or to others.” Vol. I, p. 676.

His Translator and Commentator begins the subject at *verse* 5 of the above place in Corinthians, and writes thus :—

“ “ Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing”  
 ‘ —Who is he? Is it not the Holy Ghost; the whole God-head Triune?—as the Apostle writes: “ Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is *God!* who hath also given unto us [already] *the earnest of the Spirit;*” therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in this unredeemed body, (which, like the microscope, is at once the means of boasted investigation, and at the same time the preventive of almost all sight; ) whilst we are enveloped with this shroud, *the flesh;* while all things are distorted by its impurity and nothing seen aright by reason of its refraction; while sin is mingled in our every thought, and the better they are the more literally that is crucified;—  
 ‘ “ *while we are at home in the body,* we are absent from the Lord.” ” P. 672.

The first thing I notice in these extracts is, that the Doctor, by coupling the two texts together, adroitly diverts our attention from the antithesis in 2 Cor. v, and treats only of that in Phil. 1. The second thing I notice is, that his Translator, when giving his own opinion on the former passage, entirely passes over the important parenthesis,—“ For we walk by *faith* not by *sight;*” which is nevertheless the key to the right understanding of the whole. For what may the Apostle mean by these words? To me he appears to anticipate the objection which would immediately present itself to a spiritual man, when the Apostle speaks of being *absent* from the Lord :—How can we be *absent* from him, when *to live* is *Christ*, and every believer walks with him, and enjoys the sense of his presence? Yes, (answers the Apostle,) we certainly live and walk with him now; but whilst in the body it is by *faith*, and not by *sight*: but when we are absent from the body, then we shall walk in the enjoyment of his visible presence—by *sight* and not by *faith*. This I consider the real antithesis of the passage.

If I understand the view which Dr. B.’s Translator takes, it is, that the presence to be enjoyed when apart from the body is a *spiritual* one;—the Holy Ghost having given to us an ear-



nest now, will then give us a greater fulness. I grant that we have here many drawbacks and hindrances, which prove a clog upon our spiritual enjoyment; but in the heart of every believer Christ does nevertheless dwell by the Spirit;<sup>f</sup> and his body, though vile, is nevertheless the temple of the Holy Ghost.<sup>g</sup> It therefore destroys the essential distinction between the righteous and the ungodly, to say, that Christ is not with the believer *now*, in this present life. And it destroys the antithesis of this passage; which is, not the having less of the *Spirit* whilst in the body, and out of it the fulness; but the walking in the body with Christ by *faith*, and when out of it being with Christ by *sight*.

I must here however observe, that though I feel assured, that the enjoyment of Christ with the saints is a *visible* one; yet am I equally persuaded, that they have not yet ascended up on high to be present with him in the heavens. Nor is such an opinion at all inconsistent with the ancient notion of Paradise being in the heart of the earth, whether it is really there or not. The material sun is said to be present with us, and is unquestionably seen and felt by us when it shines in our heavens, though it is separated from us by millions of miles: why may not "the Sun of righteousness" equally gladden the saints in Paradise, by some similar manifestation of himself, and communication of his beams from the highest heavens? Certainly Stephen had such a manifestation, when he cried,— "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

I shall finally notice, in regard to the separate state, Rev. xiv. 13; "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." The latter part of this text—"their works do follow them"—I may probably enter upon at some future period: for the present I must confine myself to the other words—"They *rest from* their labors;" words which, though apparently of a negative signification, do nevertheless, when duly considered, prove that the righteous dead enjoy a decided increase of *positive* blessedness.

They will evidently be delivered from all *bodily* pain and disease, and from all the various corporal evils attendant on

<sup>f</sup> John xiv. 18, 21, 23; Rom. viii. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19.

poverty,—viz. hunger, thirst, heat, cold and the like. The peasant, the mechanic, the bondman, will likewise have done with all their toil and fatigue: not indeed that the spirit will be without active employment; for I consider a state of in-ertness to be incompatible with its happiness.

And in respect to weariness of the flesh—aye and weariness of the *spirit*—even christian labors of love are not without their drawback: the very phrase “*labor of love*” implies an imperfection. They may be cheerfully entered upon, and they are not unfrequently attended by real gratification; but yet, alas! through the present infirmity of man, they are a *weariness*. To visit the abodes of wretchedness, filth, and contagion,—to endeavour to bring the spiritually dead to a sense of their danger;—to instruct the dull, the prejudiced, the unbelieving;—and frequently from all these classes to meet with ingratitude in return for our exertions: these things are for the present not joyous but grievous. But the dead REST from all this.

In the next place it is a rest from *sin*—which rest must be one of the most blessed sources of enjoyment to a renewed spirit. He rests from sin *outwardly*, since he no longer is doomed to dwell with those who vex his righteous soul from day to day by their ungodliness: “there the wicked cease from troubling:”<sup>h</sup> there “the Lord hides him in His tabernacle from the strife of tongues.”<sup>i</sup> And he rests from the conflict with sin *inwardly*. For though whilst in the flesh he is able through grace, to enjoy a dominion over sin, so that he does not obey it in the lusts thereof; yet he is continually galled and annoyed by its inward emotions. Sometimes when he would enjoy spiritual things, his soul cleaveth to the dust;—when he would do good, he finds evil present with him, (in his motives and tempers perhaps,) and he groans in this body of death being burdened. But, when he dies, he rests from all his warfare, and from his fears, and doubts, and prejudices, and jealousies, and is borne by the angels to the general assembly of the spirits of the just.

<sup>h</sup> Job. III. 17.    <sup>i</sup> Ps. XXXI. 26.

## Essay IX.

## THE RESURRECTION STATE.

In my last Essay I adverted to the circumstance, that some Christians discourage inquiry concerning the *glorified* condition of the saints, as if nothing were specifically revealed concerning it: and I may add, that there are two passages of Scripture frequently brought forward, as *proof* that we cannot arrive at any satisfactory knowledge on these points. These passages I shall first notice.

The one is 1st Cor. II. 9—"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." This text is quoted by the Apostle from Isaiah LXIV. 4, to shew how it had come to pass, that the wise and mighty of this world had crucified the Lord of glory, because they did not understand the mysteries of redemption. I need not stay to inquire, whether the things, here said to have been withheld from the perception of man, were the gracious truths and mysteries connected with the present state of salvation, or if they related only to a *glorified* condition in heaven or on earth: it is sufficient to observe, that the next verse clearly proves these things, whatsoever they may be, TO BE REVEALED under the Gospel to the *spiritual* man, and only veiled from the eye and the ear and the heart of the *natural* man.—"But God HATH revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (v. 10.)

The other place is 1 John III. 2—"It doth not yet appear what we shall be." There is in the *context* of this passage sufficient to lead one to the conclusion, that we do not apprehend it rightly, if we would so interpret it as to say, we know nothing about our future state. For is it not therein declared, that we are *sons of God*, and that we shall be *like Christ* at his appearing? A careful consideration of the Greek text will I think satisfy the Reader, that the Apostle means not to say, that it has never been *declared* what we shall be; seeing that he himself also *does* declare it in this very place: but that what we shall be hath not yet *appeared*; (that is, the glorified God-man, our great *exemplar* hath not yet appeared;) but that

when HE *shall appear* we shall be like him.\* Thus in Col. III. 4 we read—"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then 'shall ye also appear with him in glory.'" Whatsoever therefore is declared of the glorified manhood of the Lord Jesus at the time of his appearing, of that we may conclude the saints will be partakers; and thus the text, instead of being *opposed* to the inquiry, would really form an ample foundation on which to raise it.

I proceed now to the more immediate consideration of the resurrection state itself.

I. It is pretty generally acknowledged among Christians, that the grand purpose of God in redemption is to make such an exhibition of certain of his attributes, as could not otherwise be properly conceived of. It is not sufficient, either for men or angels, that Jehovah should be *proclaimed* as "the 'Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, 'abundant in goodness, &c. ;'" he will be known as such by his *actings*, so that the universe may have experimental evidence of this blessed and glorious truth. I pass however from the general consideration of this point, to its particular bearing on redeemed *man*, which is not, I think, so commonly dwelt upon.

For aught we know to the contrary, angels had never witnessed an example of the *justice* and *severity* of God, until the angels that rebelled were hurled down to Tartarus. But in regard to the rebellion of man, the principalities and powers in heavenly places are to behold a display of the *mercy* and *goodness* and *love* of God: not such a mere ordinary instance of these qualities, as shall only prove that they are divine; but such an exhibition of them as shall be *worthy of* JEHOVAH, affording the most wonderful and exalted specimen of these attributes. To this end man is permitted to *fall*, and *so* to fall, that he becomes lower, if possible, than the angels that rebelled; being "earthly and sensual" as well as "devilish," and thus as it were two-fold more the child of hell than his deceiver. But God will not only pardon him, and reinstate him in his former condition of happiness; but he hath deter-

\* Ουπω εφανερωθη τι εσομεθα' οιδαμεν δε οτι εαν φανερωθη ομοιοι αυτω εσομεθα. There is an evident connexion and identity here between that which is the nominative to εφανερωθη (whatever it may be) and the nominative to φανερωθη and the antecedent of αυτω.

mined to lavish on him the riches of grace and glory.<sup>a</sup> As we read of the eastern monarchs sometimes raising men, according to the pleasure of their will, from very lowly circumstances, treating them as special favorites, exalting them among all other princes, presidents and rulers, and sending them forth as those “whom the king delighteth to honour;” so the Lord Jehovah hath purposed to raise up man as a beggar from the dunghill,<sup>b</sup> to receive him to his own bosom, to dwell and walk with him as his friend and familiar, to exalt him in dignity *above* the angels, giving him to inherit *all things* as his portion, and in fact only in the throne being greater than him.

It will, I trust, be readily admitted, that these things are true concerning the MAN Christ Jesus: would that they were as fully believed in regard to the elect of God in general! I am persuaded that we should find this blessed expectation most influential in stirring us up to walk worthy of our high vocation. But so wonderfully is the love of God above all that we can ask or think, that the saints in every age have need to pray, “that, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the hope of His calling, and what *the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*”

It may be well, however, before I proceed to prove these things of the redeemed in general, to instance two or three testimonies concerning Christ. As Jesus declares that the Father hath committed all judgement to the Son, *because* he is the *Son of Man*;<sup>c</sup> so St. Paul asserts, that *all things are put under him*, He only excepted which did put all things under him.<sup>d</sup> In Ephesians we are told, that God hath raised him “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all under his feet.”<sup>e</sup> In Philippians again we read, “that God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, &c.”<sup>f</sup> And once more it is written, “that God hath appointed him heir of all things;—that he is made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a

<sup>a</sup> Rom. ix. 23; Ephes. i. 7, 18; ii. 7; iii. 16; Phil. iv. 19.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 8.      <sup>c</sup> Compare John v. vv. 22 and 27.      <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28.      <sup>e</sup> Ephes. i. 20—22.      <sup>f</sup> Phil. ii. 9—11.

‘ more excellent name than they : for unto the angels hath he  
 ‘ not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak ;  
 ‘ but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that  
 ‘ thou art mindful of him ? Thou madest him a little [while]  
 ‘ lower than the angels ; thou crownedst him with glory and  
 ‘ honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands ; thou  
 ‘ hast put all things in subjection under his feet.”<sup>g</sup> Every one  
 acquainted with Scripture must be aware, how readily these  
 passages might be multiplied : and I trust none will be disposed  
 to contend that they relate to the *divine* nature of our Lord ;  
 since it were absurd to make the circumstances, that he should  
 be above the angels, and inherit all things, the subject of pro-  
 phecy or promise in regard to his *deity*.

Now it is clear to my mind, from the obvious tenor of the  
 Scriptures, that, in this exaltation and glory of the *manhood*  
 of *Christ*, the saints are to have a direct participation. This may  
 be made evident, first, from a due consideration of one or two  
 of the *figures* under which they are frequently spoken of in  
 their relationship to Jesus. For example, they are “ the *body*  
 of Christ ;”<sup>h</sup> and it is difficult to imagine how honor can be  
 put upon the *head*, unless the *members* also are made partakers  
 of it. Again, they are “ the *bride*” or spouse of Christ, whom  
 he nourisheth and cherisheth as his own flesh, and of whose  
 honor he is jealous.<sup>i</sup> And it is manifest, that when a man is  
 raised to regal dignity, his wife is likewise elevated to the  
 throne ; and her lord would resent an indignity or slight of-  
 fered to his consort, the same as if offered to himself. This  
 latter figure will further serve to point out one important dis-  
 tinction as to the relative *degree* of glory to be respectively  
 enjoyed by Christ and the saints ; for a queen, though she  
 share immediately in all the pre-eminence and splendor and  
 greatness enjoyed by her husband, does nevertheless possess  
 it subordinate to him. It becomes his by inheritance, perhaps,  
 or by conquest : it is hers rather as it is *reflected* on her by  
 him. She can lay no claim to it in her own right, separate  
 from her lord ; and she enjoys it only because he has set his  
 love upon her, and called her to come and share in his glory.

But these things are not merely to be inferred from types  
 and figures, but are declared in more plain and absolute terms.

<sup>g</sup> See the whole of chapters I. and II.

<sup>h</sup> Ephes I. 23.

<sup>i</sup> Ephes.

I have shewn in Essays No. V. and VII. that the saints are to sit down in the *throne* with Christ, and to participate in the *judgement*; but some of the things also which are alleged in Scripture to prove this great pre-eminence of Christ, are in other places spoken in respect to the saints. Is the exaltation of Jesus above the angels argued from the circumstance, that God hath never said to one of them, Thou art my SON? j—“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the *the sons of God!* Beloved now are we the sons of God.”<sup>k</sup> Again, is Jesus, being the Son, “appointed *heir of all things?*”<sup>l</sup>—So the Apostle argues of the saints, “that if *children*, then *heirs*—HEIRS OF GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS with Christ! if so be that we *suffer* with him that we may be also *glorified together!*”<sup>m</sup>—“He that overcometh shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be *my son.*”<sup>n</sup> I cannot take these things as mere rhetorical flourishes, spoken without any definite meaning: I view them as blessed and glorious realities, not one jot or tittle of which shall fail: and therefore I cannot conceive, how the saints can be “predestinated to the adoption of *children*,” and made “*joint-heirs* with Christ,” unless they stand in the next immediate gradation to him in rank and privilege and glory in the kingdom of their Father. For this purpose they are made “to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the EXCEEDING RICHES of his grace in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus.”<sup>o</sup> I know not how others who can receive and realize these truths are affected by them: as for me, though they excite my joy and wonder, yet they fill me with self-loathing and abasement.

Before I quit this part of my subject I may here anticipate one particular concerning the enjoyments of the saints; which is, that their experience does in many respects increase their *capacity* for spiritual bliss, above that of the Angels. According to our present apprehensions, the measure of our spiritual happiness is proportionable to the measure of love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Love is indeed the very essence of the divine nature; p conformity to which, beyond a question, constitutes our ability to taste of divine bliss. But then our love towards God depends on our sense of the extent of God’s

j Heb. i. 5.    k 1 John iii. 1, 2.    l Heb. i. 2.    m Rom. viii. 17.  
n Rev. xxi. 7.    o Ephes. ii. 6, 7.    p 1 John iv. 16.

love and condescension towards us ; especially in the instance of redeeming mercy. He who is conscious of many sins forgiven, the same loveth much ; “ but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”<sup>q</sup> In this respect then the probationary experience of the saints, painful and degrading as it is in the first instance, is by divine grace ultimately overruled to enhance their sense of God’s condescension and goodness. The elect angels, so far as we know, have never sinned ; and therefore have not been placed in jeopardy by hell-deserving guilt. They have not been plucked as brands from the burning ;—they have no inward corruptions nor evil world to contend against ;—they have not “ come out of great tribulation.” Nothing so much enhances our sense of present blessings, as the retrospect of opposite dangers and evils. The comforts of a fire-side are never more appreciated, than when we have been subjected to the pelting and severity of a storm : the refreshment of cooling shade is best understood by him, who has wandered through desert wastes, exposed to the fury of a vertical sun. The angels’ conception of the *condescension* of God must likewise be inferior to ours ; for *we* are the immediate objects on whom it is bestowed ; they rather the spectators, who “ desire to look into” these things. God hath never identified himself with the nature of angels by assuming it, as he has done ours :<sup>r</sup> and in one word,—Christ did not DIE for them ; and therefore they can only view his *mercy* as it is exhibited to others.

II. Having, as I trust, established the general position, that in the resurrection the condition of the saints will transcend in glory that of the angels, I pass on to the next consideration.

In my last Essay I contended, (from 1 Cor. v, 6—8 and Phil. 1, 21—23,) that the souls of believers are, in the intermediate state, in the enjoyment of the presence of Christ. In what *manner* they see him and are with him, is not, that I am aware of, revealed ; it is for us to receive the fact itself ; and for the rest, it appears to me the safest to leave it in that obscurity, in which it has pleased God to envelope it. But in regard to the person of the FATHER, I think it is clearly intimated to us, that our formal introduction and presentation to *Him* does not take place until the period of the resurrection. Though we are now said to be *sons*, (or rather “ *sons and daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty,”<sup>s</sup>) yet it is only the *Spirit* of

<sup>q</sup> Luke VII. 47.    <sup>r</sup> Hebrews II. 16.    <sup>s</sup> 2 Cor. VI. 18.



adoption we have as yet received, which is the *pledge* and *earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession: the adoption itself being identified with the redemption of the *body*, which is also the time of “the *manifestation* of the sons of God.”<sup>t</sup> But as this is an important point in regard to the millennarian view of the Advent and Resurrection, I shall endeavour to illustrate it further.

When the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead he said to Mary, “that he was not yet ascended to his Father;”<sup>u</sup> plainly intimating, as I conceive, that Hades or Paradise, from which he was just come, was not the abode of the Father. The same may be inferred from the words of the Apostle concerning David; viz—“David is not ascended into the heavens:”<sup>v</sup> and the Psalmist himself defers the period of the beholding the face of God in righteousness, until he shall “awake up with God’s likeness.”<sup>w</sup> It would appear also, that the saints are not publicly *declared* to be the sons of God, until their glorious manifestation: for it is to this period Jesus refers, when he promises, concerning him that overcometh,—“I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will *confess* his name before my Father, and before his angels.”<sup>x</sup> And there are various other scriptures referring the time of the saints’ introduction to the royal presence, (if I may so say,) to the period of the resurrection. Thus St. Paul expresses his confidence, “that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up *us* also (meaning *himself*) by Jesus, and shall *present* us with *you*.”<sup>y</sup> In the epistle to the Thessalonians he connects it with the *advent*; praying for their increase in love, “to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness *before* GOD, *even* our FATHER, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”<sup>z</sup> Similar is the doctrine of St. Jude: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to *present* you faultless before the *presence* of his *glory* with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.” Thus am I compelled to conclude, that *man*, whilst in the separate state,\* hath no access to that light in

\* There is a curious passage on this head by the ancient author of “Questions and Answers to the Orthodox,” bound up in the editions of

<sup>t</sup> Compare Rom. VIII. 15, 19, and 23; 2 Cor. V. 5, 6; Gal. IV. 5, 6; Ephes. I. 13, 14. <sup>u</sup> John XX. 17. <sup>v</sup> Acts II. 34. <sup>w</sup> Psalm XVII. 15. <sup>x</sup> Rev. III. 5. <sup>y</sup> 2 Cor. IV. 14. <sup>z</sup> 1 Thess. III. 13.

which God dwells,<sup>a</sup> and that he does not visibly behold the glory of God until that time when it shall be announced,—“Behold the tabernacle of God is with *men*, and he will  *dwell* with them.”<sup>b\*</sup>

But there is a yet greater depth in this part of our subject, which remains to be considered. Many expressions in Scripture lead to the conclusion, that the saints are not presented even to *Christ* until the period of the advent; and therefore, that in whatever way the saints, when absent from the body, are to be considered present with him, and to behold him by sight and not by faith, it is not in that glorified nature which he will possess, when he comes as “THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR.” Thus it is written, that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the Church, “that he may *present* it to HIMSELF a glorious Church, &c.<sup>c</sup> He bids his disciples pray, that they may be accounted worthy to escape the last tribulation and to *stand before* the SON OF MAN;<sup>d</sup> as if they had not been brought into his presence previously. Similar is the promise in John’s Gospel,<sup>e</sup> that He will *come again and receive them to*

Justyn Martyr’s works, and incorrectly attributed to him. Being asked, what became of those who came out of their graves after the resurrection of Jesus and went into the holy city and appeared unto many; and having stated, among other things in reply, that they went again to Hades with their bodies, in order to afford assurance to the souls there, that the resurrection of Christ was a pledge of the resurrection of *all*; he concludes by saying, They died not again, but continue in immortality, just as Enoch and Elijah, and are *with them in Paradise*, still waiting a *change* after the manner of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; according to the words of the Apostle,—“We shall *all* be changed.” Δι’ ἣν αἰτίαν εἶδε ἐτελευτήσαν πάλιν, ἀλλὰ μὲν εἶναι ἐν ἀθανασίᾳ καθάπερ ὁ Ἐνωχ καὶ ὁ Ἡλίας, καὶ εἰσι σὺν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ παραδείσῳ ἀναμένοντες τὴν ἡδὴ αἰωνίαν τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀναστάσεως γινομένην κατὰ ἐναλλαγὴν καθ’ ἣν, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Θεὸς ἀποστόλος, πάντες ἀλλαγῶμεθα. Εἰς γὰρ ἀθανάτον τε καὶ ἀφάρτον ζῶντων ἐπιγεγονετινος ἡ ἀνάστασις, πλὴν τῆς Σωτήρος Χριστοῦ, οὗ καὶ πρωτοκόκος τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἀνηγορευταί. Question LXXXV. I give this without expressing any opinion on it, merely for the information of others.

\* Not only can no *man* now approach to the presence of God; but there appears to be a distinction among the *angels* even. For Gabriel states it to be his *privilege*, that he stood *in the presence* of God: (Luke i. 11 :) and of the angels who minister to the saints it is said, apparently by way of distinction, “In heaven their angels do *always behold the face* of my Father which is in heaven.” Matt. xviii. 10.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 16.    <sup>b</sup> Rev. xxi. 3.    <sup>c</sup> Ephes. v. 27.    <sup>d</sup> Luke xxi. 36.  
<sup>e</sup> xiv. 3.

HIMSELF; which it is difficult to reconcile with the notion of each believer being at *death* received to Christ. Agreeably with this view the Apostle says, that he had espoused the Corinthians to one husband, that *he* (Paul) might *present them* as a chaste virgin to *Christ*.<sup>f</sup> He declares also of the Thesalonians, that they will be “his hope and crown of rejoicing *in the presence* of our Lord Jesus Christ *at his coming*.”<sup>g</sup> And St. John exhorts the saints to abide in Christ, “that *when he shall appear*, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed *before him* at his coming.”<sup>h</sup> I pretend not to reconcile these two things, though I doubt not they may be so: they are both *revealed*, and I heartily believe them both. It may please God to give to another greater light on this subject than to myself.\*

III. Let us now inquire, concerning the resurrection saints, “with what *body* do they come?”

Our body is at present a great hindrance to our spiritual enjoyment. Even though the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak; and it has to be denied and carefully watched in order to subject it to the spirit; and to the last “we groan in it being burdened.” But the power of God will be so exerted

\* It is further worthy of observation, that the body in which Jesus was seen by his disciples after his resurrection, and in which he ascended, (as likewise the bodies in which we presume the saints, raised after his resurrection, appeared unto many,) was not such as he appeared in, when, together with Moses and Elijah, he was transfigured in the mount. And therefore these passages of Scripture may allude to the greatly different *circumstances* and *character* in which the saints will behold the Lord at his advent, compared with that appearance in which he condescends to be seen by them in their separate state. This notion is the more reconcileable with Scripture, if we consider, that when the Lord bid the disciples pray, (Luke xxi. 36,) that they might be counted worthy to *stand* before the Son of Man, they were at that very time enjoying the privilege of standing, or possibly sitting, in his presence: yet he evidently makes no account of his presence under the circumstances in which he then was, compared with the period to which he adverts. So Justyn Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, having noticed the power manifested by Christ, whereby devils were cast out in his name, considers it as nothing, compared with the glory and majesty and power to be assumed by him, when Daniel vii. 2 and following verses are fulfilled. So the passage beginning *Εἰ δὲ τῆς παθῆς αὐτῆς οἰκονομίας τῆς δυνάμεως δεικνύται παρακολεθῆσασα καὶ παρακολεθῆσσα, ποσὴ ἢ ἐν τῇ ἐνδοξῷ γινομένη αὐτῆς παρῆσια;* &c.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 2.    <sup>g</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 19.    <sup>h</sup> 1 John ii. 28.

in the resurrection, that we shall possess a *spiritual* body, which will assist, instead of retarding, the motions of the spirit; so that our very *flesh* may then be said to be athirst for the living God. But I cannot do better, in regard to this point, than request the Reader's attention to St. Paul's plain and clear argumentation on this subject, contained in 1 Cor. xv. Having shewn, by an appeal to the analogies in nature, that the corruption and dissolution of the body in the earth, must not be considered any impediment to the power of God to raise it up in a different form, since the same may be observed in regard to every grain of corn cast into the earth; (vv. 35—38) he continues to illustrate the subject by noticing the different kinds of *flesh* which already exist; (as the flesh of men, of fishes, of birds, &c. v. 39;) and also the fact that we already see both *heavenly* and *earthly* bodies, and these with various *degrees* of glory; (vv. 40, 41;) and he then proceeds to apply the subject to the human body. It is placed in the grave under circumstances of corruption, dishonor, and weakness, a merely natural or *animal* body ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\sigma$ ;) but it is raised up a *spiritual* body, incapable of corruption or death, and possessing power and glory. (vv. 42—46 and 53.) Our Lord himself declares the *immortality* of the resurrection saints, when he says, "neither can they *die* any more:"<sup>i</sup>\* so that whatsoever we are to understand of "the second death,"<sup>j</sup> we have this blessed assurance,—“He that overcometh shall not be *hurt* of the second death.”<sup>k</sup> Thus, though the body is to rise, it will undergo such a change, as shall render it flesh of a very different kind from that which we now possess.

We must notice likewise the resplendent *glory* of the body at this time. We have a description of it in the account of the transfiguration, when the Lord appeared in glory together with Moses and Elijah. “The fashion of his countenance was altered,”<sup>l</sup>—“and his face did shine as the sun,”<sup>m</sup>—“and his

\* It is worthy of remark, in regard to the *power and immortality* of the body, that Jesus during his ministry gave a power to his disciples for a season, which, if held in perpetuity, would confer immortality on the possessor: viz. power over all manner of sickness and disease, and over *all the power of the enemy*,—the greatest and last enemy being *death*. See Matt. x. 1—8; Luke x. 18, 19.

<sup>i</sup> Luke xx. 36.    <sup>j</sup> Rev. xx. 12—14.    <sup>k</sup> *ibid.* ii. 11.    <sup>l</sup> Luke ix. 29.  
<sup>m</sup> Matt. xvii. 2.

raiment was white as the light," "shining exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can white them."<sup>n</sup> This *particular* description is not indeed expressly concerning the glory in which Moses and Elijah appeared, but of the body of Jesus: nevertheless, we have decided assurance, that the glorified saints will be exactly conformed to their Lord. Did the face of Jesus shine as the sun?—so also "shall the righteous shine forth *as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father.<sup>o</sup> Was his raiment white as the light?—so "they that be wise shall 'shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars 'for ever and ever."<sup>p</sup> Thus the Apostle argues, in the chapter of Corinthians before quoted, that as we have borne the image of the earthly [man,] we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: which heavenly man is "the Lord from heaven."<sup>q</sup> And in another place he declares, that the Lord will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned *like unto* HIS 'glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able 'even to subdue all things unto himself."<sup>r\*</sup>

Though I fear to enter into an inquiry on any subject, when we have no word from the Lord; yet I consider it equally reprehensible to be afraid of inquiry, when we *have* any light to guide us; therefore I would notice two or three other particulars revealed, concerning our future bodily state.

The first is, that there will be no *marriage* among the risen saints; which our Lord plainly declares in Luke xx. 35. And St. Paul seems to teach, that the distinction of *sex* will be done away; declaring "that there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond 'nor free, *male* nor *female*; but that all are one in Christ Jesus; and if Christ's, then Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."<sup>s</sup> It may be questioned, however, whether the *latter* passage does strictly refer to the resurrection state.

\* It would seem to be owing to the sun-like splendor of the Lord and his saints, that it is said of the New Jerusalem, "there was no need of the sun there, because the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. xxi. 23.) When Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, it was with a glory "ABOVE (or exceeding) the brightness of the sun." (Acts xxvi. 13.) Isaiah iv. 5 may also relate to the shining of the saints in their new tabernacles or "dwelling-places," their heavenly *tabernacle* being evidently their heavenly *body*. See 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid. and Mark ix. 3.    <sup>o</sup> Matt. xliii. 43.    <sup>p</sup> Dan. xii. 3.  
<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 47—49.    <sup>r</sup> Phil. iii. 21.    <sup>s</sup> Gal. iii. 28, 29.

Another particular is, that the saints will have the power of conveying themselves, in the manner of angels, through the heavenly regions. This is evident, first, from the circumstance, that they will rise to meet the Lord in the air.<sup>t</sup> And secondly, it may be clearly gathered from the assurance, that they are to be *ισαγγελοι*, “equal to the angels;”<sup>u</sup> whose bodies, however fashioned, unquestionably possess this locomotive power.

The last particular I shall notice is, that they will possess the sense or faculty of *taste*,—at least, that they will *eat and drink*. To some this will appear a gross and carnal view of our angelic state; but this, I am persuaded, arises from the carnal state of our own minds, which cannot distinguish between the holy use and the abuse of a good thing. Wide is the difference between painting heaven like a Mahometan’s paradise, (as if it consisted only in meats and drinks and sensual enjoyments,) and denying to the saints and angels those faculties, by which they are better enabled to appreciate the goodness of God. The man who can *see* the beauty of creation in fruits and flowers may be enabled to praise God accordingly; but he cannot understand so much of his power and goodness, as the man who likewise discovers a *fragrance* and a *flavor* in those fruits. “To the pure all things are pure.”

But let us come to the Scripture testimony on this head; for on this we may safely rely, however human prejudice may be opposed to it. Did not our Lord eat and drink with his disciples, after his resurrection from the dead?<sup>v</sup> and did he not promise his apostles, as the recompense for their continuing with him in his temptations, “that they should eat and drink ‘at his table in his kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the ‘twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>w</sup> The heavenly messengers who visited Abraham, before the destruction of Sodom,<sup>x</sup> ate with him; and are we to suppose that it was not a reality? or that they were destitute of any faculty whereby to appreciate the food they apparently consumed? The Lord Jesus on one occasion purposely demanded food, that he might convince his disciples of the *reality* of his resurrection:<sup>y</sup> but it were absurd to view it as a proof at all, if we must suppose the act of eating to have been itself only an illusion. Once more, the *manna* which fell in the wilderness, and which was different from any

<sup>t</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 17.    <sup>u</sup> Luke xx. 36.    <sup>v</sup> Acts x. 41.    <sup>w</sup> Luke xxii. 28—30.    <sup>x</sup> Gen. xviii. 8.    <sup>y</sup> Luke xxiv. 41—43.

thing ever witnessed before or since, is called in Scripture "the bread of heaven;" and it is declared by the Psalmist, "that man did eat *angel's food*."<sup>z</sup> We may really just as well deny to the angels the sense of sight or of hearing, as of taste, and suppose that when they *sang* together, at the creation and at the birth of our Saviour, they understood not their own melody.

IV. I shall next briefly notice a few particulars concerning the *intellectual* faculties of the saints.

The *memory* will necessarily be wonderfully improved; decided indications of which are already afforded to spiritual persons. For example, the apostles of our Lord, whilst under training for the ministry, betrayed repeated instances of forgetfulness, in regard to the things which they had both seen and heard from their divine Master; but he promised, "that the Holy Ghost should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said to them."<sup>a</sup> And we have now frequent instances of persons, who, when led to repentance, have sins brought by the Spirit to their recollection, which previously seemed to have been clean forgotten.

In the same manner I might dwell upon the want of *understanding* which men betray in their natural state; and shew how the Lord *opened* the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures.<sup>b</sup> For I apprehend, that every instance, in which we may perceive that our human faculties have been improved by the power of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of our God, is a pledge and earnest of the fulness of that which shall be wrought in us, when we are altogether conformed in body and spirit to his glorious image.

Concerning the increase of our *knowledge* wonderful and glorious things are spoken! The knowledge of the most spiritually minded and intellectual and learned is now, comparatively speaking, as *nothing*. St. Paul compares the present knowledge, even of the *Church*, to the understanding and thoughts and prattling of children; and says, that what we see of divine things are presented to the mind as through a glass, shrouded in comparative obscurity, (*εν αινυματι*,) being only partially known. But hereafter we are to see 'face to face,' without any veil, either on those things now hidden from us, or on our own powers of perception. Then

<sup>z</sup> Psalm LXXVIII. 24, 25.

<sup>a</sup> John XIV. 26.

<sup>b</sup> Luke XXIV. 45.

we shall know EVEN AS WE ARE KNOWN!<sup>c</sup> How *we* are known is plainly declared: "THE WORD OF GOD is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;—piercing, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow;—and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart;—neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of HIM with whom we have to do."<sup>d</sup> Hereafter then shall we be admitted to as intimate a knowledge of the Deity! Nothing will be withheld from us of his purposes, his counsels, his mysteries, his attributes. This would be inconsistent with our privilege, as the friends and brethren of Jesus, and as the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. For Abraham is called "*the friend of God*;"<sup>e</sup> and mark how the Lord accordingly treats him:—"Shall I *hide from Abraham* that thing which I do?"<sup>f</sup> And Jesus decidedly encourages the same inference from the term *friend*:—"Henceforth I call you not *servants*, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you *friends*: for *all things* that I have heard of my Father *I have made known unto you*."<sup>g</sup>

I conceive, however, that this wonderful increase of knowledge will be *gradually* acquired. All that can be known will not burst upon us at once, and be immediately understood in its height and depth and length and breadth. Concerning the sufferings and future glory of Christ it is written,—"*which things the angels desire to look into*;"<sup>h</sup> which expression implies, that *their* knowledge of them is progressive; since they could not, were it otherwise, experience for one moment the unfulfilled desire. Nor is such a gradual and continual increase of the knowledge of God at all incompatible with the promises, that we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known. Suppose we were privileged to have access at all times to some rare beauty, reputed to be exceedingly talented, wise, and amiable,—to behold her unveiled, and to converse with her on the most intimate footing; how soon we should tire, could all that was lovely and admirable be known at one interview. The attraction in such characters is, when fresh graces of the mind and disposition and affections are *continu-*

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. XIII. 9, 12.    <sup>d</sup> Heb. IV. 12, 13.    <sup>e</sup> James II. 23.    <sup>f</sup> Gen. XVIII. 17.    <sup>g</sup> John XV. 15.    <sup>h</sup> 1 Pet. I. 11, 12.



*ally* to be discovered. Not that their chosen friends are in the mean while prohibited from seeing and conversing with them ; but circumstances and occasions *elicit* their character and talent, and cause it to be displayed. And thus it is with God ; of whom we have previously observed, that the work of redemption is one of those occasions which afford a more glorious display of his attributes. And throughout the ages to come, I doubt not but men and angels will be continually discovering fresh excellencies ; even as St. Paul, when he prays that the Ephesian christians might be enabled to comprehend with all saints the breadth and length and depth and height of God's love, declares nevertheless, that it " passeth knowledge."<sup>i</sup>

Connected with this consideration is a point, which has ever greatly interested Christians ; viz.—the mutual *recognition* of the saints. " Shall we *know* each other in the heavenly state ?"—is a question frequently asked ; though the Scripture testimony is so clear on this head, that a question on the subject from an intelligent believer is somewhat surprising. For St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, gives us express instruction concerning them that sleep in Jesus, " that we sorrow not, even as others which have no *hope*."—No hope of what ? evidently, from the context, no hope *of seeing them again*. The heathen around them were indeed without hope in this respect ; and therefore, when they lost their relatives and friends, sorrowed immeasurably and without consolation. But to the saints the Apostle says, " that if we believe that *Jesus* died and rose again, (thus returning again to be seen ' and known by his friends,) even so them also *which believe ' in Jesus*, will God *bring with him*." And then, explaining under what circumstances Christ will bring them with him, he adds, " Wherefore, comfort one another *with these words*."<sup>k</sup> But there would be no peculiar and suitable comfort in them to a person sorrowing under a bereavement, unless they teach, that there is to be a *recognition* of the person.\*

\* How very few, either of pious ministers or laymen, do really comfort the afflicted "*with these words*." Though the instruction is so plain and express, and the time of the saints' reappearance so much nearer, the generality do nevertheless view 1 Thess. iv. 13—18 as a dead letter, and prefer to offer consolation of human suggestion.

<sup>i</sup> Ephes. iii. 18, 19,      <sup>k</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

But besides this, we have evidence in Scripture of a faculty, occasionally communicated to man, something like the gift of discerning spirits; which enabled its possessors not only to recognise those whom they had previously known in the flesh, however changed the fashion of the countenance, but also to identify individuals whom they never could have seen before. Of this there are many instances. Such a power was apparently communicated to Peter, James and John, when they saw Moses and Elijah in glory on the mount. They had never seen them previously, and therefore could not have known them personally; yet Peter evidently discerns them, and mentions them by name.<sup>l</sup> The saints likewise, who rose again after the resurrection of Christ, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many,<sup>m</sup> must have been identified by those to whom they appeared, or their resurrection would not have been a satisfactory evidence. The same power, together with an opposite and restrictive influence, appears to have been exercised on the two disciples traveling to Emmaus after our Lord's resurrection: for though Jesus was personally known to them, yet were their eyes holden, in the first instance, "that they should *not* know him;" and afterwards "their eyes were opened and they *knew* him."<sup>n</sup> We have various instances of these opposite influences being exercised on different parties at the same time. For instance, the ass of Balaam saw the angel of the Lord, for some time before "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam."<sup>o</sup> Elisha appears as if he himself had a perception of the angelic host, when he prayed the Lord to open the eyes of his servant, that *he* might see them.<sup>p</sup> The glorious personage who appeared to Daniel by the river Hiddekel was seen by him only; "for the men that were with him saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves."<sup>q</sup> In these, and similar instances which might be adduced, it is plain, that the individuals, who were supernaturally wrought upon, did previously exercise the ordinary use of their eyes, without any sensible diminution of the powers of vision; and therefore, when it is said that their eyes were *opened*, it refers to an enlarged faculty or capacity of perception granted to them. It is to the point to notice also, that the devils discerned Jesus,

<sup>l</sup> Matt. xvii. 4.    <sup>m</sup> Matt. xxvii. 53.    <sup>n</sup> Luke xxiv. 16 and 31.  
<sup>o</sup> Numb. xxii. 23, 25, 27, 31.    <sup>p</sup> 2 Kings vi. 16, 17.    <sup>q</sup> Dan.  
x. 4—7.

notwithstanding the veil of the flesh, and were repeatedly forbidden to say that they knew him.<sup>r</sup> This I apprehend is, because these fallen spirits do still retain the superior faculties of angels: and be it remembered, that the resurrection saints shall be *as the angels* in regard to their nature and mode of subsistence; only, as before stated, *superior* in rank: for “know ye not (saith the Apostle) that *we shall judge angels?*”<sup>s</sup>

These things are enough, I trust, to *assure* us, that we shall recognise those dear friends who have fallen asleep in Jesus; and that we shall enjoy a conscious communion and fellowship, and be of one mind and spirit, with Abraham, Isaae, Jacob, Moses, David, Jonathan, Daniel, Peter, Paul, John, and the general assembly of the saints, who will “compass each other about with songs of deliverance.”

V. There remains one point for consideration, comprehending many particulars; viz. the nature of the intercourse between the resurrection Church and those men in the flesh, who will dwell under the new dispensation. But though there are numerous scattered rays of light on this part of the subject, which if gathered into a focus would doubtless form a bright mass of evidence; yet I must confess that my eyes are not yet opened to discern this matter with clearness, and I conceive it unjustifiable to advance mere guesses and speculations. Some things, relative to those in the flesh, are so obvious that we cannot well mistake them. For example, there is abundant testimony that *Israel* after the flesh will be pre-eminent among the nations: it is plain also, that *the earth will be renewed*, and give forth its increase during the period in question;<sup>t</sup> so that the wilderness shall become as Eden, and the garden of the Lord. Righteousness will also then prevail among the nations, just as iniquity abounds now: for Satan will no longer go forth to *deceive* the nations, but will be restrained;<sup>u</sup> and there will be an admirable administration of godly justice and government;<sup>v</sup> the consequence of which will be *universal peace*,<sup>w</sup> and a prevalence of true religion and worship.<sup>x</sup> And whatever may be the result to men in the

<sup>r</sup> Mark i. 24, 25; (*see margin*;) iii. 12; Luke iv. 41.   <sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 3.   <sup>t</sup> Ps. lxxvii. 6; civ. 30; Isa. xxxv. 1; Ezek. xxxiv. 24—27; Joel iii. 18; Amos ix. 13.   <sup>u</sup> Rev. xx. 3.   <sup>v</sup> Isa. i. 26; lx. 17, 18.   <sup>w</sup> Ps. xlv. 9; Isa. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 4.   <sup>x</sup> Ps. xxii. 27. Isa. xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14; Zech. xiv. 20, 21; Mal. i. 11.

flesh at the termination of the Millennium, we are quite sure that the resurrection Church will not be affected again by any pricking briar or thorn, in the way of sin, temptation, or trial. They have put on incorruption; <sup>y</sup>—they are delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; <sup>z</sup>—nothing shall enter into the holy city (whatever there may be *without*) which defileth, or which loveth or maketh a lie.<sup>a</sup>

I have mentioned the latter circumstance, because there certainly will be a great apostasy *after* the Millennium, when Satan is again loosed for a little while; and it would appear that even *during* the Millennium, there will be a *coercive* power exercised over the nations. That it will *commence* in this way is evident from its being written, that the Lord “will send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity;”<sup>b</sup> that the sinners shall be consumed out of Zion;<sup>c</sup> that the saints shall tread down the wicked, who shall be as ashes under their feet;<sup>d</sup> and that the world shall be so brought into subjection under Israel, that the nation and kingdom that will not serve them shall perish.<sup>e</sup> But it would seem also, that during the whole period of the judgement the Lord will rebuke strong nations afar off;<sup>f</sup> that he will rule in the midst of his enemies;<sup>g</sup> and specially it is promised to him that overcometh, that he shall have power over the nations and rule them with a rod of iron;<sup>h</sup>—the *rod of iron* being, as I apprehend, always emblematic of coercive authority.\*

I will only in conclusion offer a remark or two on the amazing apathy, not to say opposition, manifested by some

\* There are one or two eminent *types* of the same thing. For example, the Lord Jesus cleansing the temple with a *scourge*, shows how it shall be when he comes to set up universal worship, and make the house of God really “the house of prayer for all nations.” And the reign of Solomon, which is generally considered a type of Christ and the Church triumphant, evinces the same thing of the millennial rule itself. For of the prosperous and glorious rule of Solomon it was nevertheless complained, that his yoke was *heavy* which he put upon the nation: (1st Kings xii. 9:) and possibly that generation, which shall immediately succeed the Millennium, may make the same complaint of the rule of Christ and the saints.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 50—52.    <sup>z</sup> Rom. viii. 21.    <sup>a</sup> Ezek. xliv. 9; Rev. xxi. 27.    <sup>b</sup> Matt. xiii. 41.    <sup>c</sup> Ps. civ. 35.    <sup>d</sup> Mal. iv. 3.    <sup>e</sup> Ps. xlvii. 3; Isa. lx. 12.    <sup>f</sup> Mic. iv. 3; Isa. ii. 4.    <sup>g</sup> Ps. cx. 2.    <sup>h</sup> Rev. ii. 27.

professors of religion in regard to the resurrection state, because the theatre, in which the glory of Christ will be more immediately exhibited, is to be this globe, in its renewed state; and because there may still be men in the flesh on the earth. I pray God they may none of them come under the rebuke of those of whom it is written,—“ Yea, they despised ‘ the PLEASANT LAND, they believed not his word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of ‘ the Lord.”<sup>i</sup> But I would also affectionately, yet solemnly, admonish such, that if the things I have written are supported by God’s word, their minds are not in unison with the mind of the Spirit. Angels desired to look into the proceedings of Christ when he came to *suffer* upon earth: and shall we not desire to behold him and be with him, when he comes to *reign* on earth? Many prophets and righteous men desired to see the days of the *Gospel* dispensation: <sup>k</sup> and shall we have no longing for that most glorious of *all* dispensations on earth? Shall “ the whole creation *groan* for it?”—shall “ the *earnest expectation* of the creature *wait* for it?”—shall “ the Spirit and the bride say *Come*?” and shall there nevertheless be christians in whom there is *no* earnest expectation, no groan or emotion of desire?—Ah! it must be because *their* expectation is not the expectation of the creature;—and their hope does not accord with that of the Spirit and the bride.

But some may still object, that they cannot reconcile their minds to the notion of being on earth again, and of being placed within the possibility of again beholding sin, and probably of witnessing the last apostasy. Dear brethren, suffer the word of exhortation. Our happiness must always be proportioned to *our conformity to the will of God*. It is the want of subjection and conformity in our minds to his *revealed will*, that prevents any from finding pleasure from those scripture testimonies I have adduced. Only consider what has *already* happened. When Jesus rose from the dead and sojourned on earth during forty days, occasionally communing with his disciples; did this take from his happiness? was it a second cup of suffering? or did it render his mind carnal? Or those saints, who came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city: were

<sup>i</sup> Psalm cvi. 24, 25.      <sup>k</sup> Matt. XIII. 17.

*they* rendered miserable, by being thus brought again upon earth, and among men, who, to say the least, were still imperfect—still in sinful flesh—still liable to sin? The Church has ever thought it an eminent distinction and honor conferred upon those saints: just as the Scripture declares him “*blessed and holy*,” who hath part in the first resurrection. But if their blessedness in Paradise was interrupted by this resurrection, instead of an eminent honor, it was an additional *curse*. We may just as well argue, that it shall be a misery to be again in the *body*, (considering that our temptation has been in the flesh,) as to suppose it a woe to be brought again on *earth*, because it has been the scene of iniquity. And if any should reply, “But our *body* will be *changed* ;”—I answer, So likewise the *earth* will be *renewed*.

Once more, let me ask, are those angels who attend the steps of God’s children whilst warring in the flesh ;—of whom it is written, that “they are all *ministering* spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ;”<sup>1</sup>—are these, I ask, rendered less happy owing to the office assigned them? Alas! they must witness much that is perverse and sinful in their charge; and often, when they go into the presence of our heavenly Father,<sup>m</sup> must have a sorry account to render. But though their joy is increased over every sinner that repenteth, I cannot think their happiness is ever interrupted: and for this reason (which equally applies to the resurrection saints,) that they are doing their Lord’s will, assured that all will tend ultimately to his glory; and in this conformity to his will, and confidence as to the result, they must be continually blessed. I repeat, therefore, we want an *angel’s mind* to enter into these things aright; and then we shall be ready to cry with the Psalmist—“Remember ME, O Lord, ‘with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people! O, visit ‘ME with thy salvation!—that I may see the glory of thy ‘chosen!—that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation! ‘—that I may glory with thine inheritance!” (Ps. cvi. 4, 5.)

<sup>1</sup> Heb. I, 14.

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xviii, 10.

## Essay X.

*Our Lord's Prophecy.—Matt. xxiv. xxv.*

When the attention is at length arrested by the voice of prophecy, and the mind becomes engaged in the contemplation of future events, that question put by the disciples to our Lord will continually obtrude itself: "WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?" I cannot at all subscribe to the opinion, apparently entertained by some, that such a question is unlawful. The indulgence shewn by Jesus, in his reply to these inquiries,—the things moreover which have been spontaneously revealed to other servants of God,—above all, the reproof cast by our Lord upon the great bulk of professing Israelites, because they knew *not* "the signs of the times,"—all these things, I say, would lead to the conclusion, not only that *it is lawful* to take heed to them; but that we are obnoxious to the imputation of *hypocrisy* if we do not.<sup>a</sup> Having therefore dwelt upon the principal events connected with the glorious advent and Kingdom of Christ, I now proceed, with an equal assurance of its scriptural propriety and practical utility, to submit a few observations *on the period when they may be expected*.

There are two principal modes in which it has pleased the Holy Spirit to communicate light to the Church in regard to the times and seasons. The one is by assigning an *event*, as the epoch from which a certain period of time is to be reckoned; which time must elapse before that which is more especially the subject of promise shall come to pass. The other is by a delineation of those great *characteristics* which shall signalize the time, when the thing foretold is about to be accomplished. In regard to the first advent of Christ, the "seventy weeks" of Daniel ix. 24, will afford an example of the former mode of foretelling the time; and the prediction of Jacob, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh should come,<sup>b</sup> may serve as an instance of the latter mode. In respect to the second advent of Christ, Daniel will again supply us with *dates*, and also the Apocalypse; whilst the *characteristics* of the last days are abundantly scattered through the Old and New Testaments.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xvi. 3.<sup>b</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.

I do not however intend to enter at present into the question of *dates* ; but purpose to consider one or two remarkable prophecies relative to the character of the *last times*, which (if it please the Father of light to guide us by his Spirit into a right apprehension of them,) will enable us to form a judgement, when those things, which I have previously treated of, shall come to pass.

I. First I enter upon that elaborate prophecy of our Lord contained in Matthew xxiv and xxv ; in regard to which there are certain points of difficulty which it may be better previously to discuss. Great obscurity has been thrown upon this prophecy by its being divided into two chapters : whereby many are wont to limit the subject to the 24th chapter. But it will be manifest, I trust, as we proceed that it is continued throughout the 25th chapter.

Another source of obscurity is the circumstance, that it is commonly treated as an *involved* prophecy : that is to say, the Lord is presumed to speak primarily of *the destruction of Jerusalem* ; and is supposed to predict his *second advent* and the *end of the world* only under the type or figure of this his providential visitation on Jerusalem. From the difficulty indeed of explaining all the details as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, a most arbitrary and unwarrantable system of interpretation has obtained. The expositor has taken upon himself, without any internal evidence or notice in the prophecy, to say of one event, " This refers to Jerusalem"—of another, " This belongs to the end of the world"—of a third, " This applies to both events." I feel persuaded that the prophecy is as chronologically *regular* as any in the Scriptures ; and that to view it in this light is absolutely necessary, in order to arrive at a correct interpretation of it.

A third source of obscurity is, I believe, more immediately *designed* of God, not only in this, but in many other Scriptures ; to the intent, that whilst the humble but diligent inquirer is led to penetrate within the veil, the proud the superficial the indifferent and the worldly may not be able to understand. The source of it is, the indistinctness of the subject revealed *if only one Gospel be looked at*.

And here I would throw out an observation, which I consider important in order to a right understanding of the Scriptures in general, and of the Gospels more especially. From the third verse of the chapter which begins this prophecy, as



also from other parts of the Gospels, we may infer, that the disciples of our Lord were wont to come to him *privately*, for a fuller exposition of those things which they had previously heard touched upon in public.\* In Mark iv. 34, we are further informed, that all things whatsoever which were preached to the multitude were afterwards expounded to the disciples by Jesus, when he was alone with them. I am therefore of opinion, in regard to the prophecy now under consideration, that Jesus, in condescension to renewed inquiries, has further expounded at some subsequent period certain portions of this subject. In no other way can I reconcile the important variations in the accounts given of it by St. Matthew and St. Luke, than by supposing, that when two or more disciples came to write or converse on the subject, their narratives would vary, according as their minds were prepossessed with the prophecy as at first delivered, or with the subsequent *expository* matter. In this instance I take it, that St. Matthew generally (though not always) relates the simple prophecy, as he had heard it in the first instance from our Lord: whereas St. Luke frequently gives us exposition or paraphrase instead. At all events we shall find, that St. Luke's Gospel is an important commentary on St. Matthew's; in proof of which I shall instance an example tending to our better apprehension of the subject.

St. Matthew says; "When ye therefore shall see the *abomination of DESOLATION*, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (*whoso readeth let him understand* :) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains, &c." (vv. 15, 16.) The special exhortation of the Lord, to take heed and understand *this* point, renders it more probable that further information would be elicited concerning it; and accordingly we find St. Luke gives us the exactly parallel passage in these words: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed *with armies*, then know that the *DESOLATION* thereof is nigh. Then let them which be in Judea flee, &c." Now to me it is manifest from this, that "the abomination of desolation" is the *Roman power*, whose armies soon after compassed Jerusalem; which power, in one shape or other, has proved the great *DESOLATOR* † both of the Jewish and Gentile Churches.

2. Another difficulty is the *tribulation* mentioned by St. Matthew; but as this point is of considerable importance in

\* See Matt. XIII. 36; xv. 15; Mark IX. 28. † See the marginal readings of Dan. IX. 27.

my view of the subject, I must beg the Reader's attention whilst I enlarge upon it. St. Matthew says, "For then shall ' be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of ' the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be, &c." (v. 21.) Now this tribulation, though some are disposed to think it *typical* of the wrath to be poured out at the ultimate day of judgement, is generally limited to the destruction of Jerusalem; but turn to the parallel place in St. Luke and we read, that "these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are ' written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with ' child and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall ' be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people; and ' they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be *led away ' captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down ' of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*" In these latter words the tribulation is extended throughout the whole period of Jewish depression and Gentile domination, even down to the entire accomplishment of what is called "*the times of the Gentiles;*" a phrase the meaning of which I shall examine presently.

But this is not all. In Daniel xii. 1, 2, we read thus: "And ' at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince, which ' standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a ' time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, ' even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be ' delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. ' And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall ' awake, &c." The words "*at that time*" are in the first instance immediately connected with the latter exploits of the wilful king, described at verses 40—45 of the previous chapter; and with this time of trouble are likewise connected the resurrection and glorification of many who sleep in the dust.\* As

\* I take the opportunity of noticing here, that the explanation of this latter paragraph which most commends itself to my own mind, is to be found in an article signed *Edinensis*, in the Investigator, Vol. III. p. 8. The text may be thus paraphrased:—"And *many* of them that sleep in ' the dust of the earth shall awake. *These* [the many raised ones] are ' destined to everlasting life; *those* [who remain in the graves] to shame ' and everlasting contempt." This sense is sustained by the original Hebrew; and Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, an ancient Jewish Commentator, says of the passage: "This is the resurrection of the dead of Israel, whose lot is to eternal life; but *those who do not awake*, they are the destroyed of the Lord, &c."

the majority of commentators have concurred in fixing the tribulation named in Matthew to the overthrow of Jerusalem, so have they equally agreed in considering the time of trouble in Daniel to be yet future. But there is a remarkable notification attached to each of these passages, by means of which both periods of trouble may be clearly demonstrated to be connected together. Daniel says, "There shall be a time of trouble *such as never was since there was a nation to that same time.*" Matthew also declares of the tribulation instanced by him, that it is "*such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time;*"—and then adds—"NO, NOR EVER SHALL BE." Thus in both places the tribulation is described as *unprecedented*; but in Matthew it is stated besides, that the one referred to by him shall never *subsequently* have a parallel. How then, I ask, can the tribulation in Daniel *follow* that in Matthew? It might have *preceded* it, and that perfectly in consistence with truth; but I see not how it can come after it. Had the notifications been reversed,—so that of the *Jerusalem* tribulation it had been said, it was such as never was since it had been a nation; and of that at the standing up of Michael, that it was to be such as was not, *neither shall be*,—I should experience no difficulty in reconciling the language with modern expositions: but, as it now stands in Scripture, I am compelled either to reject the interpretation which would limit the tribulation of Matthew to the destruction of Jerusalem, or I must charge the word of God with exaggeration and falsehood.

Another consideration here presents itself. The unprecedented character of the tribulation, spoken of by Matthew, is explained, by those who limit it to Jerusalem, to consist in the sufferings and horrors experienced at the siege; especially in regard to the circumstance, that women were led by hunger to devour their own children. I readily grant, that the history of that event is sufficiently appalling; but I greatly question if it be without a parallel. The tribulation at the *former* siege of Jerusalem was very similar in this respect, and therefore forbids us to say of the *second* siege, so far as this characteristic goes, that it was affliction "*such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time.*"<sup>c</sup> Jeremiah says of the besiegement by the Chaldeans: "I will make this city desolate and a hissing; every one that passeth by shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

<sup>c</sup> Mark XIII. 19.

And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies and they that seek their lives shall straiten them.”<sup>d</sup> And afterwards, in his Lamentations over the destruction of the city, he shews that these things were actually fulfilled:—“Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit and children of a span long?”—“The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.”<sup>e</sup> Josephus informs us, that in the second siege of Babylon the inhabitants *strangled all their women and children* to make their provisions last. And horrible indeed have been the sufferings endured on various similar occasions; as I might easily shew from history.

Lest I should be misapprehended, I would again observe, that I consider the vengeance which the Lord poured upon Jerusalem to have been very marked and signal: but if we limit it to the mere siege and its attendant circumstances, there is nothing so remarkably transcendent in its character, as at once to give it pre-eminence over other events. A careful perusal of Deut. xxviii, 47—68 and Daniel ix, have led me to conclude, that the *unparalleled* character of the tribulation, whilst it *includes* the dreadful sufferings endured in the siege and straitness, does more immediately respect *their being led away captive into all nations, and their becoming a by-word and reproach*, and suffering thus the wrath and vengeance of God for so long a period;—so long, that the Spirit saith of its conclusion, “Jerusalem hath received of the Lord’s hand *double* for all her sins.”<sup>f</sup> I mean not that Moses and Daniel, in the passages referred to, directly speak of this second and great captivity: for Moses (as is plain from Daniel’s reference to him v. 13) *primarily* regards the Babylonish captivity, and the dispersion of the ten tribes which then commenced; and Daniel perhaps *exclusively* regards it. Yet Daniel, having dwelt at verse 7 on the circumstance of the men of Judah and Israel being scattered through all countries on account of their trespass against God,—and then having in verse 11 viewed it as a fulfilment of the curse denounced by Moses,—adds, concerning the Lord, “He hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bring-

<sup>d</sup> Jer. xix. 8, 9.

<sup>e</sup> Lam. ii. 20; iv. 10.

<sup>f</sup> Isa. xl. 2.

'ing upon us a *great evil*; for UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN 'HATH NOT BEEN DONE as hath been done upon Jerusalem.'" This it was which constituted its unprecedented character:—not the signal vengeance inflicted in the siege only, but the accumulation of plagues and sufferings to be endured through a tedious and miserable dispersion.

I have still to harmonize Daniel and Matthew. This I think may be done, in perfect accordance with the context of the Scriptures, by considering the tribulation to *commence* with the signal vengeance on Jerusalem and the Jews then living; to *continue*, according to St. Luke, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;" and to *terminate* with that marked period of distress, called by Daniel "*the last end of the indignation,*"<sup>g</sup> and by Jeremiah "*the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it!*"<sup>h</sup> This termination of the period (which shall be more especially disastrous to the *Gentiles*, as marking *their* overthrow, but out of which *the Jews shall be delivered*,) is I believe symbolized by the signs described in verse 29 of Matthew xxiv, and verses 25, 26 of Luke xxi; for which I shall give my reasons in their proper place. St. Matthew indeed says,—“Immediately *after* the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened;” but this I apprehend is not intended to denote a *distinct tribulation*, but only the climax of it; being the termination of those days of vengeance and captivity to the Jews, “the end whereof is with a *flood.*”<sup>i</sup> This will be further evident from the parallel place in Mark's Gospel, which says—“But IN those days, after that tribulation”—thus intimating, that the days of the tribulation, though drawn to their *close*, are not absolutely passed away. It is the last act, yea the last scene, of the drama, in which occurs the grand catastrophe of the whole. Probably Rev. xvi. 18, which describes a symbolical “earthquake, *such as was not since men were upon the earth*, so mighty an earthquake and so great,” has that notification of its unparalleled character inserted, in order to enable the studious inquirer to connect it with other passages in which similar notices occur.\*

<sup>g</sup> Dan, viii. 19.

<sup>h</sup> Jer. xxx. 7.

<sup>i</sup> Dan. ix. 26.

\* There are passages which seem to mark an *incipient* fulfilment of the time of trouble; and which consequently corroborate the view I have taken, that the tribulation commences with the Jews' captivity, continues throughout their dispersion, and is completed only at their

3. I would next offer a few observations on the phrase "*times of the Gentiles*" in Luke xxi. 24, which may throw further light on the succeeding exposition.

Various significations are attached to the word *time* or *times*, when spoken of a kingdom, which must be determined by the words connected with either expression; and even the same word may have opposite meanings, according to the context; as in the phrase "time of *visitation*," which signifies in one place a visitation of *wrath*,<sup>j</sup> in another a visitation of *mercy*.<sup>k</sup> But when the *fulfilment* of a time is spoken of, the immediate reference is commonly, not to the character of the time or period which has been fulfilling, but to that immediately succeeding; in which case it answers rather to our phrase, "the time *is come*." Thus in Mark i. 15—"the time is *fulfilled* and the kingdom of God is at hand,"—the attention is directed to the Gospel dispensation about to be introduced; whilst the legal dispensation, which was the period just fulfilled, is only obliquely referred to. So in Luke i. 57, in the words "Elizabeth's *full time* came that she should be delivered," the time of deliverance is principally regarded, though the time completed must be that of gravidation. And thus, reasoning by analogy, I take the *fulfilment* of the times of the Gentiles to be the time of deliverance to the Jews; which is plainly implied by the expression, "Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot *till* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And this time of deliverance itself, forasmuch as it also (as we have seen) is to be in a time of trouble, is compared in Jeremiah xxx. 6, 7, already quoted, to the time of travail. The *times fulfilled* must necessarily be the ages of affliction and oppression they will have passed through; and by an obvious contrast, as regards the Gentiles, whose times they are called, they are the period of *their* domination.

We may perhaps get a further clew to the meaning of this expression by an example or two of the use made of it in respect to others. Of the king of Babylon the Lord says, "All

deliverance. Such is the 8th verse of this chapter of Matthew;—"These are the *beginning* of sorrows." Such also is Luke xxiii. 30;—"Then shall they *begin* to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us;" an imprecation which (according to Rev. vi. 16) will be *repeated* at the consummation of the period.

<sup>j</sup> Jer. xi. 23.

<sup>k</sup> Compare Luke vii. 16 and xix. 44,

' nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until  
 ' the very *time of his land come* : and *then*—many nations and  
 ' great kings shall serve themselves of him."<sup>1</sup> The words  
 " *time of his land come*" are here equivalent to the *fulfilment*  
*of his time*, during which he was to have the empire over the  
 nations ; and then the scene was to be reversed, and they  
 were to " *serve themselves of him.*" In Ezekiel xxx, Egypt  
 is specially threatened with this period of Babylonish tyranny,  
 and it is called " the time of the *heathen*" or *Gentiles*.<sup>m</sup> That  
 this signifies the time, in which heathen Babylon with her  
 vassal nations should domineer over others, appears from the  
 parallel place in chap. xxix, 12 : for there Egypt is threat-  
 ened with a desolation for forty years, during which she is to  
 be " scattered among the *Gentiles* ;" (גוים) which exactly an-  
 swers to the dispersion of the Jews during the Gentile times.  
 I will conclude this point by once more quoting that passage,  
 already twice partially appealed to, viz. Jeremiah xxx. 6—9 :  
 " Ask ye now and see, whether a *man* doth travail with child ?  
 ' Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins,  
 ' as a woman in travail, and all faces turned into paleness ?—  
 ' Alas ! for that day is great, so that there is none like it : it  
 ' is even the *time of Jacob's trouble* ; but he shall be saved out  
 ' of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord  
 ' of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and  
 ' will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more *serve them-*  
 ' *selves of him* ; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and  
 ' David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

4. There is one other point which I shall here anticipate,  
 inasmuch as it proves a stumbling-block to many ; viz. verse  
 34.—" Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass,  
 till all these things be fulfilled." This is by many supposed  
 to be equivalent to Matt. xvi. 28—" There be some standing  
 ' here which shall not taste of death, until they see the Son  
 ' of Man coming in his kingdom." But the words are en-  
 tirely different ; and, though the latter passage has an un-  
 doubted reference to the term of man's life, the former has not  
 necessarily such a signification. So far as I have noticed, our  
 Lord Jesus never uses the word *generation* to signify the term of  
 man's life ; but commonly to express the peculiar *character* of  
 the nation or people to whom he applies it. Thus we find men-  
 tion in the Scriptures of a " *sinful generation*"—" an *evil* and

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xxvii. 7.      <sup>m</sup> Compare verses 3 and 26.

adulterous generation"—“ a faithless and perverse generation ”—“ a generation that set not their heart aright ;”<sup>n</sup> and on the other hand we have “ a righteous generation ”—“ the generation of them that seek him ”—“ the generation of thy (God’s) children,” &c.<sup>o</sup> And as frequently is the word, (γενεα) translated in this place of Matthew *generation*, used to express a *nation*, or the *posterity* of some individual.\*

I will just add, that most commonly, when the word *generation* means a period of time, it is in the New Testament used in the *plural* number : and this in some instances when it is translated into the *singular* number :—e. g. Luke i. 50 ; Acts xv. 21.

It is likewise very important, as respects the use of the word in this prophecy, to observe, that the previous chapter

\* Thus in the Septuagint we have such phrases as γενεαι Εναχ and γενεαν Εναχ, Numb. XIII, 23, 33, both meaning the *children* or *descendants* of Anak ; also Genesis XLIII. 7—“ The man asked us straitly of our *kindred* ;” Numb. x. 30—“ I will depart to mine own *kindred* ;” and Lev. xx. 18—“ Both shall be cut off from their *people*,” in all which the word in italics is γενεα in the original. There are likewise testimonies which I have noticed of a more direct character ; as in Jer. x. 25—“ Pour out thy fury upon the *families* that call not upon thy name :” wherein γενεας is exegetical of the word *heathen* in the same verse. Again, “ Death shall be chosen rather than life by all that remain of this evil *family* ;” which is evidently, from the context, spoken of the *nation*. (Jer. VIII. 3.) Both in Matthew and Luke’s Gospels “ the men of Nineveh,” or *Ninevites*, is the antithetical phrase for “ men of this *generation*,” or *Jews*. So of Sodom, &c. (See Matt. XII. 41, 42, 45 ; Luke xi. 31, 32, &c.) And the identical phrase translated “ a perverse *generation*” in Matt. XVII. 17, is in Phil. II. 15, rendered “ a perverse *nation*.”

It is noticed by Mr. Begg, in a Treatise recently published on this subject, that in Beza’s *Latin* translation of the New Testament, he generally renders the word γενεα by *gens* or *natio*. I can confirm this observation from a careful reference to Beza, and also to the version of Tremellius. It is remarkable, that the principal exception to this rule is the passage now under dispute, where Beza has *atlas* and Tremellius *generatio*. This shows that anti-millennarian prejudice weighed with them, and thus renders their translation of the word by *gens* in other places the more free from suspicion. I learn also from Mr. Begg, that the earlier *English* translations rendered γενεα *nation* in this place ; and it may therefore be questioned, how far the later translators of the Bible were warped in their view of the passage by millennarian antipathy, since Mede’s view of the subject was then known.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. XII. 39 ; XVII. 17 ; Mark VIII. 38.      <sup>o</sup> Ps. XIV. 5 ; XXIV. 6 ; LXXIII. 15.



thus concludes : “ Behold *your* house is left unto *you* desolate : ‘ for I say unto you, *ye* shall not see me henceforth till *ye* ‘ shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the ‘ Lord.” This is evidently addressed to them *nationally*, since the generation then living rejected the Lord to the last ; but the words imply that there should be a time when they (“ *ye*,” that same *people* or *nation*, though not the same individuals) should say, “ Blessed is he that cometh, &c.” I consider this passage, therefore, as affording a sort of paraphrastic exposition of the words now under consideration : for it declares of the Jews, that they should be preserved nationally, (and probably it implies that they should remain in their unconverted state,) during the time of the desolation, even until the advent of the Lord.\*

II. I purpose now to commence the prophecy, and pass regularly through it ; chiefly following St. Matthew’s Gospel for my text.

1. First we must notice the *occasion* of it, which was—the questions of our Lord’s disciples. These questions are differently stated by the Evangelists, and form in the Gospels of Mark and Luke only *two* distinct particulars ; but in Matthew’s they form *three*. In all of them however the first question is the same—WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?—which question arose from the disciples having drawn our Lord’s attention to the magnificence of the temple, and his taking occasion thereupon to admonish them, that the days were approaching when the whole should be destroyed.

Now it is worthy of remark, (bearing as it does upon the general principles of Scripture interpretation,) that the remaining questions, and the reply of our Lord, are in each Evangelist made consistent with the *context* of the narrative of each. There is nothing in the previous chapter of Mark and Luke that has any obvious connexion with the *advent* of Christ ; and therefore the only other question in their Gospels is for A SIGN, by which they might know when these things were to be accomplished. But in Matthew the context concerns also *the desolation of the Jewish church and nation*, together

\* Mr. Cuninghame, whose opinions on these subjects are entitled to great respect, takes a different view of this particular ; which I have endeavoured to combat, as it refers to the passage under discussion, in the Investigator, Vol. I. page 378, and note at page 404. To that work I refer the Reader for further information on this point.

with the advent of Christ :—“ Behold your House is left unto you desolate : for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord :”<sup>p</sup>—and then immediately follows the circumstance of the disciples pointing to the buildings of the temple : to which they seem to have been moved by the very circumstance of our Lord declaring, that their *House* was to be left *desolate*. Accordingly, the questions as related by St. Matthew have an immediate reference to the other matter introduced by him into his narrative.—1st. “ *When shall these things be ?*” (including, as I apprehend, the persecutions of the disciples in verses 34 and 38 of the preceding chapter :) 2ndly. “ *What shall be the sign of thy coming ?*” (της σης παροσσιας spoken of in verse 39 of the previous chapter :) 3rdly. “ *And of the end of the world ;*”—or rather, of the consummation of the dispensation or age,—(της συντελειας τσ αιωνος,) which they would justly consider the desolation of their House to be, in regard to the Jewish dispensation.\* The questions of the disciples were probably shaped according to their previous expectations of the manifestation of Messiah’s kingdom and glory ; for we can hardly suppose them to have had, at this particular moment only, a correct view of the order in which the three events inquired of were to take place.

2. Verses 4 to 14 of St. Matthew’s Gospel comprehend the next portion of our subject. These are considered by Mr. Begg† to form an outline of the whole substance of the prophecy, down to the very end ; and that then our Lord reverts back to the commencement, and dwells more minutely on im-

\* In our Lord’s reply the word τελος is invariably used, instead of συντελεια ; but I do not, as some, consider any distinction is intended, and that τελος refers to the end of the Jewish polity only, whilst η συντελεια τσ αιωνος regards the termination of the Christian dispensation. In Heb. ix. 26 επι συντελεια των αιωνων (in the plural, which one would conceive must more decidedly mark the end of the latest dispensation) must from the context be necessarily connected with the end of the Jewish dispensation ; and I apprehend that the context must always determine its meaning.

† I would once for all refer to the whole of his able work on these chapters,—viz. “ Letters to a Minister of the Gospel on his and other Interpretations of *Our Saviour’s predicted Return*, recorded Matt. xxiii. xxiv. xxv. &c.” Nisbet, London.

portant particulars. But there are reasons which induce me to think, that the whole of these verses had their fulfilment *prior* to the desolation of Jerusalem; and that the prophecy is with little deviation chronologically regular down to the end of verse 31: though my view is nevertheless *substantially* the same with Mr. Begg's, in which ever way these verses are taken. I shall state my reasons however for differing from him on the point in question.

First, there appears to be a *repetition* of some of the circumstances herein mentioned, as occurring at the end of the great tribulation; which we have seen, from Luke *xxi.* 24, extends itself throughout the Gentile times.—I refer to the coming of *false prophets*: (compare verses 11 and 24.) Now the *repetition* of this particular plainly implies, that the *first* mention of it refers to a distinct period. Secondly, in the parallel verses of Luke there is inserted at verse 11, in connexion with the earthquakes, &c. “fearful sights and great signs from heaven.” These would also be *repeated*, according to Mr. Begg's view, at verses 24 and 25 of Luke: but I think it will be found that these occurrences also are entirely distinct. Thirdly, the whole is susceptible of an easy interpretation, applicable to events transpiring whilst the Jewish polity existed; as may be readily proved from Scripture and profane history.—e. g.

With regard to the false christs and other deceivers, mentioned both in verses 5 and 11, Josephus names some (as Theudas and the Egyptian; see Acts *xxi.* 38,) and says, that they became so numerous during the procuratorship of Felix, that he *daily* put some to death.<sup>4</sup> Whitby also mentions Simon Magus and Doritheus among the number of false christs. The rumors of wars, the actual insurrections and contests, the famines, pestilences and earthquakes (or *commotions*\*) which follow in verses 6, 7, are equally remarkable, as described by Josephus, Tacitus, and others;† as likewise the supernatural prodigies mentioned by St. Luke. Scott says

\* So Dr. Adam Clarke is most inclined to interpret *σεισμοι*, from its original *σειω*, to *agitate*. The history of those times shows, that in either sense it was fulfilled. The learned Mr. Allwood also, in his *Literary Antiquities of Greece*, observes that this word was commonly used to represent “the vehemence of popular discord and commotion.” P. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph. Ant. B. *xx.* c. v and viii. and Jewish War, B. *xx.* c. 13.  
† Joseph. Ant. B. *xviii.* c. 9; *xx.* 2; War, *ii.* 10; *iv.* 4; Tacitus, Annal. *xii.* *xiv.*; Hist. *v.* See also Acts *xi.* 28.

of all these particulars—"It suffices to observe, that by the concurrent testimony of ancient historians, and the judgment of modern and learned men, the period alluded to was distinguished from all others, which went before and which have followed, by such events as are here predicted."s Yet they are warned, that *the end* (which I take to refer to the great overthrow of the Jewish polity) was not yet; and that these are only the *beginning* of sorrows; (v. 8.) which words appear manifestly intended as a contrast to that great tribulation which followed, and which period is called "the days of vengeance."t—

That the followers of Jesus were *persecuted* and delivered up to synagogues and councils to be beaten, (as they were first warned in chapter XXIII. 34, and here in verses 9—11,) must be known to all who are acquainted with the Acts of the Apostles.u I only observe, that the particular mention of their suffering these things in the *synagogues*, seems to limit the fulfilment to the period during which the Jews still possessed some ecclesiastical authority, and could summon offenders before them in their synagogues.—

I pass on to the 14th verse;—"And the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." I have no doubt that this is one of the special signs of the *latter* days; but I ground it on Rev. xiv. 6, 7, and not on this text; for this I consider to have been fulfilled prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. St. Paul says to the Colossians, that "the Gospel was come unto them, *as in all the world*;"v and again, "that it was preached to *every creature* which is *under heaven*:"w which passages are decisive as respects a fulfilment adequate to the meaning of the text. It is also remarkable, that this preaching of the Gospel (which is only instanced by Matthew and Mark) is the only circumstance which in Mark's narrative of this prophecy is not placed in a regular parallel with the same events noticed by Matthew. He inserts it at verse 10, as a parenthesis between the warning that they should be delivered up to the synagogues, and the direction not to premeditate when delivered up: as if to point out, that

s See *in loco*. t See the parallel places Mark XIII. 9—12 and Luke XXI. 12—16. u Acts III. V. VII. VIII. XII. XVI. XVII. XVIII. XXI to the end. v Col. I. 9. w Ibid. I. 23.

this persecution should be connected with the preaching the Gospel to all nations, and afford additional opportunity of bringing their testimony before kings and rulers.\* (See *v.* 9.)

3. Verses 15—28 will form the next portion for our consideration. The tribulation which is the subject of them I have already so fully discussed, that I need not repeat it here. I shall only remind the Reader, (as an important circumstance to be kept in view in the interpretation of this chapter,) that I have proved this time of affliction to be connected with that mentioned in Daniel XII; who there speaks of the *termination* of that period of wrath, which in St. Luke's account of this prophecy *begins* with Jerusalem being compassed about with armies, (when the people fall by the edge of the sword and are led away captive into all nations,) and *ends* only with the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles. This is the more important, in as much as it determines the period when those signs are to be exhibited, mentioned in verse 29.

Matthew says, "*immediately after.*" Mark makes it so immediately, that he says, "IN those days, after that tribulation." Whilst St. Luke makes no discrimination at all, but connects it at once with the tribulation by the words, "and there shall be signs in the sun, &c." (verse 25.)† In his narrative all this is contained in verse 26 and the six following verses of Matthew's account is omitted; so that verse 25 joins on immediately to the words—"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled:" as much as to intimate, that *then* there shall be this "*distress of the Gentiles with perplexity:*" viz. simultaneous with the passing away of the Jewish tribulation.‡

\* I would here notice that the word *then*, as used in this prophecy, must not be always understood in an *ordinative* sense, as if the event it introduces must necessarily follow *next* in order of succession. As a proof of this St. Matthew says, (*v.* 9.) "*then* shall they deliver you up, &c." St. Luke however has it; "but *before all these*, they shall lay hands, &c." adverting to those same commotions, wars and pestilences, that are connected by Matthew with the word *then*.

† The word translated *after*, (*μετα*) both in Matthew and Luke, often signifies, when it governs the accusative (which it does in both these instances) *within* the period mentioned, but at the latter end of it. Schleusner contends for this sense of the word in the very place in question, Matt. XXIV. 29,) where he says "Latine reddi debet per *intra.*" Parkhurst also shews this to be its undoubted sense in several instances; and I feel quite assured that it is its meaning here.

‡ There is no article before the word *Gentiles* in the original in either instance. The passage stands literally thus:—"Jerusalem shall be

To return therefore to the passage in Matthew more immediately under consideration : I see no reason to deviate from the ordinary interpretation of verses 16—20 ; which seem to me clearly to contain a direction, how the disciples were to act, as soon as they should see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, (i. e. Jerusalem compassed with armies,) and by which they were to understand, that the desolation “ *thereof* ” (i. e. of *Jerusalem*) was nigh. See Luke xx. 21. To these directions warnings are added to stir up the disciples to prayer, watchfulness, and decision ;—showing what promptitude they must use (*v.* 17) when they were menaced with the danger ; how questionable the possibility of escape would be rendered to those labouring with child ; and how necessary it was for all to pray, that this compassing of Jerusalem should not take place in the winter or on the sabbath day. In the first instance the roads, I presume, would be broken up, so as to render flight more difficult ; and in the second, they would be exposed to molestation from the pharisaical zealots, should they be observed apparently about to exceed the limits of a sabbath day’s journey.

In verse 22 it is declared, that except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; “ but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” These words appear to me to respect, not the siege of Jerusalem, but the entire period called “ the days of vengeance.” The shortening of the days at the overthrow of Jerusalem could have had no connexion with the saving of the elect, if the christian Jews be “ the elect ” intended ; for these we know escaped to Pella and Mount Libanus before the vengeance was actually poured out. And if the words “ *all flesh* ” are to be referred to the nations generally, and not limited to the Jews, it does not appear, by the history of those times, that *all flesh* was at all endangered ; or indeed any other nation besides the Jews. There is however abundant evidence in Scripture, that all the inhabitants of the world will be in jeopardy at the *close* of the tribulation, when the Lord’s controversy with the nations ar-

trodden down by Gentiles, until times of Gentiles be fulfilled ; and there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth *distress* of Gentiles with (or in) perplexity, sea and waves roaring.” The context shows that the style of this passage requires the article to be uniformly supplied, and that the Gentiles of verse 25 are identical with those of verse 24.

rives at its crisis. I will quote only one place : viz. Isaiah xxiv.—“ The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof ; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate : therefore the *inhabitants of the earth are burned* AND FEW MEN LEFT.” (vv. 6, 7.) This is the time, as appears from the same chapter, when “ the Lord shall *punish* the kings of the earth,” and “ 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.” (vv. 21—23.) This connects the signs in the luminaries, and the “ *distress*” of the Gentiles, with a period directly the reverse of the destruction of Jerusalem and the *triumph* over it of the Gentiles.

I consequently consider, that the rising up of false christs and false prophets, (verses 23—26) is not a repetition of verses 5 and 11, but that it has a distinct reference to the last times ; and that the effect of their signs and wonders will be such as to stagger and entangle the elect ; seducing and deceiving them perhaps for a time, but not so as to draw them away unto perdition. May we not already see pretensions of this character clearly developed in regard to alleged *prophets* ?\* and is there not some appearance also of false *christs* ?† Though I expect that these signs (the latter especially) will be manifested ere long in a more conspicuous manner ; yet has there enough already appeared to justify the most jealous

\* We are no longer left in suspense in regard to that alleged spirit of prophecy, accompanied by unknown sounds, which has challenged such general attention in this country : the confession of some of the accredited gifted persons, that they were under the influence of *delusion*, leaves it beyond question, that in *their* case at least “ a lying spirit has gone forth.”

† In regard to false christs, a man has recently distinguished himself at Nottingham and Derby, who calls himself *Zion*, and professes to be *the Christ*, and to give the only true interpretation of the Scriptures yet offered. His system is sufficiently imposing to the natural man to have drawn after him many zealous followers. Mr. Begg informs us, that a certain London Infidel Society sent recently two of their members to Ashton-under-Line, one of whom personated the Messiah ; and that they were greatly caressed by the *Southcotians* until the cheat was detected. A German Treatise is also in my possession, published recently at Leipsic, in which is related various instances of impostors of this description on the continent.

circumspection; more particularly when we consider those words of our Lord—"Behold I have told you before."

The Lord warns us, (*v.* 27) in order that we may not be deluded by those who assume his name or character, that his coming will be "as lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west:" that is to say, with suddenness and splendor. He will not come as an obscure individual, first heard of in a corner; whether it be in the desert or in secret chambers.

I only add here, that there is sufficient evidence in this verse alone, that the coming of the Lord, which is in part the burden of this prophecy, is a *personal* coming; and not providential or spiritual, as is so frequently contended. For first the phrase "the coming" is in the original *ἡ παρουσία*, in evident conformity with the question put by the disciples, as related in this Gospel; as also with verses 38 and 39 where the same word is used; and it has justly been observed, that in the Scriptures this word invariably signifies a *personal* advent.<sup>x</sup> Secondly, is it consistent with our notions of a *providential* or *spiritual* coming to illustrate either of them by a comparison with *lightning*, darting and shining through the heavens? These are modes of coming which would at least fail of being discerned by the natural man: for the *judgements* of God "are far above out of his sight," so far as they are connected with God; and *spiritual* things "he cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned."<sup>y</sup>

Yet will the Lord's personal advent be in the midst of judgements: "for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." These words appear to be used proverbially, and therefore are applicable at all times: for as eagles and other birds of prey are to be found where there is a dead carcase; so, when the Church of God shall become *dead*, and exhibit symptoms of corruption and dissolution, then God will bring her enemies upon her.\* But I believe this to have a more special reference to christendom, and to intimate, that when she shall have filled up the measure of her iniquity, and have given unequivocal evidence that she will not repent of

\* The attack of an enemy is frequently in the Scriptures compared to that of an *eagle*. See Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. xlviii. 40; Lam. iv. 19; Hab. i. 8.

<sup>x</sup> See Investigator, Vol. II, p. 279. <sup>y</sup> Psalm x. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 14.



her apostacy and corruptions, (an evidence already too plainly afforded,) then those “unclean and hateful birds” nourished in her own wilderness, “shall eat her flesh.”\*

III. I now proceed to a deeply interesting portion of the subject, which I must treat separately; viz. the *signs* which are immediately to precede the coming of the Lord.

I shall first turn to St. Luke’s account.—“And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars.” Matthew and Mark inform us what those signs are—“the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.” To this St. Luke adds, that there shall be “upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” Then all three conclude, “that the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

The question which first presents itself is, are these signs to be understood figuratively or literally? Some who interpret them literally conceive, that they took place previous to the destruction of Jerusalem: the sun having been darkened at the crucifixion of our Lord; and various other prodigies having followed, as related by Josephus. But I have already shown, that *those* prodigies are distinctly spoken of in verse 11 of St. Luke’s Gospel; and further, if they took place *previous* to the commencement of the tribulation, they cannot be the same with those which are to happen at its termination.

Others make them still future, yet understand them literally; among whom is Mr. Begg. He grounds his view principally on the circumstance, that Luke distinguishes signs on the *earth* from those in the *heavens*; (viz. “on earth distress of nations,

\* I expect the speedy downfall, not only of the Papal church, but I confess I tremble also for the *Protestant* church; more especially for the *established* portion of it. Not but the approximation to apostacy is perhaps more rapid and visible in other quarters, and of course the decline of vital piety: but the circumstances in which establishments are placed are such as are calculated to provoke *first* the rapacity of the birds of prey; and the pertinacious adherence to obvious abuses is evidently precipitating the crisis. It cannot be denied that there has been a great awakening in the Protestant church, and that much piety still prevails; but so it was before the overthrow of the Jewish polity: “the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem *greatly*; and a *great company of the priests* were obedient to the faith.” (Acts vi. 7.)

&c.”) and argues, that this compels us to understand the former signs of the literal heaven, and not as the symbols of powers on earth here repeated. But *both* expressions may consistently be figurative; the celestial phenomena having reference to rulers and governors; the earth and waters to nations and peoples distinct from their rulers; as I hope to prove.\* I shall assign the reasons therefore which lead me to conclude the passage to be *figurative*.

The first is, that any other than a figurative sense seems to involve a contradiction. I conceive the whole phenomena described, were they literally to occur before the day of advent, would cause a destruction of this mundane system, and leave no earth for Jesus to visit, nor any disciples to lift up the head and rejoice in their approaching redemption. Mr. Begg indeed admits, that the stars falling from heaven “cannot possibly mean their falling to our earth:” (p. 209) and argues that these things will after all only *seem* to be literally fulfilled.

Secondly, some of the things mentioned are of such ordinary occurrence, in their literal sense, as to render them doubtful tokens as the signs of any particular period. For how frequently is the sun or the moon darkened by an eclipse; (though these bodies cannot both be darkened at the same time, by means of any *known* agency: which is further against a literal acceptation of the signs;) and when is there a tempest of any magnitude, during which the literal sea and waves are not agitated and roaring?

But my chief reason for adopting the figurative interpretation is, that these signs occur so frequently in prophecies relating to other kingdoms, and the fulfilment has so decidedly proved them to have been figurative, that the figurative sense becomes as it were the literal one, from its familiarity. I would not say, that there are no passages in the prophets which literally foretel signs in the celestial bodies: I merely contend, that, generally, a figurative sense is intended.

I will instance first Isaiah XIII. 9—13; “Behold, the day

\* I take this opportunity of observing, that since the first publication of my *figurative* view of these signs, it has been attacked in “The Investigator of Prophecy” by an able writer under the signature of TRINITARIUS. I refer the Reader to my discussion with him in Vols. II. and III, leaving him to judge whether my view is in the smallest degree subverted, or if it be not rather more firmly established.

‘ of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate : and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the *stars* of heaven and the *constellations* thereof shall not give their light : the *sun* shall be *darkened* in his going forth, and the *moon* shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, &c.—Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place. in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.” This passage is quoted by Mr. Begg to support his *literal* interpretation ; yet the first verse introduces it to us as “ the burden (or oracle) concerning *Babylon* ;” and the latter verses declare, that it relates to the conquest of that empire by “ *the Medes.*” (v. 17.)

Another Scripture which Mr. Begg instances to support his view is Ezekiel xxxii. 7, 8, concerning *Egypt*, and referred by him to the latter day. “ And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven and make *the stars thereof dark* ; I will cover the *sun* with a cloud, and the *moon* shall not give her light : all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.” But at verse 11 it is declared, that this should be accomplished by “ *the sword of the king of Babylon*, &c. who should spoil the pomp of Egypt.” And in chap. xxx. it is also said, “ that the multitude of Egypt should cease by the hand of *Nebuchadnezzar* king of Babylon”—“ and at *Tehaphnehes* also the day should be *darkened.*” This specification of person and place fixes the fulfilment to the period when Nebuchadnezzar and Tehaphnehes existed.

Isaiah xxxiv seems to refer to the last days ; the kingdoms, upon whom the vengeance declared therein is to fall, being called *Idumea* ; though “ the indignation of the Lord is upon *all nations* and his fury upon *all their armies.*” (vv. 2, 5.) “ And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll : and all their host (the stars) shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from off the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.—For *my sword* shall be *bathed in heaven*, &c.” Here the latter clause is so evidently a figure, that it at once with me determines the whole passage not to be literal. Several clauses are indeed identical in their phraseology with Rev. xi. 13, 14, where, at the opening of the sixth seal ; “ there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon

‘ became as blood ; and the *stars of heaven fell unto THE EARTH, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs*, when she is shaken ‘ of a mighty wind,” and “ the *heaven departed as a scroll, &c.*” This agreement with a prophecy confessedly symbolical appears further to establish the meaning of Isaiah xxxiv.

The antichristian power described in Daniel viii. is also seen by him “ to wax great even to the host of heaven ; and ‘ it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, ‘ and stamped upon them :” expressions which again are manifestly absurd if literally understood.

Some have considered the ready application by Jacob to himself and family of the sun, moon and stars in Joseph’s dream, (see Gen. xxxvii. 9, 10,) to be the foundation of this figure ; and it is certainly a sufficient ground for it : but then the question arises, How came *Jacob* acquainted with it ? I am inclined to go still farther back, and to believe it was contained in Genesis i. 14, 15 :—“ And God said, let there be ‘ lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from ‘ the night ; and let them be for SIGNS, and for seasons, and ‘ for days, and for years : and let them be for lights, &c.” In this passage all the *natural* purposes (if I may so speak) for which the sun, moon and stars are created are specified, independent of their being for *signs*. They are to be for *lights*, they are to produce the *seasons*, and to mark *periods of time* : what other sense remains, connected with the economy of nature, in which they can be as *signs* ? I conclude therefore, that in patriarchal times they were looked upon as significant demonstrations of the “ eternal power and godhead” of Jehovah, of which they continually testify in all the earth ; and that they were also symbols of the gradations, orders and courses, appointed of God in his moral government of the world ;—“ the sun *ruling* by day, the moon and stars *ruling* by night,” and “ one star differing from another star in glory,” as in the world to come. Thus it was, I apprehend, that not only Jacob, but intelligent Jews in subsequent ages, would be equally familiar with the signification of such language in their prophets. Probably Judges v. 20 was thus understood.

2. I proceed to the signification of the signs. As the sun signified in Jacob’s case the patriarch himself, or head of the family, so in the political state it is the king, or supreme ruler. I am not aware of any Scripture that *clearly* proves the moon to symbolize the *Church*, though it is generally so interpreted :

unless it be that, as the *wife* of Jacob was intended by the moon in Joseph's dream, so the Church is also frequently compared to a woman betrothed or united in marriage.<sup>z</sup> It may be presumed in the case of Rachel to signify *reflected* authority; and as all these symbols must be referred to Christ and his kingdom, as containing their great antitype, so is he the great King or "*Sun* of righteousness," by whom all kings reign; and the Church shines only by an authority and light borrowed from him. The stars, or heavenly host, exclusive of the sun and moon, symbolize princes, magistrates and rulers in church or state, or both, according to the context. Thus when in Isaiah xxiv it is said, "that the Lord shall *punish* the host of ' the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth ' upon the earth, and they shall be gathered together (the host ' and the kings) and *shut up in prison, &c.*" it is evident that princes and mighty ones are intended.\*

The *heavens* in this symbolical sense will of course mean the whole host of the celestial luminaries—sun, moon, and stars; comprehending political authorities in general, and institutions supported by them. The *darkening* any of these lights signifies the diminution or extinction of the power of those symbolized; just as "a cloudy and dark day" is a figure for a time of wrath or judgement. The following Scriptures will sufficiently prove the correctness of the above interpretation:—Isaiah XLVII, 5; Ezek. xxxii, 7, 8 and xxxiv, 12; Rev. viii. and xvi. 10. The *shaking* of the heavens is only another figure for similar judgements on rulers and kingdoms, even to their extinction. Thus in Haggai the Lord says: "I ' will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow ' the *throne* of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of ' the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the ' chariots and those that ride in them, and the horses and their ' riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother."<sup>a</sup>—In which passage the whole of what follows after the words, "I will shake the heavens," appears to be explanatory of them.

\* I question if the words "and the kings of the earth" be not exegetical of the previous sentence; the word *and* having the sense of *even*. Such explanatory sentences are common in Isaiah and the Psalms, (some instances of which I shall presently offer;) and they are particularly useful in helping to fix the meaning of symbolical and figurative language.

<sup>z</sup> Compare Ephes. v. 31, 32 with Rev. xxi. 2 and 9.   <sup>a</sup> Haggai ii. 21, 22.

It needs no argument to prove, that the prophecy thus explained is *fulfilling* at the present time. Since the French Revolution we have seen the thrones of the continental kingdoms shaken to their foundations; and a republican spirit is now ready to burst forth, like an eruption of volcanic matter, and overwhelm them all. We have already seen France, and Belgium, Italy, Poland, and other places, affected by the revolutionary spirit; Ireland and our own country are evidently ripe for explosion; Switzerland has been the theatre of popular tumults and struggles; Spain and Portugal are likely immediately to be involved in a war, which will provoke a collision of similar revolutionary principles with those of despotism and intolerance. Nor is *royalty* the only object of present attack; the nobles of every rank are also aimed at. They have been temporarily extinguished in France, and are now seriously menaced again; whilst the indications of hostility against them in our own formerly happy land are too fierce and loud to be mistaken. Still more clearly indicated is the hoarse croak of war against prelates, and against all established churches: and I am fully persuaded that it will ere long be as distinctly heard assailing the real ministers of Christ of every denomination. I deem it utterly impossible for any pious minister to be *faithful*, and to declare the whole counsel of God, and not become odious to a generation which clearly hates every thing in the shape of authority, whether political or ecclesiastical, but especially to be reminded of the word and the authority of Jehovah. Woe, to my country, to Europe, to the world!

3. This leads me to the terrestrial signs: "upon the earth 'distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves 'roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking 'after those things which are coming on the earth.'" I must first explain the *figurative* part of the passage;—in proceeding to which I am aware, that I expose myself to the objection of mixing literal and figurative clauses in the same sentence. But though I plead for the literal sense of Scripture in the main; yet, like all other principles, it may be carried to an extreme: which it certainly is, if we are not kept within those rules and limits discoverable in the Scriptures themselves. It is no uncommon thing to meet with such mixed passages in the Scriptures: though there is usually some internal mark by which a careful reader, well acquainted with Scripture phraseology, may distinguish the several sentences or clauses. Some

such places interpret themselves;—others become evident from the *necessity* of taking certain portions spiritually or figuratively;—and others arise from the ordinary use of certain words and phrases, which become as it were *tropical* expressions, from their frequent occurrence in that figurative sense. Thus in Isaiah XLIV. 3, 4—“ I will pour water on him ‘ that is *thirsty*, and *floods* upon the *dry ground* : I will pour ‘ out my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thy offspring : and they shall *spring up among the grass, as willows ‘ by the water courses* :” who doubts the figurative meaning of those portions marked by italics, notwithstanding the literal passages with which they are intermixed ?

To pass however to the passage before us, “ the sea and the waves roaring,” it happens, that there are few expressions of more frequent occurrence in a figurative use of them ; nor any more fully explained by the context. It must first be observed, that “ *waters*” and “ *waves*” of the sea are interchangeable terms in Scripture ; otherwise some of the passages to which I shall advert will not be satisfactory. Thus in Psalm XCIII. “ The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods ‘ have lifted up their voice : the floods lift up their *waves* : the ‘ Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many *waters*—the ‘ mighty *waves* of the sea.” (See also Isa. XI. 9 ; LVII. 20.)

Now in Rev. XVII. 15, an infallible interpreter assures us, that *waters* are “ *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues* :” but as the Apocalypse is so avowedly symbolical, I will prefer adducing a few instances of a different character. In Jeremiah LI. 13, Babylon is thus addressed :—“ O thou ‘ that dwellest upon many *waters*, abundant in treasures, thine ‘ end is come :” in which sentence, though the two last clauses are literal, the first appears from the context to be figurative : for verses 43, 44, and 55 show that these waters are the nations which she had subdued, but which instead of flowing to her any longer as tributary streams, would all at once *overflow* and destroy her :—“ ‘ The sea is come up upon Babylon ; she ‘ is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her ‘ cities are a desolation, &c.”—“ ‘ The waters shall not flow ‘ together any more unto him. (Bel.)”—“ ‘ The Lord hath ‘ spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice ; ‘ when her *waves do roar* like great *waters*, a noise of their ‘ voice is uttered.” Again in Isa. LX. 5, of Zion it is said : “ the *abundance of the sea* shall be converted unto thee, the

*forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee:\** in which passage the latter phrase is evidently explanatory of the first.

From the few instances brought forward it may already have been perceived, that “the sea and the waves *roaring*” must signify nations and multitudes in an unsettled and revolutionary or hostile state, threatening destruction. This will appear more evident as we proceed. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the *mountains* (the symbol of kingdoms, having *established and settled* governments) be carried into the midst of the *sea*; though the *waters* thereof *roar and be troubled*; though the *mountains shake* with the swelling thereof.” (Ps. XLVI. 1—3.) In the sixth verse the whole is thus explained: “*The HEAVEN THEN raged, the KINGDOMS were moved, HE uttered his voice, the earth melted.*” Verses 8—10 further prove, that the *melting* of the earth must also be a figure; because it evidently remains afterwards, with the spoils and desolations of war upon it. Again in Psalm LXV. 7 it is said of God, that he “stilleth the *noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people:*” in which sentence the latter clause, though the word “and” is prefixed, is not an *additional* circumstance, but is explanatory of the former. A similar explanatory intermixture may be perceived in Psalm CXXIV. 2—5. “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when *men* rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the *waters* had overwhelmed us, the *stream* had gone over our soul: then the *proud waters* had gone over our soul.” So again in Isaiah v. 29—“The Lord will lift up an ensign to the *nations* from far, &c.” and at verse 30 it is said of them;—“And in that day they shall roar against them like the *roaring of the sea*; and if one look unto the land, behold *darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof:*”—altogether very similar language to that in the prophecy before us. I will only beg the Reader’s attention to two passages more, which I will merely place in juxta position, without any comment. “Woe to the

\* Further instances are Jer. L. 30; Ezek. XXVI. 3; XXVII. 25; and Dan. VII. 3.



‘ multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise  
 ‘ of the seas ; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rush-  
 ‘ ing like the rushing of mighty waters ! The nations shall  
 ‘ rush like the rushing of many waters : but God shall rebuke  
 ‘ them, and they shall flee afar off, and shall be chased as the  
 ‘ chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling  
 ‘ thing before the whirlwind. And behold at evening time  
 ‘ trouble ; and before the morning he is not. This is the por-  
 ‘ tion of them that spoil us and the lot of them that rob us.”<sup>b</sup>

—“ We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art,  
 ‘ and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee  
 ‘ thy great power and hast reigned. And *the nations were*  
 ‘ *angry, and thy wrath is come*, and the time of the dead, that  
 ‘ they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward  
 ‘ unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them  
 ‘ that fear thy name, small and great ; and shouldest *destroy*  
 ‘ *them which destroy the earth*. And the temple of God was  
 ‘ opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark  
 ‘ of his testament, and there were lightnings, and voices, and  
 ‘ thunderings, and *an earthquake, and great hail !*”<sup>c</sup>

I have enlarged on this point, for the purpose of convincing the Reader of the frequency of this figure in the prophetic Scriptures : I now return to the exposition.

Surely we have had “ *distress of nations !*” The landed, the funded, the mercantile, the agricultural, the manufacturing, the shipping, the trading interests, all in turn have experienced depression and distress ; and so extensive has it been, that the members and adherents of different administrations have repeatedly pointed to its prevailing throughout *every nation of the continent*, as a proof that it did not originate from their own political measures. And the “ *perplexity*” concerning its cause and cure have been equally remarkable. Numerous reasons have been assigned for it, all differing from each other ! the war, the peace ;—paper currency, and return to cash payments ;—superabundant harvests,\* deficiency of crops ;—free trade, restrictions upon it ;—machinery, taxes, borough mongers, &c. &c. The remedies proposed have been if pos-

\* This was first blasphemously declared by a minister of state, (Lord Castlereagh,) and it was immediately followed by crops below the average, with partial droughts and famine.

sible still more numerous, and some of them have been adopted: but perplexity and distress have nevertheless increased rather than diminished; and throughout it all the hand of God is not acknowledged:—yea to hint, that it is a judgement, is in high places scouted with derision!—"Therefore for all this, the Lord's anger is not turned away, but his arm is stretched out still."

Then we have "the sea and the waves *roaring*." What I have said concerning the signs in the sun, moon and stars, has led me in great measure to anticipate this point: for the perilous condition of all rulers, governments, and nobles arises from the seditious spirit existing among the people. All the governments of Europe are obliged to maintain enormous standing armies, notoriously for the purpose of keeping down the revolutionary spirit that prevails. Various demonstrations have already occurred, in different countries. In our own country we have awful symptoms: in some places we have had dreadful riots and outrages; (e. g. Bristol, Derby and Nottingham;) in others incendiary fires, destruction of machinery, with tumultuous and violent assemblages of the peasantry; and in all populous places political unions are formed to overawe and control the government by physical force. Too generally the voice of infidelity, blasphemy, and speaking evil of dignities is heard; and thousands have shown that "their throat is an open sepulchre, the poison of asps under their lips, and their feet swift to shed blood." The social bond also appears dissolved: all parties in the state are dissevered from each other; personal animosity embitters political movements; and every man's hand seems to be against his brother. It should be remembered that a similar state of things broke out with the French revolution, when infidelity, anarchy and sedition, ran like wildfire among the nations. More atrocious acts were then perpetrated even than now: but the fire, which seemed got under for a while, is now beginning to rage forth again with the same relentless fury; and it may be feared (judging from God's word) will burn up all before it, until the Lord interpose.

Is it to be wondered at, that we see "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth?" The rapidity with which events are rushing upon us, appear to arrest the attention of all who are considerate, and to inspire them with apprehension. There

are, indeed, multitudes who are yet, alas ! hugging themselves in a fond delusion ; as if every thing around us, both religious and political, were improving. But I fear even these will soon have cause to tremble : for if I mistake not, those who are not utterly given up to hardness and blindness will speedily awake to the real character and tendency of prevailing principles, and all at once discover, that they have been themselves hallooing on the dogs of war, and promoting their own destruction by a spurious and infidel liberalism.

IV. There are one or two other events which I conceive are to transpire at the time when the signs just considered shall be fulfilled, and which I would therefore briefly notice in this place.

1. The first is the completion of God's elect remnant, who are gathered out from among men, during the time when the principles of infidelity and superstition are rapidly hurrying the world onwards toward that crisis which will terminate in the battle of Armageddon. I have already observed, that some interpreters conceive this event predicted in verse 14 ; and my own opinion, that that verse rather belongs to the preaching of the Gospel prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. I have no doubt however, that a great evangelical movement is predicted to occur contemporaneously with the appearing of the signs in the sun and moon ; which may be clearly gathered from Rev. xiv. 6, 7, where an angel is seen to " fly in the ' midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to ' them that dwell on the earth and to every nation, &c : " and this at the very crisis when " the hour of God's judgement is come ! " This circumstance is important, as accounting for that phenomenon which seems to puzzle so many—viz. the increase of infidelity and ungodliness, together with the diffusion of true religion. But was not this the case prior to the destruction of Jerusalem ? Thousands were converted at a single preaching ; " the number of the disciples multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith ; " <sup>d</sup> and yet the people at large were nevertheless given up to judicial blindness, " to fill up their sins alway, because the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost. " <sup>e</sup>

The religious movement, which has so signalized the period just passing away, may be said to have had its commencement

<sup>d</sup> Acts vi. 7.    <sup>e</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 16.

coeval with the first decided break out of revolutionary and infidel principles in France. Since that period the Bible has been translated into upwards of 150 languages and dialects, and more than seven million copies have been scattered through the world. Since then Missionary Societies have arisen, and sent forth their heralds with the glad tidings of the Gospel to nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples; so that we have missions to Pagans, to the Jews, to Roman Catholic and Mahomedan countries, and to the dark places of our own land. Since then the education of all classes has been attempted, from the adult of "threescore years and ten," down to "the infant of days;" Sabbath schools have found their way into every town and village of this empire; and the national systems of Bell, Lancaster, or Pestalozzi have been adopted here and on the continent, so that Papists themselves are borne along with the stream, and compelled by the current of public opinion to affect the instruction of their members. Since then various societies for the dissemination of religious tracts and other publications have likewise poured their millions of little treatises into the world: and the age is so fertile in various schemes for the spiritual and moral amelioration of mankind, that every year witnesses some new institution formed, having these objects avowedly in view. It may be truly said, that such combined and gigantic exertions have never yet been witnessed in the world; and they form a most remarkable precursor of that crisis, which the increase and prevalence of anti-social principles is so evidently hastening.

2. A second event, which I believe is now beginning to transpire, is the passing away of the Jewish tribulation, which one may expect to discern some symptoms of at this time. I have already shewn, that the signs take place so immediately on the ending of the tribulation, as to be comprised in the period of its termination. This view is strengthened by the 34th verse:—"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled:" for it would seem that the Jews, whatsoever different *political* aspect they may assume, will continue as a nation unconverted to Christ, until all that is previously foretold, and included in the phrase "*all these things*" shall be fulfilled.

The indications of this passing away of their affliction are to be found, first, in the circumstance that Christians do now "speak comfortably" to them. Four or five different institu-

tions are in existence, the object of which is to promote their spiritual welfare, or to ameliorate the temporal condition of inquirers. And, secondly, in the political measures in their behalf, which have either been proposed or adopted in France, England, and Russia and even Turkey; dictated either by the liberalism or the expediency of the age.

I must repeat, to avoid being misunderstood, that I expect, after they have come upon the stage, that their great crisis of tribulation will take place, previous to their final emancipation; but this is no way inconsistent with the *period* of their deliverance having arrived. We have a parallel case, if not a type of the same, in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The Lord first declares, "I have surely seen the affliction of 'my people, &c. and I am come down to deliver them.'" Yet an aggravation of their trials for a time followed this declaration; and the period when they were in the greatest strait (being pursued by Pharaoh and his host, and shut up between mountains and the sea,) was immediately preceded by a kindly disposition towards them of the Egyptian people, in whose sight the Lord gave them favor.<sup>f</sup>

V. I shall now review the remaining portion of Matt. xxiv—"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in 'heaven;—and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn;—and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of 'heaven with power and great glory.'" (v. 30.) The two first clauses of this verse are not in Mark or Luke; and they seem to me to be clearly distinct from the advent itself. It becomes us to speak with diffidence of things unfulfilled; but I incline to the opinion that this sign is an appearance of the Son of Man himself in the heavens, previous to his actual descent; to prove which I cannot do better than quote the words of an intelligent writer:—

"It seems impossible to affix any definite meaning whatever 'to these words, '*the sign* of the Son of Man in heaven,' unless we understand *his visible presence there* to be what is referred to by the expression '*the sign.*' For as in Matt. 'xii. 39, not *Jonah's sign*, but *Jonah the sign*, is signified by 'the words 'the sign of the prophet Jonah;' and as in Acts 'iv, 22 we understand the *healing* itself as the thing called *σημειον*, the miracle, or sign; and as in Rom. iv. 11, by

<sup>f</sup> See Exod. III. 7, 8; XII. 33—36.

‘ the words *σημειον περιτομης*, we understand, not properly a sign of circumcision, but *circumcision the sign*, received by Abraham; so in the text before us we must likewise understand, not properly ‘ *the sign of the Son of Man in heaven,*’ but *the Son of Man in the heaven* THE SIGN of his advent.”<sup>g</sup> This seems the more probable when taken in connexion with the question recorded only in this Gospel,—“What shall be sign of THY COMING?” for there does not appear to be any specific answer to it, unless it be contained in this verse: and this is a direct reply to it, which may be thus paraphrased:—“Then shall appear the *sign* of my coming, viz. the Son of Man in heaven; after which they shall see the Son of Man actually *coming*.”

I have reserved for this place a more particular consideration of the *Advent* or *Coming* of the Son Man, so frequently mentioned in the course of this prophecy.

Modern commentators have been wont to consider it a figurative coming, and to have been fulfilled by the Lord’s visitation of wrath upon Jerusalem. This interpretation is wholly gratuitous, as there is no ground in the prophecy itself for such a conclusion; and even if the tribulation, therein named, were to be limited to the overthrow of Jerusalem, (which I have shown it is not,) still it is throughout kept entirely distinct from the Advent, which occurs not until *after* the tribulation. But there are, on the other hand, one or two considerations directly subversive of such a view. We have seen (p. 404) the circumstance which probably led to the question, “What shall be the sign of thy coming?”—viz. “Behold your house ‘is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that *cometh* in the name of the Lord.” Now if this very desolation of Jerusalem were the Coming of the Lord, the parties on whom the wrath is denounced were those who more immediately witnessed it. Surely the Jews, who were besieged in Jerusalem and afterwards led captive, saw the Lord’s coming if any did; and as certainly they did not then say, either of him or of that event, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:” which they ought to have done, had our Lord’s words been then fulfilled. Further, the very expression, “Ye shall not *see* me henceforth, till ye shall say, &c.” shows that a per-

sonal advent is intended, in which they should see him as visibly, as they beheld him then. For if he was "henceforth" to be personally *invisible* to them, (which none deny) the natural antithesis of this place requires us to understand, that when they should *see* him again, it would also be personally.

There are one or two further considerations which render this point still clearer. This coming of the Son of Man is in Luke immediately connected with the *redemption* of the Lord's people: for when the signs which precede it begin to come to pass, they are to lift up their heads and take courage, from the confidence that their redemption draweth nigh. This is in all three Gospels illustrated by the parable of the fig tree putting forth its leaves, as the indication that summer is nigh at hand; explained in St. Luke of the approach of *the kingdom of God*: but neither did the redemption of the Lord's people, nor any striking manifestation of the kingdom of God, immediately follow the destruction of Jerusalem. It is, I am persuaded, at this very time in which we live, that the fig tree is putting forth her leaves; and that, notwithstanding the stormy elements gathering around, the Christian may rejoice at the thought of his speedy and glorious deliverance. The *summer* of the Church is nigh at hand. Already she may say:—"The voice of my beloved! *behold, he cometh*, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." And presently she will hear him say,—“Rise up, my love, my fair one, and ‘come away. For, lo, *the winter is past*, the rain is over and ‘gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; ‘*the fig tree putteth forth her green figs*, and the vines with ‘the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair ‘one, and come away.” (Canticles II. 8—13.)

Another decided argument for the personal advent being meant is the parables, which follow in the next chapter, and which are a continuation of the prophecy. These are commonly explained (the two last of them more particularly) of the personal advent of Jesus; and indeed the remaining portion of the chapter now under review is, by the generality of commentators, supposed to refer to the same event.\*

\* I have forborne to press another argument on this head; though it is conclusive to my own mind: I mean, *the coming* being described as “in the clouds of heaven,” or “in a cloud.” I believe this description of the Advent always sets forth the personal coming in other parts

Verse 31,—“ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” This is a verse on which I cannot speak with any assurance. There are three views which may be and have been taken of it. The first is figurative, making it the preaching of the Gospel, by which the elect of God are called out from the world: and some have referred this preaching to the time previous to the destruction of Jerusalem; and others make it identical with Rev. vii. 1—3, when the four angels restrain *the four winds* until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. The second makes it the gathering of the Jews, the elect nation of God, who are spread abroad as the four winds of heaven;<sup>1</sup> and of whom the Lord says—“ If any of thee be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee.”<sup>m</sup> The third opinion is, that it describes the gathering of the living saints, who shall then be changed and caught up to meet the Lord. I will only observe, as an important clew to a right interpretation, that whatsoever be the event here described, it takes place *after the coming* of the Son of Man; and it therefore appears to me to be performed at the same time that the angels gather out of Christ’s kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity.<sup>n</sup>

The remaining portion of this chapter, with the parallel places in Mark and Luke, are highly practical. We are informed that the precise day and hour in which the coming of the Son of Man shall take place, is not revealed to any created intelligence,—neither to man, to angel, nor to Messiah himself.<sup>o</sup> The object of this concealment appears to be to make men *watchful*; but, alas! such is the perverseness of human nature, that because the day and hour are not known, men make it an argument to discourage believers from entertaining the hope of Christ’s appearance altogether, and thus to throw them off their guard. How many professing christians are at this very hour as ignorant and indifferent with regard to the Lord’s approach, as the generation in the time of Noah were

of Scripture, and therefore must be so understood in this place. See especially Daniel vii. 13; Acts i. 9 and 11; Rev. i. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Zech. ii. 6. <sup>m</sup> Deut xxx. 4. <sup>n</sup> Matt. xiii. 41 and 49; xxv. 31, 32.  
<sup>o</sup> Mark xiii. 32.



in respect to the flood ! Too many indeed are making secular and carnal concerns the *chief* business of life ; and “ eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” absorb their attention and affections. Would that warning in St. Mark’s Gospel be added,—“ Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you un-awares ;”—I say would this warning be added, if the Lord had not foreseen that his Church would stand in need of it ? Some are offended at any thing like an intimation, that the *religious* body can be defective, either in spirit, in practice, or in doctrine ; and seem to imagine, that what the multitude of professors think and do is a sufficient standard of doctrine and duty. But I must believe God’s word, which rather intimates, that at this time his *disciples* even will have need to be cautioned against the absorbing and engrossing cares of life ;—yea even against so pampering the *appetite*, that the heart do not become habitually overcharged and indisposed to spiritual things. For according to verse 49 of this chapter, it is not so much drunkenness in the professors themselves that is to be feared, as that they will readily “ eat and drink *with the drunken* ;” and thus be drawn into infidel carelessness and security with the ungodly world. I apprehend that verses 40, 41 apply entirely to *professors* ; and if so, that there will be among them men of high pretensions in religious matters, who will one day “ sit with vain persons and eat of their dainties,”<sup>p</sup> and the next mix with the people of God and endeavour to speak as they speak. It will be from amongst professors therefore, that, when the angels come forth to gather the elect, “ one shall be taken, the other left :” one will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air ; the other will then be declared to be a hypocrite, and left to the pelting of that storm, which will come with the overflowings of ungodliness.

Awful indeed will be the state of the world in general !—“ For as a *snare* shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” They not only will not expect it, but will not believe it, though a man declare it unto them. They will ask, “ Where is the promise of his coming ? for since ‘ the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from ‘ the beginning of the creation.’”<sup>q</sup> They will be dreaming of a new era of liberty and happiness by means of political move-

<sup>p</sup> Psalm xxvi. 4 ; cxli. 4.    <sup>q</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 4.

ments and “the march of intellect;” but “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.”<sup>r</sup>

Again, therefore, the Lord urges on his disciples to “*watch*,” and that because they know not what hour their Lord doth come. (v. 42.) He would have them in the same readiness as a man who has received intelligence of the intended visit of a midnight robber; and always be in readiness for *his* approach whose coming shall be “as a thief in the night.”

Verses 45—51. Ministers are more especially called upon to watch for this coming, and, in expectation of it, faithfully to give the household of God “their meat (doubtless their *spiritual* food) in *due season*. There is here a special reference, as I apprehend it, to the need of setting the doctrine of the Lord’s advent before their hearers, and exhorting them to look for it when the signs of the times bespeak its near approach.—“Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily, he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” Then comes the dreadful responsibility of those who keep this subject out of sight, “saying in their heart, my Lord *delayeth* his coming,” and so postpone the advent to some remote or indefinite period; smiting their fellow servants, and behaving themselves unseemly. These persons shall be led away with the error of the wicked and deceived in this respect,<sup>s</sup> so that the Lord will come upon them after all “in the day when they look not for him, and in an hour that they are not aware of, and shall cut them asunder, and appoint their portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth!” O! how much better to be even *mistaken* in regard to time, and to bear the reproach of enthusiasm in this matter, than to sit down with the reputation of *sobriety*, and to be indifferent in regard to the event. In the one case we are at least stirred up to that readiness for the Lord’s coming which is pronounced *blessed*; in the other we run the risk of being confounded with the hypocrite and unbeliever! May the spirit of watchfulness—of watchfulness in regard to this subject in particular—and the spirit of prayer, be poured out upon the saints and the servants of God; “that they may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man!”

ABDIEL.

<sup>r</sup> 1 Thess. v. 3.   <sup>s</sup> 2 Pet. III. 17.

## Essay XI.

## PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

This parable, which begins the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, possesses a peculiar interest, arising from the circumstance that the events which it illustrates are so evidently fulfilling in the present day.

And here, lest I should be misapprehended, I would request the Reader to distinguish between the *fulfilling* and the *fulfilment* of a prophecy. I find that unless this obvious distinction be kept in view, what I have written in regard to the signs in the sun, moon, stars, &c. mentioned at verse 29 of the previous chapter, is liable to misconception. I am very far from thinking these things *fulfilled*: I have a daily increasing conviction, that they have "*begun* to come to pass," the indications of which are to my mind very decided; but it is still only the *budding* of the fig tree, and neither the time of full leaf nor fruit.

Now the first thing, with which we have to do in the parable before us, is the very first word—"THEN." This at once fixes the *time* of the parable, and consequently the principal *action* of it, to the period of the coming of the Lord, with which this word so evidently connects it. Let the reader only dismiss the artificial division into chapters and verses, and look at the context, and he will perceive it to be as follows: that in those days which shall be as the days of Noah, (chap. xxiv. 37—39;)—that in the hour which thoughtless professors think not of, (vv. 42—45;)—that when the evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, (48—51;)—THEN, shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, &c.

I have already discussed the meaning of the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," &c.\* I shall only here observe, that though it most commonly refers to the period of millennial glory, it frequently in the parables respects only some *circumstances* in the character or condition of the *visible Church*. This is obviously the scope of the phrase in the parable now under consideration; so that I would thus paraphrase the first verse.—"At the period immediately connected with the advent of the

\* See Essay II.

‘ Lord, the aspect or appearance, which the Church will then assume in regard to that event, may be compared to ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth, &c.’”

Our next step must be to inquire into the meaning of the symbols or imagery of the parable ; which will enable us afterwards to trace its purport with greater clearness and less interruption. It is not material to the practical bearing of the subject, whether we understand the virgins to represent *churches*, or individual *professors* in the Church at large ; for it is the conduct of individuals collectively, which must constitute the character, either of national churches, or of separate congregations of Christians. *Virgins*, in Psalm XLV. 14, appear to signify nations or churches ; whilst in Rev. XIV. 4 they seem to mean individual followers of the Lamb. The number *ten* denotes in many instances a considerable but indefinite number,\* which I take to be its meaning in the present instance ; and therefore that the ten virgins set forth the great body, or indeed the entire, of the visible Church.†

In regard to the *lamps*, *the word of God* is compared in Scripture to a lamp,<sup>a</sup> and churches are also symbolized by lamp-stands or candlesticks ;<sup>b</sup> but neither of these interpretations appear to me consistently to apply to the parable of the ten virgins. The *hope*, or *expectation*, of individual professors is also likened to a lamp ; and this seems to be its meaning in the parable before us. One instance may suffice of its being used in this sense : “ The *light* of the righteous rejoiceth : but the *lamp* of the wicked shall be put out.”<sup>c</sup> The word *lamp* is here the same as the word *light* in the antithetical member of the sentence ; and the whole answers exactly to

\* For proof of this the Reader may consult Gen. xxxi. 41 ; Num. xiv. 22 ; Job xix. 3 ; Zech. viii. 23.

† Mr. Maitland has a valuable remark in his Discourses on this Parable, showing why the Church is here represented, not by the *bride*, but by “ the virgins her companions that follow her.” It is to the purport, that a difference of character cannot be set forth by one single individual ; and therefore it must be represented by the conduct of *different* individuals, as in the instance of the guests at the Marriage Supper. The *bride* however appears to be in the Old Testament Scriptures the *Jewish Church*, as distinguished from the Gentile Churches, who are either “ the Virgins her companions that be her fellows,” (Psalm XLV.) or “ the ornaments with which as a bride she decorates herself,” (Isa. XLIX. 18,) or placed in some other subordinate relationship.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. cxix. 105.

<sup>b</sup> Rev. I. 20.

<sup>c</sup> Prov. XIII. 9.

what in another proverb is expressed without figure;—"The *hope* of the righteous shall be gladness; but the *expectation* of the wicked shall perish."\* For there is an intimate connection between the divine illumination of a man's soul, and the hope begotten in him thereby: which is indeed the light shining in him.

The *oil* I take to be the *love of God* in the heart; which is the Scripture test whereby we may know, that our hope shall not be put out or confounded: for it is written "hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."<sup>d</sup> Thus, whilst the righteous are "looking for that blessed hope, [even] the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,"<sup>e</sup> they are exhorted to go "*rejoicing* in hope,"<sup>f</sup> and "holding fast the confidence and the *rejoicing* of the hope firm to the end."<sup>g</sup> For "the *light* of the righteous *rejoiceth*," (as we have seen,) and "the *hope* of the righteous shall be *gladness*;" just as the *oil* shed abroad in them is called "the oil of *gladness*," and "the oil of *joy*."<sup>h</sup>

It requires no argument to prove, that the *Bridegroom* is the Lord Jesus Christ.—John III. 29 and Rev. XXI. 9 are sufficient evidence.

Proceeding therefore now to the main subject of the parable, I observe, that it sets forth the conduct of the Church generally under a particular *hope* or *expectation* which it professes. This is *the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*; evidently indicated by its being likened to ten virgins "who take their lamps and go forth to meet the *Bridegroom*." It was and is a custom in the eastern nations for the bridegroom to be thus waited for by a group of attendants, who met him in the evening with lamps and ornamented lanthorns, and, falling into his train, conducted or accompanied him to the marriage supper. The being furnished with these lamps did, I apprehend, more than any other circumstance, point them out as the attendant virgins, chosen for the occasion; and it thus marks the persons in the parable to be symbols, or similitudes, of professors.

\* Prov. x. 28. Compare also Job VIII. 13. 14; XI. 17—20; XXVII. 8; Prov. XI. 7 with Job XVIII. 5, 6; XXI. 17; Psalm XVIII. 28; Prov. XX. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. v. 5.    <sup>e</sup> Tit. II. 13.    <sup>f</sup> Rom. XII. 12.    <sup>g</sup> Heb. III. 6.  
<sup>h</sup> Ps. XLV. 7; Isa. LXI. 3.

And this has long been the *attitude* (if I may so say) of all the professing followers of Jesus. In regard to the Church of England in particular, the services appointed for the season of Advent sufficiently testify, that *she* professes to look for the coming of her Lord : and I believe I may say, without fear of being successfully contradicted, that there are no orthodox Christians who do not avow the same expectation. It is true, some are now only looking for a *spiritual* coming ; and some talk only of a *providential* coming ; forgetting that in these two senses the Lord continually visits his Church. The majority however look also for a *personal* coming in *glory* : only they postpone the time of it to some remote or indefinite period. I may indeed here observe, that the majority of professors of serious religion entertain an opinion, that some great crisis is even *now at hand*. They have differed greatly in regard to the character of that crisis ; but that we live in no ordinary times, and that a period pregnant with good or evil is rapidly hastening onward, has become a very general, I may say a universal, persuasion.

An essential distinction is described as existing among these virgins,—viz. that five of them were *wise* and five were *foolish* ; and the proof given of the folly of the latter is, that they omit to take *oil* in their vessels with their lamps. Before however I dwell on this, I must notice another circumstance in the attitude of the whole group ; viz. that “ while the Bridegroom tarried, they *all slumbered and slept*.” How exactly this describes the state of the Church till within the last few years ! The Bridegroom has *tarried* ;—his promised coming has not appeared to be immediately at hand ;—and the Church, therefore, unable to reconcile how he should “ tarry,” and yet “ *not tarry*,”<sup>i</sup> has been universally sleeping and slumbering in regard to this expectation. It has been well nigh taken by surprise. It has been upon the watch tower with its lamps ; but the lamps have in general burnt dimly, or not at all, and therefore afforded little or no light. Thus Christians have given little or no warning to the world in regard to this subject, and they have slumbered in respect to it themselves. All has been, comparatively speaking, in darkness : for if the wayfaring man, observing them, might be led to suppose from their lamps, that they were waiting the coming of a bridegroom ; their sleeping

<sup>i</sup> Compare Hab. 11. 3 and Heb. x. 37.

posture would lead him, on the other hand, to conclude, that they said in their hearts—"My Lord delayeth his coming."j And so, if a simple inquirer (a member of the Church of England for example) should judge from the light of its liturgy, that the coming of Christ was expected; let him only put the question to the generality of ministers and members of that Church, and he will find that they consider the man to be under some delusion, who does really expect that coming earlier than a thousand years hence!

To return however to the essential distinction existing among these virgins; it is important to observe, that throughout the whole parable the *foolish* virgins are not charged with any gross immorality. It is not therefore the openly wicked and profane who are here intended: they are persons who are apparently interested in religion, who are companions of the wise in heart, and who professedly expect the coming of their Lord; but they have no *oil* in their vessels with their lamps;—that is, as we have seen, the Holy Ghost has not really been shed abroad in their hearts;—they have no inward principle of love and joy and holy obedience.

The wise virgins therefore, though slumbering in regard to the great object of expectation, were nevertheless ready to trim the lamp and join their Lord, as soon as they should recognise the shout of his approach: whereas the foolish virgins, having neglected this readiness, their lamps were really of no use. Thus it is with believers in the Church. Though they have lost sight of this blessed event, and have been dreaming about the conversion of the world first, and a previous millenium of glory, and rambling in their sleep about other matters, have nevertheless a readiness of heart,—a sanctified spirit. They have secured the one thing needful, and whether the Bridegroom delay his coming till they die first, or whether he come suddenly, they have a hope, grounded upon faith in Jesus, and witnessed by their inward delight in his commandments.k

This is just what the foolish are destitute of. They are in *company* with the wise,—they equally have lamps,—and they perceive that the wise can slumber as well as themselves. This draws them into a fatal security. They point perhaps to this or that pious person who does not believe that the Lord is

j Matt. xxiv. 48.      k Compare Rom. vii. 22—25; viii. 1, with I John v. 1—3.

at hand, and they are satisfied with their own resemblance to them in this and certain outward circumstances, without considering the great difference as to inward and spiritual grace. They never seriously examine into the state of their own hearts ;—their faith has no purifying influence on the soul ;—they are not aiming to be conformed to God’s holy nature ;—they have not a readiness to do his will : yea, I will say, that though they profess to be *waiting* his coming, they do not really *desire* it ! I am disposed to believe that one reason why the Lord suffers some pious christians in the present day to remain for a time prejudiced against this hope, is, that their conduct may prove a snare and a trap to those who have the form of godliness, but whose hearts the god of this world hath blinded.

I pass on to the next point.—“ And at midnight there was ‘ a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to ‘ meet him.’ ” The Lord is considerate towards his people ! In the first instance he warns them to be watchful, lest, coming suddenly, he find them sleeping ; and now that the time is arrived, he sends forward messengers to announce himself near at hand, lest, after all, he take them by surprise. He does not come actually upon them ; but, when at a little distance, desires them to go forth and meet him. From this we may gather, that just before the Lord’s actual coming there is to be some note of preparation to the Church—some cry raised—some stirring up by his ministers, to warn and rouse men from the slumber they are in with regard to this very event.

I feel awfully persuaded, that the Church is, at this moment, in the precise condition here represented ! The servants of God are *now* sounding an alarm in all His holy mountain. A cry has been raised, within these few years only, exactly answering to this, “ *Behold he cometh.* ”—it is now echoed through the land, and penetrating among all classes of religious professors. And many who, only a short time since, did not suspect such an event to be coming upon them, are now persuaded, that the Lord is at hand.

Mark the *time* also of this cry—*midnight* ! Just when the *world* is all stillness and darkness ;—just when men, who know not God, imagine themselves most secure ;—when multitudes are dreaming that the march of knowledge, perhaps, and the spread of liberal principles, and the new philosophy, is all at once to effect what christianity cannot ;—when they



are saying “*peace, peace* :”—then, suddenly, the cry is heard, and the Church is roused !

I do not mean to assert, that *all* professors have *at once* believed this cry to proceed from God, and that they have immediately risen to prepare. I do not expect it; for some people, aye and pious people too, are exceedingly dull and heavy when they once get fast asleep. They require to be shouted to again and again, and perhaps to be well shaken, before they are properly aroused. But it is nevertheless wonderful, how rapidly this cry is making its way!—what general attention it begins to excite; what numbers are daily added to those who are convinced, and who re-echo the warning; and how greatly opposition and doubt are diminished ! I have not a question in my own mind, that as the indications of the Lord’s advent increase in intensity, the whole of those who are *really wise in heart* will arise, and shake themselves from the dust, and trim their lamps.\* Yea—all *professors*, (even those who are like the *foolish virgins*,) will presently be *convinced*, so far as conviction goes: for the parable states, “that *all* those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps;” which indeed is the next point for consideration.

What I have expounded thus far I consider either fulfilled, or fulfilling: that which remains to be expounded is unfulfilled; and therefore I can only give what appears to me, assisted as we are by that which is accomplishing, to be the most probable interpretation.

It is easy to imagine, that an *increased light* is given by this trimming of the lamps; and that the wise begin to look out with eager expectation for the Bridegroom. The Church therefore—the believing part of it—instead of appearing like slumbering virgins in this respect, will presently resemble those who “stand with their loins girt and their lights burning, even as those who wait for their Lord.” There will be a *universal* testimony presently from the pious, whether men will hear it, or whether they will forbear. Faith and hope—and I pray God *charity* also—will be called into more lively exercise. The truths of prophecy will likewise shine with increased clearness,

\* Since this Essay first appeared in the Investigator of Prophecy, I have had the satisfaction to know that several eminent christians have been awakened to the subject; and are now “looking for that blessed ‘hope [even] the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour ‘Jesus Christ.’”

confirming and strengthening the expectation. Indeed this is in a measure daily fulfilling *now* : for as the cry is reverberated from place to place, so prophecy itself is more diligently investigated ; “ many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased ; ” according as Daniel foretels of this time.<sup>1</sup> And I may add, that many are now experiencing the *practical* and *holy* influence of this expectation in their souls. They enjoy more of the *power* of godliness,—they love the thought of Christ’s appearing,—and they look forward to it with desire and with holy awe.

At the same time the foolish trim *their* lamps; and now, alas ! they discover their omission—viz. that they have brought *no oil* :—their lamps go out ! They are then described as applying to the wise-hearted in this dilemma, saying, “ Give us ‘ of *your* oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise ‘ answered saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and ‘ you ; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” I can only explain this from that light which is thrown on the subject by the conduct of professors now, when they seem to have some conviction of the reality of the Lord’s speedy approach. We have seen, that the lamp represents more especially the professed *hope* or *expectation* of any. Now, when the righteous realize this event, their hope is animated and revived, and it shines with a blessed assurance ; for theirs is a hope that shall not be confounded. But when the hollow professor has this subject pressed upon him, his heart *dies* within him ;—his expectation perishes ;—his candle goes out in darkness. He discovers that his is not a hope that can *delight* in the Lord’s coming, and *love* his appearing ; he becomes sensible, that he is not ready to meet his Lord ; and he wonders at the righteous, whose spirit can say, “ *Come* Lord Jesus, *come quickly* ! ” He begins now to inquire more into the *reason* of his hope : the foolish has been with the righteous ever ; he has partaken of the same means of grace, and agreed together, seemingly, in the same doctrines and expectations ; but now the righteous appears to have a something, after all, which he has not, and he turns to him,—demanding his prayers perhaps, or his advice,—expecting that he shall share with him also of that inward preparation and joy of heart.

There are persons who seem to think, that the doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> Dan. XII. 4.

Christ's personal coming is not a practical or profitable subject; and that some ministers in the present day give too much attention to it. Nothing however can more decidedly prove, that there is power, and *great* power, in this doctrine, than the parable before us. That which can stir up the wise to greater watchfulness, and cause all their graces to shine forth;—that which can discover to the formal professor, that he has not the root of the matter in him, and set him on a diligent search;—can be no *dead letter*. It is possible, that some may *over-rate* it, or talk and preach of it to the exclusion of all other things; but surely the appearing—the hope of the *speedy* appearing—of the Lord Christ, *ought* to be an object of intense interest! and sure I am that person cannot *with the heart believe it*, who thinks it a matter of but little importance.

The wise however tell the foolish, that there will not be enough oil for both, but to go rather to them that sell and buy for themselves.\* These I apprehend are the ministers of religion, who set before their people that blessed hope, “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” and who in regard to the things of the Spirit invite them to “come and *buy*, without money and without price.”<sup>m</sup>

\* This teaches us, by the way, the folly and danger of the popish doctrine of *works of supererogation*; viz. that a man may perform more good works than are required of him. The overplus of the saints' works the Papists consider the property of the Church; and that the Pope may grant them, on payment of money or by favor, to those who have them not. Christ, however, expressly tells us, that when we have done all that is commanded us, we are only *unprofitable* servants; and here the wise answer, that they have no grace to spare. This doctrine is built upon the erroneous notion, that works either *justify* or *sanctify* a man. I apprehend they can do *neither*; we are not *pardoned* on account of our works, nor are works our *fitness* for heaven. We are accounted righteous solely on account of the righteousness of Christ; and our fitness consists of the inward state of the heart, which also is wrought in us by his Spirit,—the love of God, I repeat, shed abroad in it by the Holy Ghost. But many I fear are infected with this leaven who suspect it not. For instance, to speak of repentance and our future good life as if they could in any way atone for the guilt of our past life, is equally built upon the supposition, that a man can do *more* than is required of him daily: else how can his future good life atone for his past, seeing it is *always* his duty to walk with God? And if a man *can* do so much more than is daily required of him, what is to hinder him when he supposes his past sins blotted out by that overplus, from still laying up a store of good works to give away?

<sup>m</sup> Isa. LV. 1; Rev XXII. 17.

But, alas! “wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing that he hath no heart to it.”<sup>n</sup> The foolish will be foolish still, and the means of grace are now unavailing!

We come now to the final circumstance. “While they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went into the marriage *and the door was shut.*” The Lord is now evidently *come!* Those *believers* who are alive and remain till his coming are now “changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” “and caught up to *meet* the Lord in the air, (just as these are called to go forth and *meet* him;) and so shall they ever be with the Lord.”<sup>o</sup> But the door is *shut*, at the same time, on all those who are without! O, what fearful words! The day of grace, to all who are of the *visible* church—to all who have the lamp of profession—will then be past! *Now* the Lord says, “Behold I have set before thee an ‘*open* door, and none can shut it:”<sup>p</sup> then “the Master of the house will have risen up and shut to the door,” and none will be able to open it. A time will come (as I apprehend, just before the great tribulation falls on the nations who have professed christianity, and the kingdom and glory of Christ are openly showed in the sight of the heathen,) when those who are now the salt of the earth and the light of the world will be gathered out safely, and laid up like wheat in the barn; and then the tares will be set on fire and consumed! At this awful period professors will not only be inquiring, and for once seeking *earnestly*: they will likewise be *praying* earnestly! Terror, confusion, and dismay will seize upon them! They will *knock* then at the door of mercy;—they will seek then to enter in at the *strait* gate;<sup>q</sup>—they will cry Lord, Lord, open unto *us*; have we not eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast preached in our streets?—But the door of mercy will *not* open: “He will answer from within and say, *Verily, I know you not.*”

This does not, as I conceive, signify *absolutely*, that the Lord did not *know* them; for he knows all things, and all men: he had even searched the thoughts and intents of the hearts of these, and knew them to be false and hollow;—they were, after all, ‘workers of iniquity.’<sup>r</sup> But he knew them not by spiritual intercourse with them. They had never sought

<sup>n</sup> Prov. xxvii. 6.    <sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 17.    <sup>p</sup> Rev. iii. 8.  
<sup>q</sup> Luke xiii. 24—30.    <sup>r</sup> Ibid.

communion with him ;—they had never given him their hearts and affections ;—their *minds* had not been upon him ;—their *confidence* had not been placed in him ;—the *world*—the *world*—had continued to keep possession of their souls. Note again, they are not charged with murder, fornication, drunkenness, theft, lying, and the like—these things we know will shut a man out of the kingdom of heaven :—FOLLY is that which has ruined these persons ;—the being content with the *form* of godliness, whilst ignorant of the *power* ;—the being satisfied with a profession, which appeared outwardly the same as that of others, whilst the heart was really averse to Christ, and his ways were inwardly disliked, and his cross, his reproach, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, were all shrunk from and despised.

O, Reader ! ponder our gracious Saviour's application :—“ WATCH therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.” Look *out* for him ;—wait his appearing ;—be ready for it. The day is at hand, and it will take the world by surprise ; but if ye be walking as the children of light, you have the promise nevertheless, that it shall not overtake *you* as a thief.<sup>s</sup>

Should this meet the eye of any, who, though they be pious, have not seriously considered this expectation of the Church ; or the eye of any, who, though associated with the pious, have not been seeking conformity to God ;—I would give two brief words of warning in conclusion. First, be warned by the prophecies, and be taught of God in this matter. The Church, you perceive, has been slumbering on this subject ;—pious men, as well as the ungodly, have been thrown off their guard : learn therefore not to ground your views and expectations on the opinions of *men*, howsoever religious they may seem. Look to the *word of God* ; build upon the *Scriptures* : and you will not be shut out for want of light. Many, I fear, have betrayed in this matter, that their spirit is not properly in subjection to God's word. For when convicted by it, they have hardened themselves against its voice, and have set up human opinions against the testimony of the Lord.

Secondly, I repeat, *be ready* ; and the more so, because you see the day approaching. You know not indeed the day itself ; and well it is for us we do not : for many would slumber on

<sup>s</sup> 1 Thessalonians v. 1, 5.

until the very evening before it. But though we know not the day, we are persuaded that it must be at hand: the cry is already gone forth—"The bridegroom cometh; Go ye forth to meet him." Examine yourselves therefore, if you can meet him with joy and confidence. See that you have *oil*. O, it is a sad thing to have to *seek* oil when you have need to *use* it! Those who have to struggle with sickness and the pains of death can tell you this: but how much more will it be the case, when the master of the house rises up and shuts to the door! A lamp *without* oil will not avail: you may have professed evangelical doctrine, and have determined to hear no other;—you may have separated yourselves from the openly profane and self-righteous;—you may have mixed with the wise, and prayed with the wise, and talked with the wise, and acted, in a certain measure, with the wise;—and yet you may be destitute of that inward spirit, which draws your heart and mind up to Christ, and leads you above all things to delight in his commandments. O then, I say, seek *oil*—seek this one thing needful—this "hope which maketh not ashamed." Now you have scarcely need to knock at the gate of heaven; for "behold, the Lord standeth at the door and knocketh at your heart:"<sup>t</sup> OPEN the door and let him in, and he will come in and sup with you and you with him: you shall enjoy all the blessed consolations of the Spirit here—a *hope* full of immortality; and, presently, a "crown of glory that fadeth not away."

ABDIEL.

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P.S. Since I published the above, I have met with an interesting Millenarian Treatise called "GENERATION WORK," by *John Tillinghast*, published in 1653. The Author argues ably in it from this Parable, as well as from other Scriptures, for the *pre-millennial* advent of Christ. He does not take exactly the same view that I do of the *particulars* of the parable; though he does of its *general scope*: conceiving it with me to set forth the aspect of the professing Church just before the personal coming of the Lord. He considers, however, that the sleeping of the virgins—of the foolish ones more particularly—is intended to forewarn us of the *stupor* which will come on many through erroneous anticipations of this event; by which they will cease to work whilst it is

called to day ; and that much practical unholiness, and great spiritual sluggishness and inactivity will thereby be generated. He did not consider the days in which he lived fully to answer to this state ; but from *symptoms*, which he then saw, he judges what will be the circumstances leading on to this state : and whether he be right or wrong as to the view itself, the following extracts will I apprehend be found very seasonable in the present day.

“ Two things here are very observable, which seem to intimate the way or manner how this sleep shall steal upon the Virgins at this day.

“ 1. *From a false Principle commonly received among the Virgins, as touching the coming of Christ ;* namely, that the same shall be *spiritual* only, and not *personal*. This to me appears from the attempt they make, and that before his coming, to go forth and meet him. For taking this for granted, (which is indeed a certain truth,) that the present administration is to be in force but till His coming ;—and conceiving this *coming* of Christ to be no other, than a more glorious manifestation of himself in a *spiritual way* to the souls of his people ;—judging withal some beginnings of this to be already both in themselves and others ;—they hence conclude the time now to be come in which these things are to cease, the *Day star* (which will suddenly enlighten the whole world) beginning already to glimmer in their hearts. Hereupon they pluck up stakes, quit their old station, sound a march, with a mighty cry, “ *The Bridegroom’s coming, the Bridegroom’s coming, let’s speedily go forth to meet him :*” whereas, had they in their judgement not only believed the coming to be near, but retained in the love of it, that good old Principle, that it is only Christ’s *Personal* coming which puts an end to these things ; they would have had certain ground to have stood upon, and have known the time when these things were to cease ; and not before the time headly run forth, but rather patiently waited for that day, submitting themselves in the mean time to the Law and commands of their Lord and Master Christ.

“ 2. *From a looseness in practice, in comparison of what they were formerly.* For observe, They *slumber*, i. e. give a little way to pride, remissness in duty, examining, and watching over their hearts, &c. allow themselves to be a little more worldly ; stretch conscience a little for gain, and reach after places, honors, preferments, the love of great men (though

gained by unfaithfulness to God and to them also) more than, a time was, they durst do. And thus having first by a *slumber* benumbed their consciences,—which now are not so tender, and apt to be pricked with the least thorn, as in times past they were,—the next degree is, *a fast sleep*, (“they all slumbered and *slept*,” verse 5.) i. e. what before they neglected through carelessness, now they throw off from a principle, that they *need not do any such things*; whereupon they lay themselves down, as a man asleep, stir not, act not in any duty, or ordinance, or work, of their Lord and Master Christ. I wish from my heart (were it the Lord’s will) that all those, who at this day amongst us are asleep, might from this word have such a *jog*, as might cause them to rub up a little, and to bethink themselves how they fell asleep.

“Further than this, there will be *an extraordinary deluge and over-spreading of errors*; Christ’s *second* coming herein agreeing to his *first*: for never was the church and commonwealth of the Jews so infested with errors, as about the time of his first coming. And this we have plainly, chap. 24, where Christ tells us; First, that there shall be many seducers, “Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.”—“And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.”—“There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets.”<sup>a</sup> “Second, these seducers shall pretend commission from Christ; and therefore are said (ver. 5,) to “*come in his name*,” i. e. pleading his commission. “Third, they shall profess themselves to be extraordinarily *gifted*;—persons inspired by Christ, endued with the gift of prophecy, called therefore *prophets*. Fourth they shall do strange and wonderful things,—things not common, or of ordinary observation: “There shall arise false prophets, and shall *shew great signs and wonders*.”<sup>b</sup> Fifth, they shall have many followers and disciples. They “*shall deceive many*,” yea, so cunning shall these be in deceiving, “that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect.” (v. 24.)

Also there will be *a sad and fearful apostasy* of divers who were formerly eminent and glorious lights in the church. “The love of many shall wax cold,”<sup>c</sup> which words are to be understood of a *final* apostasy; because in the next verse *perseverance to the end* is set in opposition to their apostasy;—

<sup>a</sup> Verses 5, 11, 24.    <sup>b</sup> v. 24.    <sup>c</sup> v. 12.



“ but he that shall endure to the end the same shall be saved.”  
 The stars shall fall from heaven.”<sup>d</sup> By HEAVEN we are to understand *the visible church*, so called in the Scripture: “ I heard a great voice of much people in *heaven*, saying, Hallelujah;”<sup>e</sup> that is, in the *visible church*. By STARS, *eminent men in the church* are meant.—“ The seven stars are the angels (or officers) of the seven churches.”<sup>f</sup> The meaning is, eminent men,—men that were formerly of no small note in the church, for their seeming zeal and piety,—shall now show themselves what they are, and become *apostates*.

“ Again, there will be *an aptness to be offended at the things that shall be done in the world in these times*; as in verse 10, “ then shall many be *offended*.” They shall not be able to brook what God in an active way will do, and in a permissive way will suffer; but every thing they shall at this day cast their eyes upon will stumble them, and offend them, make them kick and fling; so that the very world will be a torment to them, and they to themselves.

“ Finally, there will be *a hating of fellow-brethren, with a notable persecuting spirit lying at the bottom*; as verse 10,—“ they shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.” And again, “ if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to *smite* his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.”<sup>g</sup> What is the meaning hereof? why, eating and drinking denote friendship, and civil society; therefore many men in these times, who shall yet go under the name of Christ’s servants, shall so far degenerate, as that they shall not only disown those that were formerly their fellow-servants, but shall smite them with reproaches, (yea with the civil sword, if the Lord prevent not;) and instead of making their fellow-servants their companions and associates any longer, they shall chuse such as their very walking doth declare them to all men to be persons void of grace, and strangers to Jesus Christ; and yet these now shall be their familiars and intimates, rather than the other.

“ These things our Lord Jesus Christ hath foretold to be in the world a *little* before his *coming*: to escape which, as he there calls upon his disciples to *watch, watch, watch*; so do I conceive (for the very same reasons in the words I am upon) are we exhorted to this duty. Because, as by all these things

I have mentioned sanctification grows into decay, and they are made naked in the eyes of others to their shame; (as Aaron made Israel by that sin of the calf, and that amongst their enemies;) <sup>h</sup> so the very *motive* to this duty of watching, in these words, is the “keeping their garments,” that is, of sanctification,—(the garment of *justification* being but one garment, resembled by the robe Christ wore in the days of his flesh, which was one entire piece, without seam throughout;—and that rather is Christ’s put upon us, than *ours*; and not at all trusted in our hands to keep, but kept in Christ for us, and therefore not that here spoken of,) lest by losing of them they become naked, and are in the eyes of others, yea their enemies, (who can see these garments, though a saint’s *justification* is a thing hidden from them) exposed to shame; which in a few words comprehends all those reasons Christ had laid down and pressed, Matt. xxiv. and xxv. why believers living in times immediately preceding his coming should be watchful.

“And let not any, in case what I have said sit too close, be for that offended at the Author, (who is a friend to all that love the Lord Jesus) nor slight the things themselves; but rather considering what Christ hath plainly foretold shall be a little before his coming, let them learn this,—to consider their own ways, and lay seriously their practices to heart; lest otherwise he come upon them as a thief, before they shall have time to get oil into their lamps, or to put on again their garments which now they have put off.”

<sup>h</sup> Exodus xxxii. 35.

## Essay XII.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS—MATT. XXV.

I have stated, in a former Essay, that there is a close connection between the parables contained in Matthew xxv. and the prophecy of our Lord delivered in the previous chapter. They are in fact a portion of that prophecy; being, as it were, the practical application of it. The scope and drift of them appears to be as follows:—

By the parable of the *Ten Virgins* is set forth, what would be the slumbering aspect of the Church, at the time of her Lord's Advent, in regard to her professed expectation of that glorious event; and it is shown, that the hope of all professors will be confounded, and they made ashamed, unless *the love of God be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost.*<sup>a</sup> In other words, all will be shut out from the Marriage Feast, unless they be truly converted in heart and sanctified by the Spirit.

The parable of the *Talents* teaches, that if there be grace in the heart, it will manifest itself by zeal and diligence in the cause and service of Christ; since the object of Jesus is "to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."<sup>b</sup> Some, who take up this subject in the prophetic view, see in the servants, to whom the talents are intrusted, only the *ministers* of the Gospel. Doubtless ministers are affected in the first degree: not only as being interested personally in the great concern of salvation, together with every other christian; but because the obligation to be diligent and profitable is, on account of the charge they voluntarily undertake, peculiarly incumbent on them. Yet I can see nothing in the parable which appears to aim *specially* at ministers; and I therefore purpose to interpret it as it seems to affect believers in general.

The parable (if parable it be) of the *Sheep and Goats*, points out the *kind* of works, which the Lord more especially looks for from believers; and the want of which (or rather of the spirit to perform which) further evinces, that there is "no oil in the vessel with the lamp."

<sup>a</sup> Rom. v. 5.      <sup>b</sup> Tit. ii. 14.

I. To proceed then to the second of these subjects, the parable of the *Talents*: as the delay of the Bridegroom, in the parable of the Virgins, indicated the *long period* which would elapse before the second advent of the Lord; so here, the same circumstance is set forth by the similitude of a man travelling into a far country.\* He is now, as it were, abroad upon important business; but he will nevertheless certainly return, and will then deal with every one “according to his works.” Neither the great promise to his faithful people, nor the vengeance denounced upon the ungodly, are forgotten: he has foretold, that he will seemingly “tarry,” as well as that he “will certainly come and *not* tarry;”<sup>c</sup> and has assured us, in the mean while, “that he is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”<sup>d</sup> Nevertheless, this long-suffering of the Lord, which ought to be accounted salvation,<sup>e</sup> is abused in various ways. Wicked men “despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, *not knowing* that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.”<sup>f</sup> As regards the *promise*, they cry,—“Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”<sup>g</sup> And as regards the *threat*,—“because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”<sup>h</sup> And those who “seem to be religious,” but have only “the form of godliness without the power,”<sup>i</sup>—yea, it is to be feared, some of those even who experience the *power*,—say in their heart, concerning the promise, “My Lord delayeth his coming;”<sup>k</sup> thus putting off the fulfilment of the event to some remote period; whilst they fearfully overlook or explain away the *Judgement according to works*, which affects believers.

\* The words “*the kingdom of heaven is,*” with which this subject commences, are not in the original; as may be seen by consulting any copy of the Scriptures in which the words supplied are marked by *italics*. The context evinces, that a more suitable phrase might be supplied; such as “For the *Bridegroom is*”—or “For the *Son of Man is*”—his advent having been throughout the immediate subject of discourse.

<sup>c</sup> Hab. II. 3; Heb. x. 37; 2 Pet. II. 3.    <sup>d</sup> 2 Pet. III. 9.    <sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. III. 15.    <sup>f</sup> Rom. II. 4.    <sup>g</sup> 2 Pet. III. 4.    <sup>h</sup> Eccles. VIII. 11.    <sup>i</sup> James I. 26; 2 Tim. III. 5.    <sup>k</sup> Matt. XXIV. 48.

As I consider the parable of the Talents, and that also of the Sheep and Goats, to have direct reference to the Judgment according to works, I may perhaps be excused if I take the opportunity of somewhat enlarging upon the doctrine in this place. Those indeed, who expound this parable as referring to *ministers of the Gospel*, are ready to admit that it speaks of recompense or punishment awarded to *them*, according to their faithfulness; which is, indeed, to admit the *principle* for which I contend: for if it be not considered repugnant to the Gospel, in respect to one class of human beings, there is nothing to prevent us from extending it to any other class, so far as the great principles of salvation are concerned.

Now it is as clearly revealed in Scripture, "that God will *render to every man according to his deeds*," as it is insisted, "that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be *justified*." Both these doctrines are stated by the same Apostle, and in the same Epistle;<sup>1</sup> and are no more contrary to each other than are St. Paul and St. James, when the one insists that Abraham was justified by faith,<sup>m</sup> and the other that he was justified by works.<sup>n</sup> Both are reconcilable, if the context is duly considered; for St. James is evidently speaking of the fruitful character of that *faith* which was imputed to Abraham for righteousness.<sup>o</sup> So also the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard does not oppose the doctrine for which I plead; though by some it is considered so to do: for it refers not immediately to the *degree* of glory or reward which any will attain, but to the fundamental and important question, whether they will attain to eternal life at all.\* It matters not indeed at what *hour* a man is called by the grace of the Gospel; whether he have served the Lord from his infancy, or whether, like the thief upon the cross, he have turned to him only at the last hour: both are accepted, both are justified, and that freely, fully, and equally, through the precious blood of Christ, and will condemn every tongue that riseth up in judgement against them. But does the spirit, and temper, and self-denial, and devotedness of a man, when he *is* called, signify

\* This parable appears to me to allude principally to the calling of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel, and the placing them in this respect upon the same footing with the Jews, who had borne the "heat and burden" of the ceremonial law.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. II. 5, 6; III. 20.    <sup>m</sup> Rom. IV. 1—5.    <sup>n</sup> James II. 21.

<sup>o</sup> James II. 22, 23.

nothing? Shall there be no difference between him who has "fought a good fight,"<sup>p</sup> and him who is "scarcely saved,"<sup>q</sup> "so as by fire?"<sup>r</sup>—between the one, who builds upon the only foundation gold, silver, precious stones; and him who builds wood, hay, stubble?<sup>s</sup> Yes—we are told, that though the latter be saved, "he shall suffer *loss*; whereas the former will obtain a reward:<sup>t</sup> which I know not how to explain, if I reject the Scriptures which tell me, that there are some who shall be called *great* and some *least* in the kingdom of God,<sup>u</sup> "and that one star differeth from another star in glory."<sup>v</sup>

Again, our Lord tells us, "that when the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, he then shall REWARD every man *according to his works*:"<sup>w</sup> which saying becomes a key, whereby we may in a measure understand the chapter now under consideration; since the period referred to therein is, "when the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory." (v. 31.) The parable of the "Pounds" is a further aid to the understanding of this; for therein those servants who had gained by trading have authority given to them over ten cities, or over five cities, *in proportion* to their gains.<sup>x</sup> The Lord also clearly distinguishes between a prophet's reward and a righteous man's reward; and declares, that any thing done for Him, even to the giving a cup of cold water only, shall in no wise lose its reward.<sup>y</sup> Further, it appears to me to be in reference to this doctrine, that St. Paul assures us, "that God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love which we have shown towards his name;"<sup>z</sup> and that St. John exhorts us to "look to ourselves, that we *lose not* those things which *we have wrought*, but that we receive a *full reward*."<sup>a</sup>

In regard however to this *reward* the enlightened believer will deeply feel, that he hath nothing whereof to glory before God: that it is entirely owing to the condescension and goodness of God, who hath wrought all our works in us,<sup>b</sup> that we are to obtain any reward at all. Thus the Psalmist ascribes the glory of the works to the *power* of God, and the recompense itself to his *mercy*:—"God hath spoken once; twice 'have I heard this; that *power* belongeth unto God: also

p 2 Tim. iv. 7. q 1 Pet. iv. 18. r 1 Cor. iii. 15. s Ibid. vv. 12—14. t Ibid. vv. 14, 15. u Matt. v. 19. v 1 Cor. xv. 41. w Matt. xvi. 27. x Luke xix. 16—19. y Matt. x. 41, 42. z Heb. vi. 10. a 2 John v. 8. b Isa. xxvi. 12.

‘ unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth mercy* ; for thou *renderest to every man according to his work.*”<sup>c</sup>

Intimately connected with the Judgement according to works is the revealing the secrets of men’s hearts : “ for *then* He will both bring to light the *hidden things* of darkness,”—those actions which, though perpetrated in secret, have not escaped his all-seeing eye : and then will He “ make manifest the *counsels* of the hearts,”<sup>d</sup>—those inward motives and principles which have led men to perform various actions ; yea those inward workings of sin, probably, which have been habitually entertained, when the actual commission of sin has been prevented. Observe how plainly the Apostle Paul declares this truth in various parts of Scripture ; and how he includes *himself* as one, who expected to have the secrets of his own heart made manifest. To the Romans he states—“ *We* shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ ;” and in the two following verses he takes occasion from the Scripture which saith, “ Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God,” to conclude—“ So then, *every one of us* shall give account of himself unto God !”<sup>e</sup> To the Corinthians also he declares, that he labours continually to be accepted of God, from a conviction, that “ *we* must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ ; that *every one* may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, *whether good or bad.*”<sup>f</sup> And thus in Jeremiah it is declared ; “ I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to *EVERY MAN according to his ways* and according to the fruit of his doings.”<sup>g</sup>—“ For God (saith Solomon) shall bring *every work* into judgement, with *every secret thing*, whether it be *good*, or whether it be *evil.*”<sup>h</sup>

It is also urged against this view of the subject, that it is incompatible with the future happiness of God’s people to have the secrets of their hearts exposed ; and that it is written, “ Who shall lay *any thing* to the charge of God’s elect ?—It is God that justifieth.”<sup>i</sup> Yes—it is God that *justifieth* : and I readily grant, that nothing will interfere with their free pardon and *justification* ; no, nor with their ultimate happiness : for I am persuaded, that the saints themselves will (when delivered from their present infirmities and prejudice) have so clear a

<sup>c</sup> Ps. LXII. 11, 12. <sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. IV. 5. <sup>e</sup> Rom. XIV. 10—12. <sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. V. 9, 10. <sup>g</sup> Jer. XVII. 10. <sup>h</sup> Eccles. XII. 14. <sup>i</sup> Rom. VIII. 33.

view of the manifestation of the glory of God in all he does, that they will with humility and cheerfulness acquiesce in the award. And I would ask, *who* and *what* is the very best christian of the present day, that he should hope to enjoy an immunity, which neither kings, prophets nor apostles have enjoyed before him? Have not the failings of Abraham, Moses, Job and others been published through the world? Has not the sin of David, the man after God's own heart, though *committed secretly*, been made as notorious as the noon-day sun? Has not Peter's denial of his master become as well known, as the Gospel which contains it? Indeed, were there no direct exposure of the secret deeds and thoughts of men in that day;—were the Lord only silently to distinguish among us and divide us; yet that very distinction itself would, in effect, amount to the same thing. We could not help concluding of him, who might be made to take a lower place than man's judgement would assign to him, that there was some sufficient *reason* for it, though secret to us: only we should be left to the darkness of surmise; whereas the Lord will chuse “to be justified when he speaks, and clear when he judges.”<sup>k</sup> Thus then “some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgement: and some they follow after.—Likewise the good works of some are manifest before-hand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.”<sup>l</sup>

II. I shall now proceed with the parable of the Talents.

First it will be necessary to ascertain, what is the meaning of the “*talents*” or “*goods*” here mentioned. Most commentators explain it, of the natural and acquired *abilities* of men, which (they say) are to be used to the glory of God. This however, though true in itself, and *comprehended* in the parable, does not appear to be the primary meaning of this figure. For the talents are given to the servants “*according to their several ability*,” and this “*ABILITY*” of theirs must refer to their natural and worldly circumstances;—as their understanding, and powers of mind, their wealth, &c. Not indeed that *this* sort of ability can strictly be said to *belong* to any; for a man has nothing, but what he has received. The Lord not only appoints to each of his servants his particular station; but actually gives him the power and ability to qualify him for it.

The *talent* was a sum of money either of gold or silver,

<sup>k</sup> Psalm LI. 4.    <sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. v. 24, 25.



usually measured out by weight. In this respect the parable is similar to another, in which the Nobleman, who goes into a far country, is said to deliver to his servants ten *pounds*;<sup>m</sup> by which we are also to understand a certain weight of gold or silver; and thus the one parable may greatly serve to explain the other. For the pounds and the talents, being both precious commodities, represent, as I presume, *the Gospel*—i. e. the Gospel, as comprehending the hope, the precepts, the promises and doctrine it contains. Thus are the commandments of God compared in one Scripture to *fine gold*;<sup>n</sup> whilst in another divine grace is likened to gold tried in the fire, which we are counseled to buy of Christ.<sup>o</sup> In the one parable therefore this commodity appears to be given equally among all the servants, and nothing is said of their respective *ability*; though the different returns made evince, that they *were* differently gifted. But in this parable the object is apparently to show, that more is required of men by the Gospel, “*according to their several ability* :” and thus it is said, that *ten* talents are given to one, and *five* to another, and only *one* to a third; because more will be required from the rich than from the poor;—more from the learned than from the ignorant;—more from the healthy, than from the sick and infirm;—more from those who have or might have leisure, than from those who, of necessity, are much employed. The Gospel therefore, and the means of grace, are a *trust*. Every man who is within reach of that Gospel,—every man who may enjoy the means of grace,—is bound to consider, what is required of him on that account, and to endeavour to apprehend that for which he is apprehended of Christ Jesus.<sup>p</sup>

The three servants then, here mentioned, represent three different classes of mankind: the first who receives five talents sets forth a believer highly gifted and blessed; the second is a specimen of a believer of more moderate talents and advantages; the third sets forth a person of meaner abilities,—or rather (as we shall have occasion to see) one of that numerous class, who, in religious matters, imagine that it is out of their power to do much.

The man with the five talents and the man with the two are so alike in their conduct, that they may be considered both together. These went and *traded* with their talents. By this

<sup>m</sup> Luke XIX. 12—17.    <sup>n</sup> Ps. XIX. 10.    <sup>o</sup> Rev. III. 18.    <sup>p</sup> Phil. III. 12.

I understand the practical walk of faith and usefulness exhibited by true believers. "Their merchandise and their hire is holiness to the Lord."<sup>q</sup> We see in them, not a dead, and consequently unfruitful, faith; but we behold "the things which accompany salvation"—"the work and labor of love which they show towards his name."<sup>r</sup> They imitate their heavenly master, who worked the works of him that sent him whilst it was day.<sup>s</sup> They are "not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises:"<sup>t</sup> so that "giving all diligence they add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity;" which things, being in them and abounding, make them, "that they are neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>u</sup>

But there are other circumstances to be considered in regard to this increase of the talents. It is a maxim of divine grace, "that whosoever hath to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."<sup>v</sup> Grace, when it is really in the heart, is a property which will expand and increase. When professors of religion only seem to go to a certain length, and then stand still;—or if it alters not their character and spirit, improving them in all the various relationships of life;—we may rely upon it there is no grace. I speak not of the *occasional* falls and transgressions of believers, as exhibited in such men as David, Peter, and others; but of the effectual work of grace in them throughout their life in general. Sometimes it will so call forth the energies of a man, that he will appear to possess abilities, which the world did not previously give him credit for: but, commonly, the more a man exercises himself unto godliness, the more fruitful will he become in proportion: for the faculties of the soul, like those of the body, acquire strength by use.<sup>w</sup> Thus, the last works of such a man will prove "more than the first;"<sup>x</sup> whilst, as regards his own personal enjoyment, he finds that "exercising himself unto godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."<sup>y</sup> Such will bring forth fruit in different degrees, according to the talent committed to

p Isaiah xxiii. 18. r Heb. vi. 9, 10. s John ix. 4. t Heb. vi. 12.  
 u 2 Pet. i. 5—8. v Matt. xiii. 12. w Heb. v. 14. x Rev. ii. 19.  
 y 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8; vi. 6.

them ;—in some thirty, in some sixty, in some a hundred-fold ;—but each will prove a fruitful branch of the True Vine, and glorify God by his life and conversation.

We must now consider the character of the servant who had only *one* talent, in regard to whom two or three circumstances must be noticed.

First, it must not be supposed, because the servants who have five and two talents are represented as doubling them, that *all* persons who are blessed with superior advantages are faithful servants. Neither because the man with one talent hides it, are we to conclude, that persons with fewer gifts are always unfaithful. The character represented by this man is to be found in high life and low life,—among rich and poor,—among persons with great, and persons with slender abilities. Men who have received five talents often bury them ; whilst those, who have received only one, frequently trade with that one and double it. We must consequently consider the circumstance of his having only one talent in a two-fold point of view. For he represents those, who are *really* poor in their worldly circumstances, in education, and in natural abilities and advantages ; and he likewise represents those who, when religion is concerned, *imagine*, that they are able to do but little ; although, in reality, they are not so deficient.

Secondly, the parable teaches, that every man has *one* talent ; that whatsoever may be his station in life, the Gospel requires of him to glorify the Lord to the utmost of his ability ;—that the poorest, the most simple, the most wretched man in existence is called upon to do the will of God, if he would inherit the promise ;<sup>z</sup> and that there is grace promised to enable him both to will and to do of God's good pleasure.<sup>a</sup>

Thirdly we must notice, what it is which constitutes the offence of this man—viz. *unprofitableness*. He is not afterwards charged by his Lord with murder, theft, adultery, drunkenness or the like : the head and front of his offending is the being *unfruitful*,—the omitting to perform that, which in his station was required of him.

Lastly, we must notice the *mode* which he takes to be unfruitful. In one parable he is said to lay up his talent in a napkin. This is often *literally* fulfilled by *poor* people : they have the Gospel, (that is to say, the Bible,) and they keep it

<sup>z</sup> Heb. x, 36.    <sup>a</sup> Phil. ii. 13.

wrapt up in a pocket handkerchief and buried at the bottom of a box or drawer. And because they *possess* this treasure, and have some regard for it, they take for granted, that they are in no great danger of being condemned. But what is principally set forth here, is that class of persons who neglect the Gospel in other respects. It matters not whether the Book be hid in a closet, or exposed to view upon a shelf;—it signifies not even that it be daily read, and that every week men hear it preached: if they are content with this,—if it stir them not up to zeal, to self-denial, and holiness,—they are still *burying their talent* and will be condemned. They may not be guilty of any gross sin;—they may be decent and respectable in the sight of the world: yet, if they strive not to be rich towards God, they are as barren soil, of which the Apostle says—“it is nigh unto cursing and its end is to be burned.”<sup>b</sup>

It is worthy of notice likewise, that in the parable before us, the unprofitable servant is said to *dig*, in order to hide his talent; which seems to imply, that he is at some pains and labor to do it. And truly there are persons, who labour far more to *stifle* their convictions,—to *resist* the truth, and to *justify* their neglect of God,—than ever they do to advance his cause, or to benefit their own souls.

III. The next point for consideration is the *reckoning* of the Lord with his servants. After a long time he came; and so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. The man who had received the two talents came also and gave a similar account; he having likewise doubled the sum committed to his trust. To each of these their Lord replies: “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

I have already sufficiently dwelt on the reward according to works: it is enough here briefly to observe, that these now experience the truth of that saying, in its most glorious sense,—“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof

<sup>b</sup> Heb. vi. 9.

‘ than fine gold.’<sup>c</sup>—They are rewarded by being made *rulers*, instead of servants; and, according to the parable of the pounds, by receiving a *dominion* apportioned to their increase.\*

“ Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.”

An important principle of interpretation must here be borne in mind; viz.—that the parables frequently speak of things, not as they really are in the sight of God; but according to the corrupt opinions of *men*. Keeping this circumstance in view, we may perhaps arrive at an easy explanation of this portion of the parable.

How shocking it is to think that any who hear the Gospel should view the Lord as a *hard master*, and speak of him as unmerciful if he does not forgive sin!—Yet this is only what thousands and tens of thousands are guilty of! They do not in *direct terms* call him thus; but they insist that he *is* so, if certain doctrines which he has revealed be true. It is not sufficient, that his mercy and love are so vast, that He has given his Son to die for sinners; they must be saved in their own way, and on their own terms, or they still speak of the Gospel as a hateful message. Take an instance or two. One will object, “ that it seems hard for the Lord to damn any for not being holy and abounding in good works, since He himself tells us plainly, we can do nothing *without Him*, and that no man can come unto Him except the Father draw him.”—Another says, “ It is of no use my trying, if I am not elect. I am told I cannot do these things without grace: surely, to require a holy life of me, when the Lord has not given me

\* A distinction however must be noticed. The servants in the parable of “ the pounds” receive *equal* sums, yet produce different results, and are proportionately rewarded; which more decidedly illustrates the point for which I have contended in the beginning of this Essay. The servants in *this* parable receive *different* sums, and the result (in the instance of the faithful ones) corresponds with the proportion between the sums received. From this we learn, for the great comfort of sincere persons, that it may not be in the power of some to equal others in their exertions and sacrifices; since the abundance of fruit must in certain circumstances depend on the “ *ability*” previously possessed.

grace, is to desire to reap where he does not sow, and to gather, where he does not straw." A third will say—"I do not *profess*; I harm no one; I pay every body their due; I go to church: what more can be required of me?—There, thou hast that is thine." Whilst a fourth will exclaim—"There are many worse than me; if I am wrong there will plenty be damned: surely the Lord will not be so *unmerciful* as to condemn all those who do not act as the preachers of the Gospel insist they should!"

The above is not only the language of the hearts of many, but the very words of their lips. But the answer of his Lord reveals to us the true character of all those, who would thus justify their lukewarmness and neglect of spiritual things.—“Thou *wicked* and *slothful* servant! *Thou knewest* that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed?—thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury.” Perhaps we may better understand this answer, if we paraphrase it; and then we shall perceive that his Lord condemns him out of his own mouth, and by his own principles. “You *knew* me to be a hard master?—You were indeed *persuaded* of this?—How can you tell me such a lie! Had you *really* thought me so severe, would you have run the certain risk of punishment? Had you truly feared me, would you not at least have put out my money to interest? If you despaired of *doubling* it, you would have tried to have let me have *something*. The very fact, that I did lend you a talent to trade with shews, that I do *not* wish to reap where I have not sown. But you have no *heart* for my work;—you are a wicked and slothful fellow: you have neglected that which was your duty to perform, and now you would justify it by slandering my character.”

Thus it is that all the objections which are made by men in order to justify their worldly mindedness, their coldness, their want of spiritual life, will return upon their own hands with shame and confusion of face. They profess to be stumbled by *this* thing, and not to be able to understand *that* thing; one command is too hard for them, obedience to another is not to be expected: but all they can say to excuse themselves only shews, that they are deceitful and wicked;—that they really know better than they pretend;—and that the true ground of their deficiency is *slothfulness*, added to a *carnal enmity* of

*heart.* For if men really thought God so unmerciful, would it not render them still more careful to flee from his wrath? If they were stumbled at the doctrines of Scripture, yet really desirous to glorify God, would they not go to the exchangers—to those that sell oil—to the ministers of the Gospel? Yes, they would carry their doubts and difficulties to them; and with an honest heart they would use the *means* of grace, whilst they humbly waited upon God for that *power* which is promised to them that believe.

Finally, we have the sentence pronounced upon this man.—“Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him ‘that hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be ‘given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath ‘not shall be taken away even that which he hath;” or (as it is stated in the parable of the pounds) “that which he *seemeth* to have:” for grace they have none, in reality, who are not profitable towards God. They have the *means* of grace, and a blind world often mistakes their attention to the means for the spirit of religion itself. There may be some good also which they may have done under pretence of religion, and some vain glorious works on which they pride themselves; but this their righteousness, which they only *seem* to have, will be stripped from off them, in the day when the secrets of the heart shall be revealed; and their form of godliness will be proved to be hollow and unavailing. And that authority and glory, which they might have had in Christ’s kingdom, (it would appear from this) shall be added to the righteous; whilst they themselves shall be cast into outer darkness—into that darkness without the palace, into which the foolish virgins were banished—who were refused the joy and honor of the marriage feast, and left to bemoan their folly in weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Such is what I apprehend to be the meaning of this awful parable! I would once more press upon the Reader this consideration: that (like the parable of the foolish virgins) its object is not so much to shew, that the *thief*, the *fornicator*, the *drunkard* and *liar* have no part in the kingdom of God and of Christ:<sup>d</sup> but that the *unprofitable* have a heart equally fallen from God, and averse to his ways; though they may possess a

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

more specious and plausible character. This is a circumstance of the more importance to be kept in view in these days, when evangelical profession is becoming so general and so cheap; and when we see so many associated with the people of God, and presuming that they themselves belong to him, whilst yet they are careless of their tempers and affections. And even, in regard to their works, they are not "a peculiar people zealous of good works," whose readiness and forwardness of mind are known to all; but those whose desire rather is to know how *little* they need do; and who are constantly opposing difficulties and objections in the way of those things which call for self-denial and renouncement of the world.

I would also notice those persons who imagine, that they could serve God better, were they placed in different circumstances, and had more money, more time, &c. Many deceive themselves in this respect, and are after all but *slothful* servants; since they are not endeavouring to glorify God with such ability as they *do* possess: and if they are not faithful in that which is least, they certainly would be unfaithful in much, and their condemnation would be so much the greater: for it must be remembered, that, in proportion to this sort of ability, the duties which God requires of us are enlarged. But many serious and sincere persons miscalculate in this respect. For how rarely do we find those who have superior advantages living the nearest to God! and what presumption it is that leads us to suppose, that we should do better! Yea, so entangling are some of those things, which men suppose will enable them to glorify God the better, that instances are not unfrequent of persons, who *do* shew some little zeal for God, when they have only one or two talents; but no sooner does the Lord send them another, than they act as if they thought, that *less* were then required of them. A man, for example, is industrious and self-denying for the cause of God, whilst his circumstances are straitened: the Lord then sends him *wealth*, perhaps, and now he acts and speaks, as if God had no longer a right to look to him for the exercise of that ability which he previously possessed; but that wealth was intended to exempt him from all *personal exertion* which would interfere with his comfort or pleasures. Let us therefore strive to be faithful in that which is *now* committed to us: let us not mind what our disadvantages are: "if there be first *a willing mind*, it is ac-



cepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not." e

Since writing the foregoing I have met with an interesting discussion of the Judgement of Believers, contained in an Essay on the Millennium, &c. by Dr. Sayer Rudd, an eminent Dissenter, who wrote on this subject in 1734. He presses all the texts on this subject which I have noticed, largely expounding 1 Cor. III. 10—15; and further shews that many of the saints will even be *rebuked*, and be *ashamed* for the moment in the presence of the Lord; which he argues from the warnings given them to walk so as that they may *not* be ashamed, but presented *without* spot and unrebukeable, &c. He treats the subject however with great modesty, and concludes it with the following qualification of his sentiments; which I append to this Essay, because it excellently illustrates what I have said at page 178, that the very calling one man to come up higher, and bidding another to go down lower, would have the *effect* of a judgement of works, saving that it would leave it to surmise.

“ I have here expressed myself in the manner commonly used on this subject. Though, that I may not conceal from the Reader what has sometimes turned upon my thoughts, in considering this doctrine I would observe, that as I am obliged to suppose every thing respecting the judgement of the saints' persons is issued in their resurrection, their being with the saints, &c.; and consequently that they are all fixed in their respective places, and share such degrees of honor as were eternally designed them, as soon as they enter upon their reign with Christ, in the new heavens and new earth: so I am inclined to think, that the judgement of the saints' works in this state is not so much that particular rewards may be distributed to them after this judgement, as that the justice of Christ may appear in having, upon entering on his mediatorial kingdom, assigned them respectively such and such stations, rewards, or honors, call them by which name you please. I imagine it is by no means feasible to suppose that the saints are kept in *suspense*, or prevented sharing those honors which belong to them, as members of Christ, till the works of every one are called over: this would certainly break in upon their *reign*.

I am therefore rather of opinion (though I submit it only to the judgement of others) that they are each of them ranged in those places, near the person of the Redeemer, which God before all time had allotted them ; and then, that Christ, in order to vindicate his procedure herein, and give public testimony that he had acted according to the strict rule of righteousness, will condescend to call over the works of each person, and lay them open to the public view of the saints, that all may be convinced he has, in assigning them their several places or degrees of honor, *rewarded every man according to his works.*

“ This indeed, at the time it is done, may be called, in a large sense, a distributing *rewards* to them ; forasmuch as the claim which each particular person has to the reward before assigned him will then visibly appear : and, farther, because the whole body of Christ’s followers will confirm (if I may so speak) what he has done, by acknowledging, that each person’s rewards are answerable to his works as they appear upon trial.” Page 325.

ABDIEL.

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*Erratum.*

The Reader is requested to alter the word *act*, at page 169 line 10 of the last Number, and to read *creep* instead of it.

## Essay XIII.

## PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND GOATS.—MATT. XXV.

Circumstances have rendered that portion of Scripture at which we are now arrived one of peculiar difficulty. I do not apprehend there is really any greater obscurity thrown over this subject, than over any other part of the prophecy we are considering : the embarrassment of the expositor arises entirely from the preconceived and erroneous notions which the generality of Christians have imbibed concerning it, against which he has consequently to contend. Commentators having lost sight of and rejected the doctrine of a *pre-millennial* Advent of Christ, an interpretation has been sought for and persisted in necessarily at variance with that view of the kingdom of our Lord taken by me in former Essays ; and accordingly it is at once concluded, that the subject now to be treated of refers to the *general Resurrection and the ultimate Judgement*.

In proceeding however to demonstrate, that this portion of Scripture relates to events which will occur immediately before, or at the beginning of, the Millennium, I desire to submit my sentiments upon the subject with unfeigned deference to the criticism of others. I am not, I trust, so wedded to a system of interpretation as to determine to make all things bend to it : yet there do appear to me insuperable objections to the reception of the ordinary interpretation. I shall begin first by pointing out some of these difficulties.

1. My first reason for concluding against it is derived from the *whole scope* of the Prophecy. I have already observed, that the discourse of our Lord, commenced in chap. xxiv, is continued throughout chap. xxv. The word "*then,*" with which the parable of the Virgins commences, plainly evinces, that the time of the action of the events there spoken of must be the same as the time when those events are to be transacted, intimated in the latter part of chapter xxiv. The Reader will perceive that the word "*for,*" with which the parable of the Talents commences, (v. 14,) equally connects that subject

with the parable of the Virgins; and the Sheep and Goats must likewise be admitted to be a continuation of the same subject, unless we suppose that there is here an abrupt transition in the discourse of our Lord, for which I think it would be very difficult to assign a satisfactory reason. I conceive, that this chapter sets forth one and the same judgement, but under three different aspects; and of course exhibiting various circumstances of it. Commentators however interpret the Advent of our Lord described in chap. xxiv. as referring to his providential visitation on Jerusalem: and though there is not the slightest intimation that any *other* Advent is spoken of in chapter xxv. they nevertheless refer that, without any ceremony, to the period of ultimate judgement *after* the Millennium! I think the considerate Reader will find *this* an insuperable objection to the prevailing hypothesis.

2. Another difficulty which presents itself, if these two chapters are to be received as reaching down to the *last* judgement, is, that they do not contain the slightest intimation of the *Millennium!* It is a remarkable feature in the present state of prophetic investigation, that the thousand years period of felicity and triumph to the Church is not now questioned. A century back numerous christians were sceptical on the subject; and, previous to that, eminent divines had laboured to prove that the Millennium had already passed. Indeed, within these last ten years only, ministers were not unfrequently interrogated for information on the subject by individuals who were acquainted with it by nothing but the name. Now, however, though men entertain very different views in regard to the *character* of the Millennium, and all are not agreed even in respect to the term of its duration, (some supposing that it may last for 365,000 years,\*) yet, I repeat, the fact itself of a *Millennium to come* is not now disputed. But where (I ask) is it described in Matthew xxiv. and xxv, if the anti-millennarian hypothesis be correct? Is it credible, that a period of rest and glory to the Church, such as it is generally expected to prove, should be passed over in silence, in a prophecy which is assumed to describe the great tribulation of the Jews, the times of the Gentiles, and the connexion of both with the Advent, Resurrection and Judgement! There is apparently no interval in the prophecy between the

\* See the Treatises of Jones and Gauntlett on the Apocalypse.

great tribulation and the final consummation of all things. Take the millenarian view,—that the Lord's second coming is to *introduce* the Millennium—and then the prophecy will appear consistent: take the other view, and I cannot at all reconcile it with the predictions of the prophets in general.

3. A third and very surprising circumstance is, that anti-millenarians commonly appeal to the parable of the Sheep and Goats, and the last five verses of Rev. xx, as containing the most decisive and explicit descriptions of the general Resurrection and Judgement. I call it surprising, first, because both these passages are more or less involved in figure or symbol; and therefore they are not the Scriptures which one would expect to be appealed to as the basis or foundation of a system: and secondly, I shall proceed to shew, that there is no proper analogy between the two, and that they consequently do not describe the same events.—

(1.) Matt. xxv. describes an *advent*: “when the Son of Man shall *come* in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:” the whole implying that he comes to the *earth*, and that his throne will be there placed. Rev. xx. describes not an advent, but an *apparition*: “I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the *earth* and the heaven *fled away* ;” so that there is apparently no earth in this instance for the throne to be placed upon, or for Him that sits on it to come to.

(2.) St. John sees “the *dead*, small and great, stand before God;—and the *dead* were judged, &c.” There is no mention of the living, or ‘quick,’ nor of the nations; it is “*the dead*,” without any discrimination of nation, on whom the judgement takes place. In Matthew, on the contrary, there is no mention of the *dead*: those gathered before the Son of Man are “the *nations*” otherwise “*the Gentiles*,”—(τα ἔθνη) those Gentiles to whom the Gospel was first to be preached as a witness;<sup>a</sup>—those Gentiles whose times should be fulfilled, when the Jewish *tribulation* should be fulfilled.<sup>b</sup>

(3.) It should further be noticed, that no mention is made in Rev. xx. 12—15 of *rewards*: it is the judgement and *punishment* of all whose names are not found written in the book of life. (v. 15.) The reason is obvious: the rewards have been distributed to the saints *previously*, being set forth in the begin-

<sup>a</sup> Matt, xxiv. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Luke xxi. 24.

ning of the chapter by their sitting on thrones, and judgement being given *to* them. Agreeing with this is the invitation in Matthew,—‘Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom,’ &c.

Having pointed out these difficulties attending the interpretation of Matthew xxv.—if supposed to refer to the last act of judgement, and to be parallel with the judgement in Rev. xx.—I shall notice two or three other circumstances, which, to my mind, evince the parable of the Sheep and Goats to refer to events *prior* to the Millennium.

First, the “everlasting fire” into which the Goats are ordered to depart (*v.* 41) is said to be “*prepared for* the devil and his angels.” This is evidently the same as “the lake of fire” into which the devil is described as cast, the torment of which is “day and night *for ever and ever.*” Now the phrase “*prepared for* the devil” implies, that he was not *yet* cast into it: for otherwise, I apprehend, it would have been said of it, “where the devil *is* ;”—the same as in Rev. xxiv. 10, it is said, “where the beast and false prophet *are.*” Now the beast and false prophet (or the powers thus symbolized) are cast *alive* into the lake of fire, previous to the Millennium; (see chap. xix. 20 :) but Satan is not cast in till after the thousand years are ended; (Rev. xx. 7, 10;) and the dead who are adjudged and condemned are not cast into the lake of fire until after Satan is there, (verses 14, 15,) that is—supposing the events of this chapter to follow in chronological order. It appears to me, therefore, that the nations cast into everlasting fire “*prepared for*” the devil and his angels, and the dead cast into the lake of fire where the devil *already is*, cannot be the same parties. The “nations” of Matthew are probably the same as “the kings of the earth and their armies”<sup>c</sup> confederated under the beast;—and the same as those of whom the Psalmist says, “HE shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both *living* and in his wrath.”<sup>d</sup> It is evident from Matthew, that the nations who are there accursed have, nevertheless, been *evangelized*;—not only from their being the same as the Gentiles previously mentioned, but in that they deny ever having neglected to minister unto the Lord. (*v.* 44.) So in the Psalm just quoted, they are addressed as the “*congregation*”—which intimates that they are nominally the

<sup>c</sup> Rev. xix. 19.

<sup>d</sup> Psalm LVIII. 9.

people of God ; though the context shows that they are apostates in spirit and action from his truth. Again, are they not probably the same as "the goats" mentioned in Zechariah x. 3, whom the Lord punishes at the time when he again visits the house of Judah and makes Israel "as his goodly horse in the battle?"\*—and the same again with "the goats" of Ezekiel xxxv. whom the Lord, when "he judges between cattle and cattle," (v. 17,) condemns for "treading down his pastures and fouling the waters with their feet?" (v. 18.) The identity of the symbol is at least worthy of serious consideration.

Secondly, the *throne* and *kingdom*, mentioned in this passage, will prove a further guide to a right apprehension of it. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. Christ is *now* seated on the throne of God ; not on that throne in which the glory of the God-man shall be manifested ; which is clear from its being stated that he shall *then* sit on it, when he comes in glory.† There is an evident distinction of these two thrones in Rev. III. 21.—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with 'me in *my* throne ; even as I also overcame, and am set down 'with my Father in *his* throne." It is clear, I think, from this, that the throne mentioned in Matt. xxv. is something peculiar to the kingdom of Christ: but we know from 1 Cor. xv. that a period shall arrive, when the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father. (v. 24.) So that it is not only capable of being proved, that "the throne of *his* glory," here mentioned, is not that throne on which he is at present seated ; but that the period when he shall be made manifest in glory upon it must be *prior* to the time of his "delivering up" the kingdom : and I am utterly at a loss what period to refer it to, if it be not the time of the prosperity and glory and triumph of the Church on earth, acknowledged by all to be foretold. The same is further confirmed from verse 34—"Then shall the King say

\* Even Mr. Scott concludes, "that the recovery of the Jews and the whole House of Israel from their present dispersion, and future events for which that nation is reserved," are predicted in this chapter ; and "that it can only be *accommodated* to any of the past affairs of Israel or of the Church." (See his Com. *in loco*.)

† See this argument ably handled by Mr. Cuninghame, in his "Critical Examination of Faber," p. 107.

‘ unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father  
 ‘ inherit the *kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of  
 ‘ the world.” This, from verse 31, is evidently the kingdom  
 of the Son of Man ; yet it is a kingdom which shall not be  
 inherited by his saints till “He shall come in his glory ;” and  
 a kingdom which, we have just seen, is nevertheless to be  
 given up. When is *this* kingdom then to appear ? It is not now  
 —it cannot be in the ultimate supernal state—it can be only  
 in the *intermediate* period.\*

Once more, there are two passages of Scripture with which  
 the place now under consideration remarkably harmonizes, if  
 the view I am taking be correct ; but which, again, I am at a  
 loss to reconcile with the ordinary interpretation. The first  
 is Psalm cii. 13—16. “Thou shalt arise and have mercy  
 ‘ upon Zion : for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is  
 ‘ come : for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and  
 ‘ favour the dust thereof. So the heathen shall fear the name  
 ‘ of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. *When*  
 ‘ *the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory.*”  
 Now if this alludes to the restoration of the Jews, and the  
 literal rebuilding of Zion, it will be admitted, by all those  
 who believe in the national restoration of that people, that it  
 must be at the commencement of the Millennium. The mil-  
 lennial state cannot be accompanied by a universal recognition  
 of Christ, whilst the Jews remain in unbelief : it were absurd  
 to think of a millennium, in which *they* shall not bear a con-  
 spicuous part. But suppose we *deny* a literal restoration of  
 the Jews, as Jews, and believe that the building of Zion,  
 spoken of in the Psalm, refers to a future glorious triumph of  
 the Church ; we must equally date it from the *beginning* of  
 the Millennium : for what sort of a millennium, I ask again,  
 would that be, in which the *spiritual* Zion, the Church of the  
 living God, should still remain trampled in the dust ? Such  
 a notion cannot, I apprehend, comport with any view of the  
 Millennium at present entertained by Christians. It clearly  
 follows then, whichever view we take, that the Lord *appears*  
*in his glory at the beginning of the Millennium,* And as the

\* The expression, that it is a kingdom “ *prepared*” for the saints,  
 (v. 34,) coupled with the obvious fact, that they have not yet *possessed*  
 it (or *entered* on the inheritance) will further serve to prove, that the  
 “ fire *prepared* for the devil, &c.” is a punishment not yet inflicted  
 on him, when the accursed are cast into it.



coming in glory, mentioned by Matthew, is equivalent to the appearing in glory of the Psalmist, so must this parable be connected with the beginning of the Millennium.

The other passage is in Matt. XIX. 28—"Verily I say unto you, that ye, which have followed me, in the REGENERATION, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." It is too evident to require proof, that the sitting upon the throne of glory, described here and in Matthew XXV, must be the same; were any further testimony wanted, we have it in a similar passage of Luke XXI. 28—30: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a KINGDOM, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my KINGDOM, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That which, in the former passage, is referred to Christ's manifestation on the throne, is here referred to his kingdom, as also to the kingdom appointed to the saints; which can be no other than the kingdom which at verse 34 of the parable before us they are invited to come and inherit. This then is to be at the regeneration, the same as "the restitution of all things,"—generally admitted to be at the commencement of the Millennium; and proved to be so, by its being the period when the apostles shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Having endeavoured to fix the period of the judgement here described, I shall conclude with a few words respecting the character of the judgement itself. I fully agree with Mr. Cuninghame that the account of this judgement is *parabolical*, rather than *literal*.<sup>e</sup> It partakes more of the mixed character than the generality of parables: yet the whole scope of Scripture forbids us to suppose, that the separation between the righteous and the wicked will be effected by their being actually divided into two bands, on the right and left of Christ; nor can we suppose that either party will be addressed in the precise words here related, or that they will simultaneously reply as here described. It appears to me that the object is to shew the great *criterion* of the judgement,—viz. whether we have been influenced by LOVE towards God and man. We have seen that the lamp of the virgins represented their *hope*;

<sup>e</sup> Critical Exam. of Faber, p. 114.

and that *their* hope who had no oil was made ashamed, because the love of God was not shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost.<sup>f</sup> We have seen also, that the man who was condemned for hiding his talent, was influenced by carnal enmity towards God, whom he viewed as a hard master. And here, I repeat, the sentence is pronounced, because the parties lacked *charity*—that master grace, without which all idea of sanctification and holiness is but delusion.

The parable is further useful in order to determine, how true charity will act: for the deceitfulness of men's hearts often leads them to rest in a false security in this respect. The world talks of the *cant of religion*: but nothing is more prevalent than *cant and profession and hypocrisy and bigotry* among worldly and profane men. Whatever is supposed to be lovely and of good report the world is sure to lay claim to; arrogating all to themselves which they think worth taking credit for; and insinuating that the godly are the only persons deficient of it. It is remarkable, that *love*, which is the sum and perfection of christianity,—the very highest of all divine attainments, and that which the righteous are generally *diffident* in concluding they possess,—is that, nevertheless, which the worldly man rarely questions the existence of in his heart! Thus here, when the Lord commends the righteous for their works, performed for his sake, they can hardly credit it—"When saw we thee, &c.?" whilst the wicked seem just as confident and secure, that they have never neglected Christ! (v. 44.)

Now the judgement proceeds upon this principle; that whatsoever is done to the members of Christ,—out of regard to his cause, or out of regard to them because they belong to Christ,—is accepted of the Lord as done unto himself: just as he assures us in another place, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of (or because he is) 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, (that is, again, *because* he belongs to Christ,<sup>g</sup>) verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."<sup>h</sup> The converse holds good also—"He

<sup>f</sup> Investigator, Vol. II, p. 62. <sup>g</sup> See Mark ix. 41. <sup>h</sup> Matt. x. 41, 42.

‘ that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he ‘ love God whom he hath not seen ?’<sup>i</sup> There is a close and intimate connexion between the one and the other. “ The first ‘ and great commandment is—Thou shalt love the Lord thy ‘ God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all ‘ thy mind. And the second is *like unto it*,—Thou shalt love ‘ thy neighbour as thyself.”<sup>k</sup> “ And this commandment have ‘ we from Him,—That he who loveth God love his brother ‘ also.”

For the further illustration of this point two particulars demand especial notice. The one is, that the works commended appear not only to proceed from an evangelical principle, but to be of an evangelical character. Taking the whole *literally*, even that which concerns the body, the feeding and clothing, is done to the objects of this charity because they are of the household of faith ; whilst other particulars necessarily imply, that the concerns of the *soul* were kept in view. For the main object of the righteous in visiting the “ sick and imprisoned,” (v. 36,) is to impart spiritual consolation, and lead the mind to rest on Him, who promises to be a father to the afflicted.\*

But, secondly, we must observe that the persons, for whom these various services are performed, include those whom the the King calls “ the *least* of these my brethren.” Jesus tells us, that *his brethren* are they that hear the word of God and keep it :<sup>l</sup> and doubtless this is the meaning of the phrase as it respects Christ’s brethren generally. But the *least* of these must be those who are weak in faith, and very limited in their spiritual knowledge and attainments : yet, if they are on the whole sanctified in spirit, “ He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”<sup>m</sup> This is plainly the case of the weak brother dis-

\* I say, if we take the subject *literally*, because some might contend for a figurative sense ; in which case spiritual things would be exclusively meant. For the *imprisoned* are those in bondage to Satan ;—the *strangers* are such as are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, without hope and without God in the world ;—the *sick* are those whose souls are diseased by sin, and need to be healed by divine grace ;—the *naked* are the persons who are not yet clothed in the garments of Christ’s righteousness, and are therefore exposed to the wrath of God ; the *hungry and thirsty* are those whose souls are so far awakened, as to have vehement desires for spiritual food.

<sup>i</sup> 1 John III, 20.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. XXII. 35—40.

<sup>l</sup> Luke VIII. 21.

<sup>m</sup> Heb. II. 11.

coursed of in Rom. xiv ; which chapter, taken in connexion with this subject, reminds us that our charity to the brethren will, in order to be approved as genuine, call into exercise our forbearance of spirit and lowliness of mind. We are not to *judge* our brother, nor *set him at nought*, remembering that we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.<sup>n</sup> Oh ! how greatly we need to be put in remembrance of these things in these days, when Christians *do* proceed to judge, and to unchristianize, and to cast off as brethren, many of those who hold fundamentals with them ; but whose prejudices or other spiritual hindrances prevent them from seeing alike in all things. We must bear in mind, that many of these are persons for whom Christ died,<sup>o</sup> and of whom the Apostle declares, “ they shall be holden up.”<sup>p</sup>

But there is also a further demand to be made upon our evangelical labors. For we must remember, that Christ’s brethren are *the elect* ; and that they are declared to be the people of God, even before they have been led to receive the Gospel. Thus, when St. Paul was labouring as a missionary at Corinth, the Lord encouraged him to stay there a year and a half in the midst of persecution, by assuring him, “ that he had *much people* in that city ;”<sup>q</sup> and in like manner is the believer now encouraged to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and labour patiently for souls among the heathen. Though he sees the world around him living in apparent enmity to God and ignorance of Christ, still he hopes that there may be some *secret* ones among them ; and he will continue labouring, in the hope that in due time the Lord will make them manifest. In the same spirit he visits the sick, and the poor, and the imprisoned, hoping to speak a word in season and lead them to the knowledge of Him who can heal their souls, and enable them to rejoice : and in the same spirit, those who do not feel immediately called to *teach* others, or who consider themselves not qualified for so doing, will make sacrifices and exertions in other ways. These are the works in which those who have any real concern for their *own* souls, will always feel a special interest ; these are the works whereby we honour Christ ; and whereby, when they are done with this view, we testify our love to his person, his name, and his cause. It is very evident, that the

<sup>n</sup> Heb. 11. 10.      <sup>o</sup> Rom. xiv. 15.      <sup>p</sup> Ibid. v. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Acts xviii. 9—11.

Lord appreciates a work done, or a sacrifice made, in proportion as it has an immediate respect to his name and glory. When the woman poured the precious ointment over him, and was rebuked by Judas Iscariot, and then by the other disciples, because it was not sold and the money given to the poor; the Lord justified the woman, and concluded,—“for the poor ye have always with you, but ME ye have not always.”<sup>r</sup> There are thousands who are now like Judas in this respect; and when the cause of Christ is mentioned, excuse themselves by talking of the *poor*, insisting that the money raised for evangelical purposes ought rather to be expended upon them. “Not that they care for the poor;” but are too generally careless and indifferent in regard to the cause of Christ. But it is still our duty to seize every opportunity of testifying our love more directly to Christ, for the unspeakable benefits we have received through him. The poor we have always with us, and whensoever we will we may do them good: but Christ’s cause does not *every day* demand our sacrifices;—we have not so constantly an opportunity of testifying our zeal for him:—and blessed is he whose heart is ready, when the occasion *does* present itself! They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world; and having laboured to turn many to righteousness, they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.<sup>s</sup>

I notice, then, finally, that this judgement takes place on those who have been *evangelized*—on those who have at least had their love towards Christ put to the test, either by his cause or through his members;\* but who have slighted, despised, or neglected it. Alas! I grieve when I consider, how often we hear, among *professors* of evangelical religion even, cold hearted selfishness making excuse for not showing liberality towards the cause of Christ; who nevertheless can *lavish* money upon their houses, their persons, or their pleasures! My heart is pained when I hear of this and that person, as is so frequently the case, whose love has waxed cold; who, having perhaps once evinced some little attention to these matters, have gradually diminished and pared down their charities,

\* This is again another reason why the Judgement cannot be that which affects the heathen who have never heard of Christ. It is a judgement on *Christendom*.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxvi. 11.    <sup>s</sup> Dan. xii.

until at last they have altogether given them up ! I fear again for those, who, though they can sometimes give a little from their superfluity, can never be urged to make the slightest *personal* exertion, or exercise any *self-denial*, to promote the glory of Christ ; but all is dead and apathetic ! If men did but realize the truths of the Gospel, and consider seriously, how the Lord will judge them according to the state of their affections towards him, as evinced in this life, surely their conduct would be different ! But where there is no love, there is no *faith* ; and therefore we are brought to the obvious conclusion, that it is after all the *unbeliever* only, who is cast into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels !

ABDIEL.

## Essay XIV.

## THE LAST DAYS.

2 Tim. III. 1—5. “*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;—from such turn away.*”

I now enter on the examination of a second prophecy, containing in it certain *characteristics* of THE LAST DAYS; purposing, as I proceed, to institute the inquiry, if they are clearly applicable to the present times. I must first, however, make a few prefatory observations.

An important question has been raised; viz.—What are we to understand by *the last days*, mentioned in the passage before us? It has been shown (and I think successfully) that this phrase is applied in Heb. i. 2, to the period in which the Apostle wrote; but it has likewise been proved, with equal clearness, I think, that it more especially and extensively belongs to the winding up of the Christian dispensation. Now I conceive the dispute, in one respect, to be of little moment; for it appears to me that the last days of every dispensation or period of trial are characterized in a somewhat similar manner; since the Lord generally gives a people up to hardness, to make manifest the utter apostasy and depravity of the human heart, before he signally inflicts vengeance: the aspect of that depravity always deriving a certain expression and tinge of color from the peculiarities of the several dispensations under which men have been placed. Thus the earth became filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, during the hundred and twenty years that the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.<sup>a</sup> So the nations of the Amorites, whom the Israelites were commissioned to punish, were first left to fill up the measure of their iniquity.<sup>b</sup> Many characteristics, similar to those in Timothy, may like-

<sup>a</sup> Gen. vi.<sup>b</sup> Gen. xv. 16.

wise be found in the Prophets, as applicable to the state of Israel immediately previous to the captivity. And doubtless the same character was manifested in those Jews who perished or were scattered at the final overthrow of their polity. They were judicially left "to fill up the measure of their fathers;"<sup>c</sup> which the Apostle testifies they did in his time "*alway*, because the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost."<sup>d</sup> So that, I observe, if it should be found, on pursuing our inquiry, that the characteristics mentioned in this passage of Timothy are clearly discernible in our days, (which I venture to declare they are,) it will signify but little, in one sense, whether the prophecy were specially *intended* for these days: it will be manifest, that perilous times are impending; that the nations of Christendom are given up to hardness; and that wrath is, consequently, about to fall upon them to the uttermost.

But, secondly, an examination of the *context* (which embraces the whole remainder of the chapter, and part of the next,) will perhaps lead to the conclusion, that it certainly must refer to the last days of this present dispensation. For immediately after the enumeration of the special characteristics contained in these five first verses, Paul points out to Timothy, for his avoidance, some who were "*of this sort*:" (verses 6—8,) not of this sort as exhibiting the evil fruits previously mentioned, (for surely Timothy would have discernment to know men who were proud, boasters, blasphemers, &c.) but men who were *then* of a more *specious* character; yet betraying a spirit, which, under certain circumstances, would speedily be matured to this fulness of iniquity. For at verse 13 he says, that evil men, and these more specious seducers, should wax *worse and worse*, deceiving others and being themselves deceived; and in verses 3 and 4 of the next chapter he foretels, "that the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts should heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned to fables." Therefore, having dwelt (chap. III. 14—17) on the sufficiency and importance of the holy Scriptures, he solemnly charges Timothy, (chap. IV. 1, 2,) "before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his *appearing and his kingdom*, (which may to some sufficiently indicate what period of time was in the Apostle's mind,) to preach this word:" leaving it on record

<sup>c</sup> Matt. XXIII. 32.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Thess. II. 16.



for us, as an admonition, if we imagine we perceive the authority of Scripture to be loosened in our days, that we are so much the more bound to continue to hold it up "in season and out of season."

This additional description of the apostates may be further useful to us presently, in determining the characteristics themselves: my object however in noticing it at present is, to draw attention to the fact, that the characteristics were only in an incipient state in the time of Paul and Timothy, and that whatever related to their further developement was *future*: just as the latent principles of the Mystery of Iniquity did already work, but were not yet fully developed; something at that time "letting" or preventing them. "Perilous times (he says) *shall* come;" therefore those *special* times of which he speaks were not then arrived. "Men *shall be* lovers of their own selves, covetous," &c. "The time *will* (or *shall*) come, when they will not endure sound doctrine." Now the Gospels make it very evident, that the Jews were *already* in that state when they would not endure sound doctrine; and when *their* covetousness, blasphemy, &c. together with the form of godliness, were plainly manifest:<sup>e</sup> besides which, it is evident from the context, that the allusion is to evil men and seducers within the *christian* church, and therefore cannot at all relate to those who altogether reject christianity. Therefore this must all refer to a state which was yet to occur to the *gentile* Christians; which is the more probable when we consider, that the warning proceeds from the apostle of the Gentiles to a gentile bishop over a gentile region; who therefore could have no very direct interest in being warned of perilous times, which were to happen and to be limited to the Jews of Palestine.

I would yet make two or three very brief observations by way of preface.

First, in seeking for these marks of apostasy in our own day, we must observe, that the distinguishing circumstance is, their being found coupled with a *form of godliness*. This is the distinguishing symptom (the proper *diagnostic*, as physicians would call it) of the complaint: otherwise there is scarcely a mark here enumerated, which might not be found among men *unacquainted* with the Gospel; as would appear from Rom. i. 29—31. It is enough likewise if we look for these marks in

<sup>e</sup> John VIII. 47; Acts VII. 51, 57; Lk. XVI. 14; XXII. 65; Matt. XXIII.

our own nation *generally*.\* For we still must be called a *christian* nation, as to the name and form, however we may have departed in the spirit : the great bulk are still dedicated to God in baptism ; and there are but few who do not at least wish to be *thought* christians, yea and better christians (they would insinuate) than those whom they despise. Secondly, it would not be satisfactory to point out these characteristics in trifling matters only, nor as they merely distinguish a few individuals ; for in that degree they have ever existed in the Church. I must show them as becoming manifest in great masses of society, and in striking features ; though we must still bear in mind “ that evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse,” and consequently that the characteristics will become more strongly marked and prevalent, and the times therefore more perilous, every successive year.†

1. To proceed then with the first characteristic—“ Men shall be LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES :” in other words, they shall be *selfish*. We shall in several particulars be enabled to illustrate this passage by a reference to St. Paul’s description of

\* I had long ago taken the view here advanced, and had unfolded it in the course of my public ministry. I could not however consign it to the press, without feeling a desire to peruse Mr. Irving’s work, called “ *The Last Days*,” founded on the same passage of Scripture. In many respects we remarkably coincide ; but it is in those instances in which I think he deviates from his own plan. His object is to affix all these marks upon the *evangelical* religion of the present day ; in doing which both his exposition and application of the subject are often forced ; and he is continually obliged to change his point of attack. At the same time, I acknowledge that he says many just things against professors of evangelical religion, whether they be relevant to the point in hand or not. I hope to derive from them individual benefit to myself, and wish that others could be induced to read them without partiality and without prejudice : for though there are several matters in which doctrinally I cannot agree with Mr. Irving ; yet I am persuaded there is a great deal of practical home truth in his work, which every candid christian, especially if he be a minister, would find it to his edification seriously to weigh.

† I could not have supposed, that in the short space of six months, which is the time that has elapsed since my last paper on this prophecy appeared in the INVESTIGATOR, events would so rapidly have justified the view I have taken, and given an aspect of decision to many of the characteristics, such as none scarcely can mistake. I am compelled likewise, in justice to Mr. Irvine, to qualify what I have written in the preceding note, and to own with grief, that in numerous bodies of evangelical professors the spirit recently manifested has been such, as to justify many of his statements.

*charity*, or love, in 1 Cor. XIII. For indeed the marks enumerated in Timothy are the very reverse of those blessed fruits produced, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost; and they bespeak, that the persons in whom they are found, whatever may be their profession, are altogether destitute of real sanctification, and will constitute a race of whom our Lord may testify, (as he did to the Jews,) "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."<sup>f</sup> "Charity (then) *seeketh not her own*;" these, on the contrary, who are lovers of their own selves, look every man on their own things and not also on the things of others.<sup>g</sup> But, alas! to what period of the Church shall we look, and not find lamentable proofs, that those who have the form of godliness are seeking their own? St. Paul testifies, even of his own primitive age of christianity, that he had only found *one* decided exception to it; declaring of Timothy, "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally (or genuinely *γνησιως*) care for your state: for ALL seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's!"<sup>h</sup> This selfishness is indeed so deeply imbedded in our very nature, and so insensibly and subtilely communicates a bias, that the experience of the most godly has testified, that in proportion as they acquire *self knowledge*, so do they detect *self love*, artfully insinuating or endeavouring to conceal itself, where they had least suspected it. It is indeed well placed in the front of this evil catalogue; for out of it, as if it were only another name for the very core or heart of man, proceed all those evils which follow in this passage, together with those corrupt fruits which our Lord (Matt. xv. 19) declares come forth from the heart. It appears to me therefore, that it is no *ordinary* manifestation of selfishness which is intended in the text; but that reference is made therein to a period when those guards and restraints imposed upon it by public opinion, and by human laws and institutions, shall be despised, and when circumstances shall reveal it in its real and native character, which is—ANTI-SOCIAL.

It needs then only to refer to notorious facts, and to the general opinion of reflecting men, without citing particulars, to prove that the bonds of society are every where loosening, and are ready to fall asunder. The declaration of Sir C. Wetherell,<sup>i</sup> "that all Europe at present is in a state of abso-

<sup>f</sup> Luke xi. 42; John v. 42.      <sup>g</sup> Phil. ii. 4.      <sup>h</sup> Phil. ii. 20, 21.

<sup>i</sup> Debate on the Reform Bill, March 2, 1831.

lute dissolution," has been echoed by many eminent public men since, and is daily being illustrated by facts. Whence arise our perplexities, our factions, our animosities; whence the burnings and outrages and breakings of machinery; whence the combinations of various classes against their rulers or employers for sinister ends; but from an anti-social spirit? But whence, again, has it come to manifest itself in this manner?—It is because men in their various situations in life have lost sight altogether of the interests of others, being lovers only of themselves. That common patriotism and benevolence, which, in the absence of higher principles and motives, have led men in some degree to think of each other, has been pretty near extinguished by the increasing lust of gold, or pleasure, or power, or some other object. Self-love will itself sometimes appear enlightened, and aim at more firmly securing its own gratification by attending to the wants and interests of others; but in our age it seems to have been given up effectually to its native blindness, and by a shortsighted policy to have first grasped at its own. I speak not of individuals, (there are yet, thank God! many splendid exceptions,) but of society in the aggregate, when I say, that every class seems to have been bent, and still to be bent, upon advancing itself, by oppressing the grade immediately below it. In commerce, the large consumer or purchaser of various articles grinds down the manufacturer in his price. The manufacturer submits to this, because he calculates upon having the *operative* at his mercy, and hopes to reimburse himself by reducing his wages. The landholder grasps at the highest price he can obtain for rent, affecting to be unusually liberal by returning a per-centage, without caring whether his tenant be prospering or losing by his land. The tenant in his turn reduces the wages of the labourer, until he is reduced to a pittance insufficient to support him; and then both the labourer and the artisan, who are similarly circumstanced, combine against their masters, or destroy their factories, or burn their stores, or (which is the more common procedure) are openly aiming at political revolution, as the supposed cure for all their miseries. In the management of the parochial poor also, I can speak from a knowledge of what passes in many parishes; that the object on the one side is generally to disown the poor, or to dole out to them as little as possible, and to make that little irksome for them to receive: whilst, on the

other side, the boisterous poor do what they can to impose by craftiness; the great mass having become so insensible to the feeling formally prevalent, of wishing to keep off the parish, that it is rare to find an individual in whom it still remains. Thus it has come to pass, that those in subordinate stations look up to their superiors as enemies; and those in the higher ranks look down upon their inferiors in like manner. The bond which united noble and peasant, landlord and tenant, master and servant, appears to be broken; and those who must be governed view their rulers with sullenness and mistrust. The same might be shown in regard to relationships and parties in the body politic, considered more immediately; and it may be equally traced to conflicting interests and abuses which have grown up and been persisted in through the selfishness of man, until it has thus manifested itself in dissocial feeling, threatening *peril* to the established order of things.\*

I shall not further enlarge here on this head, because, as it is the root of the other evils, every remaining characteristic will serve further to develop it: and, indeed, most of these particulars will reflect light on subsequent ones, and receive further illustration from them.

2. COVETOUS—or, literally, lovers of money, *Φιλαργυροι*.

\* Since I first published the above, the following has been printed in the preface to "A Letter" by the Rev. W. Anderson to the Author of "Millennarianism Indefensible." It is extracted from "a late No. of the London Courier:" the preface being published in Feb. 1834. "The manner in which the different classes of society are now assailing each other on the score of wealth—they considering no longer, that their interest is one and identical—and the common name of *country* having lost for almost all classes its binding power; the farmers appealing against the manufacturers, and the manufacturer and artisan attacking the agriculturist; the masters combining against the workmen, and the men entering into combination against them; the present conflict of almost all classes one with another, as to which shall have the largest share of the joint produce; is for us a subject of rather painful reflection; while the gradual wearing out of *patriotism*—the disuse even of the term, *except in mockery*—and the *individualization* which is going on in every part of society, make us ready to forebode much coming evil. The community is scarcely now the object of any man's care, except indeed those demagogues who seek to make a profit by talking of it; and every numerous class in the state, forgetful of the common interest, is only anxious to obtain wealth by invading the rights and privileges of some other. We are no longer in fact a *community*. We are only individuals and classes living in the same island, each pursuing his own good in his own manner."

This the apostle declares also to be a *root of all evil*; <sup>j</sup> for it moves men to many sinful acts in order to obtain it, and, when possessed, brings with it many hurtful and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.<sup>k</sup> But though the love of money is thus a root of evil, it is itself nourished and excited by a still deeper motive, and that is *selfishness*. Men are rarely lovers of money for the mere sake of the metal itself; that is a species of disease or insanity which every worldling reprobates, and with too many their notions of covetous men are thus limited to the miser and the churl. Men seek gold and other valuables for the sake of ministering to their lusts, conceiving the possession of it essential to the indulgence of the flesh, and to the enjoyment of that power which self love inclines them to covet; and covetousness, like selfishness, is, in this view of it, so prevalent, that again we are at a loss for a period in which religious profession has been altogether free from it. There is, however, this remarkable difference in the present times, compared with others; that, however covetousness was latent in the heart, it formerly did not manifest itself as now; being pent up within such bounds as to pass for sober industry and prudence, and the proper desire to provide things honest in the sight of all men. But in these days men are not content with a livelihood; all are "making haste to get rich" and to be *independent*, as it is erroneously called; and hence the rage for speculation, on the one hand, and the discontent with ordinary prosperity only on the other. Men often call themselves *ruined* when reduced to limited means; though they still are able to do much more than to provide that food and raiment with which Christians ought to be content.<sup>l</sup> This is a sufficiently general and marked feature of the present age, as contrasted with former times, without going into the detail of the particular fruits it has produced. Suffice it to say, that the money-getting spirit is now so active, that it converts all things into a medium of obtaining it, whether profane or sacred; so that indeed a minister of the Gospel of any talent cannot preach in the present day, but he has reason to expect some hireling of the press may be before him, desecrating the sabbath, the temple, the worship, the Gospel of Christ, by pirating his sermon for gain: thus combining covetousness with the form of godliness. Men are found ready to sell any thing for gain; no matter what

<sup>j</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 10.

<sup>k</sup> Ibid. v. 9.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 8.

base passion it panders to, or what righteous principle it assails : they will disperse through the country the filthy obscenities of the print shop, or the atrocious blasphemies of Carlisle, or any thing else that they *dare*—and professors of godliness even will justify it by the infidel excuse, that it is only “ *in the way of trade* :” as if *trade* were some deity whose laws were paramount, and must be obeyed rather than the Lord Jehovah.

A new indication of this covetousness has also recently manifested itself in the increasing resistance to tithes, church rates, and taxes. Demagogues could not succeed in drawing into their schemes the numbers they have done, were it not that they appeal to a covetous or avaricious principle within the natural heart, which too readily responds to the call. Agitation of this kind has extended into districts apparently the least likely to be put into commotion ; and instances could by the writer be named of men, who have passed for quiet inoffensive churchmen, who know and acknowledge the justice and propriety of what they pay, but who, nevertheless, in the hope of getting rid of a rate or a tithe payment, will join the ranks of the most ungodly radicals. I would not be supposed an advocate for the continuance of tithes and church rates ; on the contrary, I most cordially desire the abolition of both. But I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, that professors of religion among the dissenters are endeavouring to accomplish that object by unchristian measures ; and that they readily combine with the most ungodly scum of parishes for this purpose—the link of union, in the case of the latter, being purely and manifestly *covetousness*.

It is the same “ vulgar economic mania,”\* which not only would reform abuses, but aims also to destroy many truly liberal and generous institutions in the land ; and where it cannot destroy, would so pare down the resources, as to render them inefficient. But we shall see more of *this* spirit also, as we proceed with other particulars.

3. BOASTERS.—But “ charity *vaunteth* not itself.” Selfishness manifests itself in two ways. The first is by *conceitedness*, which leads men to assume greatly to themselves in the way of opinion, and vain gloriously to seek admiration of others ;

\* See the speech of Dr. Chalmers, delivered in January last in the Edinburgh Presbytery, against the abolition of the collegiate churches.

the other is by *covetousness*, which leads them unduly to aim at appropriating to themselves the means of "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." And here I may observe, that, in cultivated and talented minds, temporal advantages are often despised for the sake of obtaining a greater measure of popularity or reputation; and that in vulgar minds human opinion is often despised, for the sake of grasping at some apparent worldly advantage. So that *one* only of these fruits may visibly predominate, and yet the individual be clearly under the influence of *selfishness*. We have considered covetousness: the other branch, which here falls under the denomination of *boasting*, remains.

I might first take up the latent principle, and shew that the present age is notorious for the way in which it courts *public opinion*, openly professing to be guided by it, and to be seeking it as its chief reward. It is not now the ordinary demagogue who affects to be thus influenced; men, who are in actual enjoyment of that power which the demagogue secretly covets, profess to recognise no other law; under the influence of which they often put aside the law of Christ, the principles of the constitution under which they live, and recognised maxims of justice, and surrender all to the humor of the people. In all which the people first assume and arrogate to themselves the power of majesty, yea of deity, (*boasting* themselves to be *the sovereign people!*) and secondly those who truckle to this authority are participators in and chief promoters of their guilt.

But I rather pass on to more obvious indications that we are boasters; and, truly, as a nation, we are become remarkable in this respect, having entirely lost the simplicity and modesty of our ancestors. There is always a something in which we are nationally vaunting ourselves over others, and in which we impiously seem to rest our confidence, to the dishonor of Almighty God. To day it is our wooden walls, to morrow it is British bayonets, the next day it is public credit, then we "boast ourselves in the multitude of our riches," then of our industry, inventions, manufactures. Other nations are equally disposed to vaunt, in proportion as they imbibe the infidel or revolutionary spirit; and Europe is in various parts puffed up with the notion of the march of *intellect*, looking back upon all that has preceded us with contempt, and viewing the men of antiquity as pigmies in comparison. This is especially the case now in regard to those who lived at the time of the Reforma-



tion. The Reformers were till lately looked back upon with reverence : now they are viewed as narrow-minded bigots ; and all which they laboured to build up the present generation would pull down. The religious public does not escape the contagion, but vaunts itself with equal self-complacency on the superior *piety* of this age, and on the multitude of our religious and benevolent institutions and charities.

There is one especial feature of the present day, which affects literary men in particular ; and, included among them, a great number of religious persons ; at which circumstance I have often greatly wondered : I mean the modern practice of extracting commendations of their works from reviews, and then publishing these encomiums throughout the country. Formerly an official testimonial of the censor was occasionally published, as a justification of the *imprimatur* ; but now we see affixed to an advertisement half a score extracts from various reviews, which often become stitched up with the work itself in a second edition. These things I know are most commonly done by the booksellers who purchase the copyright of such works ; nor need we wonder greatly at mere worldly men doing it themselves ; but surely it is unbecoming in the christian ! We should at once set that man down as vain-glorious, who, when he met his friend in the street, should begin to tell him what this person or that writer had said favourable of his book or of himself ; and I cannot see that it makes any difference, as to the principle of the thing, that such encomiums are printed instead of spoken :\* it is only bowing, again, to “ *the way of*

\* If pious men were acquainted with all the *secrets* of reviewing, it would inspire them with disgust at the system altogether. Some booksellers are proprietors of reviews or periodicals for the express purpose of puffing and commending their own publications. An author may have a friendly review also inserted in some publications by dint of interest or *pay* ; and these are not unfrequently penned by the author himself, or by the bookseller who is chiefly interested in the work. Some will likewise make garbled extracts from an independent and unfavourable review, just taking so much of a passage as suits the purpose, and leaving out the context which makes the whole condemnatory. For example :—a review commences by declaring, that such a work has long been a desideratum ; but proceeds to show that the publication in question does not supply it. The puffer however merely extracts the words—“ Such a work has long been a desideratum.” It is mere accident which has enabled the writer to detect some flagrant instances of this kind : for it is presumed that people in general will never take the trouble to compare the extract with the review—were it to be generally done, it would often, I fear, be not only boasting, but a *lying* boast.

*trade*”—to that Mammon that exalts itself against God. But I write this with great deference,—more especially when I consider that some excellent men have fallen into the practice.

The great evil of boasting is, that it is an expression of *self* dependance and complacency; whereas the trust of those, who profess to be worshipers of God, should unquestionably be in the Lord Jehovah, in whom also they are called on to *delight* themselves. The word, which is in the original translated *boasters*, is but of rare occurrence, in any form of it, in the Scriptures; but in the Epistle of St. James it is specially applied to this habitual forgetfulness of our entire dependance upon God; and the passage will therefore serve to confirm my general argument.—“Go to, now, ye that say, To-day or ‘to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a ‘year, and buy and sell and get gain; whereas *ye know not what shall be on the morrow*, &c. For that ye ought to say, ‘*If the Lord will we shall live and do this or that*. But now ‘ye rejoice in your **BOASTINGS**: (*αλαζονεϊαις*) all such rejoicing is evil.”<sup>m</sup> And thus it is that we have proceeded from boasting of the exploits of our fleets and armies, &c. until the very form of recognising the providence of God in our national affairs has been systematically omitted, and has formed a peculiar national feature of these last days.

I shall have occasion to return to this subject again, in the course of this exposition; since (as I have before observed) there is a remarkable connexion in the characteristics. I pass on now therefore to the next head.

4. **PROUD**.—Various expressions are translated to signify *pride*, another of which will presently occur in this description of the last day apostates. The one before us is met with but rarely in the New Testament, and not at all under circumstances which fix its meaning. But in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament it is of frequent occurrence; and in several instances the context leads to the conclusion, that it is used in reference to those who arrogantly oppose their own will to the commandments and precepts of God, and scornfully deride such as would obey the Lord’s will. Thus in Nehemiah ix. 16, it is said of the Israelites, that “they and our ‘fathers dealt *proudly*, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey, &c.” Again in Psalm cxix.—“Thou hast rebuked the cursed *proud*

<sup>m</sup> James iv. 13—16.

‘ which do err from thy commandments.’ (v. 21.) “ The ‘ *proud* have had me greatly in derision : yet have I not declined from thy law.” (v. 51.) “ The *proud* have forged a lie against me : but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.” And in Jeremiah XLIII. 2 it is written—“ ‘ Then spake Azariah and Johanan, and all the *proud* men, saying ‘ unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely, &c.” In this place therefore the term does not so much point to any definite evil, as to that general principle of rebellion or contempt of the authority of God, which is indeed at the root and foundation of all habitual sin. And I am inclined to think, that, in this passage of the Epistle to Timothy, the expression is not so much intended to describe any one specific or distinct feature ; but to shew, that in their whole character (every particular of which might be shewn to be the fruit of pride,) they manifest themselves to be “ THE PROUD ” so often mentioned in Scripture, and whose doom is so frequently declared.\*

It would be no difficult matter to point to instances, in which multitudes in the present day have manifested their contempt of the Most High. How has the *Sabbath* (for example) come to be despised and trampled on, first on the continent, and now here ! So much indeed has it been neglected, that a legislative enactment is rendered necessary, in order to bring back the nation to decorous conduct on the Lord’s day. And the discussion on the subject, though the measure has not yet been fully canvassed, has already elicited much that is awfully significant in reference to our subject. Very decided rancour and hostility have been expressed by two of our legislators, both of whom have nevertheless avowed a *zeal of Christianity* on other occasions ; thus shewing, how the *form* and *profession* of godliness may exist notwithstanding. But the more remarkable circumstance is that numbers of individuals, who make a profession of evangelical religion, do quite deprecate the thought of promoting such a measure out of deference to the command of God : they advocate it solely on the grounds of *expediency*, that men may not be compelled to work ; and it is greatly to be apprehended, that it will be altogether rejected, or that some *half* measure will be adopted, which will virtually yield ground to Satan, and legalize, as it were, many

\* See among other places 1 Sam. II. 3 ; Psalm xxxi. 18—23 ; Isaiah II. 10—12 ; Mal. IV. 1 ; Luke I. 51.

things, which are now felt to be wrong in principle even by those who are guilty of them.\*

So far indeed has man proceeded in lifting up the pride of his heart against God, and saying "Who is the Lord that I should obey him," that in our own country a reference to the name of God and to the principles of Christianity in legislative discussions has been repeatedly deprecated by statesmen of influence; whilst in a neighbouring nation it is too evident, that a principle of infidelity prevails, which has practically set aside the Deity altogether from public matters, and constituted man the sovereign ruler and judge over himself.† It has indeed become a matter of ordinary occurrence for men at their public dinners to toast *the SOVEREIGN people!* for truly "the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands."<sup>n</sup> Yea, our political writers go so far in exalting themselves against God as to say, *vox populi vox Dei—the voice of the people is the voice of God*—whereby this sovereign people is as God showing himself that *he* is God. But various particulars, which evince the

\* At this time, May 10th, 1833, the bill for the better observance of the Sabbath has only been read a first time. [Since the preceding note was published, that bill has been rejected, and its christian advocate lampooned and caricatured throughout the country. Another bill has been introduced by different hands, founded on principles, which would in reality legalize much desecration and neglect of the Sabbath. The undaunted advocate of the former bill is attempting to pass a similar law this session; but, though I pretend not to be a prophet, I cannot hope that the men of this generation will give heed to any thing really efficient. The Lord grant it may be otherwise! At the same time, it is not impossible that many may be influenced by respect to "the *form* of godliness," who deny its *power*, that being the character of these last-day apostates; and never indeed was there a people more rigid and scrupulous concerning the external observance of the Sabbath, than that very generation which crucified the Lord of Glory. Feb. 1834.]

† In considering the present subject, I am one of those who feel *thoroughly persuaded*, notwithstanding the scepticism of some of the more recent students of prophecy, that the *French Revolution*, is the era to which we must look back for the beginning of the manifestation of the last day signs. In the earlier ages of this mighty revolution (which is only now in progress) the tokens of ungodly pride and rebellion have been more rife and conspicuous than they may be just at present: but I doubt not the latent principle pervades as much as ever, and will presently be still more broadly marked.

<sup>n</sup> Isa. v. 12.

rebellion or contempt entertained by men or Jehovah, will fall under consideration presently.—The *next* head indeed will further illustrate the subject: viz. that men are in the last days to be—

5. BLASPHEMERS. Various kinds of blasphemy are mentioned in the Scriptures: I greatly fear the present age must be admitted to excel in all of them. In regard to religious blasphemy, it consists, first, in a direct and open speaking against the revelation or ordinances of God; and, secondly, in the avowal of heretical doctrines, indirectly calculated to degrade the glory of the triune Jehovah, and the Gospel of his grace. But “to speak evil of *dignities*” is likewise blasphemy; more especially against *kings*, who, spite of the infidel jargon of modern times, are the Lord’s *anointed*; and their persons therefore, as the types and representatives of the Christ, are to be had in reverence.\* What period then, in the history of Christendom, can compare in this respect with the last forty years? We have seen one entire nation openly revelling and glorying in atheism, sedulously destroying the Scriptures of God, and proceeding to worship a prostitute who personified the goddess of reason! A free course has latterly been given in this country also to infidel and seditious writings; (for vain man, in the pride of his heart, *will seek to be wiser than God*;) and the publication of blasphemies of all descriptions is now therefore tolerated upon principle.† And whilst apathy thus leads some to give in-

\* See 1 Sam. xxiv. 6, 10; xxvi. 9, 16; 2 Sam. i. 14—16; &c. especially in regard to speaking against them, see 2 Sam. xix. 21. Isa. xlv. 1 shews that Gentile kings are viewed as the Lord’s anointed, as well as Israelitish.

† The distinction between *tolerating* men’s private opinions, and allowing the publication of them, is well put by Dean Swift in an admirable satire on our modern politics, conveyed through the king of Brobding to Gulliver.—“He laughed at my odd kind of arithmetic (as he was pleased to call it) in reckoning the numbers of our people by a computation drawn from the several sects among us in religion and politics. He said he knew no reason, why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public should be *obliged to change*, or should *not be obliged to conceal them*. And as it was *tyranny* in any government to require the first, so it was *weakness* not to enforce the second: for a man may be allowed *to keep poisons in his closet*, but *not to vend them about for cordials*.”

direct countenance to this offence,\* the sympathy of others shews itself by petitions and subscriptions for offenders, when the zeal of private individuals has in a few instances successfully prosecuted them.

The Socinian heresy is likewise awfully increased and tolerated in the present day,—a heresy which is not only blasphemy against the Son of Man, but against the Holy Ghost, whose personality and distinct influences are denied and derided; and many other evils, not suspected by the Christian public in general, (such as denying the obligation to keep holy the Sabbath day, and the spurious *liberality* which abounds,) are fruits which have grown upon the Unitarian tree. Previous to the French Revolution, Socinians were held to be *criminals*, and were liable to punishment for openly teaching their doctrines.<sup>o</sup> Since that period it has come to pass, that we “can bear them that are evil:”<sup>p</sup> yea, Christians can be openly leagued with them, and defend the union! They have long since been associated with dissenters for political purposes; they have been admitted into the senate; they are leagued with professing Christians in the London University for the purposes of education; in the British and Foreign Bible Society for the translation and distribution of the Scriptures; and professedly orthodox dissenters do now, it seems, take their regular turn with Socinian ministers in the supply of service at the chapel of the City Road Orphan Working School, their names being promiscuously mingled also in the published lists!<sup>†</sup> And daily may the attentive observer notice, how that leaven (which I repeat had its origin with them) is spreading, which would level all distinctions of a religious nature; whereby men, who

\* It must not be forgotten, that the *tolerator* of blasphemy is guilty as well as the blasphemer himself; as may be proved, by parity of reasoning, in the case of cursing. “If a soul sin and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness whether he hath seen or known of it, *and do not utter it*, (that it may be rebuked) then he shall bear his iniquity.” Lev. v. 1. And Solomon also condemns him who “heareth cursing and bewrayeth it not.” Prov. xxix. 24.

† The case appears the stronger, from the effort of one of those ministers (of the Independent denomination) to excuse it, in the Record of December, 1833. While he attempts to palliate the evil, he fully admits the extent of it: yea, further, that the children of the school are occasionally marched to the Socinian Meeting-house; and he calls it “an embarrassing and afflicting circumstance.”

<sup>o</sup> See the 9th and 13th of William III, chap. 32, p Rev. II. 2.

are the most notoriously indifferent as to matters of vital godliness, arrogate to themselves the graces of charity and liberality; whilst those who evince any remaining zeal for the honor of God and the truth of the Gospel are held up to scorn, as narrow-minded, illiberal, and uncharitable bigots.

The Owenite and St. Simonian blasphemies are of more modern growth, and are fostered by the same spirit of legislative apathy before complained of. The Rotunda in London has long been known as being the arena of enacted blasphemies, where every thing sacred is turned into solemn mockery, and this again—for *gain*! But, besides the Rotunda, the establishment is to be noticed of Mr. Robt. Owen of Lanark, at the Exchange Bazaar, Charlotte-street, London, where on every Sabbath Day from 1500 to 2000 persons are usually assembled, (who all again *pay* for their admission,) and are regaled with profane and voluptuous music and blasphemy. The lecturers at this synagogue of Satan enlarge upon the *uselessness* of public worship to an educated community, the inconsistencies of christianity, (which is denominated the religion of tithes, taxes, corruptions and oppression,) and the auditory is even incited to rise up and “demand” or “take” (not supplicate) their rights as *men*.<sup>q</sup> The St. Simonians, with whom the Owenites claim a sort of kindred, are equally eloquent in exhorting the *female* part of society to throw off the modesty and restraints and natural subjection of the sex, and to *demand* or *take* their privileges; their professed object being to destroy the obligation of the marriage bond, and to lead all mankind to live in a state of temporary concubinage. Surely these are “scoffers, walking after their own lusts!”\*

The charge of blasphemy may likewise be proved against the present generation in regard to “speaking evil of dignities,”—a circumstance which is elsewhere spoken of as characteristic of the last day apostates.<sup>r</sup> Pride and rebellion of heart have been bawling for *equality* since the same epoch: kings have been so extensively assailed, that there are few

\* However these men may have been discountenanced by the authorities in France, and laughed at by some in England, the number of their adherents is steadily increasing, especially on the continent, where (as the writer is assured on good authority) they now have *eleven* different newspapers in their pay; whilst, with the exception of a journal at Berlin, none think it worth their while to controvert their tenets.

<sup>q</sup> See Courier, Oct. 15, 1833.      <sup>r</sup> 2 Pet. II. 10; Jude III.

countries in which they have not been dethroned, assassinated, or had their life and crown attempted : and at this very period the thrones of Christendom exhibit a melancholy spectacle of instability, arising from the revolutionary or republican spirit. Lesser dignities are in a similar plight—they are threatened with the destruction of their order, whenever they thwart the humor of the day ; and the most ferocious sarcasms are levelled at them by the favorite demagogues, and received with plaudits by their besotted followers.

6. DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS.—I shall have some further remarks to make on this subject, when I come to shew that men are “ *without natural affection.*” For the present I will observe, that at the time of the Reformation, when the church catechism was framed, the view then entertained of the requirements of the fifth commandment was as follows : viz.—“ to love, honour, and succour our father and mother ; to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him : to submit ourselves to all our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters : to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters.” This exposition appears to be based upon the following view :—viz. that God is our *spiritual* father, the king our *political* father, and our parents our *natural* father and mother ; and, consequently, that as obedience is due to them in the first instance, so also to such as are delegated with authority by them for the purpose of government : to *ministers*, as spiritual pastors and fathers in the stead of Christ ; to *magistrates*, as in the stead of the king ; to *governors and masters*, as persons to whom the natural parents consign their children for instruction or otherwise.

Those who subscribe to this view of the subject will perceive under the last head sufficient to convince them, that the principle of subordination to *rulers* is destroyed from among us ; the immense standing armies which exist show the impossibility of keeping men in check otherwise than by the bayonet.\*

\* Some may be disposed to justify those who require such coercion by pointing to the abuses and corruptions which prevail under the various governments of the world. I trust I am no defender of abuses and corruptions ; but it must nevertheless be remembered, that the characteristics now under discussion are applied to *Christians* ;—to those who have at least the *form* of godliness retained among them. It equally shews, therefore, that the *power* of godliness is wanting ; for nothing is more plain than that it is the *duty* of Christians to obey them that have



In regard to spiritual rulers, the spirit of insubordination is still more conspicuous; insomuch that it is a rare thing, on the one hand, to witness subjection to the ministers of the Gospel; whilst, on the other hand, the very mention of them among the public is generally made an occasion to sneer at or speak evil of them. And it is not a little remarkable, that this has come to pass at a time when it is admitted, even by dissenters from the church of England, that the establishment never perhaps contained so many pious and respectable ministers as at the present day. Nor is this spirit of insubordination evinced only by members of established churches. Serious dissenters complain of the same evil in their own communities; the members of their congregations becoming so captious, and having such itching ears, that they are continually removing their ministers; and various ministers (according to a witness of their own<sup>s</sup>) are now without congregations, and congregations without ministers, from this very cause.

In regard to disobedience to natural parents, it is a circumstance so commonly noticed by persons at all observant of the moral character of the age, as specially belonging to the present times, that it requires no further comment. Even our justice rooms do not unfrequently witness instances of parents coming to complain of, and to ask protection against, their own children; whilst those who have any thing to do with the education of the poor must well know how defective it is, from the want of a spirit of obedience and subordination to the wishes of their parents. A great declension has been noticed in this respect in the course of the last half century, as compared with the times immediately preceding: but if we compare the present with patriarchal times, and consider the deference shewn in those days to parents, the contrast will be more remarkable. Indeed I fear it would now provoke the laughter of many, were they to be seriously reminded, that the sons and daughters of those days rose up before their parents, and did them homage.\* And though the Gentiles are described in Rom. I. 30 as being disobedient to parents;

the rule over them,—yea, to be obedient to the froward also,—and to be subject even for wrath's sake. See Rom. XIII. 1—7; Titus III.

\* Gen. xxxi. 31; 1 Kings II. 19; and see also Lev. xix. 32, as regards the deference to elders generally.

<sup>s</sup> See Thorpe's *Destinies of the British Empire*, page 127.

yet have we instances mentioned in heathen authors of filial piety and reverence, and of deference to age, which might put to the blush multitudes of the present generation of professing Christians.\*

\* It is not for me so much to trace the *causes* which have led to these evils, as to point out the evils themselves. There can be little doubt however, that it may be attributed in a great measure to the relaxation of parental discipline and authority; so that men have come now to treat their children with the familiarity of brothers rather than of sons; and to make it a moral question, whether it be right to coerce or to chastise them. I am persuaded that no observations which I can make will avail in regard to any who are not serious christians; but there are two circumstances which have been much upon my mind, that I will take the liberty of submitting to the consideration of those, whom I desire to see proving themselves to be as salt of the earth which has not lost its savour.

First, then, it is daily becoming more a maxim among professors of religion to leave their children to run after pleasures or amusements which they themselves condemn, and to suffer them also to go into any company; excusing themselves under the notion, that it is wrong to thwart them in such matters, and that restraint may disgust them with religion. But surely this is being wiser than God. He approved Abraham because "he *commanded* his children and his household after him;" (Gen. xviii. 17—19;) and when authority is not exercised, it is to be feared, either that the welfare of the children's souls is not constantly kept in view; or that the mind is not really persuaded (though it affects to be so) of the evil of the company or pleasures deprecated. Parental authority is a talent for which all are responsible, both as regards its use and its abuse; and surely a father or a mother never more legitimately exercises it, than in keeping their children from that which they esteem an evil.

The next consideration I would affectionately submit to those who are *mothers* in Israel. They will admit, that the *head* of every family is undoubtedly the *man*: in which view, even the wife, though endowed with authority from him, is required to be *subject* to him. And women are not only reminded, under the Gospel, of the example of Sarah, "who obeyed Abraham, calling him *lord*:" (1 Pet. iii. 1—6;) but they are required "to submit themselves unto their own husbands, *as unto the LORD*." (Ephes. v. 22.) It has come to pass, however, that the propriety of such submission is, among carnal and worldly women, greatly questioned; and I have been pained to hear even female professors of religion make a jest of that portion of the marriage service in which obedience is vowed, and treating the notion of the thing itself with any thing but seriousness and reverence. Yea, I have known mothers openly inculcate on their daughters, that it would be the mark of a mean spirit in them, should they ever be married, not to contend for the mastery; and an excellent christian woman once assured me, that she had been counseled by different females to *resist* marital authority; but never in any instance, was counseled to *submit* to it. Now the genius of christianity is such, that it has necessarily endowed women with a degree of liberty

7. UNTHANKFUL.—When men are fast declining on the one hand from a devout recognition of God, and verging on the other hand towards scepticism and infidelity, how can it be expected, that they should entertain a spirit of praise and thankfulness towards the alone Giver of all good? So far from acknowledging the providence of God, the very spirit of boasting, already noticed, betrays that they say in their heart, “*My power, and the might of mine hand, hath gotten me these things.*”†

First we may notice (what is most obvious) the general spirit of unthankfulness in regard to those national blessings and advantages which we have possessed. When we consider the wealth, the liberty, the freedom from foreign invasion, and, above all, the abundance of Gospel privileges, that have been enjoyed in this country, they form an aggregate of mercies which call forth the surprise of strangers; whilst yet our streets are full of “murmurers and complainers,” and our most popular orators have been continually insisting, that we are a people ground down by tyranny and oppression! The very abundance of our fields was only a few years since complained of in the senate house by Lord Castlereagh, as the cause of our own national perplexities then existing; which sentiment was afterwards echoed by multitudes. Oh, how must we have fallen from God, and how unnatural must be our social condition, when that *plenty*, which has been hitherto esteemed a blessing, comes to be looked upon as a curse! It has been often observed also in the present day, that though many persons can request a minister to offer public prayer for rain, or for fair weather, (as the case may seem to require,)

they did not enjoy before: but the two passages which I have quoted evince, that it never intended them to go to an opposite extreme; nor is it possible that any deviation from the precepts and spirit of the Gospel can take place, without a series of evil consequences following. In this instance, I fear much of that spirit of disobedience which exists may be traced to it: for when children and servants perceive that individual in a house, whose duty it is first to shew subjection, treat the notion of it in their own case with lightness, (to go no further;) must it not insensibly encourage a spirit of insubordination through all the downward gradations in which submission is required? This is the more important in the wife, seeing that it is her province to train up the children of the family to shew proper reverence and respect to the *father*,—and to impress upon them, that he is the individual to whom all must be subject.

† Deut. VIII. 17.

they rarely request him to return thanks to God, when the mercy has been vouchsafed. The same may be remarked also of persons under affliction or in sickness, who can readily request the prayers of the congregation; but though ten may be cleansed, there is scarcely found one to return to give thanks unto God.

In this particular the *form* of godliness is still retained: witness the practice at public dinners of a grace before meat, and the *Non nobis Domine* after the repast; whilst yet a *reverential* thanksgiving on such occasions is treated with derision; and still more so the proposal to acknowledge God at any *other* meal than dinner. And though a public fast and thanksgiving have recently been ordered, yet it has been coupled with the remarkable circumstance, of being reluctantly yielded to the petitions and remonstrances of individuals; thus betraying, that there wanted the spirit and power of godliness notwithstanding.\*

Mr. Irving would have the word "*unthankful*," in the text, to signify "*uneucharistical*;" in order that he may fix it on religious professors. I question the correctness of his introductory remarks, though I can agree in most things which he afterwards deduces from them: but I can have no doubt that christians ought "to rejoice in the Lord always;" and as little doubt, that the majority of professors do not cultivate a cheerful, grateful frame of mind. We too frequently hear, even from them, complaining and murmuring in regard to worldly matters, and very little of habitual praise and thankfulness for undeserved daily mercies.

8. UNHOLY.—It requires but little observation to be persuaded, that the great majority of those who have the form of godliness are not *holy ones*, (or *saints*, as the word implies,) since the very name "*saint*" is made a subject of derision; and that entire surrender of the heart to God, that universal obedience, (which is what the Scriptures mean by holiness, and what genuine christians aim at,) is by the multitude decried as puritanical, methodistical, enthusiastic; or more openly denounced as "cant, hypocrisy and humbug."

\* A more appalling spectacle of pride, hardness, and determined contempt of all government, could not have been exhibited, than on the occasion of the last national fast; when a set of miscreants literally "joined hand-in-hand" to turn it into ridicule, parading the streets and baying the police, in open defiance of all human constituted authority, and making scoff of the providence and majesty of Jehovah!

But how lamentably deficient are religious professors in this respect! How little do multitudes of evangelical worshipers make it their habitual aim to be conformed to the will of God, or even to inquire what his will may be! They take up with a low and human standard of religion. They inquire not, in various circumstances, what the *Lord* saith; or what would most conduce to his glory, and be most beneficial to their own souls; but, what this minister or that professor may think or do, and who of repute will tolerate or countenance them in their proceedings. How little do such seek to be “transformed by the renewing of their mind!” They are influenced by the same principles, the same motives, the same prejudices, the same objects, as worldly persons;—their aim appears indeed to be to enjoy the world as decidedly as possible, whilst they nevertheless affect to renounce it.

But passing downward from these, O, how awfully are holy ordinances desecrated and trampled under foot! Look how the rite of *Baptism* is profaned by persons who have no thought beyond the propriety of the form,—to have a godfather who may probably make a present to the child, and to indulge in a good feast on the day of the ceremonial! Look at the numbers again who rush to *Confirmation*: the more decorous for the mere sake of the form, never once intending really to keep the vows they make, and not caring to understand them; whilst in country places multitudes of the less educated classes go like a flock of sheep to follow the leader, and to enjoy—not a *holy-day*, but what is vulgarly termed a *holiday*. And what are our *holy-days* generally, (such as Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide,) but days devoted by those who make holiday to gluttony, riot, debauchery or folly? Look again at the ecclesiastical ordinance, the *Churching of Women*: in most towns it is performed in private houses, though intended to be a public thanksgiving; (the parties thereby betraying themselves to be “*unthankful*;)” whilst in the generality of instances it is conformed to from a superstitious notion, that the woman will be *unlucky* if she goes out publicly before she is churched. The sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is not perhaps so generally profaned as other ordinances; though until lately it was grossly desecrated by men who were qualified thereby for secular offices. But the *small* number of communicants is, in this instance, a proof of the unholiness of the age: for most abstain from it because they imagine that it

does more solemnly engage them to that holiness which they are resolved not to follow after: whilst yet they can come, with a lie in their right hand, to make similar engagements in *prayer*; for there is nothing which a man pledges himself to at the Lord's table, to which he does not equally pledge himself in the course of ordinary public worship, if he repeats the liturgy. Finally look at *Ordination*, so commonly profaned by those who offer themselves as candidates for the ministry; who enter the church as teachers merely for the sake of following a gentlemanly profession, and often for "filthy lucre;" whilst those who possess church patronage too commonly prostitute it to political objects. All these abuses are notoriously worse in Catholic countries, so that we may truly say the age is *unholy*.

9. WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION.—From the word *εοργη*, here translated 'natural affection,' is said to be derived our English word *stork*; which bird shews a remarkable affection towards its parents when it is young, and towards its offspring when it is more advanced in age. It is that principle or law of nature which first leads men into the social compact, and forms the secret bond of attachment in the various relationships existing among them.

Two facts, then, stand out conspicuously, connected with the legislative proceedings of the present day. The one is, that it clearly appears necessary to frame laws, in order to prevent parents from sacrificing the health of their children in mills and factories, whither the love of gain induces them to send them; (which is another proof of the "covetousness" and "selfishness" of the times, both as regards parents and masters :) The other is, the recent parliamentary returns of the commissioners appointed to examine into the state of the poor laws, which abound with melancholy evidence of the present antisocial and depraved character of the age. Children now no longer consider it a *duty* "to shew piety at home and to requite their parents;"<sup>u</sup> but apply to the overseers of the poor for remuneration, because they maintain them; and, when refused, say—Then you must take my father, or mother, into the workhouse, for we cannot *afford* to keep them!

In the next place children are generally spoken of, not as "a gift and heritage which cometh of the Lord,—*happy* is the man that hath his quiver full of them;"<sup>v</sup> but as an incumbrance

<sup>u</sup> 1 Tim. v. 4.

<sup>v</sup> Psalm cxxvii.

and misfortune.\* It is true, that few are so indecorous as to speak thus of their *own* children ; but it is the way, nevertheless, in which they make mention of the children of *others*.

The population returns of France exhibit an enormous proportion of illegitimate children, who are, for the most part, abandoned by their parents ; and the instances are innumerable in this country of children forsaken by the parents under similar circumstances, and left to the tender mercies of the overseers of the poor. I may also notice the destitution of natural affection betrayed by the drunkards of this generation, the number of whom, both male and female, is awfully increased ; for in most instances they consume their earnings at the public house or dram shop, and leave their families to get aid how they can. I am acquainted with numerous cases, in which the pittance sent to the pining family from the hand of charity has been seized and devoured, (or, if it has been in money, spent on more liquor,) by the stony-hearted drunkard. The Burking system which was recently brought to light, betrays how extensively the commonest affections of humanity have become stifled in various instances ; so that men can be daily engaged in hunting for blood, for the paltry price of the victim's corpse ! There are numerous other circumstances which betray our downward progression in this respect ; but I shall close with an able passage from Mr. Irving, which more immediately concerns the higher classes.—

“ Now I consider *home* to be to man's natural affections, what the nest of its young is to the affections of the fowls of heaven : but if we should see the birds of heaven forsaking their young and callow brood, in order to contend in song, in beauty of plumage, or in rapidity of flight,—to enjoy themselves in flocks, when they ought to be providing for their

\* I have met with some remarkable *individual* instances of this nature. The wife of a respectable cottage farmer, who had an only daughter about fourteen years of age lost a cow. A neighbour came in to condole with her, at the same time concluding, from her being a great professor of religion, that she would cheerfully submit to the will of God. She found her, however, inconsolable for the loss, and in the midst of her lamentations she exclaimed—“ Ah, if it had but pleased God to take the *girl* instead of the *cow*,—that would have been a saving to me !” Another woman was one day speaking to me of her misfortunes ; declaring, she thought there was nobody like herself. I began to mention a neighbour who had recently lost two children ; but she, misapprehending my intention, said—“ Aye, I never had a bit of luck in *that* way like other people : I have had seven, and they have all lived !”

young, and teaching their young how to provide for themselves,—what would we say, but that natural affection had intermitted its course, and a wonderful thing had come to pass in the animal creation? But, ah! how truly doth it so fare with *families* in these times; when all the day is spent in business or in vanity, and all the night in feasting or in greater vanity. Between the oppression of business and the oppression of fashion, the tender, and delicate, and blessed abode of our natural affections, which our fathers called HOME, hath been almost crushed to pieces, and the very word hath changed its meaning; so that ‘*at home*’ now signifies being surrounded with a multitude, and ‘*not at home*’ almost signifies being alone with your children.”

After mentioning the hollow, superficial, and perverted character of that which now commonly passes for hospitality, Mr. Irving proceeds:—“But what need of entering into particulars, when by a general fact we can include all particulars, and shew the very disposition of the time to be against natural affection. The fact I refer to is the promulgation of the French philosophy by many able men in these parts some thirty years ago; of which the root is this: That we should love all men alike; and that the preferences which we shew to the more intimate relationships is a prejudice, and an offence to this uniformity and equality of love. And though the strength of our religious and civil establishments hath beat back this hideous philosophy, (falsely so called,) and forced it to work in secret; yet, that it hath been working in secret, and that it is the very same with that *liberality* which is now catching all places like wildfire, I have no doubt. And that the tendency of this liberality is to destroy the foundations of faith, is manifest from the character of those who are its high priests and apostles; of whom the general character is, that they have made shipwreck of their faith, and are, as much as public opinion will allow, loosened from the obligations of duty and the bonds of affection. It is an abortive attempt to reach liberty and well-being without observing the conditions upon which God hath made liberty and well-being to be dependant. And in an age when liberality is the object of universal worship; and public opinion of men, not the word of God, is the common law; nothing else is to be expected but a dissolution of the bonds of natural affection, and the increase of crime in every direction.”<sup>w</sup>

<sup>w</sup> See “The Last Days,” page 167.



10. TRUCE-BREAKERS.—This word, in the first chapter of Romans, (where *συνθετες* is translated *covenant-breakers*) is rendered *implacable*; one meaning of which is, not to be appeased or brought under covenant or agreement. So that it refers to that lawless and unbridled state of mind, which, if it enters into covenant, does so without intending to be bound by it, but to break it whenever the passions or expediency invite; as also to that spirit, which having somewhat more perhaps of conscientiousness, refuses to be bound, because it will not be restrained by any conventional act or agreement.

Bearing in mind, that these characteristics are to be found in a people having the form of godliness, (making a profession, that is to say, of christianity, or being nominally christians,) there are some circumstances affecting the multitude which immediately invite attention. First are the solemn vows made with God in *baptism*—Oh! how lightly is the covenant entered into in the first instance, and how awfully despised and trampled under foot afterwards! We are truly a nation of truce-breakers in this respect,—a nation which “kept not the ‘the covenant of God and refused to walk in his law’—“for ‘their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast ‘in his covenant.”<sup>x</sup> Nor can it be pleaded that the parties who transgress in this respect are comparatively guiltless, inasmuch as it is rather the act of their parents than their own act, seeing they are brought under the bond of the covenant when infants, and are not directly parties to it themselves. For I have shewn under the eighth head, that the multitude equally rushes to *Confirmation*; which rite is purposely postponed, until they are of an age to confirm and ratify the solemn vows and promises in their own persons: and we find this same-multitude, again in *their* turn, when they become parents, as heedlessly bringing their children under the like obligation: so that if it was their parents’ guilt in the first instance, it is now by a two-fold act their own.

There are also persons who neglect the covenant of God in the opposite respect: for they will seek baptism of the Church, but do all they can to evade that part of it, (vulgarly called *the christening*) in which the vows and promises are made. Under pretence that the child is weakly, or some other plea, they endeavour to procure baptism in private, secretly resolving not to appear at church to complete the rite. And

<sup>x</sup> Psalm LXXVIII. 10, 37.

herein also they betray, how completely they despise the rites and ordinances of the *church* into which they are received as members; thus becoming truce breakers in another respect, if not in the former: for, undoubtedly, when we are received into any particular church by baptism, we virtually bring ourselves under an obligation to believe the articles of faith, and to observe the ordinances and rites, and to obey the discipline, of that community, whatsoever it may be.

The same spirit is manifested by those who refuse (though baptized, and constantly attending on public worship) to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: for their real objection is, that they conceive the ordinance *obliges* them to a life of godliness, to an extent to which they do not suppose themselves to be committed by any former act.

I am unwilling to enter largely into political matter, because I know in nothing is the mind more likely to be prejudiced by the party spirit of the day: so that the Reader may not agree with me in my view of some questions, which nevertheless is obvious to others; and I may indeed myself be unconsciously warped and twisted on certain points. I hope however he will bear with me when I state it as my own deliberate opinion, that all those of our senators (being the majority) who supported catholic emancipation, disregarded the oath they took on becoming members of the legislature. I see a glaring instance also of public men treating the solemn obligation of an oath with lightness, in the case of those Roman catholic and dissenting members of the British parliament, who are sworn to uphold and maintain the church of England. Nor must this be viewed as the delinquency of a few individuals only, when it is considered, that they are justified in so doing by the majority of the legislature; who, by a modern discovery, that oaths and treaties are not intended to bind men in their *legislative* capacities, have reduced every conventional safeguard to a mere dead letter. It is manifest, if this doctrine is to obtain, that neither the act of union, (now about to be infringed upon,\*) nor any other act, can prove a real security to any party; and that in fact it is utterly impossible to offer

\* Written in 1833, when a Bill was brought into Parliament, and passed both houses, for reducing the number of Bishops in Ireland and the revenues of the Irish Church; which church was by the Act of Union covenanted to be upheld in all its rights and privileges.

legislative or conventional security, unless it be accompanied by *penalties* in case of infraction ; and unless the party insured possess power also to *enforce* those penalties.

Public *pledges* and the avowal of public *principles* come next in solemnity to oaths and treaties ; in which matter the profligacy of men in modern times is a subject of general complaint. Many pledge themselves at elections, and on other occasions, only to betray those pledges when the temptation offers. And on some occasions, when public men have veered round with the minister of the day, or with their party, their inconstancy has, in the senate, been made a matter of laughter and jocularity ; instead of exciting a feeling of indignation, as it ought to do in every honest mind.

Among the instances of departure from professed principles, to which appeal may be made in the way of illustration, I cannot forbear mentioning one of a singular character as regards two of the principle nations of Europe—Great Britain and France. They have both been loud and energetic in regard to the principle of non-intervention with nations, who are struggling among themselves ; yet France has decidedly violated it, in regard to the Italian states, by the occupation of Ancona ; and both France and England have done so in regard to Belgium and Portugal, in their respective struggles with Holland and Spain.

Passing on from political men, I would just notice, that the same recklessness of oaths and engagements are notorious among commercial men. Every *debt* has in it the nature of a contract or covenant ; but unprincipled speculations, or still more unprincipled assignments, have become so common, that commercial men say proverbially—a man is more extolled now for paying ten or fifteen shillings in the pound, than if he had never failed at all. A similar dereliction of principle is observable in regard to excise and custom house oaths—which multitudes take as a matter of course, without at all caring to have a conscience void of offence towards God in the matter ; alleging that it is a concern of mere public business, and not of private character.

11. FALSE ACCUSERS.—The original word is *diaboli*,—literally ‘*devils* ;’ and with deference to our Translators I would suggest, that it should rather be rendered *malignant* accusers. For though the devil is “ a liar from the beginning,” yet are his accusations not always without truth ; but they are, invariably, the fruit of envy and malice, being the very oppo-

site of that charity which "envieth not" and "thinketh no evil."

This evil is so notorious among us, as to require but little in the way of proof: any one who observes with only ordinary attention what is passing in the world, must be aware of the censorious and scandalous spirit which prevails among us. Our parliamentary debates are now little else than a medium for accusation and recrimination; and much of the time which ought to be devoted to business is employed in listening to charges, retorts, and explanations. It is the same with public meetings generally: they rarely pass off, when the object of them is political, without some odious attack upon the characters of public men, and sweeping charges of corruption and atrocity against ministers, the peerage, the aristocracy, the tories, the whigs, or the church. And what is the press, but a vehicle for the most licentious and scandalous attacks upon individuals both public and private? Some of our Sunday newspapers are recommended to the public by large placards, specifying the principle articles of their contents; among which it is no uncommon thing to see printed in conspicuous type such sentences as "Crim. Con. in high life"—"Remarkable exposure"—"Tory corruption," &c. And charges which are made through the medium of the press, and also of Parliament, are often proved to be false, as well as wanton and malignant; yet, though openly refuted, the same system of attack on character is nevertheless continued. "Love covereth sins;" but this satanic spirit delights in baring and exposing them.

Now it were absurd to object, in regard to the press, that such accusations are but the acts of individuals: the fact is individuals are but panders and caterers to the public appetite; and those publications, which are the highest seasoned with scandal and malignant abuse, are purchased with the greatest avidity: which betrays that there must be multitudes of readers of a congenial spirit.

12. INCONTINENT—that is to say, men who will not exercise self-denial, nor bridle their lusts and desires. I do not feel justified in going at large into the proofs of direct sensual incontinency. I will satisfy myself with appealing to the testimony of all moralists who have had an opportunity of observing the state of society abroad and at home. There never was a period when the habits of men were so generally profligate. The Continent has long been known as abounding in sensual

depravity; and we are fast rivaling them in this country. I might appeal to public documents published in Paris, to the baptismal registers in manufacturing and agricultural districts at home, to the state of our public streets at night in large towns, and to other facts of a notorious character; but I would draw a veil over this part of my painful subject.

I next may appeal to the notorious luxury of the present age, evidenced in the excess of apparel, in sumptuous furniture, and in voluptuous diet. The increased addiction to these things is not perhaps so obvious in the higher classes of society, inasmuch as they have been commonly more or less the characteristics of wealth and rank; but in the downward gradations it is sufficiently manifest. It has been repeatedly noticed, for instance, in regard to the yeomanry of the country, that they have of late years launched out into a style of living entirely different from their former habits; whilst the dress of servants and of the lower orders of the community is such, that little, if any, difference can in this respect be discerned between them and their superiors.

The spirit of *self-denial* appears also to be greatly, if not entirely, lost sight of, among the generality of religious professors. If persons set their minds on any vanity, luxury or pleasure, they will not be said *nay* to, if they can enjoy it, and preserve a decent reputation at the same time; and those who would remind them,—that all things, though lawful, are not expedient,—are set down as a self-righteous class of professors, whose views are legal and contracted. Hence it has come to pass that the ordinance of *fasting* is with the multitude of professors a dead letter; and they view it as the remains of monastic superstition; though the Lord hath expressly warned us that some kind of devils go not out but through prayer and fasting.<sup>y</sup>

Another proof of the incontinent spirit of the age is the entire prostration of ecclesiastical *discipline*. The members of the established church are under no spiritual control whatsoever; neither would they endure it: the very suggestion to restore church discipline would be spurned as a fruit of intolerable bigotry, suited only to the days of puritans or priestcraft. The same spirit is equally manifest among dissenters. Men will not be subordinate the one to the other; the governed seek to control their rulers: to enforce discipline would often

be to break up a community; and many either retire, or go over to some other sect, or form a new schism, rather than submit themselves the one to the other.

The same spirit runs through other classes. Parents will not suffer their children to be thwarted or controlled by their teachers; and as the children advance in years, so neither will they submit to be restrained by their parents. Servants will not endure contradiction from their masters, but on the slightest rebuke seek another place.

13. FIERCE—the opposite of *meek* and *gentle*. “Charity suffereth long and is kind,” and “is not easily provoked;” but the spirit of the day (as has just been observed in regard to servants) is, not to brook a contradiction; and consequently challenges are given and received, and the life of a fellow creature is demanded in the way of satisfaction, rather than men will for a moment have it supposed, that they can be meek under an affront. So tenacious indeed are men, and so easily provoked, that the speaker of our house of commons has frequently to interpose, in order to procure such apologies or explanations as may prevent a hostile meeting.

It will I think be admitted, that these things generally arise from fierce and hasty words: men being *incontinent* in regard to curbing the tongue and restraining the passions. When the attack is indirect,—not being levelled perhaps at any one individual in particular,—fierce and vituperative language is still more freely used; not unfrequently accompanied by a hope that their political opponents may speedily be brought to the block.\* The public prints, not being checked or restrained by the forms of parliament, carry their fierceness to a still greater extent; and have frequently of late endangered the lives of public men, by holding them up to the detestation of the people, and insinuating that their conduct has been such as to provoke a just retribution. The language indeed of the press, ever since the time of Junius’s Letters, (whose rude attacks upon one of the best of monarchs, produced so many inquirers and so many imitators,) has gradually increased in fierceness and licentiousness.

\* A remarkable instance of ferocious attack occurred not long since at a popular meeting in Westminster respecting the Irish Coercion Bill, and was made by an Irish member of Parliament on the prime minister. 1833.

z Matt. xix. 17.

14. **DESPISERS OF THEM THAT ARE GOOD.**—It may be asked, Who are the “*good*” in the scripture sense of the term? If the Lord Christ would not be called *good* independently of God;<sup>z</sup> but would have us know that all that is good proceeds only from God; then those in whom the Spirit of God dwells, whose “fruit is in all *goodness*,”<sup>a</sup> are the alone *good*. We might contrast this sentence with the Psalmist’s praise of the saints, concerning one of whom he says,—“In whose eyes a *vile* man is despised; but he maketh much of them that fear the Lord:”<sup>b</sup> whereas these “will call the *vile liberal*,”<sup>c</sup> and despise them that fear the Lord.

The *saints* therefore are the good; but the very mention of the word is sufficient to remind the Reader, that it is a term notoriously used in scorn and contempt of those who desire to walk godly in Christ Jesus. And this is the case from the senate house, downward to the pot house;—“they that sit in the gate speak against them, and they are the song of the drunkard.”<sup>d</sup> Nor is it only to be lamented that avowed infidelity may now rise up, and in high places denounce the sentiments and measures of the pious, as the result of “cant, hypocrisy and humbug;” but some professors of religion even begin to think scorn of them; those being set down as bigots, or fanatics, or weak-brained, who have the courage to confess Christ boldly, and to stand up for God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.\*

15. **TRAITORS**—Under the head of *covenant-breakers* I have already anticipated much of what might be said here; for such are necessarily, in regard to public engagements and pledges, betrayers of the interests they are bound to uphold. I would here however take occasion to make one important remark concerning the character of the last times.

It is the opinion of some, (in which opinion also I concur,) that the last Antichrist, or the last form of Antichrist, will be avowed and open infidelity; but I conceive, that this will not be the aspect which the last Antichrist will assume on his first rising up. He will creep in by flatteries, like the traitor Judas, whose words were smoother than oil, while yet they were

\* One man, a dissenting minister, has recently written and maintained, that pious men are the most unfit to become members of parliament, or to transact public affairs!

<sup>a</sup> Gal. v. 22; Ephes. v. 9.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. xv. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Isaiah xxxii. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Psalm lxi. 12.

drawn swords.<sup>e</sup> And thus, during the latter days, we shall find men still retaining the *form* of godliness; but, being destitute of the power, they will yield and betray the interests of religion; giving up all those bulwarks, by which christianity has been *nationally* maintained in any purity or consistency. Witness the fact, that we no longer have a *protestant* legislature, and consequently are no longer a protestant nation. Witness the fact, that by the admission of the Socinians already to legislate, (and presently, as I fear, by the admission of the Jews,) we cease to have a *christian* legislature. Witness the betrayal of the protestant principle, to please the Romanists of Ireland, in the matter of education. Witness the betrayal of the interests of the established church, and by the very men who are pledged and sworn to defend them; and some of those who have been most influential, and have acted as leaders in bringing these things about (I particularly refer to Catholic emancipation, and to the Jewish question,) have been men professing religion, but tainted and misled by the modern liberalism of the day. It is in this manner therefore that I apprehend the last day apostasy will be first manifested; and then, at the winding up of the drama, when men are duly prepared by infidel principles on the one hand, or by apathy and indifference on the other, the man of sin will be revealed in the nakedness of unbelief; and the real character of this modern and spurious liberalism shall be found to be *infidelity and idolatry*: for these apostates, who have boasted so much of their superior wisdom and strength of mind, will at the same time cast off the Lord and worship a man! Yes, —Deists, Unitarians, Socinians, who have refused to worship the holy Child Jesus, because he is man as well as God, will worship “the man of sin!”—and those who have refused the *Son of God* incarnate will bow down to the *devil* incarnate!\*

16, 17. HEADY, HIGH-MINDED.—I take these two characteristics together, the one being so intimately connected with

\* I am persuaded that the word “*traitors*” is here to be understood in reference to the cause of Christianity. Some however would limit its meaning to those who are traitors to their earthly sovereign. If the Reader be of this opinion, he may be reminded that this is the era also for deposing *kings*. We have seen, both in France and England, wonderful inconstancy in this respect. Louis Philip and William IV. are one day extolled to the skies as patriot kings; but, let them only independently exercise their prerogative, and a whole nation rings with fierce, blood-thirsty, and seditious railing at them.

<sup>e</sup> Ps. LV. 21.



the other : for it is a proud and overweening conceit of themselves, which leads men to be self-willed, head-strong, and unmannerly ; just as that “ charity [which] behaveth not itself unseemly,” is intimately united with *humility*.

I have anticipated much in regard to these particulars ; for *boasting, pride, disobedience, fierceness, &c.* are fruits proceeding from high-minded headiness. But there are still some important circumstances to be noticed.

The first is, the disposition of men to arrogate to themselves all authority, as if power proceeded from themselves. Hence they “ despise government;—they are self-willed : they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.”<sup>f</sup> Hence they contend, that *the people* are the legitimate source of all power ; losing sight of the providence and mightiness of God : for which reason it is declared of Nebuchadnezzar, (who considered himself as the author of his own grandeur,) “ that his *heart* was *lifted up* and his *mind* hardened in *pride*.”<sup>g</sup> Hence again men endeavour by means of political and trades’ unions, or other factious combinations, to govern or overawe their rulers. A law is no sooner promulgated, than they set their wits to work to resist or evade it : and in order to coerce the government, when they can no longer evade, they threaten to refuse the payment of taxes.\* The excuse formerly urged by some, that until the Parliament was reformed the people were not constitutionally represented, will not now avail. The Reform Bill has passed ; but the same heady and rebellious spirit is clearly discernible. And to *agitate*, as it is called—that is, to do all men can by word and deed to obstruct and trammel the wheels of government—is come to be considered a *legitimate* proceeding. They now literally cry,—“ *With our tongue will we prevail : our lips are our own ; who is lord over us ?*”<sup>h</sup>

\* Since this was first published, it has not only become a *threat*, but associations have been actually formed for the specific object of resisting taxes ; and those persons (as brokers and others) who have officially interfered on the part of Government have been held up to infamy, and their lives endangered. The same principle of taking the law into their own hands has been exhibited in Ireland in the instance of tithes. I am not called to enter into the Scriptural propriety of the tithe system ; but putting it on the lowest footing—that it is merely an ordinance of man, —surely Christians are bound “ to submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” whilst it continues law ; and to seek redress in a legal and christian manner, not in a heady and seditious one.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Pet. II. 10.

<sup>g</sup> Dan. v. 20.

<sup>h</sup> Psalm XII. 4.

Another mark of the heady high-mindedness of the age is the intolerable conceit, self-sufficiency and arrogance of *young* people. They no longer defer to the aged, and wait to hear their voice, or to notice their movements, before they act; but the most desperate efforts at revolution in all parts of the Continent are almost invariably originated and conducted by the students in the public schools and universities, or by clubs of beardless boys. The words of the Prophet are seemingly about to be fulfilled on this generation:—"I will give children 'to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them; and the 'people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every 'one by his neighbour; the child shall behave himself proudly 'against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.'"<sup>i</sup>

It is marvellous also how young men, as well as others, conceive themselves competent to speak dogmatically upon subjects, concerning which they have actually read nothing, nor ever seriously reflected. Men, for instance,—who scarcely look into the Bible, whose occupations prevent them from studying the subject, will nevertheless speak with overbearing positiveness on *religion*—that most high and most serious of subjects; they will condemn without mercy, and with the greatest flippancy, the books and the ministers which speak not according to their mind; and they will treat with sovereign contempt whatsoever they are not able clearly to discern with a glance. It is the same in regard to the science of government or politics: the lowest, the most uneducated, and the most inexperienced, in regard to the history of man and actual observation of the human heart, nevertheless take upon them to discuss and decide; and all are denounced as intolerant, or bigots, or illiberal, or corrupt, who dare to differ from them!

It will be confessed that, between man and man, nothing could betray a greater want of deference and respect, than if the one were to talk loudly during the time the other was speaking, and were to receive his observations with laughter. And by the same rule, nothing could more clearly indicate the self-sufficiency and high-mindedness of a person so acting, if the occasion were such as to demand his patient attention. Pass then into our national senate-house, and observe how all this is acting on a larger scale. Not to dwell on the scenes of heady turbulence which have of late years been acted in the

<sup>i</sup> Isaiah III. 4, 5.

parliaments of Great Britain, France and Belgium; members have become *generally* so noisy and inattentive to others, that it is difficult for an ordinary speaker to be heard. Inexperienced members, in the present session, have two or three times sat down hopeless of a hearing, and evidently disconcerted and disgusted, and have, nevertheless, been assured by the minister, that they have really been listened to with more than ordinary courtesy! At the same time, many of our members seem to go to the House expecting to be *entertained*; and are continually on the watch for something to laugh at. It is almost impossible now to read through a debate, without meeting with such interruptions to it as these—(laughter)—(great laughter) (long continued laughter)—(roars of laughter)—Alas! what has become of the *gravity* and *sobriety* for which this nation was once so eminent!\*

I will only notice finally, the spirit of insubordination that prevails in regard to religious matters; than which there is no

\* Since writing the above, the following extracts from two of our periodicals have met my eye.—“No assembly of decent mechanics in the country would be guilty of the indecorums which are constantly committed in the House of Commons. The decencies of civilized society appear to be totally disregarded there. A few nights ago one of our grave legislators amused his brother Members by “crowing like a cock;” and there was a regular chorus of scraping, hissing and shouting, when Mr. Poulet Scrope rose to speak upon a financial subject, which he understood, though his audience did not. Colonel Davies might well say, that he was *ashamed* of the behaviour of the House. Sir Robert Peel himself acknowledged, that there was “a great deal of talking, incessant buzz, coughing, and very ungraceful attitudes,” among the “master spirits of the age,” as he sneeringly denominated the Members of the Reformed Parliament.”—*Spectator*, 1833. “However much the Reformed House of Commons may have deteriorated, when compared with its more *corrupt* predecessors, in respect of correct and gentlemanly deportment, the upper branch seems to have experienced a still more mortifying declension in this particular. What, till lately, could be more dignified and improving than the aspect of the House of Lords? How worthy to constitute an example and pattern for the entire community! But now personalities, biting sarcasms, and personal abuse, abound to a degree that would be discreditable in any assembly. This is an evil omen.”—*Record*, July 11, 1833. Mr. Buckingham also, one of the Members for Sheffield, gave the following description of the first session of this Parliament to his constituents assembled on a public occasion:—“That session has been marked by scenes more disgraceful than ever characterized a *Palaver held by ignorant savages* under the central trees of Africa. Such scenes of disorder, and such a mockery of legislation, as those who have not seen, can form no conception of”—“such scenes of

greater proof of headiness and high-mindedness. It is upon the express point of being subordinate one to another, that the Apostle says: "If any man teach *otherwise*, and consent not 'to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is 'proud, &c."k It is the want of this spirit of subordination, as I have already intimated, which has produced the endless sects and schisms, which now prevail; until men, (no longer content with being members of *congregations* which are *independent* of all others, and which thence take their name,) now stand singly and individually (of which I know various instances,) unconnected with all denominations, and preferring to form a sect within themselves, because they cannot meet with the exact shade of opinion which may suit their captious and morbid state of mind; nor find every cog and wheel regulated according to their notions. It seems to be altogether forgotten, that men cannot be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement," to which we have so many exhortations,<sup>1</sup> unless some give way to others, and suppress their opinions, when those opinions do not involve vital doctrine. Surely men who profess to be spiritual ought to startle, lest, after all, (considering how prone the natural man is to "despise government") they be proved carnal in the day of the Lord's appearing. Jesus did not separate from the Jewish church, notwithstanding its evils:—He protested against them, but continued in communion. And those who stand aloof from communion with all denominations are at least chargeable with being under no ecclesiastical *government*.

As to the sin of *schism*, one would suppose it an offence impossible to be committed in these days: no man seems conscious that he causes divisions or separates himself;\* and when reminded of the evil in the sight of God, men either sneer at the bigotry of the monitor, or more conveniently call that *antichrist* from which they separate.

*nightly brawling, intemperance, and disorder* have been exhibited, as would be considered disgraceful in any Mechanics' Institution in the kingdom, and such as are certainly without a parallel in any country, or in any assembly I ever witnessed."

\* The Reader is requested on this important point to consult the following texts and their context.—Romans xvi. 17, 18; 1 Cor. i. 10—12, &c. with iii. 3, 4; xi. 17, 18; 1 John ii. 18, 19; Jude 17—19.

k 1 Tim. vi. 1—5.   <sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. i. 27; ii. 2; iv. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 8.

I shall only finally observe, that the multitude of self anointed *teachers* is another manifest proof of high-mindedness. Truly men “desire to be teachers, who understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm;”<sup>m</sup> whilst others make it part of their *system* to send forth *novices*, clean contrary to St. Paul’s instructions.<sup>n</sup> In some denominations, the candidates for the ministry, (who are pupils at their seminaries, and who of necessity must be novices,) are regularly sent forth into the villages and smaller towns to preach. And in others, a man no sooner appears to be seriously impressed, than, if he seem possessed of *ability* to speak, he is urged to put himself forward, (even though unwilling;) without being “first proved” in regard to his doctrine and spirit. Thus being too frequently “*lifted up with pride*, he falls into the condemnation of the devil.”

18. LOVERS OF PLEASURES, MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD.—I feel a difficulty in treating this point, because I must in some measure assume a motive for much of that which appears religious and benevolent: which I conceive is what the text would lead us to infer; viz. that much is done for pleasure, which would appear to be for God. And as by one class of religious professors those churches or chapels are frequented where there is the best music, and the best decorations, or where there is a preacher sufficiently *gifted* to entertain; so there are evangelical professors, who seek to be *excited* rather than edified; who cannot patiently sit under a minister, however pious, possessed only of ordinary talent; whilst the Pauls and Apollos of the day are run after, just in the same way as others would run after an actor.\* And indeed it is considered as indispensable, in some circles, to have heard Mr. — preach, and to have read Mr. —’s new work, as in other

\* Since writing this I have met with a small Tract, the contents of which form a remarkable illustration of many things I have written on this prophecy, both as regards the facts stated, and the remarks of the writer. It is entitled “The System and Practice of Congregational Dissent unfavourable to Religion,” and was originally published in the “Christian Remembrancer,” Vol. XIV, No. 6. The Writer was himself cradled in Dissent, and is evidently well acquainted with its system, and an intelligent man. At page 17, speaking of the injurious tendency of the system personally, he says—“It converts congregations into an *audience*, who unconsciously perhaps, seek *gratification* rather than in-

<sup>m</sup> 1 Tim. I. 7.

<sup>n</sup> Ibid. III. 6—10.

circles it is to have seen the last new play, and have perused the most recent novel. In rural districts the same feeling influences numbers, though unconscious of it; and what they call being *edified*, or *getting good*, is often nothing more than being excited and amused. Any thing for *novelty*: it signifies not who or what the preacher is, man woman or child; so *there* be a stranger advertised, he is sure to be run after for the sake of change. The worship of God is with such, of little or no account; the prayers are often complained of as tedious and wearisome; and they are impatient until the pulpit is occupied and their entertainment commences.\* Thus the preacher is unto them "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear his words, but they do them not."<sup>o</sup>

On the other hand, never did the country so abound with schemes of pleasure, and with multitudes of votaries pursuing them; and this, notwithstanding alleged general distress. Many of our charities must now be promoted by the stimulus of a public dinner, a ball, a play, a concert, or a fancy fair; the devil thus amusing men with the *form of godliness*, whilst he dissipates their minds, and leads them in reality away from God! Yea, even our churches—temples dedicated to the living God—are profaned by festivals blasphemously called *sacred*, in which the holy truths of religion, the tears and sufferings and death of Messiah, the judgements and glories of the Lord God Omnipotent, are degraded to an entertainment, and by profane lips made playthings of for *pleasure-lovers*!†

This spirit is greatly betrayed also by religious professors in their eagerness to rush to those pleasures which are not posi-

*struction*. There are meetings, indeed, which like theatres, are built and supported for the profit of the shareholders; who secure full houses by providing a succession of popular pulpit-actors. It were mockery to apply the name of *religion* to such services; yet the principle, whose destructive character is so apparent when thus carried to its full extent, is vindicated and acted upon by all Dissenters."

\* Abroad it is well known that a more awful evidence is seen of the love of pleasure rather than of God: for there, on the Sabbath, the churches are but thinly attended; whilst the taverns, the theatres, and places of public entertainment are unusually thronged. And indeed the crowded state of the public houses and tea-gardens in large towns in our own country betray a similar spirit among the majority here.

† In the neighbourhood where the writer resides a new mode of *raising money* is coming into vogue among the dissenters. To announce a

tively reprobated by the pious; as if they were anxious to make up for their abstinence from *forbidden* things by excess in these. No opportunity is suffered to pass by, if the thing be considered lawful; not considering, that the pleasure-loving spirit is made manifest by the want of self denial and moderation in lawful amusements, just the same as gluttony is exhibited by feeding immoderately on lawful meats. That charity which considered the weak brother, which would eat no meat lest he should be stumbled, and which would “avoid the *appearance* of evil,” is too frequently viewed as the *want of charity*, only because these professors feel themselves reflected on by its exercise.\*

19. HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF.—The most remarkable feature combined with the characteristics of these last times, is, that notwithstanding the unsanctified and irreligious spirit that prevails, men desire it to be *thought* that they are Christians! Even those who are evidently of a sceptical, not to say infidel, character, do yet contend that they are christians; and frequently indeed insinuate that their own christianity is far more unostentatious and genuine, than that of persons disposed earnestly to contend for the faith given to the saints.

It is becoming now a prevailing maxim among such, that man is not accountable for his *faith*;—which is the essence of practical infidelity and atheism, whilst yet it professes to *have* a faith. Among the men who are most deeply imbued with the radical liberalism of the age, we have some striking illustrations that they cling to the *form* of godliness. One of them, an eminent Irish agitator, on meeting during a political procession with a Romish bishop, alighted from his horse, ran towards the prelate uncovered, and kneeling down in the road

*preaching* only at their chapels is not sufficiently attractive: it must be preceded by a *tea-drinking*, at so much per head; the females being dressed, as soon as disencumbered of the bonnet, just the same as for a party!

\* At the Norwich Musical Festival, held in September, 1833, there was introduced and rapturously encored a hymn of idolatrous invocation to the Virgin Mary. Now, as some professors of religion say, they go on these occasions (whatsoever others may do) to *worship*; they must necessarily worship the *Virgin* in such case. But viewing the subject in the most moderate way, what an awful progression towards apostasy, when professed protestants—among whom were numerous *clergymen*—can have become so apathetic to the odious character of idolatry, as to tolerate such a hymn with complacent ears!

implored his blessing. Another, an Englishman, notorious among other most notable acts as being the importer of the bones of the infidel Thomas Paine, stands up in the House of Commons, and declares with zealous warmth, that he is determined to oppose any measure that would tend to unchristianize this country.\* A third, formerly the representative of a Scotch borough, but now of an English metropolitan county, and who has recently been proved to have commended and distributed the *writings* of Thomas Paine, was highly indignant on one occasion, because a member, in the course of his remarks, spoke of him as entertaining infidel sentiments.

If we pass to *bodies* of men, we may observe the neologists of Germany making the form of Christianity the medium through which they broach their pernicious sentiments. The Unitarians or Socinians of our own country are like minded, and contend strenuously, that they ought to be considered Christians. The Radical assailants of the established church, who have banded together from the various religious denominations, under the name of the Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society, afford a specimen of the *animus* which prevails among the heady and high-minded of the dissenters; and these plume themselves in their speeches, as if they only were the people of God, and wisdom must die with them.

Turning to other bodies of men, the Apostle Paul (in the chapter following the words I am discussing) declares that the ungodliness of the men he is describing will be further manifested as follows:—"For the time will come, when they will 'not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall 'they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.'"<sup>p</sup> Herein the *form* of godliness is evidently sustained by their seeking a teacher at all; but each, in his own headiness and wilfulness, seeks the preacher who shall conform to his own views of doctrine and of practice; making himself, after all, judge and umpire in the question of his own salvation, and plainly evincing that he considers himself "to have need of nothing."<sup>q</sup> Surely it will not be denied that this is an age in which men "heap to themselves teachers." The numerous dissenting sects and denominations prove it on the one hand; and the captiousness with which men, who continue of the

\* The measure more immediately attacked by him was Mr. Grant's bill to permit Jews to have seats in Parliament, &c.

p 2 Tim. iv. 3.

q Rev. iii. 17, and context.



Establishment, do nevertheless move about from one place of worship to another, until the itching ear is gratified, prove it on the other. Many again will not, either in the Establishment or out of it, endure those ministers who give them *sound doctrine*;—some seek mere moralists, who are decent orators; others go to the opposite extreme and denounce every thing in the shape of precept, as being legal and self-righteous; others are dissatisfied with whatsoever is not boisterous and exciting, and call it *tame*.

I shall only observe finally, that there is in the present age no want of high patronage, when solicited, for our various evangelical institutions;—no deficiency of persons to take the chair, and preside on religious occasions;—no want of the form of church-going, baptism, &c. And yet the very men who can thus far approve religion, and “do many things gladly,” betray either a smile of contempt or a feeling of repugnance, the moment any person begins to speak of religion as if he conceived there was spiritual *power* communicated to believers. Such a notion is by multitudes looked upon as the ravings of enthusiasm or fanaticism; and all indeed that is urged in regard to the in-dwelling of the Spirit, the power of divine grace, the power of faith, &c. is referred to the same source. Thus men, having the form of godliness, *doctrinally* deny that there is a *power* in it: and thus, as we have seen, they do by unsanctified lives and evil works *practically* also deny and contradict the *power thereof*.

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Having now briefly considered this passage, I would offer one or two concluding observations.

In illustrating the subject, I have frequently adverted to the character and proceedings of members of the British Legislature: not from any invidious feeling towards them; but because I am justified in assuming them to be the fairest specimen of the general character of the British nation; more especially when it is considered, that they are now, by a recent act, more fully and extensively the *representatives* of the people. The constituency of England are, since the Reform Bill, more than ever responsible in regard to the characters of the men whom they elect; and “the lump” or mass of the nation must be consequently judged of by these “the first fruits.”<sup>r</sup>

If they are content with (yea even prefer) men who are infidel, profane, indifferent, ungodly, they nationally stand in the same predicament before God as did the Jews, when they cried—"Not this man but Barabbas."

I would also again beg the Reader to observe, that I by no means consider the signs described in the passage before us so fully and strikingly manifested in this generation as they presently will be. We may, I think, very distinctly perceive a correspondence between the men of these days, and the characteristics we have considered; but the picture is by no means complete: they are but as the first lineaments which the painter traces on his canvass, and which have to be filled up and receive their due proportions of light and shade, before it can be called a portrait. Or, rather, I would liken what we now see, when compared with the men described by Paul, to the resemblance which we often notice between an *infant* and a *man*: there is quite sufficient to enable us to recognise the babe, as being that progeny of Satan of which we are admonished; and as its age advances towards maturity, I feel assured that its features and characteristics will daily be more clearly developed. Those who have not an experimental acquaintance with the state of Society, can form but little notion, how extensively it is demoralized in its principles; and how men, who still seem to be decent characters, are ready as soon as occasion offers to cast off restraint. The principles of mischief, at work among us, are fast leavening the whole lump, and will ere long burst like a hurricane,—overthrowing, tearing up by the roots, and sweeping away all before it. Men have already "sown the wind," and when the harvest arrives "they shall reap the whirlwind."<sup>s</sup>

But let not the righteous be dismayed: "*They shall not be confounded in the perilous time.*"<sup>t</sup> With the same whirlwind God "shall take away (the wicked) both living and in his wrath?—The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: Verily, He is a God that judgeth in the earth."<sup>u</sup>

ABDIEL.

<sup>s</sup> Hosea VIII. 7.    <sup>t</sup> Ps. XXXVII. 19.    <sup>u</sup> Ps. LVIII.

## Essay XV.

## THE PRE-MILLENNIAL ADVENT AND NEW DISPENSATION.

I have now gone through those subjects which I consider are capable of *demonstration*, leaving the obscurer, and consequently more disputable, prophecies of Daniel and St. John ; though I consider the expositions supplied by Mr. Cuninghame to be *in the main* correct. The great point to be now ascertained in prophetic inquiry is, whether the second advent or appearing of the Lord Jesus is to take place at the *commencement* of that period which we call the MILLENNIUM, or *after* it. For it must not be supposed that the difference between those who are called Millennarians and those opposed to them consists in the manner or details of the kingdom of God. We may be mistaken in some of the subordinate particulars, and there are points on which it would be presumptuous to pronounce with confidence, until events enable us to judge more clearly ; but that which forms the great criterion whereby the general truth and accuracy of either system may be tested is *the time of the advent*. If the appearing of Christ, or even the resurrection of the saints, is previous to the Millennium, then they are wrong who suppose the Millennium to consist only in an improved state of spiritual things, similar to what we now witness when religion prevails, in any place. But if there be *no* resurrection, neither any appearing of Christ at the commencement of it, then the millennarian hope, which I have decidedly embraced, falls to the ground ; and the adjustment of historical facts and dates will be the only remaining points of any moment between writers on prophecy.

The discerning Reader will have noticed, in the course of these Essays, many arguments which go to prove that the appearing of Christ is pre-millennial ; and I will here admonish him of one consideration, which to my own mind is quite conclusive, and which alone renders the notion of Christ's coming after the Millennium irreconcilable with the general tenor of Scripture.—I have shown, that the apostles always speak of the coming and kingdom of Christ as an event nigh at hand, and drawing rapidly onward ; so that we should ever be on the look out and watchful for it. But those who deny that he comes before the Millennium do deliberately contradict the Scriptures

in this respect, and say—"You have no need to watch for or expect him; for Christ to a certainty comes not for *a thousand years*; and it will be time enough, when the Millennium is past and Satan is again let loose, to think of preparing for the day of God." Such is the real tendency of these opinions; and being clearly opposed to the tenor of divine revelation, they must be so far wrong.

I would now, by way of summary, briefly show that whatever event we look forward to, connected with the ushering in of the Millennium, the coming of Christ is connected with it. I will next urge an argument drawn from the consideration of the different character of the millennial dispensation, as compared with that under which we live; and then pass on to a final argument drawn from analogy.

I. I have already shown at page 194, that if we look to *the restoration of the Jews*, whatever view we take of that event, we are assured that *then* shall the Lord appear in his glory. For indeed their house is only left unto them desolate till they shall say—Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Daniel XII. 1—3 shows further, that a resurrection from the dead takes place at the time of the deliverance of *his* (Daniel's) people.

If we look to *the destruction of Antichrist*, (a point on which I have not dwelt,) it is to be by *the brightness of the Lord's coming*; (2 Thess. II. 8) in regard to which, be it observed, the expression made use of in the original for *brightness* (*επιφανεια*,) always has a reference, when applied to Christ, to his *glorious* appearing; and the word translated *coming* (*παρουσια*) means always a *personal* advent. This being the case, either the Lord appears at the beginning of the Millennium, or Antichrist continues to reign throughout the Millennium. The same thing is shown in Daniel VII. 20—22; the Little Horn (which is admitted by all to be Antichrist) pre-  
'vails against the saints "until the Ancient of days comes  
'and judgment is given to the saints of the Most High, and  
'the time comes that the saints possess the kingdom."

If again we regard the *mystical dates of Daniel*, which terminate (as all agree, with only one exception that I know of\*)

\* This exception, it is true, is *Mr. Faber*, who in order to avoid the admission of the pre-millennial advent, (to which his own reasonings would otherwise lead him) makes the 1290 days of Dan. XII. 11 and the

at the beginning of the Millennium; it is expressly declared to Daniel—"Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot *at the end of THE DAYS.*" So that at the end of those days which are to elapse before the Millennium Daniel is to rise from the dead, in order to have his part or lot in the glory then to be revealed. And if a resurrection is to take place, then of course Christ is to appear; for when the saints come, it is in company with Christ their head.

We will next consider that glorious and peaceful rest shadowed forth by *the Feast of Tabernacles*, the antitype of which is to be enjoyed at the final restoration of the Jews, when every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree. Now in Zechariah xiv. is described a great warfare among the nations against Jerusalem; and every one of the nations that continues after that warfare is required to *go up from year to year to worship the KING, the LORD OF HOSTS, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles.* (v. 16.) This description of their *going up*, and *annually*, and to keep this festival, shows that it takes place on earth. There is afterwards described a punishment which shall fall upon those nations who *neglect* to go up,—viz. that they shall have no rain. And because in the land of Egypt there is no rain, a *peculiar* and distinct plague is threatened if that nation go not up; which again proves it to be a state on earth. (vv. 17—19.) Now *previous to this*, during that very warfare from the dire effects of which these nations escape, *the Lord appears*: and "his feet stand upon the Mount of Olives." (v. 14.) And not only is the Lord declared to "come," but "all the saints with Thee." (v. 15.) Mr. Faber himself admits that the description in this passage, taken altogether, is designed by its preciseness to exclude the possibility of a figurative interpretation.

The parable of the Tares, if properly considered, proves that *the Harvest*, at the end of the world, (or *age, αἰών*) when all things are gathered out that offend and do iniquity, and the tares are burnt, and the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father,—I say it proves that *this* takes place previous to the Millennium. For the Lord declares of the tares and wheat—"Let both grow together till the harvest." So that if the harvest, when the earth is reaped and the

1335 days of verse 12 each separate periods of years, and thus interposes a space of 1335 years yet to elapse before the Advent!

tares burnt up, is *after* the Millennium, then tares and wheat are mixed together throughout the Millennium; which is directly contrary to the admitted character of its holiness. And if, on the other hand, the tares are first separated, and all which offends gathered out, then the burning is previous to the Millennium.

Again, *the marriage of the Lamb* is the time when the Lord is finally united to his glorified Church. The *resurrection* of the saints must necessarily have taken place at that time, and the glorious appearing of the Lord: for it is the same as the coming of the Bridegroom mentioned in the parable of the virgins. But the marriage of the Lamb's wife is in Rev. xix. intimately connected with the period of the final judgment upon Babylon, or the papacy; (See verses 1—8 and their connection with the previous chapter) and as it apparently takes place immediately *after* the judgment on the great whore; so it apparently *precedes* the judgement on the infidel confederacy which burns the whore; (see verses 11—21) and the armies on white horses, and in fine linen white and clean, are probably, if we compare verse 8, these same risen saints, who receive "*the two edged sword*"—"to execute vengeance upon 'the heathen, and punishments upon the people, to *bind their kings* with chains, and their *nobles* with fetters of iron; to *execute upon them the judgement*; [as it is] written—This 'honor have all his saints. *Praise ye the Lord.*"\*

II. I proceed, secondly, to the argument derived from the character of the millennial dispensation.

Those who oppose the views I have taken object to our considering the period of the Millennium as a *New Dispensation*. It is not that they call in question the doctrine of a Millennium itself, abstractedly considered; but they conceive that it is to be brought about by the world's becoming generally converted, and the Church therefore progressively gliding into a state of increased spirituality and honor by the instrumentality of those means already in operation. It is supposed therefore, that the millennial state will not differ from the present dispensation in any thing but the universal prevalence of true religion.

But if those who think thus would only candidly weigh the statements made by writers on prophecy, whose expositions

\* Compare Psalm cXLIX. from which this is quoted, specially the sentences in italics, with verses 5, 15, 18, of Rev. xix.

in the general they adopt ;—and consider to what *their own views* would necessarily lead them, were they but *realized*, and carried out to their full extent ;—they would perceive, that the millennial state cannot at all comport with various features of the *present* dispensation, and that it must consequently, in several very important particulars, constitute A NEW DISPENSATION.

Startling as it may appear to some, yet I apprehend it will be found, *that the Holy Scriptures would, for the most part, be rendered inapplicable to the then existing circumstances of men in the flesh* : and that there would need some further revelation from God.\* And I think it must be allowed, that a state of things which supersedes a portion of divine revelation hitherto enjoyed, and introduces men into a state of things which is the consummation of that revealed, has one grand characteristic of *a new dispensation* : if not, the introduction of the christian æra was not a *new* dispensation, but merely a continuation of the Mosaical.

To come however to the point.—It is admitted, that Satan will be bound during the Millennium ; which, according to those even who spiritualize it, signifies, that his influence will be so restrained, that he shall not be permitted to deceive nor tempt either nations or individuals. What become then of those numerous passages of Scripture, which inform us of his character and power ; which warn us against his subtlety and temptations ; and direct us to the armour we must use in order to contend with him ?

Moreover, with the binding of Satan there will necessarily cease all the persecution and annoyance which the saints suffer from those who are under his influence, and which more immediately constitutes them a Church *militant*. All that is written for the comfort of the believer under such circumstances,—the promises set before him to sustain him during the conflict, and the experience of the “ cloud of witnesses ” recorded for his encouragement,—will become, comparatively, a dead letter,—a matter inapplicable to the circumstances in which the Church can, for a thousand years, by any probability be placed.

\* To avoid being misunderstood I would observe, that when I say the Scriptures would be *for the most part* inapplicable, I am aware that there are many glorious declarations concerning the divine attributes and conduct, which could never lose their power and influence on a regenerate soul.

This will be still further evident if it be considered, that the Millennium is the period of the triumph and rejoicing of the Church ; whereas the present dispensation is that of mourning. The Church is the *Bride*, who, while the Bridegroom is absent, *fasts and mourns*. (Matt. ix. 15.) A time therefore in which it is supposed the Bride rejoices *without* the Bridegroom is utterly irreconcilable.

Again, the people of God are now described as “ a *little flock*, and *the whole world* is said to be “ lying in wickedness.” But it is admitted, that during the Millennium the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord ! all shall know God from the highest to the least ; and holiness and righteousness shall every where prevail. The flock of Christ will therefore be the *multitude*, and not the *remnant* ; and all those admonitions and doctrines (so useful in guarding us against ungodly men, and leading us to live separate and unspotted from the world, and to shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,) will be equally neutralized.

The same may be said in regard to the *commandments*, and all the preceptive parts of Scripture coming under the denomination of *the Law* : “ knowing this, that *the law is not made for the righteous man*, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, &c.”<sup>a</sup> None can be excited to murder, when he who is the murderer from the beginning, the great destroyer, is restrained.—None can be unholy and profane where all is holiness to the Lord.—None will be practically lawless and disobedient, or have need for any to say to them, “ Know the Lord.”

By the same rule, all those statements will be unsuitable, which set forth the Church as consisting of a mixture of good and evil,—like tares growing with wheat, good and bad fishes, wise and foolish virgins, &c. All things which offend and do iniquity will be gathered out ; every tree not planted by our heavenly Father will be rooted up ; and the entire aspect of the dispensation will be changed.

The *prophetic* parts of Scripture are, alas ! too much thrown out of the account in the *present* day ; and thousands, if one may judge from the neglect with which they are treated, would think it no loss to be altogether deprived of them. *Then*

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. i. 9.



however, their great use will *necessarily* be superseded; they will truly then have become only "matter of history;" and "they shall *fail*," (being accomplished,) as to any *immediate* need which the Church may have of them. So will it be also in regard to *promises* concerning the kingdom of our Lord. Surely the *kingdom* will be already *come*, when all the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. With what propriety then could men any longer be exhorted "to seek," and to "lay up treasure," and "to hope," for that, which they will already be in possession of?

I forbear to bring forward many other particulars, which would be rendered nugatory by our Lord's *personal advent*, because it would be assuming that for granted, which is not yielded by those with whom I now more directly argue. What I have advanced is sufficient to evince, that the whole character of the Church and of the state of mankind would be so altered, together with their spiritual and religious circumstances, that we should no longer find them pourtrayed generally in the length and breadth of Scripture; and it would not perhaps be too much to say, that the great bulk of what are called *practical discourses*, as at present delivered or published, would be entirely unsuited to the condition of mankind.

III. This view of the subject is further strikingly confirmed by referring to the past history of the Church, and reasoning from *analogy*. Whenssoever any great change has been made in its circumstances and condition, it has always been accompanied by a further revelation from God, concerning the dispensation then about to be introduced, and containing also some intimations of the dispensation beyond that. We know but little of the state of worship and knowledge of God existing in the antediluvian world; but, so far as we can judge from what is written, there was a gradual increase of blessed promises, containing in them much light for the Church, made to Noah, Abraham, and the patriarchs. Moreover, the worship of God assumed under them more ostensibly the character of an ordinance. There were also intimations given of the affliction which the house of Israel should endure in Egypt, and of the deliverance they should experience therefrom. Then came the Mosaic dispensation, attended by a further revelation from mount Sinai; and which was progressively *added to* up to the period of the return from Babylon and the building of the

second Temple. We know from our Saviour's doctrine, and from the application of prophecies and types of the Old Testament, that much was intimated concerning the christian dispensation, and much also concerning the millennial; yet were they, "whilst under the law, kept shut up unto the faith *which should afterwards be revealed.*"<sup>b</sup> Next came the revelation to the christian Church; the character of which on the one hand is, that life and immortality are brought to light; whilst on the other hand we are assured, "that we know but in part, and see through a glass (or rather, in an *enigma*<sup>c</sup>) darkly."

Again, each decidedly marked æra in the history of the Church has not only been accompanied by an increase of revelation, but by a disannulling or superseding something going before. How few of the traditions which were in the early Church, and by which it was mainly guided until the giving of the Law, are preserved in the Pentateuch. And how fallen into disuse are the ceremonial and civil law, which formed nevertheless so large a portion of the Mosaical dispensation. These things are indeed by no means unprofitable: many, if not most of them, are still shadows of good things to come; and all serve to reflect light upon the things now possessed. But it is nevertheless evident, that their use is exceedingly different now, to what it was when they existed as ordinances of worship in the Church; and this essential change in the use and application of them it is, that bespeaks us to be now under a dispensation differing from the Mosaical. When therefore a similar difference shall exist in the use of the New Testament revelation, it will be equally manifest that a new dispensation has arrived. Nor will the Scriptures, superseded in the *Millennium*, be devoid of interest or use; but they will serve in the way of retrospect and memorial:\* excepting some very few passages, respecting the little season when Satan shall be loosed and the events which are to follow. At the Millennium then, will be fulfilled more completely, as I apprehend, the prophecy of Joel: "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I 'will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and

\* Thus the *manna* given in the wilderness *ceased* on the entering of the Church into the promised land; but a pot of it was laid up in the ark as a *memorial*. Thus also the Lamb of the Passover shadowed forth the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus which *was to be*; and the bread and the wine are the *memorial* of the same.

<sup>b</sup> Gal. III. 23.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. XIII. 12.

‘ your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream  
 ‘ dreams, your young men shall see visions : and also upon the  
 ‘ servants and handmaids in those days will I pour out my  
 ‘ Spirit.” (Joel II. 28, 29.)

There are one or two other circumstances characteristic of a new dispensation, which may still further serve to illustrate the case in point by analogy. In every successive state of the Church man has always been put afresh upon his trial, but under different circumstances ; it being apparently one of the objects of God to teach his redeemed, experimentally, the impossibility of continuing upright, however varied their circumstances and advantages. Thus, “ in the dispensation of the fulness of times,” they will have a most unequivocal conviction, that they *would* fall, were they not sustained by the special grace of God. It is a lesson not only to be learned by men, but to be exhibited also to the thrones and principalities in heavenly places ; that the elect angels may likewise comprehend the footing on which they stand.

How awfully instructive is the history of the Church in this respect ! We see man placed first in a state of *innocence*, enjoying occasional intercourse with his Creator ; he is tempted, and he falls. Being now in some measure taught by fatal experience,—having acquired also the knowledge of good and evil,—he nevertheless presently apostatizes again, and the whole human race, excepting eight persons, is swept away ! After the flood we know, from the attempt to build Babel, and from the state of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Canaanitish nations, how little the *world* had gained by the further experience granted to it ; but (to keep more immediately to the history of the *Church*) the Law is now given, and man is to be restrained or stimulated by various threats and promises, given under circumstances awfully impressive ; he is to enjoy a great increase of divine revelation ; and is to witness numerous remarkable evidences of the divine power, providence and glory. Wonderfully increased are his advantages now : nevertheless—he falls ! Next he passes into the spiritual dispensation the superior advantages of which cannot be better described than in the words of our Lord and those of his apostles after him.—“ Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous  
 ‘ men have desired to see those things which you see, and have  
 ‘ not seen them ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and  
 ‘ have not heard them.”—“ For if the ministration of con-

‘ demnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of ‘ righteousness exceed in glory.’<sup>d</sup> We know however, from the prophecies already considered, that in the latter days of this dispensation men will again fall away from God. We have indeed already witnessed instances of kingdoms and states, which have either corrupted the truth of God, or forsaken it; and we have seen, alas! that sad indications are prevalent, throughout the Christian Church, of a spirit of increasing apostasy from God. The millennial state will succeed; and this will apparently combine all the various advantages hitherto enjoyed. There will be the open vision of Christ, angelic intercourse, the concentration (as it were) of spiritual light and power, the absence of temptation, and the experience of six thousand years; yet, we know from Rev. xx. that man will again apostatize!\*

It would appear likewise, that men, as well as angels, must have continually before them some striking memorial or specimen of God’s vengeance against sin,—and this the vengeance of *eternal fire*. The angels have the example of those angels that rebelled and are cast down to hell. The antediluvians had the cherubim with the *flaming sword*, to remind them of the Eden from which Adam was ejected.<sup>f</sup> The post-diluvians soon had “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*.”<sup>g</sup> In the Millennium there is apparently to be a similar example: some portion of the earth shall be so visited, “that ‘ the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust ‘ thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become ‘ *burning pitch*: it shall not be quenched night nor day; the ‘ smoke thereof shall go up for ever, &c.”<sup>h</sup> And when “upon ‘ the wicked the Lord shall rain snares, *fire and brimstone*,—a ‘ horrible tempest!”<sup>i</sup> “the redeemed shall go forth (from one ‘ sabbath to another, according to the context) and look upon ‘ the carcases of the men that have transgressed against Me: for ‘ their worm shall not die, neither shall their *fire* be quenched.”<sup>k</sup> So also after the Millennium, there shall be the devil

\* Of course these observations do not affect the *risen saints*: these can neither die any more, nor sin any more.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. XIII. 17; 2 Cor. III. 9.    <sup>e</sup> 2 Pet. II. IV.    <sup>f</sup> Gen. III. 24.  
<sup>g</sup> Jude v. 7.    <sup>h</sup> Isaiah XXXIV.    <sup>i</sup> Psalm XI.    <sup>k</sup> Isaiah LXVI. 23, 24.

and the men deceived by him, “ cast into the *lake of fire*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever.”<sup>1</sup>

It may be objected, that in some of these *latter* circumstances I have assumed for granted that certain passages belong to the millennial period, which others refer to the last judgement: this I undoubtedly have done; and it would be well if those inclined to advance the objection would carefully examine the *grounds* on which they so refer them. In the mean while, what I have previously stated concerning the *Scriptures*, is unencumbered by such an objection, and humbly submitted to their serious consideration.

ABDIEL

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xx. 10.















