

BS1545
8.P23

79-1
25-

LIBRARY
OF THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
AT
PRINCETON, N. J.
DONATION OF
SAMUEL AGNEW,
OF PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Letter.
No. *March 25th 1858*

Case.
Shelf.
Book,

B. 5. 11
E. P. 23

75



AN HYPOTHESIS
WHICH MAY
HELP TO UNFOLD THE MYSTERY OF
EZEKIEL'S VISIONS:
ACCOUNTING FOR THE FORM AND NUMBER OF
THE FOUR CREATURES,
WHY DIFFERENT FROM
THOSE IN THE APOCALYPSE,
WHY THEY ARE
SEEN TO ISSUE OUT OF THE CLOUD,
THE REASON WHY
WHEELS WERE INTRODUCED,
WHY THEY WORK AS A
WHEEL WITHIN A WHEEL.
WITH MANY PARTICULARS UNEXPLAINED BEFORE.

BY I. R. $\sqrt{\text{PARK}}$, M.D. &c.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET.

MDCCCLII.

THOMAS C. JOHNS, PRINTER.
Red Lion Court, Fleet Street.

TO

MRS. AGNES BAILLIE,

WHO, WITH

A KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY

SELDOM MET WITH,

HAS KINDLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE

FOLLOWING RESEARCH,

ARE THESE PAGES,

WITH FEELINGS OF SINCERE ESTEEM AND REGARD,

INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THAT these Visions may have been designed for some further purpose than that of producing an impression on the mind of the prophet; and may involve a more recondite meaning than a visible display of the Divine Glory, is an idea that does not appear to have before suggested itself:

Or that their meaning and purpose might be sought for in the prophecies that accompany them; if such an idea did occur, would seem to have been relinquished without due consideration.

Should it appear, that by pursuing such an inquiry, we may arrive at a solution, plausible at least, of no less than fifty or sixty propositions arising out of the subject, while not more than five or six have been consistently explained by any other plan; sufficient reason will surely appear for making the attempt.

The result of that attempt is the best apology the writer has to offer for its temerity.

INTRODUCTION.

AFTER offering a plea to justify the temerity of his undertaking, the writer hopes to be pardoned for throwing out a lure to tempt the curiosity of the reader. And if the means he employs appear to be the most suitable introduction to the exposition that follows, he will scarcely be charged with going out of his way to accomplish his purpose.

A short sketch of what others have done, and of what he has attempted, seems the simplest mode of attaining these ends ; and the question repeatedly put to the writer by those to whom he has unfolded his views—"Have not these

points been explained before?" shews some account of the expositions of others to be not less necessary as a vindication of his own, than as an introduction to them.

Selecting then Archbishop Newcome's as the most distinguished work on the subject, a brief account of his view of these visions is conceived to be sufficient for the purpose: as we cannot but suppose him to have been acquainted with the works of his predecessors, and to have availed himself of what aid they afforded him.

Passing over verbal criticisms and proposed emendations of the text, we proceed to what is offered in explanation of the symbolical meaning of these obscure visions; and shall then enumerate some of the many points not explained in the Archbishop's view, but attempted in the following pages.

The first explanation proposed is that of the whirlwind and the cloud in verse 4., which are supposed to denote "the calamities that were to burst upon Jerusalem from her northern enemies the Chaldeans." Though not given as the writer's own view, yet his adoption of it implies acquiescence, and as this explanation bears a political character, consistency might seem to

require the same principle of exposition throughout. But nothing that follows bears any affinity to this, the rest of the exposition being altogether spiritual; in which, part of the symbols are explained as attributes of the Church of God, and others as attributes of the Deity himself.

The first intimation of the Author's view of the symbolical meaning of these creatures occurs in his note to verse 10, where, identifying them with those of the Apocalypse; he supposes them to represent "the people or body of the Church of God, as the twenty-four elders represent the ministers of the Church."

This development of his views enables us to apply his previous explanations; as in verse 7, where the 'feet like the sole of a calf's foot,' are said to denote strength and firmness; and in verse 8, where the wings and hands are said to be 'instruments and natural signs of swiftness and power;' and again in verse 9, where their turning not as they go, is explained as denoting 'their steadiness in performing the Divine Will.'

So far these are all symbolically considered as attributes of Christ's Church. "But I do not

think," says the writer, "that in the Book of Revelations, they represent the Church of God on earth. They seem to foreshadow the glorified state of Christ's redeemed in heaven; where they will serve God with reason, with strength of affection, with perseverance, and with swift obedience; qualities which seem to be signified by the emblem here described."

Now as the emblem in question is the creature with four faces, these it would seem are supposed to denote as follows:—the face of man, reason—that of the lion, strength—that of the ox, perseverance—and that of the eagle, swiftness; and applied as attributes of Christ's Church in heaven. But what is meant by heaven, or how the lion symbolizes affection as well as strength, and the eagle obedience along with swiftness, are not very evident.

As we proceed we find the spiritual view still maintained, but the application transferred from Christ's Church to the Deity himself: thus in verse 17, the wheels within wheels are supposed to represent "the revolutions of God's providence, which are regular, though they appear intricate;" and in verse 18, the eyes are conceived to denote "God's all-seeing providence."

This is nearly all that we glean in the way of explanation as to the symbolical meaning of these creatures ; and on which we refrain from offering any further comment ; and proceed to enumerate the more prominent points of the vision, which are for the most part untouched in the Archbishop's exposition, but attempted in the following pages.

- Why do the creatures issue out of the cloud ?
- Why are they just four in number ?
- Why have they the likeness of a man ?
- Why has each four faces in Ezekiel ?
- Why only one each in the Revelations ?
- Why has each the same faces here ?
- Why has each a different face there ?
- Why have St. John's creatures six wings ?
- Why have Ezekiel's only four ?
- Why have Ezekiel's cloven feet ?
- Why have not St. John's ?
- Why do they sparkle like burnished brass ?
- Why have they hands under their wings ?
- Why do their wings cover their bodies ?
- Why do they touch one another ?
- Why are the faces differently enumerated ?
- Why are the man and the lion coupled here ?

- Why are the ox and the eagle apart ?
Why is the man first in Ezekiel ?
Why are the man and the eagle last in St.
John ?
Why are the creatures like coals of fire ?
Why like a flash of lightning ?
Why like lamps going up and down ?
Why were wheels introduced in the vision ?
Why do they lie on their sides ?
Why do they not revolve ?
Why work as a wheel within a wheel ?
Why is their rim so high as to be dreadful ?
Why is the spirit of the creature in the
wheel ?
Why do they soar and sink together ?
Why is the firmament like the terrible
crystal ?
Why do the wings sound like great waters ?
Why is the voice below the firmament only *as*
that of the Almighty ?
Why is that from above the firmament no
longer *as* but really so ?
Why not heard till the wings are let down ?
Why is the throne seen at the end of the
first ?
Why at the beginning of the second vision ?

- Why are they called creatures in the first ?
Why Cherubim in the second vision ?
Why again called creatures in Revelations ?
Why do they retain the bestial form there ?
Why does the Shekinah not rest on them in
the first vision ?
Why does it so in the second ?
Why does it first rest on a Cherub ?
What is meant by this Cherub ?
Why does it pass from this to the others ?
Why does it go first to the temple ?
Who are they that are marked in the fore-
head ?
Why is the first vision far from the temple ?
Why is it the scene of action in the second ?
Why are the creatures admitted to the courts
only ?
Why are they not admitted to the sanctuary ?
Why do the wheels still retain their position ?
Why do they mount with the Cherubim at
last ?
What is meant by their leaving the temple
together ?
Why does the Shekinah then go to Mount
Olivet ?

Besides other propositions arising out of the subject, but not here enumerated, the reader will find the solution of these questions attempted at least in the following exposition; and exclusive of those previously explained by Archbishop Newcome, which are here explained in a way different from his, and it is hoped, consistently with the rest.

E Z E K I E L.

THE FIRST VISION.

CHAPTER I.

OBSCURITY OF THESE PROPHECIES GENERALLY ADMITTED.

THE prophecies of Ezekiel were accounted so obscure that the Jews according to the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne, were not permitted to read them before they attained the age of thirty-one; and these visions were deservedly esteemed the most obscure of any part of them. If the Jews did succeed in giving any probable solution of their mysterious meaning, no satisfactory explanation of them has been handed down to us; nor will the student of Divinity derive much more assistance from consulting Christian commentators; for if we except partial

attempts to explain particular symbols, all he will find in the form of elucidation amounts to little more than that it presents a manifestation of the Divine glory, vouchsafed to the prophet when entering upon his ministry.

WHY CALLED THE DIVINE GLORY.

THE foundation on which the opinion of its presenting a manifestation of the Divine glory appears to rest, is the expression that occurs at the close of the vision. "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord;" a declaration immediately following the display of a throne above the firmament, to which it seems to be directly applicable. But whether this expression can with equal propriety be applied to the whole of the preceding vision, is at least very problematical. Were such admitted to be the general purport of this vision, still some attempt might be looked for, to explain why these particular symbols are here employed to represent that glory, and how they serve to pourtray it.

To the Jews in the first instance it would seem reasonable to look for information, as they

should be best acquainted with the symbolical style of their own prophets ; and as these prophecies were delivered to them, it seems reasonable to conclude that for their instruction and warning they were intended.

THE JEWS UNFIT GUIDES IN PROPHECY REGARDING THE MESSIAH.

WHETHER these prophecies were exclusively, or even especially intended for the benefit of the Jews, may perhaps be doubted from the intimation distinctly and repeatedly given, that they would not take warning, or derive benefit from them. And that they should be the best interpreters of them, is a conclusion at variance with their well known blindness as to the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom, and their wilful perversion of the symbolical language, in which it is foreshewn.

While the blindness of the Jews unfits them for expounding these prophecies, the fulfilment of the events they foreshew has furnished us with the means of doing this ; and thereby affords us most signal instruction, in displaying to our view the great scheme of man's redemp-

tion from idolatry : the object alike of both the Old and the New Covenant ; the end for which Israel was set apart ; and one for which Christ came into the world.

IMMEDIATE USE OF THESE VISIONS.

IF it be asked what could be the use of these visions, which no one could understand at the time they were revealed, nor has since been able to explain ? It may be answered that their use was probably twofold, immediate and remote ; immediate as regarding the prophet himself, and his auditors the people ; and remote as regarding future ages and the world at large. That prophecy was never intended to gratify man's curiosity by giving him an insight into futurity, is certain ; but as an evidence of Divine foreknowledge and preordination of events, made manifest after their fulfilment ; and this accounts for their being clothed in metaphor, as well as for their remaining so long unexplained.

Nor does there appear any occasion for their being understood at the time they were revealed, either by the people or the prophet himself. As regards the prophet, he required

to have his mind elevated, and his courage exalted to a degree fit to prepare him for entering upon a ministry so dangerous and difficult as that of overawing his countrymen, while he upbraided them with their sins, and uttered against them the most direful denunciations. This effect the awful grandeur of the vision before us was well calculated to produce, by convincing him that he was under the guidance and protection of Heaven. And that such an effect was produced on his mind, we are told shortly after. (Ezek. iii. 8, 9.) Neither as regards the people, was it unlikely that they would experience a feeling of awe and reverence for their prophet when they heard vividly related to them what had just been revealed to him. And thus convinced of his inspiration, they would submit more patiently to his rebuke. Now to these effects, that its symbolical meaning should be understood, was in nowise necessary; on the contrary, the feeling of awe which it inspired was more likely to be strengthened than impaired by the mystery in which it was involved.

REMOTE USE OF THESE VISIONS.

THEIR remote purpose had regard to far distant ages, and the Christian world at large; remaining as a permanent evidence of Divine interposition in human affairs; and presenting a subject for interesting and beneficial research. And here two considerations present themselves to our notice: one is, that where the same symbols are repeatedly used, as these creatures are with certain modifications in the Apocalypse, the earlier are evidently intended as the prototype of the later: and the other is, that where the same event as the Messial's coming is foretold by a succession of prophets, the later predictions are usually more circumstantial than the earlier, the event being more distinctly announced as the prophecy approaches the period of its fulfilment.

From this an important consequence may be deduced, namely, that the meaning of the symbolical language is becoming continually clearer by repetition; and that the last revealed in the order of prophetic annunciation, is intended to be the first explained, or made manifest. And accordingly such is the order which the

writer has pursued; making the exposition of the Apocalypse a clue to that of the earlier prophecies of the Messiah's kingdom; and taking the later and more circumstantial predictions of Zachariah as a key to the solution of the remoter and less distinct annunciations of Ezekiel. And those who wish to become acquainted with the prophetic writings, may do well to pursue the same order of inquiry.

GENERAL SUBJECT OF EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES.

As these visions occurred to the prophet when entering upon his mission, it seems not unlikely that they might bear relation to the general purport of that mission; and this seems to render necessary an account of the general subject of those prophecies, as a prelude to the particular exposition which we have in our view.

These prophecies, as stated in Mr. Horne's valuable work on the Scriptures, extending over a period of not less than twenty years, and comprizing nearly fifty chapters, may be divided into three periods or sections. The first of

these, occupying about twenty chapters, consists almost entirely of warnings and denunciations against the Jews for adopting the idolatrous practices of the nations around them. The second, engrossing about ten chapters, is chiefly composed of denunciations against the Pagan nations themselves. And the third, occupying about fifteen chapters, foreshews the coming of the Messiah, and the promulgation of the Gospel, figuratively displayed under the symbols of the new city and temple.

THEIR SPIRITUAL IMPORT.

THE spiritual import, so manifest as to be generally allowed, in the third section, will be found upon examination no less evident in the two preceding. That the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews bore allusion to the abolition of their ceremonial religion at the promulgation of the Gospel, though denied by the Jews, will probably be admitted by the Christian. And that the denunciations against the Pagans in the second section and in other prophecies which describe the Messiah as ‘ruling them with a rod of iron,’

bore allusion to the destined triumphs of Christianity over Paganism, rather than to the destruction of the Pagans, must be manifest to every one who considers how remote was the character of Christ from that of an earthly tyrant, and how foreign from every thing like literal warfare is His Gospel, which speaks nothing but peace and good-will towards men.

SUBJECT OF THE PROPHECIES OF THE FIRST TWO YEARS.

WHILE such appears to be the general purport of Ezekiel's mission, and of his prophecies, which extended over a period of twenty years; our immediate concern regards only those of the first two years, as these alone were preceded by the visions which we propose to investigate.

That these visions should bear relation to the predictions which immediately follow in the first vision, and are so blended with the second, as to be wholly inseparable from it, seems an almost inevitable conclusion. In short, the first vision appears to represent mankind in the state of idolatry, and the second to

foreshew the abolition of idolatry, or the revelation of Christianity and the conversion of the Pagans. And, accordingly, we are led from the predictions of the first year, consisting wholly of denunciations against the Jews for their idolatry, to seek for, and imagine that we find in the vision preceding them, an emblematic representation of mankind in the idolatrous state; so we are led to seek in the vision that accompanies the predictions of the second year, which declare the recall of Israel, and their restoration to the favour of Heaven, a representation of that event, as effected by the Gospel of Christ, and accompanied by the call of the Gentiles.

MEANING OF THESE FIGURES EMBLEMATIC.

THAT creatures somewhat like these were anciently used as emblematic of nations, has been recently proved by Sir Robert Kerr Porter; who found, in the ruins of Persepolis, sculptured figures, bearing a distant resemblance to them, in so far, at least, as their faces and wings. And, with apparent reason, he infers from

various circumstances, that they were emblematic of the nations subdued by, and annexed to the Persian empire.

Now, it is by no means clear, that they might not here have also a spiritual import, or denote the forcible abolition of their previous idolatry, and their compulsive adoption of the Sabean worship ; for a human figure, of colossal size, armed with a sword, and clearly intended to represent their conqueror, appears in the act of slaying them. But if their meaning there were purely political, this would not militate against its being spiritual elsewhere. Their emblematic character, at least, may be fairly inferred, and that they were emblematic of races of men, and not of attributes of the Deity.

ARCHBISHOP NEWCOME'S VIEW.

THE valuable suggestion of Archbishop Newcome,—that these creatures must symbolize human beings, as they acknowledge to have received redemption,—is the foundation on which the following exposition is built. And the admission that those of the Apocalypse

represent 'the people or body of the Church of God' is a farther sanction for the view we take; as the Church is but the spiritual state of man. So far, our concurrence with the Archbishop is willingly admitted. But, unfortunately, here it ends: for it is not the Church on earth, but their glorified state in heaven, that is intended by the Archbishop.

That the word 'heaven' is not here used by him in a symbolical sense, as it was by our Saviour, when he spoke of a rich man's entering the kingdom, but to signify a state of future existence, is perfectly evident. And, although we agree in the meaning of the Apocalyptic creatures as symbolizing Christ's Church, yet it is in their earthly existence that we look for that symbolical meaning; Christianity itself being the figurative heaven. And while we admit the emblematic signification of Ezekiel's creatures to be similar to those of the Apocalypse, in regarding the spiritual condition of man, we cannot accede to the idea of their symbolizing the Church of Christ, so many centuries before it existed on earth.

While we cannot but consider that the introduction of Christ's Church would be premature

in Ezekiel, whatever it might be in the Apocalypse ; so neither can we discover any thing in these symbols that is calculated to display the glorified state of that Church in heaven, (supposing that term to mean a future existence,) but everything required to pourtray the corrupt and idolatrous state of the Jewish Church, as then existing on earth ; that state which was the express object of the prophet's denunciations. And herein, as we conceive, is the connection between these denunciations, and the vision preceding them.

SYMBOLICAL MEANING OF THESE CREATURES.

IN searching for the meaning of these creatures, we are naturally led to consider others of the same class, elsewhere occurring in Scripture, as those of the Apocalypse, which have the closest resemblance to them. This resemblance declares a near affinity between them ; and if the Apocalyptic creatures symbolize the Christian Church, as appears to be admitted, this would suggest that Ezekiel's may represent the Jewish Church. But to substantiate this con-

jecture, it becomes necessary to account for the difference of form between them, and to ascertain, if possible, the origin of both.

When for this purpose we go back to the earlier representations of creatures of the Cherubic form, we find a faint resemblance between those of Ezekiel, and the Seraphim of Isaiah: while these last have the nearest approximation to the Cherubim of the Ark, which apparently furnish the prototype for them all.

That the Cherubim of the Ark had a symbolical meaning, will not be questioned by any one acquainted with the admirable work of Archdeacon Nares; which shews that every part of the furniture of the temple had an emblematic signification, and that the Old Covenant was throughout typical and prophetic of the New. Now when we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, (ch. viii. v. 5.) that the Cherubim were formed after the pattern shewn to Moses in the Mount; and when we observe the importance attached to the exact imitation of that pattern, we must infer that this was the only form of these creatures recognised by Divine authority, which, consequently,

became a type of pure worship, and any deviation from that form denotes a deviation from the form of true religion, or from that homage which the Israelites were instructed by Moses to pay to the Divine Being.

EMBLEMATIC OF THE HUMAN RACE.

WHILE their connexion with the Ark, and also their being usually represented as attendants on the Deity, and as ministers of his will, declares them to be emblems of Divine homage; we learn farther from Revelations : (ch. iv. v. 8.) that they symbolize the beings who pay that homage; for they are said "to give worship in heaven," and to be "redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb;" and who but human beings require or receive redemption?

But if redeemed, and in heaven, it may be said, they are surely in the glorified state, and cannot therefore signify the Church of God on earth. Here then, it must be remembered, that this language is altogether symbolical, declaring figuratively the spiritual state of mankind on earth; where Christianity itself constitutes the symbolical heaven; and redemption

signifies conversion; those who receive the Gospel being said to receive redemption, and to enter the kingdom of heaven. The redeemed, then, or converted to Christianity, being symbolized by the creatures of the Apocalypse, what is meant by those of Ezekiel?

EMBLEMATIC OF MANKIND IN THE STATE OF IDOLATRY.

IF the Apocalyptic creatures symbolize those who were redeemed or converted to Christianity; those of Ezekiel, signifying the same races in their previous state, must needs signify the unredeemed or unconverted; as Christ did not appear on earth for many centuries after the time of Ezekiel. But the declaration of the Apocalyptic creatures, 'that they were redeemed out of every tribe, and language, and kindred, and nation,' admitting the symbolical identity of both, is equivalent to acknowledging their having previously been in the idolatrous state. For, except the Jews, all the nations of the earth were (at the time of Christ's coming) idolaters. Thus, the creatures of the Apocalypse, being, by their own acknowledgement,

converted Pagans, those of Ezekiel, which were then in their previous state, must needs symbolize unredeemed or unconverted Pagans.

How they are represented by these creatures, and why of this particular form and number, is next to be inquired into. And here, as certain features are peculiar to each, and some common to both Ezekiel's and St. John's, those common to both will be first considered. The circumstances common to both are their number, their faces, and their wings. First then, as to their number :—

WHY ARE THEY FOUR IN NUMBER?

WHEN we come to inquire why these creatures, if symbolical of races of men, should be four in number, the following reflections suggest themselves. That the races, whose history is recorded in Scripture, and which, therefore, are likely to be here especially regarded, are just four in number; farther, that these races have been distinguished by four different forms of religion; and lastly, that the destination of these races forms the exclusive subject of prophetic annunciation.

THE FOUR PRIMITIVE RACES.

THE primitive races, from which mankind are derived, according to the Mosaic account, appear to be three, to wit, the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japhet. But the descendants of Shem, being, after eight generations, of whom little notice is taken in Scripture, (the eight generations from Shem here passed over, having nothing peculiar in their religious worship, have no claim to particular notice in a spiritual view of the condition of the human race, whatever their importance might have been in a genealogical history of mankind,) divided into two branches from Abraham, which have ever remained distinct, this makes them exactly four. The first of Abraham's sons was the one born from Hagar, his bond-woman; Ishmael, the reputed father of the Arabian race; and the second Isaac, born from Sarah, his wife, and the progenitor of the Jewish race; whose remarkable history forms the leading subject of Holy Writ. These two, with the descendants of Ham and Japhet, constitute the four primitive races.

FOUR DIFFERENT FORMS OF RELIGION.

THAT the three sons of Noah received from him a pure form of worship, cannot be doubted; but that the descendants of each had corrupted it before the birth of Abraham, is no less certain; as the restoration of pure religion was the express purpose for which the legitimate descendants of that patriarch were set apart. Of these corruptions, the oldest, perhaps, and most extensive was the worship of the sun, that form, which, from its European denomination, we shall call Druidism, professed by the Celtic inhabitants of northern Europe; who were, according to the Mosaic account, the posterity of Japhet, and the first who settled on that continent. Next to this was the idolatrous worship of the race of Ham, which probably originated in the East, and, passing from thence to Egypt, descended to the Greeks and Romans, under whom it assumed at length the form of classical Polytheism. Distinct from these, was the idolatry of the Arabs, who corrupted the religion of Abraham, but without wholly abandoning the worship of the one true God. And last come the Jews, who,

forgetting the terms on which they enjoyed the protection of Heaven, relapsed into idolatry, and corrupted the form of worship taught them by Moses, blending with it the idolatrous practices of the nations around them, though without any form of idolatry peculiar to themselves. Thus four forms of worship distinguished these primitive races, and though each may subsequently have undergone some change, they have still remained distinct from each other.

PROPHECIES RELATING TO THESE PRIMITIVE RACES.

THIS is a subject too extensive to be more than lightly touched upon here, or more than may be sufficient to direct to it the attention of the reader.

Of Ishmael, it was foretold to his mother Hagar, that his descendants should become a great nation, whose "hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against them." And strikingly has this been fulfilled in the career of these sons of the desert, who have ever led a predatory life, but never been dis-

possessed of the land of their Fathers. Of Isaac and his posterity, to the Jewish race, it was declared that from them should come the promised Messiah, through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and to Judah more particularly was that promise made in the words, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come;'—words which seem to point to the limit of the Theocracy rather than to that of Judah's political independence; for the Jews were repeatedly subdued and in captivity before that event took place. And this interpretation is offered to the consideration of those who are accustomed to regard only the political, and to overlook the spiritual sense of prophecy.

Of Ham, and his descendants, the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Canaanites, it was foretold by Noah, that for the transgression of their progenitor, the Canaanites should be 'the servant of servants;' and the judgments denounced by Ezekiel against Egypt, then a powerful kingdom, declaring that it "should become the basest of nations, and be no more ruled by a prince of its own"—have been singularly accomplished; for successively subject to the

Babylonians, Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Mamelukes, and Turks, Egypt has now for more than two thousand years groaned under the burthen of a foreign yoke, and been ruled by subordinate agents, having no interest in the national welfare, but seeking only to enrich themselves at the expence of an oppressed and subject province.

Of Japhet's descendants, who are said in the Book of Genesis, to have "divided amongst them the isles of the Gentiles," in Jewish phraseology meaning Europe, because Syria being bounded by the sea on the West, Europe lying beyond that, was once ignorantly supposed by the Jews to consist of islands—of them it was foretold, that "they should be enlarged and dwell in the tents of Shem." This prophecy has been happily interpreted as foreshewing the wide extent of Christ's kingdom after its transfer from the Jews to the Gentiles; whereby the sons of Japhet figuratively become dwellers in the tents of Shem. And in most perfect accordance is this interpretation with the other prophecies which we are at no loss to understand, which were uttered subsequently, and foretold the corruption of Christ's Church

by the Western Gentiles; a term which comprizes both the earlier and later Europeans. If the Celtic Druids who inhabited this continent before the Romans, were of Scythian origin, according to Higgins, Sir William Jones, and Bryant; being descended from Gomer the eldest son of Japhet; the Romans appear to have been of the race of Ham, and thus the Europeans became a mixed race, and each may have contributed to the corruption foretold.

When the Gothic or Druidical nations overthrew the Roman empire and resumed their ancient sway, their substituting a new idol in the room of their Arch-druid, and transferring to him the honours formerly paid to their high priest, clearly bespeaks the origin of the Papal Hierarchy. While the Polytheism of the Romans, contributed no doubt to the revival of idolatry, which was in fact the worship of the appetites and passions. Thus each race is distinguished by notable prophecies in Scripture, foreshewing their separate career, as it has fallen out. And as each has been marked by peculiar features, it is of importance to consider,—

THE PREDOMINANT CHARACTERISTIC
OF EACH RACE.

It is important to notice the ruling passion of each race, both because this is what led to the peculiar mode in which each of them corrupted the pure form of worship bequeathed to them by their progenitor Noah, and by the patriarch Abraham; and still more because this is what subsequently led them to corrupt Christianity also.

Among the Celtic Druids inhabiting the dark and dreary regions of the north, superstition and fanaticism, leading to bloody rites, and human sacrifices, which were once common among them; would seem to be their predominant characteristic.

Among the ancient Romans, the characteristic of their Polytheism was sensuality and voluptuousness; every passion having its presiding deity, to whom its indulgence was esteemed an acceptable sacrifice. And while according to Bryant, Ham was the Jupiter Ammon of the Egyptians; (vol. i. p. 7,) we are told by Sir William Jones (vol. iii. p. 36,) that the eagle of

Jove, the trident of Neptune, the Satyrs of Bacchus, the bow of Cupid, and the chariot of the Sun, with all the deities worshipped in Greece and Rome, are found under different names in the Hindu Mythology. And this passing into Egypt, and from thence to Greece and Rome, is the probable origin of classical Polytheism.

With the Arabians, or descendants of Ishmael, who lived by the sword, war was the ruling passion, and their idolatry, (for they were also idolaters, though without wholly abandoning the worship of the one true God,) differed both from Celtic Druidism and classical Polytheism, possessing neither the fanatic cruelty of the one, nor the gross sensuality of the other.

In the Jews selfishness and worldly-mindedness, leading them to expect the Messiah as intended for themselves alone, and the desire of earthly dominion, which made them reject Christ as offering only a spiritual kingdom, is usually regarded as a leading characteristic. And long taught to consider themselves as under the especial protection of Heaven, and the Heathen as hateful in the sight of God, which their form of worship surely was, can

we wonder if they looked to the kingdom of their Messiah, as one which was to establish their supremacy over the Gentiles? Thus each race had its peculiar characteristic, and the aptitude of the creatures to symbolize these is next to be pointed out.

FEATURES COMMON TO THE CREATURES OF EZEKIEL AND THOSE OF ST. JOHN.

THE same faces are common both to the Apocalyptic creatures and to these of Ezekiel, but differently distributed, the latter having four faces each, while the former have only one. The reason of this will be inquired into hereafter; it need only be observed here, that as an emblem of the human race, we may with equal propriety regard mankind as one race under four different aspects, or as four distinct races.

But here in Ezekiel they appear as four races, and each with four faces, or under four aspects. To explain this we must first ascertain the symbolical meaning of each separate face.

THE FACE AS OF A MAN.

THE first named in Ezekiel is the face of a man, which for various reasons appears to be typical of the race of Ishmael, who lived by the sword. First, as aptly symbolizing that race, in an age when manly courage was esteemed the first of human virtues, as the word '*virtus*' denotes. Secondly, as the irruption of that race, who at a later period spread their conquests and their apostacy over half the world, is represented as a swarm of locusts, devouring the food destined for the support of spiritual life; and those locusts are said to have 'faces as the faces of men.' And here is to be observed, that the Hebrew word for locust is, Arabh. Thus the face of a man aptly symbolizes the Arabian race, and their ruling passion—war.

THE FACE OF A LION.

THE following reasons seem sufficient to shew that the lion was typical of the Jewish race. First, the words of the dying patriarch, 'Judah is a lion's whelp'—favour this conclusion; the

lordly spirit already dawning in the disposition of his son, probably leading the father to apply to him that appellation. The same spirit led also his descendants to reject Christ as their Messiah in the hopes of an earthly prince. That Christ was their Messiah, and a prince, though not as they expected an earthly one, and typified by the lion, appears from his being expressly called in the Apocalypse 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' And the mistaken light in which the Jews regarded their Messiah, makes the lion as king of the forest, a fit symbol of that race who looked to be kings of the earth.

THE FACE OF AN OX.

This emblem is appropriate to the descendants of Japhet, who, if not its founders, which may be questionable, have been at all events the most pertinacious adherents to that superstition, the most ancient as well as the most extensive, which was attended with bloody rites and human sacrifices, viz.: the worship of the Sun and Fire. The celebration of this superstitious worship was especially held at the vernal equi-

nox, when the Sun entered the sign Taurus, thence called the Tauric festival; vestiges of which, according to Higgins, still remain in almost every nation upon earth.

The Celtic Druids, who inhabited northern Europe, before the foundation of the Roman empire, were addicted to this superstition, and according to Higgins, (p. 54,) they belonged to the race of Japhet, being descended from Gomer, hence called Gomerians and Cimmericians. Buddhism and Druidism were identical according to Sir William Jones; the Buddh of the Tartars being the Scandinavian Deity Wod or Oden; and probably also the Chinese Deity, Fo.

The Bull being found as stated by Higgins (p. 291,) among the gods of the Druids; the head of an ox on a human figure being among the commonest of hieroglyphical figures in Budhite temples; and the worship of the golden calf being the oldest recorded instance of Jewish idolatry in Holy Writ, are sufficient reasons for considering the ox as emblematic of that race, who introduced those superstitious rites into Europe, and were according to Moses its oldest inhabitants.

THE FACE OF AN EAGLE.

THOUGH the race of Japhet must be accounted the earliest settlers in Europe, yet we know that they were at length supplanted by the Romans, descendants of Ham. And the eagle being sacred to Jove, the Jupiter Ammon, of the Egyptians, and father of the gods, is a fit emblem of their Polytheism. Nor is it less so of modern Romanism, which substituting saints for gods has changed the names without diminishing their number. The indulgence of the passions, as before stated was the ruling spirit of Romish Polytheism, and when we consider the facility of obtaining absolution in the Romish Church, at one time even for prospective offences, we cannot ascribe a much more strict morality to the one than to the other; and an emblem appropriate to ancient Polytheism, would be no less so to modern Romanism.

Such is the reference which these faces seem to bear to each race, and to their predominant superstition, and characteristic. But if a particular face symbolize each race, we have to explain why each has four faces in Ezekiel, and only one in the Apocalypse.

WHY HAS EACH CREATURE ALL FOUR FACES, IN EZEKIEL.

THE ruling spirit of each race being symbolized by a particular face, the inference to be drawn from all four faces being affixed to each seems obvious, or to signify that each had by turns been actuated by the spirit of all four; that cruelty and fanaticism, sensuality and dissoluteness, war and conquest, and the spirit of selfishness and worldly-mindedness, had successively or simultaneously prevailed with them all; and thus each having appeared under four different aspects, the faces denoting those aspects were appropriate to all four.

Why then are they no longer so represented? but—

WHY HAS EACH A SINGLE FACE IN THE APOCALYPSE?

THE answer is, because change of character required change of symbol. The creatures of St. John acknowledge to have received redemption; while those of Ezekiel are in the

unredeemed state. But redemption in the figurative sense means conversion to Christianity; and that Christianity produces change of character, figuratively styled regeneration, is what must surely be admitted; though it has not yet produced that thorough change in the world which may be ultimately expected from it.

In some indeed a partial change had been effected before the coming of Christ; though not in the time of Ezekiel, or the compound symbols would be inappropriate there. Thus when the Jews by severe chastisement had been cured of idolatry; when they had ceased to sacrifice children to Moloch; when their war-like spirit was subdued by humiliation; the symbols denoting these characteristics had ceased to be applicable, and their ruling passion selfishness, or the desire of earthly dominion, symbolized by the lion, remained their peculiar characteristic.

WHY IS THE SYMBOL OF IDOLATRY RETAINED AFTER CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY?

BUT this change having preceded conversion does not explain the retention of that symbol

after. The solution of this problem must be sought for in a fact to which the present bears testimony no less than the past, viz. : that Christianity itself has hitherto failed to eradicate the ruling passion of each race, which was retained after conversion, and carried along with each into the Church of Christ. What is now become matter of history, the spirit of prophecy alone could foresee in the days of St. John. That the spirit of worldly-mindedness would continue to prevail in the Christian Church ; that idolatry would be shortly revived by the still remaining spirit of Polytheism ; that human sacrifices would be renewed in the burning of heretics, by the still surviving spirit of Druidism ; and that an early apostacy would be established at the point of the sword by the unextinguished spirit of Arabism ; this prophecy alone could foretel.

Though it may no longer be possible among the present mixed races to trace each spirit to its source, or assign to each race its share in corrupting Christianity ; yet as far as history can guide us, it will bear out the view we have taken. For if the worldly spirit be not

confined to the Jewish converts, it was in the Romish Church that image worship arose and is retained; it was among the Arabs, who admitted the divine mission of Christ as well as that of Moses, and whose Koran is founded on a perversion of both the Law and the Gospel, that Mahommedism arose; and it was the Gothic or Druidical nations of the west, who were foremost to adopt, and the latest to relinquish the burning of heretics.

Thus the predominant spirit of each race remaining unextinguished after their figurative redemption, or conversion to Christianity, the symbol denoting that spirit still remained appropriate to each.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THEIR WINGS?

IN the symbolical style, actions are often used as well as words, in foreshewing events. Thus Ezekiel was commanded to take a tile, and pourtray a city upon it, then to besiege it, to foreshew the siege of Jerusalem. Zechariah was ordered to take two staves, to name the one Beauty, signifying Christ, the beauty of

holiness; and the other Bands, signifying Israel, or the bondage of the law; then to break them in succession, foreshewing the crucifixion of Christ, and the rejection of Israel. What then do the actions of these wings typically signify, is the question.

If we look to the Seraphim of Isaiah which had six wings, we shall find that every action they perform is one of adoration. Thus when with two they cover their faces before the Divine presence, is it not equivalent to saying, "How great is thy glory! Oh Lord! Mine eyes may not behold its brightness!" When with two they cover their feet, is it not as much as saying? "Let me be hid from thy sight; for I am a sinful creature, and Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity!" When with two they soar aloft, is it not seeking a nearer approach to heaven, or as if they said? "Receive me into thy heavenly mansions! Oh Lord!" Thus every action being one of adoration, we regard them as symbolical of Divine homage.

WHY HAVE EZEKIEL'S FOUR WINGS, AND
ST. JOHN'S SIX EACH?

THE creatures of Ezekiel are still in the idolatrous or unredeemed state; whereas those of St. John have received redemption, or conversion to Christianity, whereby they have obtained a purer form of worship, or an additional means of attaining to heaven, symbolized by another pair of wings. The Seraphim also display nothing in form, in number or in office, that betrays corruption or idolatry; while their being furnished with six wings would seem to denote that these were required for admission into the Divine presence. If we suppose these to be symbolical of the additional means to be obtained through the promised redemption, thus prophetically presignified, there may be found in the context much to favour that idea.

These general remarks have now prepared us for entering on the particular examination of Ezekiel's vision.

CHAPTER I.

FOUR LIVING CREATURES ISSUING OUT
OF THE CLOUD, AND THE THRONE
ABOVE THE FIRMAMENT.

1. *Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fifth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*

2. *In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,*

3. *The word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar, and the hand of the Lord was upon him.*

The prophet, it appears, was among the captives, carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, along with Jehoiachin king of Judah, and saw these visions by the river Chebar, which flows

into the Euphrates about two hundred miles north of Babylon.

4. *And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof, as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.*

5. *Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.*

That portentous phenomena in the natural world are employed in the figurative style of prophetic language, to foreshew corresponding changes in the spiritual or moral state of mankind, every page almost of prophecy declares.

Thus, in Joel, (ch. ii. ver. 2,) "A day of darkness, and of gloominess; a day of clouds and of thick darkness," &c., foretel the approach of spiritual evils, as the context clearly shews.

In Amos, (ch. viii. ver. 11,) the spiritual import of this language is at once announced, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine

of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

In Hosea, (ch. viii. ver. 6,) The wind and the whirlwind are used to express the evils of idolatry: and the wrath of heaven against it. "But the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. They have sowed the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind."

In Revelations, (ch. xvi. ver. 8,) fire symbolizes the scorching heat of fanaticism. "And power was given to him (the Sun) to scorch men with fire."

Thus we see that the whirlwind and the cloud are employed to denote the evils of false religion, darkening the moral or spiritual world; and fire the scorching heat of fanaticism.

Nor can those who are acquainted with the history of Paganism, and know the horrors perpetrated in the name of religion, when human victims were sacrificed by hundreds, a living holocaust committed to the flames, be at any loss to conceive the portents alluded to. That the sacrifice of human victims was common with some Pagan nations is attested in the writings of Diod: Sic: in those of Dionys: of Halicarn: and of Julius Cæsar among the

ancients; and abundantly proved by Bryant, Borlase, and Higgins among the moderns. But even their testimony is needless, when Scripture itself decries the inhuman practice of sacrificing their very children—"by sending them through the fire to Moloch;" in vain represented by some as a harmless ceremony. For proof see Ezekiel ch. xxiii. ver. 37, and 39.

The more refined Heathenism of Rome and Greece, which derived its origin from Egypt, might disclaim these horrors; but before Greece and Rome were numbered among nations, Druidism had prevailed in the dark regions of the north, whence the cloud and the whirlwind are seen to come. Cruelties, however, were not the only abominations attached to Paganism; the grossest immoralities, and most detestable rites were practised in the name of religion; and in these the nations of classical antiquity fully participated; and these being equally included in the prophetic denunciations that follow, are as likely to be signified in the visions preceding.

But while the debasing influence of Polytheism prevailed on the one hand, and the gloomy horrors of Druidism on the other, there

was one nation in the possession of a purer theology, could they only have been persuaded to refrain from the abominations of their Pagan neighbours. But all the admonitions of their prophets were inadequate to this purpose, and hence their share in this vision, as well as the denunciations that follow it.

Out of the midst of the cloud and the fire, came the likeness of four living creatures. These for reasons already alleged are conceived to symbolize the human race, sprung from four sources, professing four forms of religion, and each distinguished by notable prophecies in Holy Writ.

Considering the cloud as emblematic of spiritual darkness in which mankind was then enveloped; the fire as indicating the scorching heat of fanaticism, the natural attendant upon spiritual darkness; and the whirlwind as denoting the morally devastating influence of false religion and idolatry; the creatures, as seen coming forth from the cloud and the fire, and impelled by the whirlwind, aptly designate the condition of the human race as then existing in the lowest state of mental darkness, and the last degree of moral debasement.

Their symbolizing the human race, is first intimated by their having the likeness of a man. Their comprising the whole of that race is indicated by their number four, which is emblematic of totality. And their spiritual condition is declared by their faces, betokening as already shewn, the different aspects under which they have appeared. Besides these, other circumstances will presently come into view to confirm this conclusion, offering further marks of their idolatry and demoralization.

6. *And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.*

7. *And their feet were straight feet, the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot, and they sparkled like burnished brass.*

8. *And they had the hands of a man under their wings, on their four sides ; they four had their faces and their wings.*

9. *Their wings were joined one to another ; and they turned not when they went ; they went every one straight forward.*

The symbolical import of their faces has been already noticed. Wings, as used by the purer Seraphim of Isaiah, were shewn to signify by

their actions adoration or divine homage ; but however fitted by their form for such an office, no act they here perform, as will presently be seen, can be interpreted to signify adoration. Nor does their number here bespeak their fitness to appear in the Divine presence.

Their feet, carefully covered by the Seraphim, are here conspicuous, and resemble a calf's foot. In fact they were cloven feet, cleaving to earth, and betraying their bestial nature, or earthly propensities. And as if to render that nature more evident, 'they sparkled like burnished brass.'

Moreover the hands of a man are seen under their wings, signifying, as it were, that their works were those of man, but concealed under the cloak of religion ; they appeared 'under the wings.' And as if to mark more strongly this semblance of religion, the expression is repeated, 'they four had their faces and their wings ;' the face shewing their real nature, while the wing furnished a pretext or covering.

Their wings when extended touched one another. Does this signify their agreeing in the same principles of action, in making religion

a cloak for worldly purposes? The same denunciations are uttered against all.

And 'they turned not as they went, but went every one straight forward.' From this it appears that they stood in a row, as they could not otherwise go straight forward without turning. Does their not turning denote their steadfastness of purpose and tenacity of belief? Established principles are seldom relinquished. A rising generation less deeply imbued with them may change; habits once confirmed either in acting or thinking are rarely altered.

10. *As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle.*

How the faces are emblematic of the different aspects under which the races of men appeared, symbolizing the ruling passion and prevailing superstition of each, has been shewn before: the order in which they are enumerated now seems the only point that calls for farther explanation. The symbols placed first, are those appropriate to the races of Ishmael and Israel, which are

coupled together. Is this because they were kindred races, or both descended from Abraham, Ishmael the oldest being placed first? The races of Ham and Japhet are placed last and detached from each other, the ox before the eagle. That the descendants of Abraham should have precedence of those of Ham and Japhet in Jewish writings is what might be expected; while the lion, as symbolical of the Messiah, is placed first in the Apocalypse. Does the ox precede the eagle in Ezekiel because Druidism was more ancient than Polytheism? Are the faces of the man and the eagle placed last in the Apocalypse, because Mahommedism and Romanism did not arise till many centuries after the time of St. John?

11. *Thus were their faces, and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.*

12. *And they went every one straight forward, whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not as they went.*

Two of their wings point to heaven, as if denoting their aim or pretension, but make no

advancement towards it: they do not soar aloft. Two of them cover their bodies, to hide their earthly propensities, not like the Seraphim in the Divine presence, but to conceal them from man, the prophet being the only witness. The joining of their wings seems to denote their unity of purpose; and their turning not as they go again intimates their steadfastness of belief, and unchangeableness of action.

13. *As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.*

14. *And the living creatures went and returned as a flash of lightning.*

We do not find here the genial warmth of true religion, which supports and cherishes spiritual life, but burning coals of fire, the scorching heat of fanaticism. We do not see the steady and beneficent light of the sun, which illuminates the earth, but the flickering and uncertain glare of lamps, going up and

down among them; and the lightning's flash, which dazzles rather than enlightens. The very creatures themselves appear transient and evanescent, as if their spiritual existence had no fixed and permanent basis.

15. *Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.*

16. *The appearance of the wheels and of their work was like the colour of a beryl; and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.*

17. *When they went, they went on their four sides; and they turned not when they went.*

Nothing in these visions is more obscure than these wheels, as regards either their visible appearance, or their symbolical meaning. The position in which they lie and move, namely on their sides, it seems impossible to apply to the creatures themselves, which appeared to be standing and in a row. Yet if the horizontal position here belong to the wheels, it would seem to change directly after. This however

involving neither contradiction nor impossibility in a vision where nothing appears in a natural order, we adopt that view as involving the least difficulty.

But besides their horizontal position and their not revolving, they work as a wheel within a wheel, or as it may perhaps be rendered, a circle in a circle. To facilitate the conception of this, we may consider the concentric circles produced on the surface of water by a stone thrown into it, for these lie horizontally and do not revolve; yet they expand and die off in succession, making room for others which rise up within them and follow the same course, thus working as a wheel within a wheel. This may perhaps afford some idea of what might be the visible appearance, but the symbolical meaning remains to be sought.

These circles within circles rising up and dying off in succession afford an apt symbol of the generations of men, and the progress of intellectual advancement, each succeeding circle being fainter than its predecessor, or less strongly imbued with the prejudices of the age, and therefore leaving the medium in a fitter state to receive a new impression. But such

an exposition would be but vague and general unless we can apply the symbol to some particular generation.

The wheel within wheel suggests the idea of an 'imperium in imperio,' an object mostly aimed at, and often obtained by the priesthood. Is there any ground then for applying this symbol to them? It is in the furniture of the temple that we must seek for the prototype as well as the meaning of these wheels, and here we find them, not only in connexion with the ark of the covenant, the emblem of true religion, but bearing up the ark, thus performing the most important office of the priesthood, or emblematically supporting true religion.

The Cherubim along with the Ark were originally borne on the shoulders of the Levites; till Solomon built the temple, when he made a chariot for them, as we learn in the 1st Chron. ch. xxviii. ver. 18.; the wheels of which thenceforward performed the office of the priesthood. Further intimation of this transfer of the ark from the shoulders of the Levites occurs in the 2nd Chron. ch. xxxv. ver. 3. "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, did

build. It shall not be a burthen upon your shoulders," &c.

Thus it appears in the days of Josiah, long after Solomon, that the ark was still sometimes carried on the shoulders of the Levites, and as the wheels were then probably taken off and laid aside, this would accord with their occasional change of position; while we see at the same time how such a symbol came to be introduced into the vision.

18. *As for their rings they were so high that they were dreadful; and they were full of eyes round about them four.*

Though the wheels before appeared to lie on their sides, yet they are seen now raised up, and rising to a fearful height, expanding as it were in dimension, like the circles on the water, though not in the same direction, but heavenward; as if to indicate their aspiring pretensions. The word rendered ring can only mean their rim or fellow, as Parkhurst and Newcome both make it. The Hebrew is גביהן

The spiritual import of these wheels, as denoting the priesthood becomes still more evident from their being full of eyes all over. These

may be regarded either as the inlets of intellectual light, or as the organs of watchfulness: both which would well accord with their symbolizing the priesthood, who were the spiritual instructors of Israel, as well as the guardians of their spiritual welfare. (2 Chron. ch. xxxv. ver. 3.) Further reasons will also presently appear for this conclusion.

19. *And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.*

20. *Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.*

21. *When these went, those went; and when these stood, those stood; and when these were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them; for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.*

Surely the influence of the priesthood over the laity, and their unity of spirit are clearly and strongly expressed in this reiterated asser-

tion ; which it seems impossible to apply otherwise. Should it be objected that the wheels do not so evidently lead the way as might be expected, history will bear out the affirmation, that the priesthood have not always been foremost in promoting spiritual advancement. Witness the priesthood in our Saviour's time, who were his most virulent opponents ; witness the Romish priesthood, who long withheld the Scriptures ; and more to our present purpose, witness the charge brought against the spiritual guides and prophets of Israel, a few chapters onwards, of 'misleading the people ;' a charge to which the Pagan priesthood were surely not less obnoxious than the Jewish.

22. And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures was the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched over their heads above.

23. And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one towards the other ; every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

The colour of the crystal could only appear terrible, as it would seem, from its great depth, betokening the immense space it filled; as the deeper the sea, the darker is the colour of the water. And the depth of the firmament displaying the distance of the heaven which the creatures sought to attain, might be awful on that account, as shewing it the more difficult of access.

Neither are their wings employed in a way to promote that purpose; while two of each are extended towards one another, and two covering their bodies, are used to hide their worldly propensities. The repetition of the word 'two,' which makes them appear to have six wings each might be omitted, being a redundance of frequent occurrence in the Hebrew.

24. And when they went I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, the noise of a host; and when they stood they let down their wings.

The great waters, to the noise of which the sound of their wings when in motion is com-

pared, is declared in the Apocalypse to signify 'peoples, and nations, and multitudes, and tongues.' The tumultuous din of nations, the discordant clashing of religious opinions, seems thus intended. Its spiritual character is implied in its being said to resemble the voice of the Almighty. Yet it is not the real voice from heaven, but *as* the voice only. The true 'word of God' is not heard till after, when the creatures have let down their wings, and the tumult of nations has subsided.

Should the clashing of religious opinions appear hyperbolic and inapplicable to nations, where Paganism held undisputed sway, and religious discord was probably unknown; the sound of their wings may apply without a metaphor to the victims of Pagan superstition and cruelty, with the clangor raised for the purpose of drowning their cries.

25. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

This voice from the firmament above, appearing to proceed from the throne, and He that utters it, declared to be the likeness of the

glory of the Lord, can be no other than the real 'Word of God,' the Gospel of truth, thus figuratively foreshewn as about to be sent, for the regeneration, and salvation of mankind, and ordained to abolish the horrors of Paganism.

The creatures letting down their wings before it was heard, may be thus explained: the Jews before this were weaned from idolatry, and the Romans having conquered the world, Druidism with its horrors was banished from the empire, human victims, save those who perished in the amphitheatre, having ceased to be offered up; religious persecution slumbered at least for a time, and universal peace prevailing, the temple of Janus was shut. And thus the creatures appeared to have let down their wings, or to have been lulled into a state of quiescence before the promulgation of the Gospel.

26. And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man upon it.

27. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it;

from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about it.

28. *This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Lord, and when I saw it I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice, as of one that spake.*

Surely this splendid vision cannot be otherwise understood than, as Newcome and others regarded it, as foreshewing the coming of the Son of God, to establish His kingdom and that of His Father. The throne above the firmament, with the likeness of a man upon it, clothed in brightness, and declared to be the likeness of the Glory of the Lord, can be no other than the Son of Man, the promised Messiah.

His appearance at the close of this vision, which pourtrays the spiritual state of the world before His coming, declares both the time and the object of His coming, which was the redemption of mankind from idolatry.

The more full and particular revelation of that event forms the subject of the second vision which follows.

SECOND VISION OF THE THRONE AND
THE CHERUBIM.

CHAPTERS 8, 9, 10, 11.

THE former vision occurred at the opening of the prophet's mission, in the fifth year of the Babylonian captivity. The prophecies of the following year were accompanied by a vision nearly similar; so nearly that the difference between them has for the most part escaped notice; yet that difference, slight as it may appear, will be found of material importance in explaining its symbolical meaning. The examination of this second vision, it is not proposed to enter into so much in detail as that of the former, but so far only as appears necessary to obviate objections that may be made to the exposition of the first as founded on particular expressions or passages in the second, when arbitrarily expounded and detached from the context, whilst their real meaning and

purport can be ascertained only by a minute and accurate acquaintance with the signification of that context.

SPIRITUALITY OF THESE PROPHECIES.

THAT the prophecies of Ezekiel in general, and those accompanying these visions in particular, had an ulterior aim bearing allusion to the coming of Christ, besides their obvious and political sense, which alone attracted the notice of the Jews, may perhaps be questioned by those who are exclusively attached to the literal interpretation. But those who are acquainted with the excellent sermons of Archdeacon Nares, on the twofold fulfilment of prophecy, and more recently those of Dr. Arnold of Rugby; will not be disposed to deny that the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, with their becoming a reproach and a bye-word, bore allusion to their spiritual as much as to their political degradation. And those who admit this view of their captivity and dispersion cannot consistently deny that the same spiritual meaning must be attached to their recal and restoration, as signifying their return

to the favour of Heaven, by receiving Christ as their Messiah.

ARE THE JEWS TO RECEIVE AN
EARTHLY KINGDOM ?

WHETHER a political, as well as a spiritual fulfilment of the restoration of Israel may be expected or not, Christians must consider, whatever the Jews may think, the restoration to an earthly kingdom a matter of small importance compared with their return to the Divine favour by receiving their long expected Messiah. But if Christ be their Messiah, who has declared that His kingdom is not of this world, what reason have we to believe that He will give them an earthly kingdom? Is not this conclusion, as well as that of Christ's personal advent, which is looked for by many Christians, founded on that error which blinded the Jews to the spirituality of His kingdom at His first coming, and equally blinds Christians to that of His second?

Their reluctance to admit that His second advent means the perfecting of the doctrine and religion He taught, in short a farther

reformation, is easily accounted for, as this would involve an admission, which it seems impossible to make ; to wit, that their present belief is partially erroneous ; or in other words, that what they now profess, they do not believe.

MEANING OF THESE VISIONS DEDUCED FROM THE CONTEXT.

As the symbolical meaning of the first vision was deduced from the prophecies that accompanied it, so will be also that of the second. The denunciations uttered against idolatry led us to seek for, and to imagine we discover in that vision an emblematic representation of mankind in the idolatrous state ; and the prophecies preceding and attending this second vision, lead to the conclusion, that the final abolition of idolatry among the Jews is the subject of the introductory Chapters, and that the promulgation of Christianity, with the call of the Gentiles is emblematically foreshewn by the re-appearance of these creatures.

The call of the Gentiles symbolized by this second vision, forms the subject of the tenth

chapter; the expurgation of the temple and the final correction of the Jews are shewn in the two preceding. The eighth chapter opens with renewed declarations of their continued participation in these abominations, still secretly practised in the temple, as shewn to the prophet, who is carried there in his vision. And the final decree of Heaven against them is then pronounced, which in the next chapter is carried into effect by the command to mark in the forehead for salvation, all those that grieve for these practices, while the rest are delivered over to destruction.

The temple being now cleansed, or the Jews cured of idolatry, the tenth chapter opens with the coming of the Messiah, whose kingdom being rejected for the most part by the Jews, was the immediate cause of the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles.

This then is what we regard as the symbolical meaning of this second vision opening with the appearance of the Messiah, followed by a scism or division in the house of Israel, and the transfer of the Divine favour to the creatures, now called Cherubim.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND VISION.

THE circumstances that point out a difference between the former and the present appearance of these creatures are chiefly the following.

The temple of Jerusalem which in the former vision was not named, in this is the immediate scene of action. The throne above the firmament which only came into view at the close of the first vision, appears at the opening of the second, preceding the appearance of the creatures. These, which before were only called living creatures, are now constantly called Cherubim. The Divine Glory, which did not appear till the close of the first, and no where rests upon the creatures, is seen from the beginning in the second, and rests directly upon them. These, and other points that will be stated, are conceived to mark an essential difference in the circumstances attending their first and second appearance ; each of which we shall consider more particularly.

THE TEMPLE, THE IMMEDIATE SCENE
OF ACTION.

THE former vision was revealed to the prophet on the banks of the river Chebar, far away from the temple, which was not directly connected with the subject of it, being a general view of the idolatrous state of mankind before the coming of Christ; but in this second vision the temple is the immediate scene of action, to which the prophet is transported in his vision from the plains by the Chebar, and being shewn the abominations practised there, its expurgation is then figuratively foreshewn.

After the denunciations against the Jews for their idolatry, that followed the former vision, the recurrence of the same preceding the second, may perhaps at first appear an useless repetition; but when it is remembered that this vision is prophetic as well as admonitory, and when the inveteracy of those habits is considered, which prevailed for at least two centuries after, the wonder is not that the denunciations are enforced by repetition, but rather that the ultimate efficacy of the judgments inflicted on the

Jews should be thus foreseen and foretold ; an effect which was finally accomplished about four centuries before the coming of Christ.

THE THRONE APPEARS FROM THE
OPENING OF THIS VISION.

THE expurgation of the temple being finally accomplished, and the Jews at length weaned from idolatry by the judgments inflicted, the coming of the promised Messiah is next foreshewn ; and this forming the main subject of the vision appropriately comes into view from the opening of it ; while the living creatures symbolizing mankind in that state from which He came to redeem them, form an essential feature in the symbolical representation that follows.

But, it may be asked, if the Jews were now weaned from idolatry, why do they appear among the creatures, symbolizing mankind in the idolatrous state ? In the first place, the Jews were indispensable in this vision, for to them was the Messiah promised and given, nor till rejected by most of them, was the Gospel preached to the Gentiles. And in the

next place, though weaned from the worship of idols, the Jews were not cured of their ruling passion; and the spirit of idolatry consists not merely in idol-worship, but in making religion subservient to the indulgence of the passions. And lastly, the Jews were not introduced into this vision as symbolizing any particular form of idolatry, though contaminated by that of the nations around: the lion symbolical of their race was stated to be emblematic of their predominant characteristic or worldly-mindedness, and not of their idolatry; and in like manner the face of man characterized the ruling passion of the race of Ishmael or their warlike spirit, and not their idol worship, although they were idolaters. Now these passions were retained by both races, long after idol-worship had been relinquished, and the symbols which denoted them remained appropriate in the second vision as much as in the first.

THE COMMAND TO SCATTER FIRE OVER THE CITY.

THE spirit of worldly-mindedness, still remaining as the characteristic of the Jewish race after

they were weaned from idolatry, caused the greater number of them to reject a Messiah, who did not fulfil their expectations of an earthly kingdom, a remnant only of them receiving Him; in consequence of which His Gospel was preached to the Gentiles.

This division in the house of Israel, between those, who, led by their priests and rulers, rejected Christ, and those who convinced by His preaching and miracles, received Him as their Messiah, is what is conceived to be foreshewn by the command to scatter fire over the city. For in the same sense, and applied to the same subject was this symbol afterwards used by our Saviour himself, when He foretold the dissension which His coming would occasion. "I come to send fire on the earth." (Luke xii. 49.) The office of promulgating Christianity henceforward devolved upon the Gentile race, with the remnant of Israel who received the Messiah.

THE CREATURES NOW CALLED CHERUBIM.

IN the former vision these emblematic figures were merely designated as living creatures, but

here on their re-appearance they are constantly called Cherubim ; a distinction which must surely denote some difference either in their condition or in the circumstances attending them. Since we commonly find this name given to the ministers of the Divine will, and to the attendants on the Deity, does not this denote their being called to some high and holy office, such as was the promulgation of the Gospel ?

WHY NOT CALLED CHERUBIM IN THE APOCALYPSE.

HERE it may be asked, why this title is withheld from them in the Apocalypse, where their symbolical meaning is allowed to be the same as here, but where they are again designated living creatures, improperly translated 'beasts' in the New Testament.

The subject of St. John's prophecies may furnish a clue to the solution of this problem. He wrote at the close of the Apostolic age, when its purity was beginning to decline, and symptoms of Antichrist had already made their appearance ; and as the corruption of Christ's Church by the Gentiles, and the establishment

of the reign of Antichrist formed the main subject of his prophecies, may not this resumption of their former name bear allusion to the change already begun in the Gentile Church, and about to be carried to a much greater extent?

The term 'redeemed' applied to that race, figuratively means, converted to Christianity, or weaned from idolatry, and is in no way incompatible with the subsequent corruption of Christianity by their descendants. These races retaining their characteristic features after redemption or conversion, may be explained on the principle of each carrying their ruling passion along with them into the Church of Christ.

THE DIVINE GLORY NOW RESTS ON THEM.

A FURTHER intimation of the extension of the favour of Heaven to the Gentiles, appears in the Divine Glory, now resting on the Cherubim, which must betoken their being taken under the care and protection of heaven.

Should it be objected that this is supposing

the protection of heaven to be given to idolatry, the objection will be found to have little weight; for the extension of the Divine favour to the heathen, does not imply its being given to heathenism. On the contrary, the express purpose for which the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles, who were idolaters, was to remove them out of the idolatrous state. Nor does there appear to be any other way of representing those races who were about to receive redemption through Christ; and at the same time pointing out the end and object of that redemption, but by emblems denoting that state which called for redemption.

THE GLORY HAD BEFORE RESTED ON
ANOTHER CHERUB.

BEFORE the name of Cherubim is given to these creatures, it was already bestowed upon a fifth Cherub, (ch. ix. ver. 3.) on whom the Divine Glory was seen to rest. Now we cannot suppose any but the true servants of God to be signified by this fifth Cherub, or those who remained faithful to their duty, continuing to receive and perform the Divine commands,

such as the prophet himself, and those who had never been seduced into idolatrous practices. And these are conceived to be meant by this Cherub.

Who then are those that are marked on the forehead for salvation, while the rest are doomed to destruction?—May not these be such as had reluctantly yielded to the influence of example, and grieved for the practices they were unable to prevent. As the prophet and his brethren, or the fifth Cherub, acting under the Divine command, laboured to reclaim their countrymen; these, marked in the forehead, would designate such as would yield to their persuasion, and return to their duty.

What means the passing of the Glory from this Cherub to the others, and its first resting on the porch of the temple?

As the prophet and his brethren were instrumental in reclaiming their countrymen; and thus bringing back the Divine favour to them,—may not this be denoted by the glory passing from the fifth Cherub to the others?

But why does the glory first go up to the porch of the temple?

As the temple is the Sanctuary of true religion,

while the Cherubim here represent the Gentiles about to be called, and the Jews open to conviction,—may not the glory first going up to the temple, denote the way or means whereby the fifth Cherub was instrumental in bringing back the Divine favour to the others—namely, by reclaiming them to true religion?

THE CHERUBIM ADMITTED TO THE PRECINCTS OF THE TEMPLE, BUT NOT TO THE SANCTUARY.

SIMULTANEOUS with the change of name from living creatures to Cherubim, and with the transfer of the Divine Glory, is their admission to the precincts of the temple, for we are told that the sound of their wings was heard to the outer court, (ch. x. ver. 4.) which accords with a command given in the Revelations, (ch. xi.) to measure the temple, and those that worship therein; but, to leave out the outer court, which was given to the Gentiles for a season. This would seem to intimate their approach to that court which was ordained for them.

But why were they not admitted to the

Sanctuary? May not this signify that both Jews and Gentiles, blinded by prejudices, and still swayed by their ruling passion, were unfit to enter the Sanctuary, or incapable of receiving at once the pure and spiritual religion of Jesus: and may it not prophetically allude to their subsequent corruption of Christianity?

THE FEATURES OF THE CHERUBIM REMAIN AS IN THE FORMER VISION.

THOUGH now called to a holy office, or that of receiving and promulgating the Gospel; yet they were still idolaters, and therefore retained still the features that distinguished them as such: nor could their conversion be instantaneous or universal; so as to lead us to expect that every trace of their former state, should immediately disappear. Some circumstances seem almost intended to intimate that it would not be universal. Thus—"As to the wheels, it was cried to them in my hearing, Oh wheel!" This exclamation, when applied to the priests and rulers of Israel, and coupled with the charge against them that follows, (ch. xi. ver. 2.) "of devising mischief, and giving wicked coun-

sel in the city ;” and when we look beyond the immediate to the remote conduct of the spiritual rulers of Israel, who to the last remained the most virulent enemies of Christ, we can hardly interpret this otherwise than as an exclamation of reproach. Their still working as “a wheel in the middle of a wheel,” as denoting their duplicity of purpose ; and their “turning not as they went,” as signifying their unchangeableness, would afford farther sanction for this interpretation. But—

A SLIGHT CHANGE DOES APPEAR IN THE FACES OF THE CHERUBIM.

A CHANGE which can hardly be deemed accidental or unmeaning, is the substitution of the face of a Cherub for that of an ox. As Druidism with its human sacrifices was banished from the Roman empire long before the promulgation of Christianity, may not the ox as symbolical of Druidism be purposely changed? Polytheism remained, therefore its symbol the eagle was retained ; the love of rule continued to be characteristic of the Jews, nor was confined to them alone, therefore its symbol the lion

was still appropriate; and the martial spirit was unextinguished, consequently the face as of a man, was also still suitable. But the horrors of Druidism having ceased among the Gothic nations, united to the Roman empire, the propriety of retaining its symbol the ox, appears questionable, and it may therefore be purposely omitted. The identity of the creatures with the Cherubim, twice declared by the prophet, as if apprehensive it might be doubted, and their having the same faces, must be understood generally, or exclusive of this slight difference, which would otherwise involve a contradiction.

THE CHERUBIM NOW LIFT UP THEIR
WINGS AND MOUNT FROM
THE EARTH.

THEIR now lifting up their wings and mounting from the earth would seem to signify the elevation of spirit imparted to them by the Gospel, according to the declaration in the next chapter, ver. 19, where at the restoration of Israel, "a new heart, and a new spirit" are promised to them.

Along with this intimation of their soaring

aloft, the glory of God standing over them, seems to declare that their form of worship becomes acceptable to Heaven.

If it be urged, that the living creatures were before said to be lifted up from the earth, what more can be inferred from this but that the worst form of religion has something of devotion in it, or that superstition itself sometimes mounts from the earth?

THE WHEELS ALSO MOUNT BESIDE THEM.

FROM this time, or from the return of Israel to the favour of Heaven, when a new heart and spirit are given to them; the wheels also mount from the earth along with the Cherubim, and the Divine glory stands over them.

This verse (19) is repeated almost verbatim in the next chapter, (ver. 22—3.) when the recal of Israel is declared, and the new heart and spirit are promised. This repetition appears to be intended as an explanation of it, and must surely allude to a new order of priesthood then to be established; no longer the Jewish but the Christian, which receives the favour of Heaven.

THE GLORY NOW LEAVES THE TEMPLE,
TO REST ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

THE departure of the Glory, in ver. 18, is beautifully explained by Mr. T. H. Horne, as denoting that Jehovah now forsakes the temple; and in the following chapter, ver. 23, the Glory is said to "stand upon the mountain on the east side of the city," which must be Mount Olivet.

Now, by the later prophet, Zechariah, we find Mount Olivet distinctly used as symbolizing the Gentile Church, or Christianity, in the state which preceded the dark ages, before the establishment of Papacy and Mahomedism. And that church at its birth, long before those corruptions had taken place is, as we conceive, equally the subject of Ezekiel's vision foreshewing the call of the Gentiles.

What can more clearly declare, then, according to Mr. Horne's suggestion, the abolition of Judaism and promulgation of Christianity, than this transfer of the Shekinah from the one to the other? The Cherubim and the wheels also appear to leave the temple together, at the same time that the Shekinah departs, seeming to

declare, as explained, the commencement of a new order of priesthood.

But it may be said, the temple was considered as the Sanctuary of true religion. Does Jehovah forsake true religion?

Judaism was the only true religion before Christianity, and symbolized by the temple, but it ceased to be so afterwards, for the temple was destroyed and Judaism abolished, after forty prophetic days, or lunar years. Mount Zion thenceforward became symbolical of true religion as used by St. John. Thus Judaism was true religion till superseded by Christianity, and no longer.

With this transfer of the Glory to Mount Olivet the vision ends, as the prophet declares—
“So the vision that I had seen, went up from me.” (Ch. xi. ver. 24.)

In concluding, it is necessary again to remind the reader, that these observations on the second vision are not proposed as a full and categorical exposition, but as hints or suggestions towards one; and principally intended to guard against objections to the view taken of the first vision, founded on the assumption that there is no material difference between them; a difference

which appears to be most striking and important.

OBJECTIONS ANTICIPATED FROM THE JEW.

OBJECTIONS to the preceding views still may be expected from different quarters; the Jew will of course object to a view which looks to a spiritual Messiah, and considers that Messiah to be Christ. But if the kingdom he looks for be an earthly one, who is to possess it? The Jews who lived in expectation of it ages ago have passed away, and the present generation are dying off daily; while small is the prospect of any speedy restoration to an earthly kingdom for the remnant that may be left. If it be destined for some future generation, then what benefit will accrue to that now existing? But if the kingdom of Christ be that kingdom, which offers peace on earth, and eternal happiness hereafter; if the restoration to the favour of Heaven be the restoration intended by the prophets, these are now within their reach, if they will but examine their own Scriptures with singleness of heart, and a mind open to conviction, and yield to the evidence they present.

OBJECTIONS ANTICIPATED FROM
THE CHRISTIAN.

ONE objection urged by the Christian, will probably arise from his reluctance to admit as emblems of impure worship, figures so nearly resembling those which he has been accustomed to regard with reverence, and to which the name of Cherubim is at length applied. In answer to this it would seem superfluous, with persons of enlightened mind, and capable of enlarged views of Scripture, to warn them against a popular error, or to remind them that these are only symbolical representations, and not beings that have any actual existence; as their continual change of form to suit the purpose of the occasion might prove, if proof were wanting. The question really is, since they are purely nominal creatures, what degree of reverence is necessarily attached to the name. If that name were held so very sacred by the Jews, as to be applicable only to the holiest of objects; or if these figures were meant, as some suppose to represent Jehovah himself, is it likely that Solomon would have used them as ornaments,

and carved them on the doors and walls of his temple? (1 Kings, ch. 6.) Surely this would have been contrary to the command given them by Moses. It is moreover remarkable, that no direction as to figure was given to the workmen, with the order to make Cherubim, shewing that this was perfectly familiar to the Jews, and needed no description. But these anomalous creatures were so uncommon as to require a most minute description; after which they are called, not Cherubim but living creatures. It is only when reverting to them in the following year, that he bestows that name upon them, as if it was what they most nearly resembled. In short, it appears that whatever idea was attached to the term Cherubim, it conveyed no distinct notion of these creatures as issuing out of the cloud, or a description of figures so familiar would have been superfluous. The term could at most be only generic, and applicable to a class of imaginary creatures, as we use the term angels, and might also admit of the same latitude of meaning.

PARKHURST'S IDEA OF THESE CHERUBIM.

THE elaborate attempt of Dr. Parkhurst under the word כַּרְבּ in his lexicon, to shew that these creatures represent the Trinity and man in unity therewith, so far as intelligible to the writer, seems rather to shew their near affinity to the objects of Pagan idolatry. Although not exactly corresponding with any one of them, which might have restricted the application, and thus have been supposed to exempt others from the denunciations against idolatry, yet they appear to be a fit emblem of the whole class, too numerous to be individualized, but all comprised under these four, representing the actuating spirit rather than the particular objects of idolatrous worship.

If they represented the Trinity, they surely represented Jehovah himself, and Solomon in carving them on his temple, would certainly have violated, as before stated, the law of Moses.

DR. MEAD'S IDEA OF THE CHERUBIM.

MANY who have adopted this idea from Mead have supposed the Apocalyptic creatures to represent the four principal standards of Israel, placed at the cardinal points of their camp. And these Cherubim of Ezekiel so nearly correspond with them as to render some notice of this opinion necessary.

The supposed correspondence of the standards with these creatures, does not appear to have extended to all parts of them, or at least not to have been stated as extending beyond their faces, and would therefore be but a vague resemblance at the most. Mr. Lowman, however, has shewn in his Work on the Revelations, that there is no solid foundation for the opinion that such were the standards of Israel, no mention being made of such in Scripture, nor in any of the ancient Jewish writers, Philo, Josephus, and others; the whole resting on an uncertain Jewish tradition.

But declining to avail ourselves of Mr. Lowman's authority, or to pledge ourselves for the sufficiency of his arguments, we are willing

to suppose that there may have been such standards; and to admit the correspondence to the utmost extent that ever was maintained. Granting then that such were the standards, what light does this supposition throw on the grand object of our research, which is their symbolical meaning? Will it explain why these creatures issue out of the cloud in Ezekiel? Will it enable us to account for each having four faces in Ezekiel, while they have only one each in the Revelations? Will it explain why St. John's creatures have six wings, and Ezekiel's only four? If a correspondence in the faces be supposed, will this account for the want of a coincidence in other respects, which was never ascribed to the standards, as their hands, their feet, their wheels, and their eyes all over?' It is evident that these must have a meaning, and that meaning is the object of research, which does not seem likely to be in any way promoted by the supposed correspondence of these creatures with the standards of Israel, to whatever extent it may be granted.

THE USE OF SEARCHING OUT THE
HIDDEN SENSE OF SCRIPTURE.

BUT some may be disposed to question the utility of looking for this hidden sense, as Archbishop Newcome, who evidently discourages the attempt. Far different was the opinion of the late Mr. Coleridge, who in one of his Lay Sermons, thus beautifully expresses his sentiments on the beneficial influence exerted on the mind, in attempting to explore the recondite meaning of the symbolical language, and typical imagery of Scripture and Prophecy.

“It is impossible that the affections should be kept constant to an object that gives no employment to the understanding. The energies of the intellect, increase of insight, and enlarging views, are necessary to keep alive the substantial faith in the heart. They are the appointed fuel to the sacred fire.”

A sentiment worthy of the mind, (and such a mind!) that expressed it. Mark also what follows,—

“In the state of perfection, all other faculties may be swallowed up perhaps in love, but it

is on the wings of Cherubim, which the ancient doctors interpreted as meaning the powers and efforts of the intellect, that we must first be borne up to the pure empyrean. And it must be Seraphs, and not the hearts of poor mortals, that can burn unfuelled, and self-fed."

Wherein does our view of the symbolical meaning of these wings differ from that of Mr. Coleridge and the Hebrew doctors, when we regard them as the means of soaring aloft, and heaven as their aim? Agreeing as we do in the object of those efforts, their amplification of the means by calling in the co-operation of intellect with love, gives additional force and beauty to the view.

A CHARIOT-THRONE INADMISSIBLE.

BUT while in this we agree with the Hebrew doctors, we cannot at all times bow to their authority. The idea which appears to have originated with them, that these creatures were attached to, and drawing along the throne of God, thence called the Chariot-throne, seems only deserving of regard from that origin, and the respectable names that have given sanction

to it. For if granted that such were their occupation in the vision, this would throw little light on its symbolical meaning. But in fact it appears to be an inference wholly at variance with the prophet's description.

Thus the creatures appear from the opening of the vision; the throne not till the conclusion of it. The creatures issue out of the cloud; the throne appears in no way connected with it. The creatures ran and returned like a flash of lightning; but nothing of the throne was yet seen. The creatures must have been on the earth, for they are said to be 'lifted up from it;' but the throne never appears to have been on the earth. They are represented as below the firmament that was over their heads; while the throne is never seen but above the firmament, and at the close of the vision. How the creatures below the firmament could be drawing along the throne which was above it; or how they could be seen in such a variety of situations and positions without the throne coming into view if they were in any way connected, seems wholly inconceivable; and if it were conceivable would leave the symbolical import as obscure as before.

PROBABLE ORIGIN OF THIS IDEA
OF A CHARIOT.

THE mention of wheels in the vision and the difficulty of accounting for their introduction, or of assigning any use for them, might probably suggest the idea of a chariot-throne. Could the Hebrew doctors have foreseen that the furniture of their temple had a typical signification, that their Ark was emblematic of true religion, and the Cherubim symbolized those that do homage, they might have found in Solomon's chariot for the Ark a beautiful emblem of the priesthood, whose office it was to bear along the throne of God, typified by the Ark, or to be the support and promoters of true religion. But the position of the wheels in this vision, however they might be borrowed from Solomon's chariot, lying on their sides as they appeared, and not revolving, seemed ill adapted for the advancement of true religion; while their working as a wheel within a wheel would as little accord with that office; but if symbolical in the vision of the corrupt Jewish, and still more corrupt Pagan priesthood, might not these cir-

cumstances be purposely super-added to declare their unfitness for such an office ?

In suggesting the chariot of the Ark as the probable origin of wheels being introduced into the vision, it must be admitted that this chariot carrying the Ark which is a type of the throne of God, would strongly favour the idea of a chariot-throne. But be it remembered that, as far as regards the Cherubim, this chariot instead of being *drawn* by them, was made for the purpose of *carrying* them, (1 Chron. xxviii. 18,) and therefore affords no sanction for the Cherubim in the vision performing such an office. It is not improbable however that the whole of this system of allegorizing would be objected to as fanciful, and not in accordance with,—

ARCHBISHOP NEWCOME'S ADVICE.

WHO says, “ We need not allegorize the circumstances of this august vision too minutely. Many may serve only to fill up the splendour of the scene ; though many no doubt have much significance, which should be pointed out rather by a correct judgment, than a luxuriant imagination.

Which of these predominated in the attempt to discover a symbol of the Trinity in these four living creatures, or to convert the throne into a four wheeled conveyance, we shall not inquire ; but that any part of the vision was introduced for the mere purpose of filling up the splendour of the scene, without a meaning is what we can never be persuaded to believe. That several of the explanations proposed may be called in question must be expected ; but the credit of consistency at least it is hoped will not be denied to them.

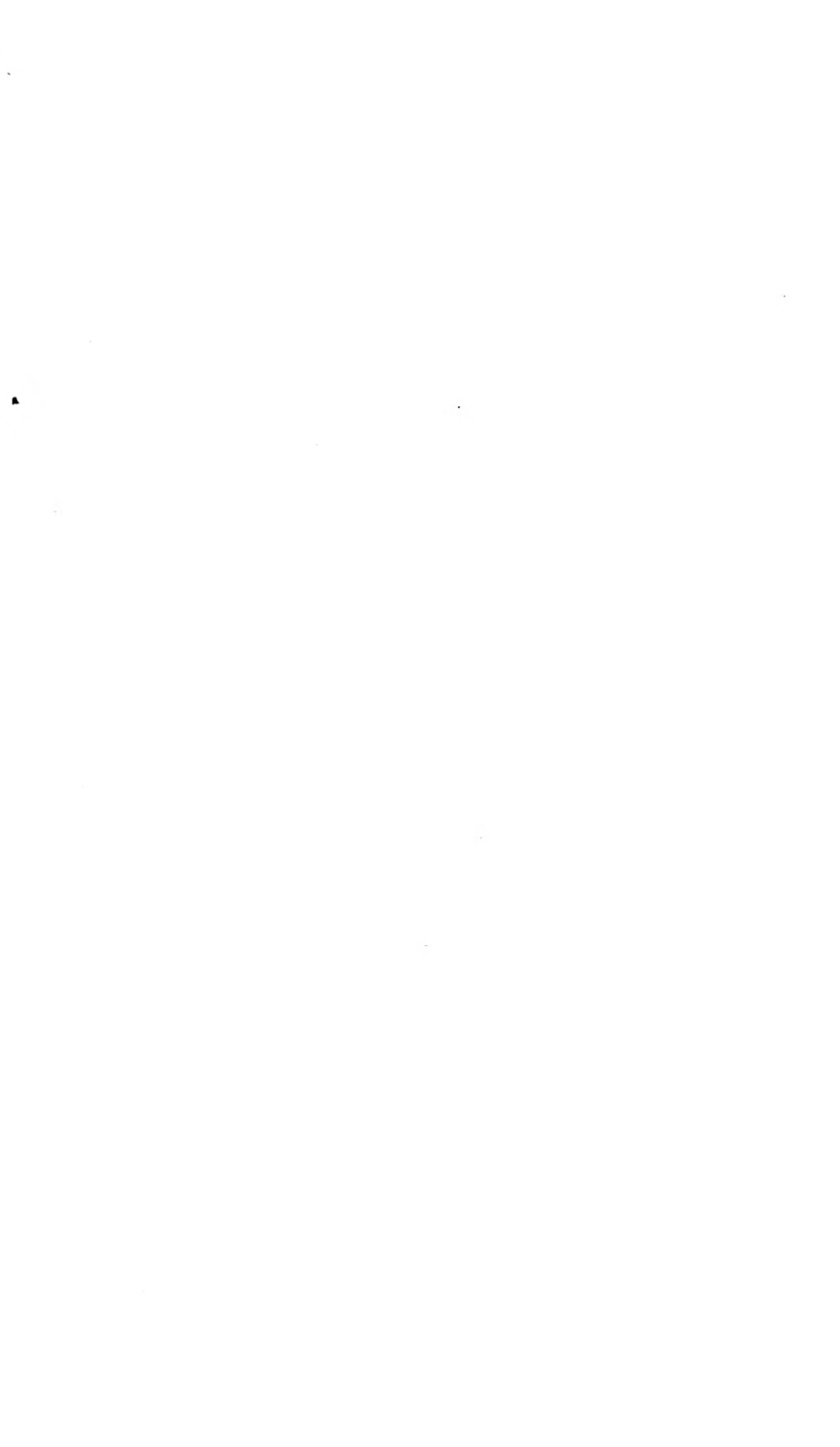
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE FOURTH EDITION

OF

A NEW EXPOSITION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Being founded on the spiritual plan of explanation, maintained by the late Dr. WOODHOUSE, Dean of Litchfield, and containing a New Interpretation of the FOUR LIVING CREATURES; The TWO WITNESSES; and The MOTHER and the MALE CHILD; to which is prefixed, a HISTORY of CHRISTIANITY from Dr. COOTE'S Edition of Dr. MACLAINE'S Translation of MOSHEIM, compressed into fifty pages; with also a REPLY to Mr. MAITLAND'S objections to the usual interpretation of Prophetic Chronology; the AUTHOR'S argument being supported by the striking fact of the notable period of "an HOUR, a DAY, a MONTH, and a YEAR;" as proposed in his last Edition, printed ten years ago, having since received its accomplishment precisely at the time he anticipated.





BS1545.8 .P23
An hypothesis which may help to unfold

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00074 3783