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AN ORIGINAL
HARMONY AND EXPOSITION

OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW,
AND THE
PARALLEL PASSAGES IN MARK AND LUKE:

COMPRISING A

Review of the Common Figurative Theories of Interpretation,

WITH A PARTICULAR EXAMINATION OF THE PRINCIPAL PASSAGES

RELATING TO

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, THE END OF THE WORLD,
THE NEW CREATION, THE MILLENNIUM, THE RESURRECTION, THE JUDGMENT,
THE CONVERSION AND RESTORATION OF THE JEWS,
THE FINAL GATHERING OF THE ELECT, ETC., ETC.

BY REV. D. D. BUCK.

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P R E F A C E.

TO THE READER :

FROM the title page you will learn something respecting the nature and importance of the subjects discussed in this Treatise. The author cannot rationally hope to prevail with all his readers to adopt his views and methods of expounding portions of Scripture, which have been the subject of so much disputation and perplexity. He does hope, however, to awaken additional interest in the important subjects brought under notice, and to excite increased attention to those prophecies whose fulfillment must greatly affect the destiny of the whole world.

Be apprised, Reader, before you proceed further, of one trait in the character of this work: you will find that the author does not attempt to explain mysteries, or to defend disputed positions, by merely advancing his own opinions. He will, in every important instance, cite you to the law and to the testimony. You will meet with some disclosures that are sufficiently startling, and with some arguments and illustrations which are entirely new. And you will perceive that the whole matter has been treated with originality and independency. There is but little borrowed from other writers; but what there is, is duly credited. The earnest, prayerful effort of the author has been to be right—exactly right—in all

matters pertaining to the great subject in hand, so far as God has deemed it wise to reveal the truth to men. The author has all along proceeded upon the supposition, that God designed the Holy Scriptures for the benefit of mankind; and that, for this reason, they may be understood.

Of the origin of this work, something, perhaps, should be known. The peculiar features of the Harmony, and the governing principle and arguments of the Exposition, are not new to the author: they are the result of several years' research and reflection. Indeed, it has been the principal subject of inquiry and investigation for several years.

The preparation of the work for the press, however, has been hurried: too much hurried, probably, for the author's personal good, or for the popularity of his publication. It has all been written within the last twelve months. And the labor of composing has been continually interrupted—sometimes for several weeks together—by much personal illness, by almost continual family affliction, by unusually heavy pastoral labors, by a number of calls for extra lectures and addresses, at home, and in other places; not to mention the perplexities and delays occasioned by a change of residence, and the necessary additions to ordinary ministerial labor, in closing up the affairs of one charge and beginning those of another.

A large proportion of the work has been composed while the majority, perhaps, of its readers were quietly slumbering. With these facts before him, the candid, and especially the Christian, reader will not fail to make some allowance for such errors and imperfections as must, in the nature of things, more or less mar the productions of human wisdom. Let the critic remember that the golden rule applies to "all things whatsoever;" and, consequently, it must apply to criticism.

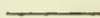
Finally, Reader, if you would derive most advantage from the perusal of this work, be earnestly advised, (1.) To read the whole work through, in the order in which it is composed ; for you will find that all the parts sustain a close relation, and in some cases, the connection is very important. (2.) Endeavor to understand the author's position and meaning in every place. (3.) Be sure to read the Notes,—especially those in the Appendix—in their appropriate connections. (4.) Do not, on any account, fail to examine the synopsis of Josephus' History of the Jewish War, when you come to the place where it is referred to. (5.) And certainly you ought to keep your Bible open before you, and refer to it as often as a complete comprehension of the quotations and references may require ; never forgetting that, after all, it is not what man may say, but what God has said, that will prove decisive in human controversy. (6.) Need it be said to Christians—in reference to such important subjects—examine carefully, patiently, prayerfully ; desiring and seeking to be divinely enlightened ?

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THE HARMONY.

HARMONY OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW AND THE PARALLEL PASSAGES IN MARK AND LUKE.

REFERENCES.	MATT. XXIV.	MARK XIII.	LUKE XXI.
<p style="text-align: center;">GENERAL</p> <p>Matt. xxiii. 38. Ezra i. 2-5; v. 2. Zech. iv. 9. Ezra v. 8; vi. 3, 4. Ezra vii. 27. Luke xix. 44. Jer. xxvi. 18. Micah iii. 12. Zech. xiv. 4. Ezek. xi. 28.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SPECIAL. Luke xvii.</p> <p>1. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him, for to show him the build-ings of the temple. [One of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!] [And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts,]</p> <p>2. Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, [The days will come in the which] there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.</p> <p>3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, [over against the temple,] the disciples [Peter, and James, and John, and An-drew] came unto him privately, saying,</p>	<p>1. And as he went out of the temple, his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!</p> <p>2. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.</p> <p>3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, James, and John, and An-drew asked him privately,</p>	<p>5. And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, The days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.</p> <p>6. As for these things which ye behold, he said, The days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.</p> <p>7. And they asked him</p>

Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4. And Jesus answered, and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you;

5. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.

[And the time draweth near; go ye not therefore after them.]
6. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass; but the end is not yet.

7. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences, and [great] earthquakes, in divers places.

[And fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.]

8. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

[But before all these, they

4. Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

5. And Jesus answering them, began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you;

6. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.

7. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled; for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

8. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places; and there shall be famines and troubles.

These are the beginnings of sorrows.

saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be, when these things shall come to pass?

8. And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived;

for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ;

and the time draweth near; go ye not therefore after them.
9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified; for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

10. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;

11. And great earthquakes shall be in divers places; and famines and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12. But before all these, they

REFERENCES.	MATT. XXIV.	MARK XIII.	LUKE XXI.
<p>GENERAL</p> <p>John, xv. 20.</p>	<p>shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you.]</p> <p>[But take heed to yourselves; for]</p>		<p>shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you,</p>
<p>Matt. x. 17.</p>	<p>9. Then shall they deliver you up [to councils,]</p>	<p>9. But take heed to yourselves; for they shall deliver you up to councils;</p>	<p>up delivering you</p>
<p>Acts iv. 1, 3; xxvi. 11.</p>	<p>[to the synagogues, and into prisons,] to be afflicted; [and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten;]</p>	<p>and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten;</p>	<p>to the synagogues, and into prisons,</p>
<p>Acts v. 18; xii. 4; xxii. 4.</p>	<p>and (they) shall kill you.</p>	<p>and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake,</p>	<p>before kings and rulers, for my name's sake.</p>
<p>Acts xxvi. 10; vii. 59; xii. 2.</p>	<p>[And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for a testimony against them.]</p>	<p>for a testimony against them. (<i>For 10th verse, see below.</i>)</p>	<p>13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.</p>
<p>Matt. x. 18.</p>	<p>[But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak; neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye.]</p>	<p>11. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak; neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye;</p>	<p>14. Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer;</p>
<p>Luke xii. 11.</p>	<p>[For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.]</p>	<p>For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.</p>	<p>15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.</p>
<p>Matt. x. 19; Luke xii. 11.</p>	<p>For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.]</p>		
<p>Acts vi. 10.</p>			
<p>Matt. x. 20; Luke xii. 12.</p>			
<p>Acts ii. 4; i. 8, 31.</p>			

10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another;

[the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.]

9. (in part) And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.
[But there shall not an hair of your head perish.]
[In your patience possess ye your souls.]

11. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake;

18. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.
19. In your patience possess ye your souls.

but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

2. Tim. i. 15; iv. 10, 16.
Acts xx. 29.

Matt. x. 21, 35.

Micah vii. 6.

Matt. x. 22.

Matt. x. 30.

Matt. vii. 15; 2. Pet. ii. 1.
1 Tim. iv. 1; Jude 4.

Rev. ii. 10.
Matt. x. 22.

Rom. x. 18.
Col. i. 6, 23.

REFERENCES.	MATT. XXIV.	MARK XIII.	LUKE XXI.
GENERAL			
Dan. xii. 11.	15. When ye therefore shall see [Jerusalem compassed with armies,] the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, [standing] in the holy place, [where it ought not,] (whoso readeth let him understand,) [then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.]	14. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth, understand:)	20. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,
Dan. ix. 26, 27.	16. Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; [and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.]	Then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains;	then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.
SPECIAL	Luke xvii.		
	17. Let him which is on the house-top not come down [into the house, neither enter therein,] to take any thing out of his house.	15. And let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house.	
	18. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. [For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.]	16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.	22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23. But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

17. But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

19. And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter; neither on the Sabbath day.

18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter; neither on the Sabbath day.

21. For then shall be great tribulation [in the land, and wrath upon this people,] such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

19. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

21. For then shall be great tribulation [in the land, and wrath upon this people,] such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, [whom he hath chosen,] those days shall be shortened.

20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, [whom he hath chosen,] those days shall be shortened.

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there; believe it not.

21. And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there; believe him not.

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

22. For false Christs, and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

(23.)

21.

(23.)

REFERENCES.	MATT. XXIV.	MARK XIII.	LUKE XXI.
<p>GENERAL.</p> <p>2 Pet. iii. 17.</p>	<p>[But take ye heed:]</p> <p>25. Behold, I have told you before.</p> <p>26. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.</p> <p>27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.</p> <p>28. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.</p> <p>[And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive in all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.]</p>	<p>23. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.</p> <p>24. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall,</p>	<p>24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.</p> <p>25. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the</p>
<p>SPECIAL.</p> <p>Luke xvii. 23. 24. (25.) 37.</p>	<p>29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven; [and upon the</p>		
<p>Job xxxi. 27, 28.</p> <p>Dan. xii. 6, 7; Rom. xi. 26.</p>			

earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

26. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

27. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven.

[And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.]

28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29. And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees,

30. And when they now shoot forth,

26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.

28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29. And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree, and all the trees,

30. When they now shoot forth,

Zech. xiv. 13.

Mal. iv. 1.

2. Pet. iii. 13-14.

2. Pet. iii. 7, 10, 12.

1. Thess. iv. 16; i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13. Dan. vii. 13; Phil. iii. 20; 1. Thess. iv. 16. Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 69.

Zech. xii. 9.

Zech. xii. 10-14; xiv. 5; Jude 14.

Matt. xvi. 27; Rev. i. 7; xiv. 14.

Acts i. 9-11; 2. Thess. i. 7-10.

Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26; Matt. xxv. 31

Matt. xiii. 41; Isa. li. 11; iii. 9, 10.

2. Thess. i. 7; Jer. xxxi. 7-12.

1. Thess. iv. 16; Zech. x. 6-10.

Matt. xiii. 48; Dan. xii. 13; Hos. i. 11.

Hos. iii. 5; Joel iii. 1, 7; Amos ix. 14.

Ezek. xxxiii. 24; xxxvii. 12, 21; xxxix. 25-28.

Deut. xxx. 8, 4, 5; Isa. xl. 11, 12, 16.

Jer. xxxii. 37; xxxiii. 7, 11, 14, 16, 26.

Zeph. iii. 8-20.

REFERENCES.	MATT. XXIV.	MARK XIII.	LUKE XXI.
GENERAL			
Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27; Matt. xxi. 43.	Ye know, [of your own selves,] that summer is nigh. 33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [the kingdom of God] is near, even at the doors.	Ye know that summer is near. 29. So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.	ye see and know, of your own selves, that summer is now nigh at hand. 31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.
Matt. xxiii. 36 · Pss. xxiv. 6.	34. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.	30. Verily I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.	32. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.
Pss. cii. 26; 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12; Isa. xlii. 13. Heb. i. 11; Isa. li. 6; Rev. xx. 11. Matt. v. 18.	35. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.	31. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.	33. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.
1. Thess. v. 2; Matt. xxv. 13.	36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, [neither the Son,] but my Father only.	32. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.	
Acts i. 7.	[And take heed to yourselves,] [watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is;]	33. Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is;	34. And take heed to yourselves,
1. Thess. v. 6; Rev. xvi. 15.	[lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.]		lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.
Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15.			
1. Thess. v. 3; 2. Pet. iii. 10, 12.	[For as a snare shall it		35. For as a snare shall it

come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.]

[Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.]

37. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39. And knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left.

41. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left.

42. Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

1. Thess. v. 9.

Matt. xxv. 10, 23, 34; Psa. i. 5.

Gen. vi. 9; vii. 5-6.
Heb. xi. 7.

1. Pet. iii. 20.

Gen. vi. 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 12.

Gen. vii. 7, 13.

Gen. vii. 11, 12.

Gen. vii. 4, 21-23.

26.

27.

30. (28. 29.) 36. (34.)

(27)

Luke xii. 35, 36.

REFERENCES.	MATT. XXIV.	MARK XIII.	LUKE XXI.
GENERAL			
Rev. iii. 1, 3; 2. Pet. iii. 10, 12.	43. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.		
Matt. vi. 20.			
Luke xii. 35, 36.	44. Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.		
Luke xix. 12.	[For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work; and commanded the porter to watch.]	34. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work; and commanded the porter to watch.	
Luke xix. 13. Matt. xxv. 15.			
Luke xii. 42.	45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season:		
(2) Luke xii. 37, 43. Rev. xv. 16.	46. Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.		
Luke xix. 17, 19.	47. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.		

Luke xii. 45.

48. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Luke xii. 45.

49. And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Luke xii. 46.

50. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.

Luke xii. 46.
Rom. ii. 8, 9.

51. And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1. Thess. v. 6.

[Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning.

2. Thess. i. 7-10; 1. Cor. xv. 52.

Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.
And what I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH!]

NOTE.—The author has not made use of all the references noted in the first column of the Harmony; neither does he consider them all as relevant to the subjects with which they are associated.

It was judged expedient, however, to record many which are used by others, not for the purpose of adopting them, but to assist the reader in finding them.

HARMONY AND EXPOSITION.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Principal subject—THE HARMONY.

Differs from others—When first designed—How originated—Effect of Transpositions—xvii. chap. of Luke—Relation of the different Records to each other—Matthew's record adopted as the principal one—Reasons—Why neither of the Evangelists was inspired to preserve the whole of the Lord's Discourse—Wise Design—Testimony—How applied to Prophecy—Perfection in Imperfection—Design of Mystery—Relation of Parts to the Whole—Illustrations.

1. It will be perceived at once that the Harmony herewith submitted is arranged after a new method. Several have been examined, and from some of them important suggestions have been derived; but in this arrangement no one has been followed. Indeed, the author has found no one to follow.* In a few instances the author's convictions have led him to differ from the usual arrangement of verses, as found in the various Harmonies which he has examined.

2. The author takes pleasure in acknowledging himself indebted for several valuable thoughts, to an article in the Methodist Quarterly Review. for July, 1842, on the Coming of Christ.

Even so long ago as the great agitation on the subject of the Second Advent, in 1842 and '43, the author had in contemplation the publication of a Treatise on the xxiv. chap-

* See Note A in the Appendix.

ter of Matthew ; and did, in fact, several years since, give several expository lectures, which embodied the principal elements of this Harmony and Exposition.

3. The design which led to the formation of this Harmony, made it desirable that all which was spoken by our Lord in the discourse under notice, should be constantly and connectedly before the eye. The paragraph and verse Harmonies in common use are a great assistance in this respect ; but still the reader is under the necessity of *forming in his own mind* a Harmony, having more particular reference to the collocation of the *sentences* and *words* of the discourse.

4. From this necessity of a *mental* Harmony, to supply the common deficiency of the written, the idea was suggested of writing out in full what must of necessity *exist in the mind*, in order to be rigidly systematic in the examination of the prophecy. It is certain that neither of the three evangelists has preserved *all* that the Saviour uttered ; for we find in each some things which are omitted by the others. And it is also certain that whatever we find in any of the three, as a part of the discourse, must have been spoken on that occasion ; otherwise, the record would not be authentic.

5. Now, whatever was spoken, must have been said in some definite order. Some things were referred to before some other things ; as, for example, the coming of the false Christs before the coming of the true Christ. And it is obviously of great importance to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the exact order in which the various items of the discourse succeeded one another in the original delivery.

But this cannot be done by merely arranging oppositely the different verses and paragraphs, as they are found in the several records. It is necessary to have a natural collocation of all the sentences and words ; for this will give us the consecutive ideas that constitute the discourse. Nothing short of this will perfectly answer the purpose in a critical analysis of the composition.

6. This is attempted in this newly arranged Harmony. But with how much success, the reader who has critically investigated the subject, is best qualified to decide. The

position of every sentence, and of every word, has been subjected to a thorough examination. In some places the author was in doubt concerning the proper place of a verse, or sentence. But in no instance did this occur in what may be termed the more important portions of the prophecy.

The Harmony of *Muenschler* has been of much real service in transcribing the sacred text; though it has not been in all cases adopted in the arrangement of either the sentences or verses.

7. Notwithstanding the fact, that the Harmony herewith presented to the reader, has brought together into one continuous narrative all that is recorded in the three inspired sketches of our Lord's discourse, yet, as it may be perceived, the arrangement of the sentences does not sensibly disarrange the regular succession of thought.

And this collocation of all the sentences in the several records, has been made without any respect to the literary character of the composition, as amended; the only guiding inquiry was respecting the *place* where each properly belongs.

Yet how unbroken and regular the succession of thought! The transitions in the amended composition are usually even less abrupt than in the individual records.

In some cases even greater perspicuity and force are given to the preceding and succeeding verses, by the introduction of omitted sentences or verses. See this exemplified in the effect produced by placing the 22d verse of Luke between the 18th and 19th verses of Matthew. And there, undeniably, is the proper position of that verse.

See, also, what a difference it sometimes makes in the *definiteness* of the sentiment, by the transfer of a single expression, as in the 33d verse of Matthew.

8. As the xvii. chapter of Luke also contains something on the same subject, it was considered advisable to give particular promineny to the *references* to that chapter.

By noticing the frequent *transpositions* of the verses of that chapter, as they are arranged in harmony with the more extended discourse, it will be observed that the succession of thought differs essentially from the order in the discourse in

Matthew ; and in several other particulars it is quite dissimilar to the one forming the subject of this Treatise.

It ought not, therefore, to guide us in deciding the consecutive relations of the sentences in the more full and perfect record.

One of the transpositions is so very important, and has so greatly embarrassed the usual exposition of the prophecy in Matthew, that it has been deemed expedient to consider the matter in a chapter by itself.

9. It will be perceived that the record of Matthew has been selected, in the effort to preserve the original order of the discourse. The principal reasons for this, are, (1.) Because the Holy Ghost seems to have designed the record of Matthew for the principal history of this remarkable prophecy.

The other histories appear to be, to some extent, supplementary, and designed to preserve what was omitted by the first. But, in order to be perspicuous, it was necessary for the supplementary writers to give a sufficiency of the original discourse to show where their emendations belong, and thus fill out to completion the original record.

10. On a careful examination of the three records, it will not usually be difficult to know just where to put the supplemental portions ; for Divine Wisdom has so directed, that throughout each of the records, there are enough of the prominent points of general agreement to guide us in forming all the points of the discourse into a complete whole. (2.) A second reason for adopting the sketch of Matthew as the governing record, is, because it is not only more full and perfect, but it is also connected with a succeeding chapter which is omitted by both the others. Perhaps the principal reason why the other evangelists were not moved to preserve the important parables, and the description of the judgment scene, which are found in the xxv. chapter of Matthew, was, because the first historian was inspired to make so perfect a record, that supplementary additions were unnecessary.

11. If it should be inquired, why the Holy Spirit should move the first historian to keep such a perfect record of the illustrative parables and judgment scene, as to render sup-

plemental emendations unnecessary, while, in the more important portions of the prophecy, the first record is so incomplete as to need additions? The answer would be this: It has pleased God to proceed in the matter on the usual plan of giving *testimony*, both in the publication and preservation of important facts.

But in using testimony to convince the world, it was deemed important to have more than one witness, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be established." The same wisdom that guides the best human governments in matters of testimony, would have chosen this very method of communicating divine truth, if it had comprehended the things which are divine as the things which pertain to this world.

Inspiration has not erred in conforming the method of revelation to the established judicial usages of the wisest governments.

12. But if the primary witness had been led to give a full, regular, and perfect narration of the matter, the other witnesses would have had either nothing to testify, or else would have been compelled to testify to precisely the same things as the other; and which, in reporting a *discourse*, must have required the exact preservation of the language and order. In the former case, this would have been a virtual exclusion of all additional testimony; in the latter, it would have too much the appearance of collusion.

13. It is not a new idea, that, in important matters of fact and prophecy, the Holy Spirit has purposely shut out every appearance, and every rational suspicion, of collusion. The witnesses of both fact and prophecy are usually independent of each other. They agree in the principal points of their testimony; and they do not disagree anywhere. The omissions of one, and the additions of another, when all are framed together, form a beautiful and perfectly harmonious testimony.

14. And, notwithstanding the objections and cavils of Infidelity, the truths of the Bible are without doubt far better established by this kind of testimony, than they could be by any other.

Had all the inspired witnesses left their testimony as if they had copied verbatim from some original document, the same Infidelity that now cavils at the apparent disagreements, omissions, and additions, would then undoubtedly be just as ready to cavil at the appearance of collusion; and would probably make the *verbatim* of the witnesses a stronger objection, than the present verbal difference with substantial agreement.

15. These observations may not appear to be as applicable to matters of prophecy, as to matters of history; for, some may say, the prophecy is its own witness; its fulfillment proves its truth. True, indeed; but is it of no consequence to know when, where, and by whom, the prediction was uttered? Should not the prophet be identified with his own prophecy, so as to establish completely his inspiration? So as effectually to guard against the possible appropriation of a wonderful prediction for the countenance and propagation of a subsequent imposture? But how can the identity of a prophet be preserved in inseparable connection with his own predictions, if his words are not preserved? And is not the preservation of words, and times, and circumstances, and personalities, a proper subject of testimony?

16. The predictions which form the subject of this Exposition, are of too much consequence, in the great and growing controversy between truth and error, to be left for the testimony of a single witness. And Inspiration was too wise to move the first and principal witness to give a testimony that should, in effect, exclude all others. Hence, in the nature of the case, we should expect to find the first record *imperfect in itself*, but *perfect as a part*. This is the general nature of the prophecies and histories that relate to the important facts in the Saviour's life, death, and resurrection. And it is a superficial view of things which leads any one to wish it were otherwise. The solution of some problems is altogether more interesting when *wrought out*, than when merely *stated*. Yet we always need some primary and self-evident principles to begin with.

17. So, to some extent, it is with some of the great facts,

and doctrines, and prophecies which are found in the Bible. God was too conversant with man's nature and necessities, and too regardful of his well-being, to give to him a revelation, which had nothing about it to call into exercise, and strengthen, and happify those strong, vigorous minds, whose health, and enjoyment, and usefulness are inseparably connected with the investigation and mastery of deep, and broad, and elevating subjects. It formed a part of the original design, that mind should be arrested, exercised, expanded, elevated, purified, and happified by subjects that lead directly heavenward, and not be doomed to the everlasting drudgery of the research, discovery, and demonstration of comparatively unimportant matters.

18. And where shall we look for such themes as we have judged to be designed for man's welfare? Shall we look for them in connection with the less important, and less interesting matters which form the primary and self-evident principles in theology? Or shall we turn to the great and thrilling subjects which have about them a sufficiency of interest to attract and rivet the universal attention?—which, on this very account, may be selected as the only appropriate themes to be held in connection with the great and sometimes mysterious problems that shall exercise the restless, ambitious, and growing mind.

To such we will turn. And we will not be disappointed in our anticipations of some solutions to be wrought out, by patience and labor, in such a thrilling subject as the final destiny of the world.

19. Not to be diverted, however, from the former illustration,—it may be observed, that the precise form in which we find the records of the great prophecy in question, may prove to be, after all, the very form which is best adapted to secure and exercise the world's attention. The design of the Infinite Wisdom which moved the evangelists thus to record their testimony, was doubtlessly as good and considerate, as the same Wisdom which, in other things, shows itself by creating component parts *imperfect*, in themselves considered, but *perfect*, when considered as *parts*. And is it not sufficiently

evident, that, with finite things, the highest perfection is *relative*?

20. If there are embarrassments and difficulties connected with the kind of testimony which we have supposed in the case before us, nevertheless, it must be endured, for the nature of the case admits of nothing better. And there is reason to believe that the disadvantages of such a case are, after all, less than would result from any other system.

If this be so, we should no more complain of the embarrassments that may result, than of the system of creating human beings, merely because the foot, or the hand, as a *part*, has not all the attributes and excellences of the body itself, which is the union of all the individual parts.

21. The imperfection of the individual records of our Saviour's discourse, is such as the perfection of the design rendered expedient and necessary. It was—so to speak—as the imperfection of a hand, considered merely of itself, and not as a part of something else. It is imperfect, in this specific sense, that it has not eyes, ears, and the other members and faculties of the body which it helps to form.

But, considered as a part, and in respect to its relations, it is as perfect as the body to which it belongs.

22. Let us not, then, view with regret and suspicion the (in this sense) imperfect records which have preserved for us the wonderful discourse which we are about to review. Let not short-sighted, caviling Infidelity rob us of our joy and boast in believing that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;” and that even the fragmentary records of some parts, and the supplementary records of others, are just as they should be: “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good unto thee.” But we must gather up these fragments, that nothing be lost. This the Harmony professes to do; and, still further, professes to restore the various parts according to their original order.

CHAPTER II.

Principal subject—TRANSPPOSITION OF LUKE XVII. 31-33.

▲ principal difficulty in interpreting the Prophecy—Two classes of Interpreters—Perplexity of Orthodox Expositors—Fanciful Expositions—How to detect the Transposition—Which record should be corrected—Are Luke xvii. and Matt. xxiv. parallel?—Which record is most complete—Christ's method of Teaching—When the Apostles were inspired—Character of the First References to the subjects of the great Prophetic Discourse—Other Transpositions—The Question at issue.

1. THE principal difficulty in harmonizing and applying the different sketches of our Lord's discourse arises from this single fact: In Matthew's record, the admonition to those upon the house-top, directing them not to come down to take anything out of the house, appears to belong to the period of the Roman invasion. But in Luke xvii. the same admonition appears to belong to the period that we usually apply to the coming of Christ. Now, when we apply any portion of the prophecy to the coming of Christ, the objector is ready to meet us with the remark, that in the account given by Luke, where he is speaking of the coming of Christ, he uses the identical admonition that, in another place, we apply to the period of the Roman war. Therefore it is concluded by some that the coming of Christ spoken of in the prophecy, was not a literal, personal coming, but a figurative, or judicial coming, by the instrumentality of the Romans.

Those who adopt this conclusion are divided into two widely different classes: (1.) Those who deny the doctrine of a second personal advent of Christ, as it is held by the orthodox churches: and, (2.) Those who believe that the Bible teaches such a doctrine in other places, but understand the language in *this prophecy* as being figurative.

2. Those of the class first mentioned have this in their favor: that the allusions to the coming of Christ in this discourse are apparently as plain and literal as in any other part

of the Bible. And if these are admitted to be metaphorical, it is with much plausibility that those who deny the doctrine of the second coming to judgment, insist upon a figurative interpretation of the other passages. And, besides, the orthodox divine has to admit that some of our Saviour's admonitions, which in Luke xvii. are given in connection with allusions to the second coming, are, in the other places, given undeniably in connection with matters pertaining to the Roman war.

Here the opponents of the orthodox claim to find proof of the figurativeness of the coming spoken of, and of its being in some way connected with the judgments that are already past. And, if in this place, why not elsewhere?

3. And this has likewise greatly perplexed our divines, when they have undertaken to point out and separate the portions that belong to the two very different periods. They have been in doubt to which of the events to apply the admonitions to those on the house-top, as found in the xvii. of Luke. If they apply that portion to the second advent, as the connection would seem to warrant; then what shall be done with the same words, where they as evidently belong to the period of the war?

If they apply them to the Roman war, then how dispose of the passages that we claim to relate to the literal coming? Here the orthodox divines have found themselves greatly embarrassed. And their opponents have not been either slow to perceive it, or reluctant to improve it.

4. Here lies the principal difficulty in giving a consecutive, systematic, and satisfactory interpretation of this wonderful discourse.

All the rest is comparatively easy. But while this difficulty remains, the orthodox expounders will continue to bewilder and confound their readers, by the unsatisfying theories of double prophecy, of typical events, or of allegorical imagery. And so long as this difficulty is allowed to modify or govern our expositions of the general subject, so long will the orthodox contribute to strengthen the hands of his opponent by those idle fancies, and groundless assertions, which have be-

come stereotyped as expositions of such verses as describe the coming of the Lord, and the darkening and falling of the luminaries of heaven. In the appropriate place in this Exposition, these stereotyped fancies will be properly attended to. And if they are not *demonstrated* to be fancies, then the author of this Treatise will acknowledge his work to be an entire failure. The reader is premonished, however, that he will then meet with some surprising *facts*; such facts as will contribute not a little to settle this whole matter of allegorical interpretation.

5. In the verses of the xvii. of Luke, of which we are now speaking, the two widely separated events are seemingly blended together. Did it never occur to you, reader, *that those verses are not in their proper place in the discourse?*

Turn, now, either to the parallel places in the Scriptures, or to the Harmony in this Treatise, and see for yourself that the verses are transposed from their relative position in the discourse.

You perceive that the verses relating to those admonitions in question, in order to be opposed to the parallel verses in the other places, have to be taken out of their present connections in Luke xvii., and placed in advance of their present numerical order. And where do they appear, when placed oppositely to their parallels in the other records?

It is easy to see: they appear just where they properly belong: they are found in that portion of the discourse which all admit refers to the Roman war. It is obvious, then, that these verses, as they stand in Luke xvii., are transposed. Put them where the other records place them, and the principal hindrance to a consistent interpretation of our Lord's prophetic discourse is taken away. The importance of noticing this matter is sufficiently obvious. No theory, no interpretation, no general conclusion, can be deemed complete and reliable, if this remarkable circumstance is not duly considered.

No good can result from overlooking it, or from treating it as a matter of little moment.

6. A question still remains: admitting the transposition of the verses in question, how shall the relative order of the ver-

ses in the discourse be determined? Shall the other records be arranged to agree with the xvii. of Luke? or shall the order of this chapter be made to harmonize with the others? It is a plain question, and a question of some importance to the general subject. Our remaining observations in this chapter will bear upon this point.

We have already been reminded that, of the several records of our Lord's prophetic discourse, *no one is full and perfect in itself*. Even the most lengthy and complete account given by Matthew omits several things of great importance, which are supplied by the others. And, in one case, (to be particularly noticed hereafter,) Matthew omitted one verse that throws a flood of light upon the obscurest portion of the predictions. Indeed, the verse supplied from Luke xxi. 24, may be regarded as the most important explanatory verse in the whole body of records.

In the proper place it will be shown to be the connecting link between the most distant periods, joining together the beginning and the ending of the predicted events. What would have been the result, if this important verse had been omitted also by Luke? It is needless to inquire: the question has been sufficiently answered by those who undertake to expound Matthew, without noticing, in its relative order, the verse supplied by Luke. The importance of this verse, and the consequence of overlooking, or misplacing it, will not now be exhibited, but reserved for the Exposition.

7. The principal difficulty in harmonizing and applying the different records of the prophetic discourse, it has been remarked, is on account of the transposed verses in Luke xvii.

It is now appropriate to ascertain what influence those verses should have in deciding the relative order of the narration. And the first remark is this: Our Lord's discourse, as there recorded, was not delivered on the same occasion, nor in answer to the same inquiries, that we find originated the discourse recorded in the other places. And although there is, to some extent, a general parallelism, we are not certain that either was designed to be a proper parallel of the other.

We need not, therefore, feel ourselves obliged to restrain

the natural interpretation of the discourse about the temple, simply because, in *some other* discourse, a matter was introduced in a different relative order. But if we conclude that the two discourses were designed to be parallel, then we should notice that these transposed verses are found, as the record shows, in a very brief and broken narrative of what was said on the general subject; and *without any other account of the same discourse, to fill up and elucidate that single, and evidently imperfect record* — (imperfect, as explained in a previous chapter.)

What other things our Saviour said on that occasion,— things (as in the other case) elucidating the nature and order of events, we are as ignorant as we must have remained in respect to many things in the temple discourse, if the subsequent records had not gathered up and preserved them.

8. Can it be wise, then, that the order of the narration of that single and imperfect sketch should be made of so much greater importance than the fuller narration of the three-fold and perfected record? Shall we change the whole order and design of the natural exposition of the elucidated and completed record, simply because the same order of relation is not observed in another record? Shall we correct the perfect by the imperfect? Shall the three-fold testimony be set aside for the single testimony? Shall what we know to be as complete as Inspiration designed it, be distorted in its natural order by what we have reason to believe is not as complete as it was designed?

For the great discourse which is found in the three evangelists, was delivered subsequently to the other: and, if it is on the same subject, it must have been designed as an improvement upon the other, as its very appearance proves.

9. This leads to another remark: Our Saviour was in the custom of presenting subjects to the minds of his disciples, that they might become themes of inquiry and meditation. He was also accustomed to give them information on various subjects, not all at once, in its fullness, but gradually, and from time to time, as he judged them able to receive it, until they had obtained a full understanding of the matter.

We should constantly remember that the disciples were not fully inspired from the first; but were slow of apprehension, liable to mistake, and even fell into errors and misconceptions about the very matters on which Christ had been speaking.

10. This state of things continued, with some improvement, until they were finally and fully inspired to act in the Saviour's place. When Christ saw fit to introduce an important subject, he sometimes designedly left his communications unfinished, that he might resume and complete them at a more convenient or appropriate time.

Thus in regard to his departure from them, his crucifixion, the gift of the Spirit, &c.

Now, would it not have been exceedingly unwise for the disciples to use those first, unfinished instructions as the criterion by which to regulate the order, and decide the nature, of the more full and finished communications? .

The case in hand is quite similar: Our Lord, designing to be more full and explicit at another time, introduced the subject of Jewish calamities, and of his own judgment coming; but, at first, gave only such an amount of information as answered the purpose of awakening an interest, and preparing the way for complete and final instruction.

11. And it is, as the record itself shows, a matter of fact, that they did not, from that first discourse, understand either the precise nature, or the relative order, or the time, of the great events under our present notice. Hence the meaning of their inquiries on the subject, at a time subsequent to the first discourse; and hence, also, the propriety of delivering the lengthy and particularizing discourse which is the subject of this Treatise.

Now, to make the relative order of the last and finished discourse subject to the order of the sketch of the first discourse, is to act without sufficient reason. But this we do, if we permit the order of the introductory discourse to overrule the order of the final one.

We need not be trammelled, then, in our exposition of the xxiv. of Matthew, by any discrepancy of parallelism in the xvii. of Luke.

12. It may be observed, still further, that there are other transpositions in the relative order of the two discourses. For example, the allusion to the carcass and eagles. Take another instance in the three sketches of the same discourse: the 10th verse in Mark's account must be put between the 13th and 14th verses, in order to harmonize with the record of Matthew. And the 9th verse in Matthew has to be divided, and a part transferred to another place in the relative order, that it may be harmonized with the two records of Mark and Luke. Transpositions in the relative order of sentences, then, are not unusual. So that, in maintaining the present position, there is not an effort to prove a new and unheard-of thing. The labor is simply to show an additional instance of what is admitted to have more than once occurred in the same general connection; and to settle the matter of precedency between an unfinished and a finished lesson of instruction, as to which of the two should be used to amend the other.

CHAPTER III.

Principal subject—THE INTERROGATIONS.

State of the case—How Christ began his discourse—How many things were comprised in the Questions proposed—What is indicated by the different forms in which the Questions are recorded—Impressions of the Disciples—Why three events are blended in their Inquiries—How their impressions originated—What probably occasioned the Difference in the Records—Importance of considering this—Cause of Indefiniteness of many Expositions—The true method of Reasoning—Illustrations.

1. SOME importance should undoubtedly be attached to the interrogations which our Lord had in view when he delivered the discourse under review. The previous *unfinished*, and—in this sense—imperfect, instructions relative to the destiny of the Jews, and of the world, had resulted as was foreseen, and perhaps intended; or, at least, wisely permitted. The

great subjects on which the Lord intended to speak more particularly, at a more appropriate time, had, it appears, already been matters of thought, and, probably, of conversation, among the disciples. They were ready now to press their inquiries, that they might the more clearly understand the matters on which they had thought, but which still seemed obscure and confused. Of the coming of the Son of man, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, they had already heard something; but in respect to the precise *nature*, and relative *order* of some of the events, they were yet in the dark.

2. The appropriate time had now come for Christ to give the complete lesson, which from the first he undoubtedly intended to teach. As they called his attention to the huge stones in the wall, and the magnificent appearance of the temple, he opened his wonderful prophetic discourse by the solemn declaration, that the time would come when there should not remain there one stone upon another. This appears to have been the substance of all that was said in respect to the matter, until they arrived at the summit of mount Olivet, and Christ had taken his seat over against the temple, where the whole city was distinctly exposed to his view.

3. Then Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately, and desired him to inform them when the things which he had predicted should take place. Here we should remember that we have no proof whatever, that anything had been said, at that time, about his coming, or of the end of the world. Yet the evidence is clear, that their inquiries had respect to three very different events: "Tell us when shall these things be?" That is, undoubtedly, the things relating to the destruction of the temple. "And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" These are the questions, as recorded by Matthew. The other two evangelists do not retain the triple form of the question, but appear to have recorded it as if all the events would transpire at the same time. "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled." There is here an appearance, which may be

regarded as an evidence, that the three events were supposed by the disciples to belong to the same period, and that the signs of one would also be the signs of the others. It is certain, however, that the questions were propounded in the three-fold manner, and referring respectively to the three great events. To suppose otherwise, would be an impeachment of Matthew's testimony, charging upon him the fact of reporting, *as said*, something that was *not* said. This is a very different thing from simply *omitting* something, in order that another might strengthen the first record by confirmatory additions.

4. And it is possible, indeed, probable, that all the disciples were impressed, that the ruin of the temple, and the second coming would be at the end of the world. And although Matthew has preserved the triplicate form of the interrogatories, it is no evidence that he supposed the three events would be widely separated. From the fact, that the whole subject was evidently suggested, at this time, by the observations about the destruction of the temple, and from the evident mingling of the three great events in their inquiries, it is probably safe to conclude, that the disciples were impressed that the three great events would transpire in connection, or at periods not remote from each other. Whether the disciples had any definite conviction in relation to the length of time which should elapse previous to the ruin of the temple, and the other supposed synchronous events, is not certain. But there are reasons for concluding that they supposed all would transpire during the lifetime of some who were then living. The different subjects had been blended in their inquiries and meditations, and, in some way, the whole matter seemed to them connected with the coming of the kingdom of God. Now, it is certain that Christ represented the kingdom of heaven as being "at hand," as coming "nigh" unto them, as "within," (or, more properly, among,) them, and as having indeed "come" unto them, just as certainly as that he cast out devils by the finger of God. He had also informed them, that as they fled from city to city from their persecutors, they

should "not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come." If any doubt remained in their minds, in relation to the nearness of this great event, it was probably removed by that very distinct affirmation of Christ, that there were some then standing with him which should not die, until they had seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

5. This passage is so remarkable, and probably had so much influence in forming the impression that all these great events were near; — and it being still a great difficulty in the way of a clear understanding of the general subject; — it will be expedient to bring it distinctly before the mind, in order that we may perceive the effect it most probably had upon the disciples, who were from other sources also impressed that the end of all things was near. We will, after the plan of the Harmony, take the record of Matthew, and add what was supplied by the other evangelists, that all that is upon record may be presented at once to the mind. The places referred to are Matt. xvi. 27, 28, Mark viii. 38, and ix. 1, Luke ix. 26, 27. [*Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh [in his own glory,] (and) in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.*] *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some [of them that stand here] which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. [Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power,] [Till they see the kingdom of God.]*

6. Let it be remembered that it is not intended, just now, to explain this passage, and the others just referred to; but simply to show what had been the subjects of thought and meditation among the disciples, and with what impressions they probably approached the Saviour, at the time they proposed the questions which are now under consideration. After such observations from Christ, and after the conversations and reflections natural to inquisitive minds, how natural, when one of the supposed synchronous events was named, to

inquire, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

It must be evident, considering the circumstances of the case, that although three very different events were contemplated in the inquiries, yet these events were considered as being likely to transpire at, or about the same time. And this conclusion appears to be still more probable, when it is considered, that although the inquiries did actually have respect to three different events, and by one of the historians they were so recorded; yet the other historians, designedly recording the inquiries in the *spirit* in which they were made, and having more particular reference to the *impression on the minds of the disciples, which prompted them to make the inquiries in that form*; — we say — this remarkable circumstance must make it appear evident that the disciples were impressed that all would transpire at about the same time.

7. And here we have another of those beautiful instances in which one part of the Scripture, without any apparent design, elucidates and sustains the other. By this two-fold method of preserving these important questions, we have not only the precise *form* in which they were propounded, but the *understanding* and *spirit* by which they were suggested. We have not only the formal interrogatories to which Christ gave his attention, but the understanding and impression of the inquirers, which he undertook to *correct*, or to *confirm*. To these unexpected, and, to the careful reader, constantly occurring coincidences, the pious mind delights to turn. They are the "things new," and yet old, which Inspiration has hidden away down in the depths of divine wisdom, like pearls in deep waters, that the inquiring mind may be both excited and rewarded in its deep searchings after hidden wisdom. They not only prove that the Scriptures were designed to be studied, but that they will *endure* study, and strengthen the belief that begins its examination with the things upon the surface.

8. Can any one fail to perceive the importance of having distinctly in view this two-fold method of preserving the inquiries under notice? Without a proper consideration of

this, can we distinctly show *to* what, and *for* what, our Saviour spoke, at the time we are now considering? Has there not been too much haste in approaching this tremendous subject? Has there not been too much leaping at conclusions, as the expression is? Has there not been an evident overlooking, or lightly considering, the circumstances which prompted the inquiries to which the Saviour replied? And has there not been, of consequence, a proportional *indefiniteness* in showing what object Christ had in view in giving this important discourse? And may not this account for the undeniable confusion and uncertainty which, to an unpleasant degree, characterize the many expositions of this portion of the divine oracles?

9. So far as common philosophy is concerned, we live in the Baconian age: we reason by induction. We first inquire, *What are the facts?* And by this we mean, *all the facts accessible; all that bear upon the case, however remotely.* He who, by any means, adds a new fact to the knowledge of the day, is regarded as having conferred a favor upon the race. And this is especially true in all these important studies which affect human destiny, and are still somewhat obscured, and apparently conflicting. In erecting our theories upon ascertained facts,—which is the true method of reasoning,—we are thankful for what may seem at first to be little facts; facts overlooked by the ordinary explorer. We sometimes find that one of these little truths—to use such a word—is in fact a great truth; a truth that gives an entirely different aspect to important matters. It was, to the common thinker, an apparently trifling matter that the electric fluid was once drawn from the clouds by a kite string; but it has changed the destiny of the world. So, in the philosophy of theology, no ascertainable fact should be either overlooked, or treated as if it were of little or no importance. And this must be especially essential in those momentous biblical subjects which have undeniably perplexed so many of our divines. Is it not palpable that they have too frequently reasoned from hypothesis, instead of facts? And is it not true that the inductive method of reasoning has hardly yet found its way

to conspicuousness in our biblical expositions? And is it not particularly true in the multitudinous, antagonistical, and unsatisfactory methods of expounding the portion of Scripture which is now under notice? In what treatise shall we find even the principal, and easily ascertained facts, that have a bearing upon this subject? Instead of inferring facts from theories, let us reverse the order, and derive theories from facts.

10. These extended remarks cannot be deemed out of place by that class of minds to which these pages are addressed. That kind of intellectuality is not in haste to plunge into the obscure depths of uncertainty. It pauses to examine every step of logical progress; and would rather go two steps backward, to be doubly sure, than one forward, but half assured of its certainty. That kind of mentality likes to linger in the examination of foundation and explanatory truths, and gather within its eager grasp all the leading lines of certainty and probability that seem to converge to the distant, unseen point, toward which the ruling desire is perpetually tending. A little delay at the outset, to see what materials for further research we have gathered, and to take our bearings for another advance, is not deemed to be time thrown away; but regarded, rather, as a new observation of the stars, that guide us, and a re-examination of the calculations that assure us, that we may proceed the more pleasantly, and the more safely.

We have ventured too long upon these voyages of discovery without a chart to guide us. Or, if we have charts innumerable, they were at first so imperfectly constructed, and have been since so carelessly copied, that he who ventures, to guide his explorations according to their indefinite and self-contradictory outlines, will be likely to veer away into the regions of doubt and darkness, or to dash headlong upon the reefs of skepticism and infidelity.

If, in our progress, we find ourselves at a point beyond which we have no further light or pilotage, we shall cast our anchor and wait for day. Or, if we must proceed, we will feel our way along as carefully as possible, constantly sounding, as we advance, and leave our discoveries as a chart for the benefit of subsequent adventurers.

CHAPTER IV.

Principal subject—CONSIDERATIONS PRELIMINARY TO THE EXPOSITION.

When the Apostles were fully Inspired—Previous liability to mistakes—Examples—Principal Design of Christ's final Discourses—A principal Error of the Disciples—Jewish understanding of the Prophecies—Examples—Facts to be considered—Leading Themes of the first Gospel Preachers—The Kingdom—The Judgment—The End of the world—Impression of the two sons of Zebedee—When Messiah's Kingdom was expected—Origin of that Expectation—Christ's Object in giving his prophetic Discourse—State of the case summarily exhibited—Why the Errors of the Disciples were not corrected before—Divine method of Instruction.

1. It is of great importance to recollect that the apostles were not fully inspired at the time when the Lord delivered his prophetic discourse. Their plenary inspiration appears to have been deferred until the great spiritual baptism at Pentecost, after the Lord's ascension. Until then, they seem to have been liable to mistake, like other men; and were not judged to be fully qualified to assume the responsibility of governing and teaching the church. It was not without a reason that the Lord directed them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. There were some things which they desired to know, but were not empowered to know, until that plenary baptism of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord was fully employed in unfolding to them the mystery of divine things, as they were able to bear it. During his continuance with them, after his resurrection, he continued to discourse with them of things pertaining to his kingdom. But even at the end of that forty days' especial instruction, they had not learned at what time the kingdom should be restored again to Israel. Of the *fact* that it would be restored, they seem to have been duly informed; but of the "times or seasons which the Father hath put in his own power," they were yet without knowledge. Acts i. 6, 7.

2. It will not be hazardous, then, to suppose that the apostles were uninformed with respect to some things, and even mistaken about others, at the time they came to Christ with their inquiries respecting the signs and time of his coming. The days of their pupilage were not yet accomplished. They were still sitting as disciples at the feet of their divine Master, learning the things which it behooved them to know, as the future guides and governors of the church. And, what was just as necessary, they were at the same time *unlearning* many things which it behooved them to forget. They still had their mistaken impressions and views, even with respect to some matters on which our Lord had already discoursed. This may seem surprising to us, but it is undeniable. The coming of Elijah was as little understood, before it was explained, as the coming of Christ himself. The relation of infants to the heavenly kingdom was so little comprehended, that the disciples rebuked those who brought them to the Saviour. And they were still so mistaken in their impressions of the nature of Messiah's kingdom, as to dispute about who should be greatest. They did not yet know the nature and necessity of the faith that was instrumental in curing the demoniac. Even Peter himself, one of the chief apostles, was yet uninformed that his Master must die. And, after all that he had said about his resurrection, Christ's appearing to them, after he was risen, was a matter of astonishment and terror. In fine, the notions of the disciples were erroneous at this time, respecting many things which to us appear almost self-evident. Even after Christ had discoursed freely on various topics pertaining to his coming and kingdom, there was much that they could not fully comprehend.

3. It is not, therefore, assuming anything in itself improbable, to conclude, that the disciples may have *misunderstood* the Lord's previous observations on the subjects about which they now inquired. And, after a little, it will perhaps be sufficiently evident to the reader that they *must* have misunderstood him in some things; and that a principal design of Christ's final discourse was, to *complete* his lessons of instruction, so far as the disciples had failed fully to apprehend his

meaning; thus communicating truth as they were able to receive it; and to *correct* such erroneous views as they might still entertain. We have seen how this was done in some things. But our principal object now is, to show how it was done in the matter of which we are treating.

4. The principal error under which they seem to have been laboring, was, in relation to the *nature* of Messiah's kingdom. Their Jewish conceptions and prejudices still remained, and evidently modified all their views of the work of Christ, and of his prophetic discourses. They still "trusted" it should be he "that should redeem Israel." And it must not be forgotten, that the redemption for which they looked to Christ, was not the redemption of transgressors, by means of the death of the Redeemer; but the literal, political redemption of Israel, as a people, from their political bondage. The Old Testament Scriptures are filled with glorious predictions of Messiah and his happy reign over Israel. And these prophetic descriptions of the conquest of the Gentiles, and of the elevation and prosperity of the seed of Jacob, were familiar to the Jewish mind, and most gratifying to the Jewish heart. This familiarity, and this gratification, with the prophetic delineations of Messiah and his kingdom, *understood as they were by the Jews*, must be considered as the key to all their otherwise inexplicable conduct, in their treatment of Messiah.

5. Their prayers, praises, hopes and enjoyments, all had intimate association with their understanding of the Messianic prophecies. When Gabriel appeared unto Mary, to announce to her the great favor she had found with God, he, at the very first, appealed to her Jewish heart: "Behold, thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name *JESUS*. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him *the throne of his father David*. *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever*." When Mary was led to magnify the Lord, in view of herself being the mother of Christ, she felt and spoke as a Jew: "He has holpen *his servant Israel*, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake *to our fathers*, to *Abraham*, and to *his seed*, forever." We perceive the same thing in the exultation

and prophecy of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, in view of his being the harbinger to go before the face of the Lord. "Blessed be the Lord God of *Israel*; for he hath visited and redeemed *his people*; and hath raised up a horn of salvation *for us, in the house of David*; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that *we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us*: to perform the mercy *promised to our fathers*, and to remember his holy covenant: the oath which he sware to *our father Abraham*, that he would grant unto *us*, that *we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies*, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." This was the nature of the redemption, and this the kind of kingdom, which the Jews expected to receive by the Messiah.

6. The song of the angels was of the same character, and could not fail to deepen the impression in their mind. "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The terms Saviour, Christ, and Lord, had a significancy with Jewish minds probably much more definite and literal than they have with us. It is probable that the venerable Simeon, as he held the infant Jesus in his arms, had also the literal conception which was so characteristic of that people. It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. As the aged saint took the infant Redeemer in his arms, he blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the gentiles, *and the glory of thy people Israel*." And as the venerable prophetess Anna came into the temple at that instant, she likewise "gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of him *to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*."

7. When the magi came from the east to Jerusalem, in search of the newly born Saviour, their inquiry was, "*Where is he that is born KING OF THE JEWS*, for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." It is not wonder-

ful that when "Herod the king had heard these things he was *troubled*, and all Jerusalem with him." He was afraid of losing his throne; and all Jerusalem was in commotion with the expectation of the result of rival kings. "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where *Christ* should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet: And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a *Governor, that shall rule MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.*" It is not surprising, then, when we consider the common impression of the Jews, that Herod should seek the young child to destroy him; for the redemption and rule that were expected of Christ, would have unthroned the tyrant, and driven from the land his Roman supporters. But to the people generally it would have been deliverance from a yoke of iron. Therefore they greatly rejoiced.

8. These Israelitish views of temporal dominion manifested themselves in a variety of ways through the whole period of the Saviour's life. Friends and enemies alike exhibited the general conviction. Ambition sought to secure the right and left hand honors of his throne. Bewildered Admiration undertook by force to make him a king, whether he would or not, when he manifested his divine power. Enmity, with forensic skill, framed his accusation of treason, in disappointment of the common anticipations relative to his kingly character. His death sentence, and his published accusation on the cross, were but so many proofs of the common disappointment. Pious grief wept over the sepulchre, murmuring through the falling tears, "We trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." The very last inquiry made by the disciples, before the risen Saviour ascended, showed that even then they had not entirely lost the influence of natural and deep-founded convictions. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They needed, besides the Saviour's personal instructions, the promised illumination of the Holy Ghost.

9. Now, these are the facts that must be considered, in or-

der to make appropriate inductions, and establish a theory of exposition that shall be worthy of our confidence. But these are not the only facts: there yet remain others, which, if possible, are still more important. Christ himself was accustomed to speak of his kingdom in a way which certainly appears to have been calculated to deepen the common impression, and rendered it the more necessary, at the appropriate time, to explain himself more fully, and do what could appropriately be done to give the disciples a true exposition of his doctrine.

10. When the harbinger of Christ lifted up his voice to the myriads who attended his ministry, his first proclamation was, "Repent ye, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" And of Christ himself it is written, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So, when Christ sent forth his apostles to preach, he gave them their instruction in these words: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now, it would be very unreasonable to suppose that John, and Christ, and the apostles merely *began* their ministry by making this proclamation; and that they did not *continue* to teach the same thing. The only rational conclusion is, that this proclamation formed the principal theme of their ministry; and that they began, and continued, with the same leading subject. Consistently with this view, we find that the occasional records of the subject matter of that beginning of gospel preaching, had intimate relation to this leading theme. Of Christ we read, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, *and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.*" At another time we read, "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, *and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.*" The very frequent reference to the kingdom, under its various distinguishing titles, shows that it was a common, if not the principal theme of public discourse, and private conversation. The mention of the kingdom, in connection with the case of John the Baptist; with the case of those who rejected the first apostolic message, and in connection with very many of our Saviour's parables;—these, and other instances that might be

named, show the frequency and familiarity of treating the great leading theme of the new dispensation.

11. Connected with this theme was another, which appears to have been almost as prominent in our Saviour's public and private teaching; this was the *Judgment*, when appropriate rewards and punishments should be administered to all classes of people. John the Baptist dwelt largely on the Judgment, and continually warned the people. And how frequently, and how terribly, Christ proclaimed the Judgment, it is not necessary particularly to specify. The disciples became familiar with the idea, and had their minds frequently and deeply impressed with the terrible calamities that should befall the impenitent, and the blessings and honors reserved for the faithful. The cities in which the mighty works of Christ had been wrought, were solemnly admonished that in "the day of judgment" it would be "more tolerable for Sodom than for them." "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it;" "The queen of the South shall rise up in the day of judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it"—are but specimens of the warnings which Christ gave to the people who heard him.

12. The disciples were taught also to look for the final closing up of these retributions, and the separation of the different characters, at the "end of the world;" or, as some prefer to render it, at the end of that age or dispensation. The parable of the Tares may be selected as a specimen of the instruction which the disciples were accustomed to receive. The explanation of the parable was thus: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world. The good seed are the *children of the kingdom*; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. *The harvest is the end of the world*; and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered, and burned in the fire; *so shall it be in the end of this world*. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall *gather out of his kingdom* all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of

fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth *in the kingdom of their Father.*” The parable of the Fishes is of the same import. And both of these, and, indeed, most of the other parables, are introduced as illustrations of things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto,” is the usual introduction.

13. There was also another view of the general subject, which must have left a deep impression upon the minds of the disciples. When our Saviour, with reference to the rich, young ruler, observed, “That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven,” Peter desired to know what should be given unto them who had forsaken all to follow him. “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” After hearing such a declaration as this, it is easy to understand what was the probable impression upon the mind of the ambitious mother of the two sons of Zebedee. These two relatives of Christ, James and John, having, perhaps, some little more familiarity with their Master than the others, and hoping thereby to secure the highest honors of that kingdom which was so generally expected, through the agency of their mother, presented their request, that one might sit on the right hand and the other on the left, “in the kingdom.” It is not difficult to perceive what kind of kingdom even these leading apostles were still anticipating. In the language of another, “They were still looking for a temporal kingdom. They expected that he would reign on the earth, with great pomp and glory. They expected that he would conquer as a prince and a warrior. The disciples here had no reference to the kingdom of heaven, but only to the kingdom which they supposed he was about to set up on the earth.” (*Barnes.*)

14. And there is still another consideration of importance, in making up our conclusion with respect to the impressions of the disciples, at the time of the discourse about the temple. It is so probable as to amount almost to certainty, that

they were expecting the fulfillment of all these things during their own natural life-time, or, at longest, within a few years. They did not forget that their Master had said to them, that, in fleeing from place to place before their persecutors, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come." And on another occasion, when speaking of the loss or salvation of the soul, the Master had said, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his work. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Mark says, "Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Luke says, "Till they see the kingdom of God."

15. Now, all these things are to be taken into consideration, in making up our minds concerning the views entertained by the disciples, at the time of propounding their questions respecting the times and the signs of the fulfillment. Our Saviour undoubtedly had some definite plan to guide him, and some distinct object in view, when he uttered his celebrated discourse about the seasons and the signs. He desired either to confirm, to remove, or to modify, the convictions of his disciples respecting these things. On a preceding page this matter has been definitely stated; and it now remains only to gather up the scattered facts that we have discovered, and present them in order before the mind, that we may ascertain, as far as practicable, with what convictions the disciples approached the great subject under discussion, and what Christ had before him to prompt and guide his discourse.

16. Are we not safe in concluding that the impression of the disciples was,

(1.) That *Christ was to come once more*,—not as he had come, in shame and obscurity,—but in great glory, and with the holy angels?

(2.) That his second advent would be a coming to execute terrible judgments upon the wicked, particularly upon the cities that would not receive him? And that this judgment would be the time of universal separation between the evil

and the good, (Matt. xiii.) that the one might be punished, and the other rewarded?

(3.) That this would be done openly and generally, when he should come in king!y majesty to establish his kingdom as a temporal prince?

(4.) That all this should take place while some of them should yet be living upon the earth? (Mark ix. 1.)

(5.) That this would be, in some senses, the end of the world? (Matt. xiii.)

17. Knowing, as our Saviour did, all that passed in the minds of men, and perceiving distinctly the error of his disciples, we cannot err in supposing that he designed in this discourse to correct their erroneous impressions, and, as far as practicable, establish them in the truth. It was his desire, undoubtedly, to do this; and we conclude, therefore, that he now undertook to do it. To suppose otherwise, would be supposing that he acted without such motives as we always like to ascribe to the adorable Saviour. It would be supposing that he misimproved a most favorable, and, perhaps, final opportunity of doing so important a work. Sometimes he instructed and admonished them without being requested to do so. Now, in addition to all the self-prompting and unchangeable desires to proclaim the truth, he was under the influence of a request from his beloved apostles, whom he had chosen to enlighten the world, and to regulate his church. Should he turn a deaf ear to their earnest request, when, upon the very face of it, there appeared an error that could not be cherished without injury? He had himself—shall we not say?—designedly suggested the subject, by his astounding declaration respecting the overthrow of the temple. Shall he now refuse to satisfy the very inquiries which he had awakened, and on a subject which he had purposely introduced for their information? No, indeed: he perceives the fatal mistakes of the world's appointed instructors; and he now undertakes, at great length, and with unusual pains, to show them the truth as it appeared to his own omniscience.

18. But here we may be met by what with some will be simple inquiry, and what with others will be caviling: Why

did not the unerring wisdom of the divine Saviour unfold, with unmistakable distinctness, these things at the very first? Why suffer mistakes to grow out of his own words? Or, originating from any source, why suffer a mistake to remain in the minds of his disciples for any length of time? Why not,—as he doubtless had the power, and could not lack for the disposition—why not *at once*—without any delay—tell them so they *must* understand, and thereby qualify them to instruct the world? Undoubtedly this would have been suggested by all who make such inquiries, if they had been permitted to advise the Son of God. But to those who repose in the belief, that Infinite Wisdom always does what is best, a sufficient answer will be, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Whether we can understand the reason or not, still it is undeniably true, that Infinite Wisdom did not see proper to adopt the method of instruction which these inquiries have in contemplation. The process of qualifying the apostles for their destined offices in the church, was a lingering process; nor was it completed until they were plenerarily inspired by the baptism at Pentecost.

19. This gradualism in the method of instruction was not confined, however, to the particular subjects under contemplation. It appears to have extended to all subjects. We meet with evidences of it throughout the Saviour’s ministry. The rule by which he was guided is sufficiently indicated by that beautiful remark of his,—“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” And this was nearly at the close of his instructions. We may, or we may not, understand all the reasons which guided unerring Wisdom in this matter; but the fact in question is too plain for contradiction. And, whether we comprehend the reasons or not, we will submit our own judgments to the Wisdom that cannot err, and conclude that it must have been best.

20. But we now approach the time when not only the power, but the disposition to instruct, could be exercised to their full extent with more appropriateness, perhaps, than at any previous period. If there was ever a time when it was proper for Divine Wisdom to display itself, by fully unfolding to

finite minds the world-affecting scenes of future ages, it was the time when the world's appointed religious teachers came to their Master, with solemn and pointed inquiries about the momentous matters which it behooved them to understand;—and which inquiries of themselves afforded proof, not only of their desire to be taught, but of their *need* of teaching. May we not conclude, with safety, that the peculiar circumstances of the case would induce the Saviour to give his instructions with greater fullness and precision than any previous period had rendered expedient?

CHAPTER V.

Principal subject—THEORY OF EXPOSITION.

Benefits of a Theory—Illustrations—Great names—Preparatory advise-ments—Character of the Theory of Exegesis—How to obtain a correct Theory—The case stated—What the Lord had in view—Illustrative Parable—Radical Mistake—How occasioned—Principal elements of the true Theory—Difficulties—What is attempted—General bearing of the Exposition—Origin of Universalism—Universalist Exegesis and Ortho-dox compared—Test of Truth and Error.

1. To accomplish any great, and, especially, any difficult enterprise, it is necessary to have a plan. And we need not linger to show the necessity of having a good and correct one: it is nearly self-evident. An *erroneous* plan or theory *cannot* guide us correctly; a *true* theory *may* not; but it will be much more likely to lead us to ultimate truth, than either no theory, or an incorrect one. We must have our plan, then; and the time has come to obtain it. Whence shall it be derived? From previous theories, shattered into fragments, like an exploded world, and rudely conglomerated into a new one? Certainly not: let it be original, as far as the nature of the case will admit. Let us take warning from the theoretic philosophy of ancient ages, and be satisfied with no

theory that is not directly educed from as many facts as we are permitted to examine. The usual theories of interpreting the Lord's great prophecy, like the ancient fanciful theories of the universe, are cumbersome, self-contradictory, and unsatisfactory.

“But they have the sanction of *great names*.” This is indeed true, and a source of deep regret. And so had the ancient theories of the universe: as great names sustained them as can be found on the historic page. Pythagoras, and Thales, and Ptolemy were neither idiots nor children; they were master spirits of a splendid age. But, since the days of Copernicus and Newton, who thinks of receiving the once orthodox and popular theories and conclusions of former ages, simply because they had the sanction of great names? “Great men are not *always* wise.” They may be great in some things, and far from great in other things. Great men are at variance in respect to a thousand things; and by the greatness of names we can never ascertain a doubtful truth. Truth is greater than great men; and sometimes God reveals to “babes” what he hides from the “wise and prudent.” (Matt. xi. 25.) “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” Before these pages are finished, the reader will frequently have the opportunity of seeing not only some of the *reasonings* of great men, but also some of their *assertions*, tested by matters of *fact*. These preparatory advisements are not without their use even now, as we proceed to develop our theory of exegesis. It will be independent, and in some respects, perhaps, a little startling. And as far as it is possible for any one who has been almost surfeited with reading on a particular subject, to shake off, flee from, and forget, the most he has read, or listened to, so far will it be done now; and, so far as it is practicable, the world shall have an *original Exposition of the Lord's great Prophecy*. If what herein appears shall happen to harmonize with what others have thought or said,—very well,—it will be a matter of thankfulness and gratulation. If otherwise,—it will be an occasion of regret; but not, for that reason, a sufficient inducement to withhold, alter, or discard, the writer's own convictions.

He claims, within the limits of evangelical orthodoxy, to think for himself, and to make known, in a suitable manner, his own impressions of divine truth.

2. "How can we reason, but from what we know?" What, then, are the facts to be considered in framing our theory? and how can they guide us to the ultimate truth? In the previous chapter, section 16, the reader will find a summary of the principal relevant facts. Let them be well considered, before proceeding further. It appears that the apostles came to the Lord with some correct, some incorrect, and with some confused notions relating to the great matters pertaining to Messiah and his kingdom. This afforded Christ an opportunity of relieving their confusion, correcting their mistakes, and confirming them in what they already truthfully understood. The only thing necessary to assume, (if it be an assumption,) is, that our Saviour, in his reply to their inquiries, did really undertake to make them understand the facts in the case. Or, in other words, that he did really desire and design to correct their erroneous impressions, and establish them in the truth. But, in such a case, it would be necessary for him to speak with more or less reference to the precise difficulties which embarrassed their minds. And these embarrassments related not only to the nature of the events, but to their times, and successive order. This should now be a subject of consideration.

3. It has already been exhibited that the disciples were erroneously impressed relatively to the nature and establishment of Messiah's dominion. Their conceptions and prejudices were still decidedly Jewish, as distinguished from the evangelical. To them it appeared likely that their Master would literally and visibly raise up and occupy the Israelitish throne, and reign gloriously over the nations. The general current of thought is indicated by one of our Lord's parables, which he introduced in this manner: "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, *because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.* He said, therefore, A certain nobleman went into a *far country, to receive for himself a*

kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered unto them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." Then follows the other details of the parable, closing up with the destruction of his enemies that would not submit to his dominion. Now, he had distinctly declared to his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some standing here, which shall not taste death till they have seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

4. It was very naturally inferred by the disciples, that this coming, and this destruction of enemies, and this setting up of the anticipated kingdom, would all take place within a few years. Hence, when the terrible calamities which Christ had predicted, should fall upon the Jews; when the temple and city should be overthrown; when there should be fearful sights in the heavens, and general commotion on earth, they would naturally be looking for the second coming of their Lord, as a literal and visible prince and deliverer, *at that very time.* But in this they would be mistaken. Hence the propriety of the first and repeated *cautions* with which our Saviour opened and continued his discourse. The disciples had entirely mistaken the *nature of the kingdom*; and could not conceive how it could be established, in their lifetime, without all these visible and temporal results. And, growing out of this error concerning the *nature* of the kingdom, they fell into another; they confounded together two very different things; that is, they did not—and, with their impressions, could not—distinguish between that *spiritual coming at Pentecost*, to establish the *spiritual kingdom*, and that literal, visible, and final *coming to judgment*, which should be at the end of the world. Hence—to anticipate the exposition—the propriety of Christ's repeatedly informing them that "the end is not yet;" and more than once, by way of anticipation, alluding to the real nature of his final judgment coming at the end of the world.

5. These are the principal elements of our theory. Who shall say that it is not warranted by all the facts and probabilities

relating to the case? With this simple plan to guide us, we can lay out the work of exposition, without any great perplexity, and, certainly, without any insuperable difficulties.

We see what was necessary to be done; and we find the Saviour undertaking to do it. We feel safe in supposing that he did it in the most appropriate manner. But we cannot deny, after all, but that there are difficulties which do not usually embarrass our biblical expositions. There are, we must candidly admit, difficulties which no theory can fully and perfectly remove. The author has not ventured upon this subject, unapprised of the difficulties of the case; nor without a studious examination of the various labors of others. The most that is now attempted is this:

(1.) To give an exposition which shall answer the purpose for which the Lord's discourse was originally designed.

(2.) To expound the whole discourse, so that one part of the exposition shall not be in conflict with any other part.

(3.) To give an exposition which shall not violate the ordinary rules for the use of language; but shall treat prose as prose, poetry as poetry, and avoid blending the literal with the figurative.

(4.) To interpret those portions which relate to the second advent and general judgment, so as to be in harmony with the many other portions in the Bible, where Jerusalem and the Jews have no especial concern.

(5.) To show the reason for blending the two leading subjects in the discourse, and, at the same time, distinguish and separate one portion from another.

(6.) To show the relation of the parables which are connected with the discourse.

(7.) In doing this, as a matter of course, some of the errors of the usual interpretations must be faithfully exposed.

6. It will be perceived, at once, that this work is not particularly intended to bear against Universalism. It is especially designed for those who are sentimentally orthodox, in relation to the great doctrines of the Second Advent, and general Judgment. In accomplishing our object, however, we do hope to rescue the divine oracles from those orthodox

perversions, which have probably done more to originate and perpetuate that fatal system of error, than all the preaching and writing of its professed advocates. Universalism, as a system of theology, was brought forth, and is nourished, by just such license in biblical interpretation as has been taken by most of our orthodox divines, in their exposition of the xxiv. chapter of Matthew. The principal difference between the Universalist and the Orthodox writers in the subject now under notice, is this: the orthodox teacher adopts a *certain method* of interpreting a difficult passage, and *limits it to that particular passage, or class of passages*. He dares not pursue his own method any further. He shrinks back from the legitimate consequence which he perceives must result, if his method should be carried throughout the Bible. The Universalist, on the other hand, starting with the usual principles of interpretation of the portion under notice, finds that by applying them to other portions of the Bible, he can explain away what appears to contradict his opinions, and so make out a desired theory, notwithstanding all the *literal* teachings of the Scriptures to the contrary. The Orthodox is the more inconsistent, and the Universalist is the more reckless, and the less reliable.

7. After all, the truth or error in the usual expositions, depends very much upon the manner of interpreting only a few of the passages in the discourse. The verses which refer to the "end" spoken of, to the coming of the Son of man, as the lightning from heaven, to the darkening of the heavenly luminaries, to the gathering of the elect together, and to the rewarding and punishing of the different characters,—the interpretation of these must be decisive of all the rest. And to these we design to bestow particular attention. *It will be desirable to keep the eye upon the record of Matthew, as found in the Harmony, with the supplementary additions from the other records.* The reader is earnestly requested to comply with this suggestion.

PART SECOND.

THE EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER I.

Principal subject—DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

Why Christ's attention was directed to the Temple—General form and extent of the Temple—Why Herod's was called the Second Temple—Stones in the wall—Adornments—Why called Gifts—Improbability of the prediction—The Romans trying to save the Temple—How the destruction began—Two days' Conflagration—Council Debate—The Romans in the inner court—Storming the Temple—The Holy of Holies on fire—Desperation of the Jews—Astonishment of the Romans—Progress of the flames—Titus in the Holy of Holies—Last effort to save the building—How the Prediction was finally fulfilled

Verse 1. AND JESUS WENT OUT, AND DEPARTED FROM THE TEMPLE; AND HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM, FOR TO SHOW HIM THE BUILDINGS OF THE TEMPLE.

THE disciples had enjoyed but few opportunities of visiting the temple, for their usual residence was in Galilee. It was not unnatural for them, then, to express their admiration at the extent, magnificence, and beauty of the sacred edifice. And they desired to have their Master observe the buildings of the temple; of what materials they were built, and how adorned with goodly stones and gifts. As the Lord Jesus had undoubtedly observed these things in his previous visits to Jerusalem, perhaps their reason for directing his attention to them at this time, was, because he had just declared in their hearing, that the temple should be left desolate, and that he should visit it no more. And he had also on a previous occasion predicted the utter desolation of the whole city. In their still imperfect faith, they may have thought that he had not

duly considered the exceeding improbability that such an edifice should be so totally overthrown, as not to leave one stone upon another. Lu. xix. 44.

They called his attention to the *buildings* of the temple. The temple proper stood on the highest part of Mount Moriah, and was surrounded by a great variety of buildings, of which, however, no very definite idea can be obtained without a diagram. The whole group of walls, porches, and buildings was more than half a mile in circumference. The principal building, which gave name to all the rest, stood nearly in the centre of this vast enclosure, and overlooked the whole. Its front, which faced the east, had a portico about one hundred and fifty feet long, and one hundred and fifty feet high.

This temple was, in some sense, the *third* temple, and was built by Herod the Great. But as the *second* temple, which was erected under the supervision of Zerubbabel, 500 years B. C., was not in reality *destroyed*, but only—by a gradual reëdification—*enlarged* and *improved*, until finally the new buildings superseded the former, therefore the *new* temple was still called the *second* one. And this was the more appropriate, because the regular service of the temple was continued without interruption during the whole process of renewing the building.

Our Lord introduced his discourse in a manner calculated to arrest attention and affect the heart. He announced the utter destruction of that great and holy edifice, so venerated and beloved by the Jews; so admired by the world. And his discourse was rendered still more impressive, from the fact, that, at this very time, their attention was particularly directed to the extent, solidity, and beauty of the holy house.

[*Mark*: AND ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAITH UNTO HIM, MASTER, SEE WHAT MANNER OF STONES, AND WHAT BUILDINGS ARE HERE!]

As Jesus went out and departed from the temple, he appears to have gone somewhat in advance of his disciples; and when he was in a position favorable for viewing the buildings, the disciples came to him to direct his attention to their solidity and beauty. One of the disciples—speaking probably

for the rest—desired him to “see what manner of *stones*” composed the walls. We are informed by Josephus—who is good authority in the case—that “The temple was built of stones that were white and strong; and each of their length was twenty-five cubits; their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve.”

It is not surprising, then, that these Galileans should exclaim, “Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!” Each of these beautifully shaped and polished stones was as large as a small dwelling house! No European or American architecture exhibits such vast blocks, either in its walls or foundations. And there are but few architectural remains in Asia and Africa that could compare with the Jewish temple.

[*Lukc*: AND SOME SPAKE OF THE TEMPLE, HOW IT WAS ADORNED WITH GOODLY STONES AND GIFTS.]

Of these adornments we may form some conception, by a single quotation from Josephus, who was an eye-witness of what he describes: “The temple had doors also at the entrance, and lintels over them, of the same height with the temple itself. They were adorned with embroidered vails, with their flowers of purple, and pillars interwoven; and over these, but under the crown work, was spread out a *golden vine*, with its branches hanging down from a great height; the largeness, and fine workmanship of which, was a surprising sight to the spectators, to see what vast materials there were, and with what great skill the workmanship was done.”*

There were undoubtedly many other ornaments, not only of the precious metals, but also of precious stones, variously displayed within and upon the temple: it was as beautiful as it was magnificent and strong. These ornaments were *gifts*, presented by different persons, for the purpose of beautifying the house of God. They were *gifts*, also, in the sense of being *devoted* to that especial purpose. It was not unusual, anciently, for people of all forms and systems of religion to make gifts to the divinities they worshipped.

* Jewish Antiquities, Whiston's translation, B. 15, c. 11, e. 3.

Those which were devoted to the adorning of the temples of their gods, were conspicuously exhibited as tokens of devotion and gratitude. The Jews were also accustomed to present beautiful and useful articles to Jehovah their God; and sometimes they were devoted to ornament his sanctuary.

The more especial object of this Treatise does not make it appropriate to dwell upon the particulars of the structure of the temple. The reader is therefore referred to other works, in which he may find a thousand particulars which are not noticed in this.

Verse 2. AND JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, SEE YE NOT ALL THESE THINGS! VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, [*Luke*: THE DAYS WILL COME, IN THE WHICH] THERE SHALL NOT BE LEFT HERE ONE STONE UPON ANOTHER, THAT SHALL NOT BE THROWN DOWN.

It must have seemed very improbable that such a building should be so utterly overthrown, that not one stone should be left upon another. The size of the stones, and the strength of the walls, and the solidity of the foundations, were such, that no common calamity could ever bring about such utter desolation. And the improbability of the prediction must have been greatly increased by the apparently impregnable defences by which the holy house was guarded.

If to this we add, the superstitious veneration which the Jews had for their temple, and which at any time would inspire them to make almost superhuman efforts to preserve it from injury; and consider, also, the uniform protection which the Romans extended to the religious institutions of the nations they subjected; we can but perceive that our Lord did not prophesy from a consideration of what might seem probable, but from omniscient perception of all future events.

We learn from history that the Roman general who conquered the city, did not design to demolish the temple, but greatly desired to preserve it. This was especially true of the temple proper. The holy house was strongly built, and well calculated for defence; and the Romans despaired of the complete conquest of the Jews, so long as the temple remained to serve them as a citadel.

The desire to preserve the temple did not prevent the most

extraordinary efforts to drive out the Jews. So, as soon as the Romans obtained access to the buildings of the courts that surrounded the temple proper, they set fire to some of the outer gates, which were made of wood, and covered with silver plates. The fire spread from the gates to the cloisters which surrounded the inner court, and raged for two days. These cloisters were three stories high. On the third day, Titus, the Roman general, ordered a part of the army to proceed to extinguish the fire, which it appears was finally accomplished.

At the same time he called a council of the commanders of the legions, the procurators, and the tribunes, to consult with them about what should be done with the temple. As it is interesting to watch the progress of all events that tended to help or to hinder the fulfillment of the improbable prediction, the observations on this verse will be extended, so as to bring definitely before us the precise manner in which the prophecy met its fulfillment.

When the subject of the destruction of the temple was submitted to the council, some of them—as Josephus says—“thought it would be the best way to act according to the rules of war, and demolish it; because the Jews would never leave off rebelling while that house was standing, at which house it was that they used to get altogether.”

Others were of the opinion that “in case the Jews would leave it, and none of them would lay their arms upon it, he might save it; but that in case they got upon it, and fought any more, he might burn it; because it must then be looked upon, not as a holy house, but as a citadel; and that the impiety of burning it would then belong to those that forced this to be done, and not to them.”

But Titus said, “that although the Jews should get upon that holy house, and fight us thence, yet ought we not to revenge ourselves on things that are inanimate, instead of the men themselves; and that he was not in any case for burning down so vast a work as that was, because this would be a mischief to the Romans themselves, as it would be an ornament to their government while it continued.”

The house here spoken of appears to have been the temple proper, around which the other buildings and cloisters were arranged. While this council was holding its deliberations, the fire in the cloisters around the inner court was still raging, notwithstanding that a part of the army was engaged in subduing it.

The opinion of Titus prevailed; and a still larger part of the army was dispatched to assist in extinguishing the flames. The fire had not yet reached the temple proper, nor the porches and rooms in immediate connection with it. Upon this lofty, central building, and immediately around it, the Jews had gathered, to make their final struggle to save themselves and their holy house.

The fire had now so destroyed the surrounding gates and cloisters, that, by forcing their way through the burning ruins, the Romans could get into the inner court, and come directly around the temple proper, which Titus was so anxious to preserve. The Jews were still more anxious to preserve it than he; for it was not only their last refuge, but they regarded its desecration with the utmost dread and horror.

The next morning after the council, Titus stormed the temple with his whole army, still designing, however, to preserve it. The Romans succeeded in forcing their way into the inner court, and came into close conflict with the Jews directly around the holy house. Titus was at this time resting in his tent, some distance from the scene of action. And now one of the Roman soldiers, without any orders, and, indeed, in violation of orders, "hurried only by a certain divine fury," as Josephus has it, snatched a brand from the burning ruins of the surrounding cloisters; and, being lifted up on the shoulders of another man, he hurled the blazing brand through one of the windows of the chambers that were built around the holy house, and set the edifice on fire.

The flames immediately burst out of the rooms around the temple, and mounted upward around the temple building itself; and the Jews instantly perceived that their holy house could not be saved. As the flames raged upward, the Jews made a terrible clamor, and labored with desperation to pre-

vent its ravages. "And now," says their historian, "they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered anything to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they had kept such a guard about it."

"And now," he continues, "a certain person came running to Titus, and told him of this fire, as he was resting himself in his tent, after the last battle; whereupon he rose up in great haste, and [unarmed] as he was, ran to the holy house, in order to have a stop put to the fire. After him followed all his commanders; and after them followed the several legions in great astonishment; so there was a great clamor and tumult raised, as was natural upon the disorderly motion of so great an army. Then did [Titus] Cæsar, both by calling to the soldiers that were fighting, with a loud voice, and by giving a signal to them with his right hand, order them to quench the fire. But they did not hear what he said, though he spake so loud, having their ears already dinned by a greater noise another way; nor did they attend to the signal he made with his hand neither, as still some of them were distracted with fighting, and others with passion. But as for the legions that came running thither, neither any persuasions, nor any threatenings, could restrain their violence; but each one's own passion was his commander at this time. And as they were crowding into the temple together, many of them were trampled on by one another, while a great number fell among the ruins of the cloisters, which were still hot and smoking, and were destroyed in the same miserable way as those whom they had conquered. And when they were come near the holy house, they made as if they did not hear Cæsar's orders to the contrary; but they encouraged those that were before them to set it on fire."*

The inner and most holy part of the building was not yet on fire; and Titus still hoped to preserve that part from the flames. With some of his officers, Titus went into the holy of holies, and found it to be far superior to the representations which foreigners had made of it, and determined to

* War, B. 6, c. 4.

make another effort to preserve it. So he "came up in great haste, [to the upper portions of the building, where the flames were burning,] and endeavored to persuade the soldiers to quench the flames; and gave order to Liberalius, the centurion, and one of the spearmen that were about him, to beat the soldiers that were refractory with their staves, and restrain them. Yet were their passions too hard for the regards they had for Cæsar, and the dread they had of him who forbade them; as was their hatred of the Jews, and a certain vehement inclination to fight them too hard for them also. Moreover, the hope of plunder induced many to go on, as having this opinion, that all the places within were full of money, and as seeing that all around about it was made of gold. And, besides, one of those that went into the place [the holy place] prevented Cæsar, when he ran so hastily out [as before mentioned] to restrain the soldiers, and threw the fire upon the hinges of the [inner] gate, in the dark; whereby the flame burst out from within the holy house itself immediately, when the commanders retired, and Cæsar with them; and when nobody any longer forbade those that were without to set fire to it. And thus was the holy house burnt down without Cæsar's approbation."

Thus, against the wishes of Titus, and in spite of the desperate exertions of the Jews, the temple was destroyed, improbable as the event had appeared. But still the strange prediction of Christ was not completely fulfilled; the most improbable part remained to be accomplished; for with all the devastation of human conflict, and raging flames, the solid walls and foundations must have remained in many places standing. No common accident, or ordinary military destruction, could have thrown the walls so utterly prostrate as to leave not one stone upon another. It now remains to show how the prediction received its complete fulfillment.

After the city was entirely subdued, Titus gave orders that it should be *utterly demolished*, excepting three of the principal towers, and so much of the western wall as might serve as a protection for the camp of the garrison that was left on the ground. The towers were reserved as specimens of the

fortifications of the city that had been overthrown. And here again we bring forward the Jewish historian.

“Cæsar gave orders that they should now *demolish the entire city and temple*,” (excepting, of course, the towers and wall afore-mentioned.) “But for all the rest of the wall, *it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground, by those that DUG IT UP TO THE FOUNDATION, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited.*”

This demolition, as we have seen, extended to *the entire city and temple*, with the aforesaid exceptions, which did not include any part of the temple. The garrison which was left on the ground was under the command of Terentius Rufus. The Jewish Talmudists call him Turnus Rufus; and they relate, that he *plowed up Zion as a field*, and made Jerusalem become as heaps, and the *mountain of the house* [the temple mountain] *as the high places of a forest.*”

Thus we have the testimony of such historians as cannot be suspected of partiality toward Christ, to prove the most literal and astonishing fulfillment of a most minute and unlikely prediction. Nothing but Omniscience could have foreseen this unparalleled devastation, so many years before it transpired. We observe here the most minute and rigid fulfillment; and we may not unnecessarily resort to fiction or figure to explain any part of this prophecy.

CHAPTER II.

Principal subject—CALAMITIES OF THE JEWS PREVIOUSLY TO THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

Supposition of the disciples concerning the Coming of Christ, and of the End of the World — Design of Christ's Discourse — Caution against Deceivers — Source of danger — Impostors claiming to be the Christ that was crucified — Plausibility of their pretensions — Wars and Rumors of Wars — Progress in the commotions — Character of Christ's Predictions — Famines and Pestilences — Earthquakes — Singular Comments — Objections — Criticisms — Literal and figurative Language — Earthquakes in divers places — Signs in the heavens — Fearful sights on the earth — Indications — An Army in the clouds — The Supernatural Voice — The wonderful Warning — Something still worse — Affecting Illustration.

Verse 3. AND AS HE SAT UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, [*Mark* : OVER AGAINST THE TEMPLE,] THE DISCIPLES, [*Mark* : PETER, AND JAMES, AND JOHN, AND ANDREW,] CAME UNTO HIM PRIVATELY, SAYING, TELL US, WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE? AND WHAT SHALL BE THE SIGN OF THY COMING, AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD?

FROM the preliminary chapters, especially chap. iii., part first, it will appear that the disciples came to Christ with erroneous and confused notions respecting both the nature of his coming, and the time and order of relative events. The coming for which they looked was a literal, personal coming, as a temporal prince, to set up his throne, and reign gloriously upon the earth. The destruction of the temple they probably regarded as a part of the general judgment upon his enemies which he would inflict at his coming. And they supposed — as has been exhibited in previous chapters — that it would take place at the end of the world. What was their precise idea of the end of the world, does not fully appear. But they appear to have understood that the world would, in some sense, come to an end, because the Lord had distinctly spoken of his coming to judgment at the end of the world. See *Matt.* xiii.

And all this they supposed would transpire in a few years :

within their own lifetime. See Matt. xvi. 28. Now here was a mingling of truth and error; a confounding together of things totally unconnected. And it behooved the Lord Jesus to correct their errors, and to establish them in the truth.

The theory of exposition maintained in this volume proceeds upon the supposition, that this discourse of our Lord was intended principally to accomplish this purpose. But as this point has been so fully exhibited in the former part of the work, it is unnecessary to say more in this connection.

Verse 4. AND JESUS ANSWERED, AND SAID UNTO THEM, TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN DECEIVE YOU.

Our Lord begins his reply by cautioning them against deception. He very well knew that they would be in danger of being imposed upon by deceivers. The note of Richard Watson on this verse is too appropriate to be omitted: "He first cautions them against those false pretenders to the Messiahship, who should mislead many of the Jews; because they would flatter their expectations of a worldly kingdom; and promise them deliverance from the hated Romans. Both of these feelings formed so strong a passion with the Jews, that they were easily led to join the ranks of any pretender; and Christ's followers were admonished to *take heed*, because their carnal and national prejudices were also strong; and under their infatuating influences they also might be seduced from attachment to a religion wholly spiritual,—one, too, which would appear anti-national, as containing threatenings of the entire overthrow of their state and nation."

Verse 5. FOR MANY SHALL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, I AM CHRIST; AND SHALL DECEIVE MANY. [*Luke*: AND THE TIME DRAWETH NEAR; GO YE NOT THEREFORE AFTER THEM.]

Here our Lord assigns his reason for warning them against deception: because there should be many who would undertake to deceive them, in a way perfectly adapted to their Jewish expectations and prejudices. They would profess to be their Messiah and deliverer. This would at once arrest attention, and any plausible evidence of Messiahship would be

joyfully received. As the perplexities and aggravations of the Jews should increase, under the hated domination of the Romans, they would become more and more eager for the deliverer and the deliverance which they supposed were promised in the Scriptures. Our Saviour well understood this; and he knew very well how the false pretenders would take advantage of it, in order to succeed in their imposture.

“*Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ.*”

It is possible, and these words appear to make it probable, that many of these false Christs did really profess to be *Jesus himself*; they came *in his name*, professing their Messiahship. If this was so, it of course made the danger of the disciples still greater; for they believed, from our Lord's own words, that he would come again.

That Jesus claimed to be the Christ, that he was unjustly put to death, and that he was reported to have risen from the dead, and that astonishing miracles were wrought in the most public places, in attestation of his resurrection, would soon be matter of common report among the people. And that he had spoken of coming in his kingdom, even before that generation had all passed away, would probably be known and talked of among the people, soon after the public proofs of his resurrection.

And it could not be possible for the myriads who had attended his ministry, and had witnessed his innumerable and undeniable miracles, very soon to forget the impressions excited by the demonstrations of his Messiahship. And certainly the unnumbered thousands who were present at Jerusalem, and witnessed the prodigies that attended his death;—the darkening of the sun, and the quaking of the earth;—certainly these could not forget these astounding events that made the heathen centurion exclaim, “Truly, this was the Son of God.”

And could there be any probability, or even possibility, of forgetting such a supernatural and appalling event, as the rending of the vail of the temple from top to bottom, at the moment Christ died upon the cross? These things were not done in a corner, nor in the presence of few people; but in

the most public places, and in the presence of all the multitudes that came from every part of the world to attend the great Paschal feast.

It is probable, then, that years after the crucifixion, the principal facts in the case were common topics of discourse among the bewildered and excited people, who had either witnessed these things personally, or heard of them from those who had.

And as the troubles of the people increased, and their superstitious fears became excited, it is not irrational to suppose, that troublesome misgivings and gloomy apprehensions were occasioned. He whom they had crucified, who claimed to be their Messiah, might now appear to have been indeed what he professed to be. And with misgivings and regrets for the past, they would be very eager to listen to any evidence or report of his coming again. This would be especially true of those who had not consented unto his death, and who were measurably impressed with the conviction of the reality of his pretensions.

Any promise of his returning again; all that he had said about it himself; and all the Scripture that looked in that direction, might be seized upon by the false pretenders as so many evidences in their favor, when they professed to be Christ; the very Christ that had wrought the miracles, and been the occasion of the omens and prodigies of the days of Jesus. This view of the passage is not insisted upon; but it appears to be warranted by the language of Christ. There is no positive historic confirmation at hand; and certainly there is nothing to contradict it. The history of the many false Christs has not descended to our day. But who is prepared to disprove the propriety of giving to our Lord's words their most appropriate meaning?

It is generally thought, however, that by the words now under notice, is simply meant, that they would only claim to be the Messiah, without making any reference to Jesus of Nazareth. But it is plain that the words will bear a much more definite application. Receiving the words, however, in

the sense in which they are usually understood, there is no part of the prophecy more abundantly proved to be true.*

“And shall deceive many.”

The circumstances of the case were so favorable for the pretensions of these impostors, that they met with great success. The very people whom the true Messiah could not persuade to follow him, were so abandoned to their delusions, that they flocked after these numerous deceivers in great numbers. Having rejected the true light when it shined upon them, they were left in darkness to stumble at every step.

“And the time draweth near; go ye not therefore after them.”

The appearance of the impostors, and the political troubles next mentioned, were not far distant; the time was nigh at hand. It seems probable, however, that the reference to the false Christs, before the reference to their hearing of wars and rumors of wars, somewhat anticipated the chronological order of events. The political troubles appear to have been first. But as the Saviour thought it expedient to begin his discourse by admonishing them against deception, it was natural to assign, in brief, the reasons for being on their guard.

In its appropriate place in his discourse, he resumes the subject, and speaks of it more particularly, after describing the commotions and troubles which would be so prolific in the production of the Messianic pretenders. This trait in the character of the discourse will be noticed again, in connection with more difficult subjects.

Verse 6. AND YE SHALL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS; SEE THAT YE BE NOT TROUBLED; FOR ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS; BUT THE END IS NOT YET.

Providence so ordered it, that we have an authentic record of the various and almost continual commotions which agitated the world—particularly the Jewish world—during the time which intervened between the delivery of this prophecy and the fall of Jerusalem. But, judging from the state of

* See note B, in the Appendix.

things at the time Christ was living in Judea, it did not seem likely that the next forty years would witness such commotions. The Roman government was well established, and general good feeling appeared to exist between the Romans and their subjected provinces. Judea was at this time a Roman dependency, and was governed by officers appointed by the emperors. It was also more or less connected with the various provinces and small kingdoms abounding in that part of the world, and which were also, in some manner, dependent upon Rome.

But when agitations began among the numerous Roman dependences, it spread from one to another. And as the Jews were living in almost every province and city, they could not avoid experiencing the inconveniences and sufferings attending those political commotions. During the latter part of the time that elapsed before the fall of Jerusalem, the empire itself was fearfully agitated; and wars and rumors of wars abounded.

And about this time, for some reason, the Jews seemed to become peculiarly obnoxious and troublesome to the various sorts of people in the provinces and cities where they resided, as they were scattered throughout the world. And between the Jews in their own land and their foreign rulers, there were almost constantly difficulties. Rumors of the almost unceasing insurrections, tumults, and massacres in other countries would of course reach Judea, as the troubles in Judea would be known abroad; and the strong bond of sympathy by which the Jews everywhere felt themselves united, would naturally agitate them, whenever anything of moment befell their kindred in any part of the world.

Judea—and especially Jerusalem—was still the heart of the Jewish world. Anything greatly affecting the heart affected also the extremities; anything greatly affecting the extremities also affected the heart. To give a particular narration of all these things, would, as one author very truly observes, be “to transcribe a great part of the history of Josephus.”

“*And ye shall HEAR of wars,*”—evidently denotes that

those of which the Saviour was now speaking, were not so much the wars of the Jews in their own country, as those of which they should *hear*. And by the *rumors* of wars we are not obliged to suppose it necessarily means only threatened, or anticipated wars. It may include both rumors of the merely threatened wars, and the rumors of actual wars, flying about, as is usual in such cases, with the conflicting versions which are so well calculated to keep the mind in agitation. From the history of those times we find this to have been actually the case. There were real wars, with their flying rumors; and there were anticipated and threatened wars, with their usual alarms and forebodings.

“*See that ye be not troubled.*”

It will be a time of trouble and alarm, especially with such as have not the true faith that keeps the heart composed. The trouble against which he admonishes them is such as may be avoided, even in times of trouble. It is the same word that Paul used in 2 Thess. ii. 2; when he wrote to the Thessalonians, to calm the agitations which had been excited there, by the supposition that the day of the Lord was at hand: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be *troubled*, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.”

Do not be *discomposed*; do not let yourselves be thrown into a *tumult*; or become *terrified*. The word is thus defined—“To make a loud noise, or uproar; to make a tumultuous noise, or outcry; to cry or speak in a loud voice;”—and some other definitions implying less excitement.

It would be very improper for the disciples to be troubled in this way. It would be so for a number of reasons: (1.) It would be an agitation disproportionate to the wars and rumors of wars of which they should hear. (2.) It would imply a want of trust in the overruling Providence which was able to protect or deliver them. Or, (3.) a want of resignation to the divine will, if they should be required to suffer and die by these calamities. (4.) If the trouble should be occasioned

by expectation of the end of the world immediately, as in the case of the Thessalonians, it would be occasioned without sufficient reason, — “*for the end is not yet.*” “The day of Christ is not at hand.” “*For all these things must come to pass.*” They are matters to be expected. The state of the world is such as to make it reasonable to anticipate them. Providence, in its active and permissive operations, will bring all these things to pass. They cannot be avoided. And this is another reason why you should not be terrified. Expect such things; prepare for them; be in such a readiness to meet them as not to be surprised into terror.

“*But the end is not yet.*”

Neither the end of the troubles and commotions, nor the end of the nation, nor of the world. However much like universal ruin things may then appear, the end is not yet; there are still many other kindred events to follow.

Verse 7. FOR NATION SHALL RISE AGAINST NATION; AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM; AND THERE SHALL BE FAMINES, AND PESTILENCES, AND [Luke: GREAT] EARTHQUAKES, IN DIVERS PLACES.

The wars and rumors of wars before spoken of, appear to have related more particularly to the petty jealousies and sectional insurrections which more especially affected the Jews. But this verse shows a *progress* in the warlike movements of the age; and also subsequency in the order of occurrence.

These wars now spoken of will be something more than the neighborhood conflicts, and sectional commotions among the people of the same place and country. It will be a rising up of *nation against nation*, and *kingdom against kingdom*.

And such truly was the progress of sanguinary conflicts in those days. The wars were on a larger scale. The comparatively insignificant contests among the people of the same tribe, province, or city, soon began to involve nations. The leaven of local jealousy spread until the world became more generally affected.

To give a detailed account of the manner in which this part of the prophecy was fulfilled, would extend the exposition

further than would comport with the author's design. Those who are best acquainted with the history of those times, will be most ready to acknowledge the wonderful definiteness and precision of our Saviour, in giving not only a general statement of the commotions of those times, but also in portraying the successive order and progress of events. And why should he not? Was he not truly omniscient? Did he not foresee the rise, and progress, and final result of all events, just as if they were moving as a panorama before his eye?—He who did nothing amiss, said nothing out of true order. If he sometimes reversed the chronological order, it was for some special reason, for the better ordering of his discourse, that it might be the more clear and impressive. But in the case of the words now under notice, the true order of occurrence is indicated.

“*And there shall be famines.*”

One of these famines was foretold by a prophet by the name of Agabus, as may be seen by referring to Acts xi. 28. Josephus describes it as having been so severe at Jerusalem, that many people died from want of food. Several other historians also mention the same famine. Several times in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, famines prevailed in several parts of the empire, particularly in Rome, Greece, and Palestine. Perhaps no other period of time had so many famines as this. Those of which we read in the Old Testament happened usually after long intervals. But the period referred to in the text may be said, with a degree of justness, to have been *characterized* by famines. Some of these should undoubtedly be attributed to the agitations of the times. But this will not account for them all: some must be regarded as special judgments, like the famine in the days of Ahab.

“*And pestilences.*”

Plagues, properly so called, or other pestiferous and epidemic diseases. These should prevail. Such diseases do not always attend upon famines; but they are very likely to result. There are several pestilences noticed by the histories of that period; and they seem to have visited more particularly those places where the Jews resided. Perhaps, however,

this should not be considered remarkable, for the Jews were found in great numbers in nearly all the prominent places mentioned in the history of those times.

Josephus describes one of those pestilences which visited Babylon, and occasioned many removals from that city. Another is mentioned by Tacitus, as having occurred about this time. But as the oriental countries have been from time immemorial more or less troubled with famines and pestilences, they could hardly be considered as marking any particular period, unless they occurred with unusual frequency. This was undoubtedly the case at this time.

“*And [great] earthquakes, in divers places.*”

The word rendered earthquake literally means a *shaking*. It is thus defined by a standard lexicon: (The noun) “A shaking; *but especially* an earthquake.” (The verb) “To shake; to toss; to agitate; to shake—*the earth in an earthquake.*” The italicising is according to the lexicon, and is designed to show the appropriate and common use of the term.

While no one is disposed to call in question the correctness of the translation, as we find it in our English Bibles, is it not surprising that some of our commentators should indicate a disposition to wrest this word from its appropriate literal use in this place, and expound it as a *figure*? One justly celebrated expositor introduces his observations on this sentence in this manner: “In prophetic language, earthquakes sometimes mean political commotions. Literally they are tremors or shakings of the earth,” &c.

Now, the prophecy of Christ must of course be considered as “prophetic language,” though perhaps not precisely such language as the quotation intends. But where is the propriety of intimating a doubt as to the intention of the word in this connection? Has there been any instance of figurative language in this discourse thus far? Was there any difficulty with the writer in finding abundant proof of the exact literality of the fulfillment of the prediction? Not at all. Why, then, unnecessarily introduce any observation that would tend to weaken the force, and lessen the definiteness of this prophecy?

Another commentator, still more celebrated than the first, comments on the passage thus: "If we take the word $\Sigma\epsilon\iota\sigma\mu\omicron\iota$ from $\Sigma\epsilon\iota\omega$, to *shake*, in the first sense, then it means particularly those popular commotions and insurrections which have already been noted; *and this I think to be the true meaning of the word*; but if we confine it to earthquakes, there were several in those times to which our Lord refers."

How many other celebrated divines have ventured such an opinion, the author is not particularly concerned to know. By whomsoever, and for what purpose soever, such a suggestion is ventured concerning the application of the word, in its present connection, it is certainly liable to several serious objections:

(1.) It obscures a confessedly simple and literal narration, (it is certainly so up to this point,) by the introduction of a *figurative* term in the midst of *literal* language, without any *necessity* for it, and without any note or appearance of figurative character. This is manifestly a violation of all good rules in writing and speaking.

(2.) It makes the narration imperfect in other respects; first, by leaving no appropriate word to apply to the literal earthquakes which did remarkably accompany the other signs mentioned in connection with the word in question. Secondly, by making the word purely, yet unnecessarily, tautological; for if the word, in its present connections, means only the political agitations which have just been particularly described, then it is purely tautological. If it means political commotions, other than the first described, it unnecessarily confuses the narration, by introducing two different ways of describing the same thing—a figurative, and a literal way—without the least appearance of a change of style.

This must be considered in no other light, than that of a dangerous precedent in the interpretation of inspired language. And it should never be countenanced; especially in such a case as the one before us, where there is not only no need of it, but absolute injury results to the whole prophecy; for when we *begin* to indulge in this *preference for the figurative over the literal*, when there is *no occasion* for the figura-

tive, with what safety can we be trusted in those more obscure portions of the Scriptures, where the literality of the language is not quite so apparent?

(3.) Neither is the ground of choice in preferring the figurative to the literal, in the case before us, a safe ground. It is not always safe to suppose that the noun must have a meaning perfectly accordant with the verb from which it is derived. Rigid adherence to such a rule would introduce confusion into our common language, and greatly disarrange our modes of thought and expression. It is very frequently necessary for us to interpret colloquial language, not so much with reference to its radical origin, as to its conventional use by the people. And even if there were (which is not the case in this instance) any departure from the rigid etymological derivation of the word, the very connection of the word, and the admitted facts of its literal fulfillment, together with its appropriate and common use, ought to preclude the very idea of its being figurative.

Do not let these extended remarks on what may appear to be a trifling matter, become a weariness to the reader. Nothing is trifling in the words of inspiration; all is serious, weighty, and worthy of the highest deference. Nevertheless, the comparatively unimportant perversion of the words in question would have passed with a mere notice, if it were not for the fact, that this loose and inconsistent method of commenting has not only nearly ruined the moral effect of this most important prophecy, but has also opened the door for the introduction of the most pernicious errors. This tendency to figurativeness, which, as in the case before us, without any occasion, or justification, confounds poetry with prose, the figurative with the literal;—this apparent choice of, and appetite for, figurative exegesis, so that whatever seems a little dark, (though there is no darkness in the words before us,) must be poetized into light; so that figures are introduced, not according to the *necessity*—the *must*—of the case, but according to the possibility—the *may*—of the case;—this mingling together of the literal and the allegorical, making our Saviour sometimes narrate calmly like a historian, and

then, with the next breath, rhapsodize like a poet, until no man is certain what is literal and what figurative; this is to be guarded against and deprecated.

And it seemed appropriate to begin the labor at the very beginning of the figurative indefiniteness and obscurity which too many expositors have introduced into this plain, prosaic discourse. Straws show which way the current runs. And if—as we have seen—popular commentators, without any occasion, and, indeed, against occasion, have developed such a preference for the figurative, what may we expect when we come to those parts of the discourse, where—from the nature of the subject—it may not be convenient to point out the chapter and verse of the precise and literal fulfillment?

“There shall be great earthquakes in divers places.”

A plain prediction of what actually occurred. Probably no period of the world's history was ever more *characterized* by earthquakes. It was not one wide, world-affecting convulsion, such as has been known in comparatively recent history, but a great many distinct earthquakes;—“*earthquakes in divers places,*” at different times. There is no lack of historic evidence to show that this portion of the prophecy was literally and strictly fulfilled. Josephus gives an account of a terrible one that happened just before the war with the Romans. (War, B. 4, c. 4.) “There broke out a prodigious storm in the night, with the utmost violence, and very strong winds, with the largest showers of rain, with continual lightnings, terrible thunderings, *and amazing concussions and bellowings of the earth that was in an earthquake.*” This was remarkable; for earthquakes are not usually accompanied by such atmospheric disturbances. On the other hand, they frequently, if not generally, occur when the atmosphere seems unusually serene. An eye witness thus describes the state of the atmosphere at the time of the great earthquake that destroyed Lisbon, in 1755. “There never was a finer morning seen than the 1st of November; the sun shone out in its full lustre; the whole face of the sky was perfectly serene and clear; and not the least signal or warning of that approaching event, which has made this once flourishing, opu-

lent, and populous city, a scene of the utmost horror and desolation, except only such as served to alarm, but scarcely left a moment's time to fly from the general destruction."

So universal an earthquake as the one described by Josephus, might well be regarded, as himself remarks, as "a manifest indication that some destruction was coming upon man, when the system of the world was put into this disorder; and any one would guess that these wonders foreshowed some grand calamities that were coming." But the earthquakes were to be in "*divers places*." And so they were; they are mentioned as having occurred during this period, at Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Pompei, Colosse, Campania, &c. Not only the Jewish country proper, but probably all countries where they resided, were visited by these quakings of the earth.

"*And fearful sights, and great signs shall then be from heaven.*"

The record of the Jewish historian is so full and appropriate to elucidate the fulfillment of this prediction, that we cannot do better than to have his words before us: Speaking of the many false prophets and deceivers, and how easily the people were persuaded to believe them, and hope for divine interposition in their behalf, he says—(War, B. 6, c. 5,) "Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation; but like men infatuated, without eyes to see, or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star, resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet that continued a whole year." Another translator renders his words thus: "A sword seemed to hang over the city, or a comet pointing down upon it for a year, which plainly seemed to portend their ruin by the sword." (Whitby.) "Thus also, before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, . . . at the ninth hour of the night, so

great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright-day time: which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful; but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it." These were indeed "*fearful sights.*" The "sacred scribes" appear to have considered that prodigious light about "the altar and the holy house," as portending that terrible fire which soon after desolated the whole. "At the same festival, also, [the Passover] a *heifer*, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a *lamb* in the midst of the temple."

Was this designed to indicate to the blinded Jews, that their typical offering of beasts had finally terminated, as to the divine approval, and become fulfilled, by bringing forth Jesus, the true Lamb of God?

The historian continues—"Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner court of the temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, *was seen to be opened of its own accord* about the sixth hour of the night!"

"Now those that kept watch in the temple, came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, who came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open to them the gate of happiness." The "vulgar," as the historian calls them, might indeed suppose this indicated the opening the gate of happiness to *them*, for it was the opening of the gate that kept the common people out of the *inner court* of the temple, which was appropriated only to the most favored portion of the Jewish people.

"But," continues the history, "the men of learning understood it, that the *security* of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord; and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared, that the

signal foreshadowed the desolation that was coming upon them."

It was at the Paschal feast that Jesus, the true Lamb of God, was led forth to be slain, as may have been betokened by the prodigy of the heifer and the lamb; and this dreadful prodigy of opening the huge brazen gate, happening—it seems—at the same feast, may have portended that it would also be at the passover that their enemies should succeed in obtaining the mastery over the city and temple.

"Besides these," continues the history, "a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [*Jyar*, second month of the ecclesiastical year,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared. I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, *before sun-setting, chariots, and troops of soldiers in their armor, were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities!*"

"Moreover, at the feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said, that in the first place *they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a multitude, saying, LET US DEPART HENCE!*"

"But what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud, A voice from the east! A voice from the west! A voice from the four winds! A voice against Jerusalem and the holy house! A voice against the bridegrooms and the brides! A voice against the whole people!"

This voice was heard by day and by night through the city. No persuasion or punishment could stop his cry. When they whipped him until his bones were bare, he did not shed

tears or make any complaint, but, with every stroke of the lash, uttered Woe, woe, woe to Jerusalem! This lamentable and wonderful voice continued for seven years and five months, and was always heard loudest at the festivals. No wonder that it was heard with discomfort and horror.

Verse 8. ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS.

But what could be worse than the terrors and sorrows already described? Answer—The wars and rumors of wars, not *heard* of merely, but actually *present*, witnessed, and suffered, with all their varied horrors. In particular, the invasion of their own country with fire and sword, until blood and blaze should be the every-day, and the everywhere scenes throughout their whole territory.

And more especially, the unparalleled famine, confusion, and carnage that characterized the siege of their capital city. The *fulfillment* of the portentous omens would be more terrible than the signs themselves. The intolerable ravages of the fatal disease would be worse than the premonitory symptoms.

The faithful and but too particular narration of these “sorrows,” as witnessed by one who lived and suffered in the midst of them, cannot be read by any person of common sensibility, without being deeply and painfully affected.

Dr. Clarke’s note on this verse is very ingenious and impressive: “The whole land of Judea is represented under the notion of a woman in grievous travail; but our Lord intimates that all that had already been mentioned, were only the first pangs and throes, and nothing in comparison of that hard and death-bringing labor which should afterwards take place.”

All that has hitherto been described, however, pertains to the period previous to the final siege of Jerusalem. And here our Lord leaves, for the present, the prediction of the *Jewish calamities*, that he may return and recapitulate the sufferings of his *disciples*. Let this be distinctly noticed by the reader.

CHAPTER III.

Principal subject—SUFFERINGS OF CHRISTIANS PREVIOUSLY
TO THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

Correction of the Record—Illustrations—Beginning of the Persecution—Progress—Saul of Tarsus—Different forms of Jewish persecution—Persecution by others—Chronological accuracy of the Prophecy—Persecution overruled for good—Why the Jews persecuted—Why the Heathen—Peter before the Sanhedrim—Stephen—Paul before the Rulers—God's design in permitting Persecution—Good result of the Appeal to Cæsar—Comfort in suffering—Why forbidden to premeditate—Perversion of a text—When we may, and when we may not, premeditate—What is meant by Taking no thought—Nature of Apostolic Inspiration—What is meant by giving them a Mouth and Wisdom—Examples—Curious way to resist Logic—An Orator in Chains—Beginning of Apostacy in the Church—Treachery—Progress of Apostacy—Terrible Result—Pattern Age of the Church—The World and the Church at variance—What is meant by not a Hair of the head perishing—How to possess our souls in Patience.

[*Luke*: BUT BEFORE ALL THESE, THEY SHALL LAY THEIR HANDS ON YOU, AND PERSECUTE YOU.] [*Mark*: BUT TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES.]

OUR Lord deemed it expedient to speak first of the afflictions of the *Jews generally*; and—as previously noted—he extended his description to the siege of Jerusalem.

When he *resumed* the subject, as at v. 15, he began with the fatal siege. Having thus far spoken of the *Jews as a people*, he returns to the *beginning* of the period then under consideration, for the purpose of showing the condition of *Christians* during the same time.

“*But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you.*”

We perceive the importance of supplying a sentence that was omitted by Matthew. If we take the prophecy as it is preserved only by him, it would teach that the persecution of the disciples would not begin until that period of general tribulation was ended, which would be incorrect. The sentence from Luke removes the difficulty, as may be seen in the Harmony. The persecution of the Christians did indeed

begin "before all these" Jewish calamities. While Jesus was with them, as when the bridegroom is with the children of the bridal chamber, they were kept in security and joy. But when he was taken away, as when the bridegroom departs, there was sadness and fasting. The persecutors, having so well succeeded with the Master of the house, then began to afflict his servants. The *green* tree had been scorched by their flaming madness; what could prevent the *dry* tree from being consumed? And the persecutors were not willing to wait long before they made a beginning: within a few weeks after the crucifixion of Jesus, they began to hunger for the flesh of the disciples.

"They shall lay their hands on you."

They shall *apprehend* you, and bring you up to answer for your proceedings. This was immediately done in the case of Peter and John, Acts iv. 1. "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them. 2. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3. *And they laid their hands on them*, and put them in hold until the next day." This laying hands upon them was not only persecution of itself, but it had an ulterior design.

"And persecute you."

This was the ulterior object. They wished to get these leading disciples into their power, that they might still further afflict them. On that first occasion, however, they were restrained from inflicting anything very severe. They "straightly threatened them," and let them go.

"But take heed to yourselves."

It is necessary to be on your guard. Be wise as serpents, for you are as sheep among wolves. Your enemies will not cease to pursue you. They may indeed but simply lay their hands on you at the first, and persecute you in this milder way. But take heed to yourselves; and do not unnecessarily incur danger; your enemies will not be satisfied with merely apprehending you: Do not trust present appearances.

Verse 9. THEN SHALL THEY DELIVER YOU UP [TO COUNCILS,] [*Luke*: TO THE SYNAGOGUES, AND INTO PRISONS,] TO BE AFFLICTED.

How soon was this accomplished! A few days after this, as the apostles were teaching and healing, Acts v. 17, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation; 18. And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." As yet, however, they had not been delivered up formally to the council. But, having been liberated by the interposition of an angel, and directed to go and preach in the temple, they were once more apprehended, v. 27. "And when they had brought them, they set them before the *council*." There was still another thing to be fulfilled, besides the arrest, and arraignment, and imprisoning; they were next in order

"*To be afflicted.*"

Here it follows: v. 40. "And to him [*Gamaliel*] they agreed; and when they had called the apostles, and *beaten* them, they . . . let them go. 41. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to *suffer shame* for his name." They were probably beaten naked. This was the beginning of their being "*afflicted*" for the sake of their Master. The "wolves" among whom these "sheep" had been sent, having once tasted their blood, will hardly let them escape.

"*And in the synagogues ye shall be beaten.*"

Here is the date of Saul's persecution. It was at *his* feet that the murderers of Stephen laid their clothes. He was already distinguished among the people for his eminence in the matter of making "havoc in the church." "And Saul was *consenting* unto his death." "When they were put to death *he gave his voice against them.*" Even so early was his influence in this matter felt and confessed.

And what was Saul's method of persecution? Acts xxvi. 10. "And many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them 11. *And*

I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme."

How many of the disciples suffered in this way, as "Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committing them to prison," has never been recorded. And how many times of punishing in the synagogues is intended by this word "oft," we are not apprised; but being "exceeding mad" against the disciples, and having "authority from the chief priests," and thinking that he was "doing God service," it is safe to suppose that the numbers "beaten in the synagogues," were large.

It is not intended to intimate here that the persecution of Saul was all previous to the martyrdom of Stephen, but only that he had already *begun* his cruel work at that time, and *continued* for some time after. And Saul himself, when he became an apostle, understood experimentally the sufferings which he had inflicted upon others; and came in for his own share of the fulfillment of this prophecy, which at first he helped to fulfill upon others. 2. Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one." Besides the beatings and stripes otherwise mentioned, we learn by this that at five different times he received the full measure of blows permitted by the Jewish law. It was undoubtedly in the synagogues.

"And shall kill you."

This was the next thing in order. What was the next event in the fulfillment? Answer—The *killing* of Stephen, under the superintendence of this persecuting Saul of Tarsus! And now the various forms of persecution which the Saviour predicted, have all occurred in their respective orders, from laying hands upon, through arraignment before councils, imprisoning, beating in the synagogues, and killing. All this was Jewish; and was done regularly, or irregularly, according to the customs of the councils of the synagogues and the great council at the capital.

But shall the persecution extend no further? Answer—

"And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake."

The scene is now to be shifted from Jewish judicatures to the magistracy of rulers and kings. The murderers of the Master, who succeeding in enlisting against him the power of their heathen governor, will soon manifest their pleasure at the havoc made among the disciples. Henceforth, those who delight in cruelty, or who wish to ingratiate themselves with the Jews, will understand how to proceed. The prediction is before us; now for the fulfillment: Acts xii. 1. "Now about that time, *Herod the king* stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread. 4. And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternians of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."

Soon we find Paul and Silas at Philippi, suffering a persecution arising from the cure of the wonderful Pythoness. Do we inquire concerning the nature of the judicature before which they were brought? Answer—Acts xvi. 19. "And they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place unto the *rulers*. 20. And brought them to the *magistrates*." Kings and rulers were next in order after councils. Omniscient Wisdom knew how to frame the prophecy. The next persecution was that in which "they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the *rulers* of the city." Acts xvii. 6.

We shall soon find Paul brought up to the "judgment seat" of Gallio, the deputy governor of Achaia. It would be tiresome to follow out much further the fulfillment of this part of the prediction. The magistracy of rulers and kings is identified more or less with the history of the apostle to the Gentiles.

We shall find him before Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Nero. It has not seemed good unto the Holy Ghost to cause to be recorded all the particulars of the further fulfillment of these words; but from many incidental references, we find the matter went on.

But why was all this? Was there no divine power to restrain? Or did the Divine Being see that good would result? Answer—

“*For my sake, for a testimony against them,*” or, rather, for a testimony (εἰς) unto them. And this better agrees with Luke’s expression—

“*And it shall turn to you for a testimony.*”

There are just these two ideas conveyed in this sentence of the prophecy; (1.) That it would be for the sake of Christ, or on his account, that they should be thus dealt with. It would not be on account of any evil found in them; or on account of any particular hatred that men would feel toward them, as individual persons. It would be solely on account of their known and confessed attachment to the Lord Jesus. Their open and fearless proclamation of the Messiahship of Jesus the crucified, would raise the storm of indignation and persecution among their own nation, and particularly among the councillors and priesthood of the Jewish nation. They were always first in opposition to the Master, and they would be first in persecution of his disciples. They hated to be charged with the rejection and murder of one whom the apostles proclaimed every where to be the only true Christ.

The persecution by the Gentiles would also be for the name of Christ, but for reasons somewhat different: one thing would be, the opposition of the apostles to the idolatrous worship and doctrines everywhere prevalent, and the fact, that the spread of Christianity would be seen to effect, proportionally, the downfall of idolatry.

The worshippers of the great Diana of the Ephesians would set all the city in an uproar, on account of this perceived opposition of the new religion to their old religion. Yet, after all, the Jews would everywhere be the principal instigators of this opposition to the name of Christ. They would never rest without doing what could be done to arrest the progress of the new sect.

(2.) The other idea is this: their being brought before councils, rulers, and kings, would be to them opportunities for giving testimony to the truth. They should be permitted,

and even invited, sometimes, to testify to the truth as it is in Jesus.

Now, however much these simple and apparently unimportant and indefinite words may have been overlooked, they are, in truth, among the most important of those found in this discourse.

Nothing less than omniscience could have foreseen these two surprising facts,—that all the persecution which the disciples should suffer, and all the reasons for their being brought before the various near at hand, and far off, tribunals, would be in consequence of their relation to a person who had never stepped beyond the limits of Palestine, and whose name was hardly known beyond the boundaries of his own native province.

But the other part of the prediction is, if possible, still more surprising. How exceedingly improbable that those persecuted, despised, maltreated, dispersed followers of one who was crucified as a malefactor, between two thieves, should, by the very efforts to silence them, stand up as privileged ambassadors, to say what they chose to testify, before all kinds of councils, and before all kinds of rulers, in almost all lands! Has it usually happened so? Were the victims of the Inquisition ever admitted to extraordinary privileges before their judges? Were the Protestant martyrs, whose blood enriched the soil of England, entitled to special privileges before their Romish rulers? And have persecuted sects usually found their judges disposed to listen to the promulgation of their most abominated doctrines, and keen reproofs and admonitions?

But the omniscient Saviour affirmed that both of these things would be true respecting the arraignment of his persecuted followers.

How did the matter result?

The first arraignment was specifically on account of opposition to Christ. When Peter and John were arraigned before the Sanhedrin, the reason is thus given: (Acts iv. 2,) the priests, captain of the temple, and Sadducees, were "grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the

resurrection of the dead. 3. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day; for it was now eventide." This was on their Master's account. Did they have an opportunity of testifying of Jesus there? This is the answer: 5. "And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6. And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name have ye done this?" [The miracle of curing the lame man.] 8. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel,"—And then follows that fearless, explicit testimony of the Messiahship of Jesus. 10. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11. This is the stone which was set at naught by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

How this arraignment before this council "turned to them for testimony!"

Peter could not have obtained such an audience as that anywhere else; and nowhere else would such an audience have listened to such a fearless testimony. And who but the Divine could have foreseen this? This illustration of the two ideas in the passage is given at some length, merely as a specimen of the precise fulfillment of this wonderfully specific prophecy.

When Peter and others were arraigned before the Sanhedrin again, soon after, (Acts v.,) he had another as remarkable chance of testifying of Jesus. And Stephen for a long time had the audience of "all that sat in the council," while he poured forth that full torrent of testimony, which they perceived but too clearly was going to prove Jesus to be the Christ. And what an opportunity for testimony had Paul

before Felix and Drusilla, and Festus, and Bernice, and Agrippa! And what a chance for testimony as he "stood on the stairs" of the theatre in Jerusalem, bound with two chains, and gave the discourse recorded in Acts xxii.!

This idea of bearing testimony—not against—but (εἰς) *to* councils, rulers, and kings, is the key that opens beautifully that mysterious providence which led the primitive church with her ministers through such a succession of persecutions. We may now understand the meaning of those prisons, chains, indictments, and other sources of suffering and notoriety, which lifted the infant church into eminency, and secured for the fettered apostles the audiences of priests, governors, councilors, kings, and queens.

There was much meaning, and comfort, too, for the persecuted apostles in such words as these: Acts xxiii. 11, "And that night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

These imprisonments and judicial arraignments should be *occasions of testimony*.

"Cæsar's household" was to be converted; and Paul—not Peter—must be the apostle to those Gentiles. He had "often purposed" to go there, that he "might have some fruit among" them, but "was let [hindered] hitherto." Paul in Rome, in the capacity of an *apostle*, could probably do less in giving testimony for Christ, than Paul the *prisoner*, waiting the convenience of the emperor, under the protection of the emperor, and dwelling for "two whole years in his own hired house, receiving all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Acts xxviii. 30, 31. Therefore Paul was moved to "appeal unto Cæsar."

But, in relation to this being all for the name and sake of Christ, it is worthy of remark, that, on the part of the apostles, it was in a sense far different from what it was on the part of the persecutors: with the *enemies* it was on account of *enmity*, that they might distress and destroy; but with the

friends it was on account of *friendship*, that they might testify for Christ, and establish his religion. They were not slow to perceive the advantages their persecutions gained them, not on account of sympathy only, but also on account of *privilege* in giving testimony for the truth as it is in Jesus. God made the wrath of men to praise him. This must have contributed much to comfort and sustain those who suffered for the truth's sake. They "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer for his name." Paul well understood this matter of persecution and suffering for his Master; Acts, chapters xx., xxiii., xxiv., which see.

[*Mark*: BUT WHEN THEY SHALL LEAD YOU, AND DELIVER YOU UP, TAKE NO THOUGHT BEFORE HAND WHAT YE SHALL SPEAK; NEITHER DO YE PREMEDITATE; BUT WHATSOEVER SHALL BE GIVEN YOU IN THAT HOUR, THAT SPEAK YE.]

Our Saviour did not design this direction for application to all persons, and all circumstances: it was a *specific instruction for a specific circumstance*; namely—when they should be led and delivered up to councils, rulers, and kings, as before described, and for the purpose aforesaid. Then, in that particular case, they were not to depend upon their own premeditated thoughts either for testimony or defence; but to look for such especial enlightenment and guidance as no premeditations of their own could secure.

It is, therefore, a manifest perversion of this passage, to apply it to ordinary pulpit and private teaching, as if the Lord designed to discourage and prohibit prudent premeditation and systematic arrangement of thoughts, in ordinary circumstances. No man that *loves* to think systematically, and few that are *capable* of thinking so, will need these disclaimers against a somewhat common perversion of this passage. But it is well to do everything practicable for the purity and propriety of the exegesis and application of the Scriptures.

No doubt but in many instances too much dependence is placed upon our previous meditations, and too little upon the timely aid of the Holy Spirit. But these ordinary labors

were not the subject of the Saviour's present admonition. A very plain rule may be suggested as a general guide in this matter :

(1.) What is already understood, or may reasonably be expected, in relation to future circumstances, may be made a subject of premeditative preparation.

(2.) But what we cannot know, or reasonably anticipate, of the future, and yet must meet,—in this we must leave it to Providence to order and assist.

This latter was the usual circumstance under which the disciples were brought before rulers and kings. The former is the usual circumstance attending our ordinary labors.

In these sudden, ever-varying, and uncertain trials and arraignments before the different tribunals, no human forethought could be sufficient to guide in matters of propriety and necessity; and premeditations and plans would only embarrass their adaptation to the unanticipated circumstances, and withdraw their trust in direct and special divine assistance.

They were directed to "take no thought" before hand, just as Christ had said respecting food and raiment, "take no thought for the morrow." Now, it is admitted by all who have examined the word, in reference to its original force, that it means something more than mere intellection; it conveys an idea of *feeling* as well as cogitation: it is the same word that Christ used in his address to the half-distracted Martha: "Thou art *careful*," &c. Luke x. 41.

The spirit of the Lord's admonition to his apostles was about this: Do not be *troubled* or *anxious* about what you shall say on these occasions. Do not let it *worry* and *distress* you. Go, trusting in the guidance and support of the Master, for whose sake all this is done and permitted. There was great wisdom in such an admonition :

(1.) It would serve greatly to relieve the anxieties of the disciples, in these most trying circumstances.

(2.) It would keep ever before them the only real and reliable source of direction and support.

(3.) And, consequently, going in this spirit, and divinely aided and strengthened, their testimony would have a freshness,

an adaptation, and a power, that could not be secured in any other manner.

“*But whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye.*”

Here is the promise of assistance *implied*. They were to expect assistance from another; it was to be *given* to them. This is why they ought not to be troubled about the matter before hand. They were to *speak* whatsoever should be *given* them. Their *words* were to be given them; and they would be aided in addressing them to the people. They were to go before such judicatures, expecting to be plenary inspired for the exigencies of the time.

* [Luke: FOR I WILL GIVE YOU A MOUTH AND WISDOM, WHICH ALL YOUR ADVERSARIES SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO GAINSAY OR RESIST.]

Here is the promise of assistance given in due form. Their *wisdom* should be given them; they should be enabled to understand and to calculate on the spot, so as to accomplish what their adversaries could not prevent. Sometimes they should be enlightened with respect to the *past*; sometimes with respect to the *future*; and they should know how to adapt themselves to all the circumstances attending their arraignment.

Their “*mouth*” should be given them. Their very organs of speech should seem to be new; and would, indeed, be newly empowered to speak with the greatest propriety and force the words which should be given them. As the result of this special endowment, their adversaries should neither be able to gainsay nor resist their testimony.

How wonderfully was this accomplished! Turn to Acts iv., and see the blazing testimony, and the scorching reproofs, of John and Peter before the great council that had condemned their Master. And notice the result: verse 13, “Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they *marveled*; and *took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*. 14. And beholding the man standing with them, *they could say nothing against it.*”

When Stephen was set upon unexpectedly by the cavilers and disputers of the synagogues of the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, and Asiatics, (Acts vi. 9,) it is said, notwithstanding the odds against him, "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." And when he was suddenly brought before the great council, his speech was so irresistible, that legal pleading and logic could not be depended upon to gainsay or resist it; and the readiest way to overthrow it, was, to kill the irresistible preacher. So long as he was alive, and had a mouth to speak, so long they knew it was hopeless to resist him. But a dead man was not so formidable; so they overwhelmed him with a shower of stones.

See how the infamous Felix was made to tremble, as Paul stood before him in chains, inspired to utter terrible things which could not be gainsayed or resisted. Acts xxiv. 24. "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, [it was all the answer he could make,] Go thy way for this time."

Take Paul's speech before King Agrippa, and the august assembly convened to hear him, and notice the effect. Acts xxvi. The prisoner stood up in chains, and gave one of the most eloquent, appropriate, and affecting speeches that ever fell from human lips. It was a most happy specimen of Gospel testimony. After overwhelming, and almost converting, the king, the conclusion of the scene is thus stated, v. 31: "And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."

The world might be safely challenged to show a single clear instance in which the primitive disciples were found incompetent to defend themselves and their Master before any of the councils and rulers of that age.

But whence the wisdom and words which proved adequate for all emergencies?

[*Mark*: FOR IT IS NOT YE THAT SPEAK, BUT THE HOLY GHOST.]

This is the explanation. When these men stood up to give testimony, they were more than men; they had a portion of the Divinity. How astonishingly was this fulfilled at Pentecost! There were promised to them a "mouth and wisdom," in order to qualify them for every unexpected emergency. When the whole Jewish world was represented at Jerusalem, the fulfillment of the prediction was to begin, and to be manifested unto the world. Acts ii. 4. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." And in all the multitude of dialects they spake of the wonderful works of God. But, in relation to the wisdom and words, it was not themselves that spake, but the Holy Ghost speaking by them. The apostles well understood the nature and source of this astonishing endowment. They knew how to explain the wonderful phenomenon: verse 33, "He [Christ] hath shed forth this that ye now see and hear."

How distinct the prediction! How undeniable the fulfillment! As far as Luke's history of the Apostles extends, it seems to be a comment upon the Saviour's prophetic discourse.

Verse 10. AND THEN SHALL MANY BE OFFENDED, AND SHALL BETRAY ONE ANOTHER, AND SHALL HATE ONE ANOTHER.

Many will be *scandalized*. The new "sect" will be "everywhere spoken against." The chief men and rulers giving the example and encouragement in persecution, those who wish to gain or retain their favor, and those who think only as they are taught by their superiors, will join in the popular hue and cry against the unpopular sect.

Many will thereby become disaffected. Their attachment to the new religion will cost them their good name, their temporal prosperity, their social enjoyment, and, in some cases, it will cost even liberty and life.

This will be sacrificing too much; more than they have

faith to endure. Many will therefore be *offended*; they will *stumble* at these impediments, and fall from their steadfastness in Christ.

And the offence will be so grievous, that, in many instances, treachery and hatred will succeed in the place of confidence and love. Those who had pleasantly and familiarly associated together, each leading on and strengthening the other, will now have their feelings so set against one another as to "*betray*" one another. Perhaps the kindly influences that had been mutually exerted to induce one another to espouse and maintain the new religion, would now appear as a malicious effort to draw them into a religion of shame, anxiety, and danger. To mutual confidence will succeed mutual treachery; and they shall "*betray one another.*" The warmest love will then give place to the deepest hatred. The union and confidence of heart will be transformed into jealousy and maliciousness.

Those engaged in making havoc of the church will not fail to perceive and improve this most unhappy result, for the furtherance of their cruel designs. These embittered and alienated brethren will be used to hunt out and accuse their former companions: "they shall betray one another."

We may find a record of the fact, which will answer as a specimen, in the account which Tacitus gives of this procedure, in the persecution under Nero: "At first several were seized, who confessed, and then, by their discovery, a great multitude of others were convicted and executed." *Annal. i. 15.*

There are frequent references to this melancholy state of things in the history and writings of St. Paul. See Acts xx., 29, 30, 2 Tim. i. 15, iv. 10, 14. It was thus that he was "in perils among false brethren."

[*Mark: THE BROTHER SHALL BETRAY THE BROTHER TO DEATH, AND THE FATHER THE SON; AND CHILDREN SHALL RISE UP AGAINST THEIR PARENTS, AND CAUSE THEM TO BE PUT TO DEATH.*]

This is not only a more particular description of this time of trial to the church, but it appears also to show an *extension*

of the disaffection, until not only the ecclesiastical, but even all the social relations shall be disturbed, and families be at war among themselves. And now will be fulfilled not only what Christ himself predicted on another occasion, (Matt. x. 34,) but what was long before prophesied by an Old Testament seer. See Micah vii. 6.

How intense must have been the alienation that caused the nearest and dearest natural relations to betray one another even to death! What terrible afflictions to the church, and what trial of faith, when parents against children, and children against parents, and brother against brother, should be maliciously excited, and cause one another to be put to death!

Through such fires as these were the primitive disciples required to pass, as the church was enlarging herself, and establishing her doctrines, government, and worship, that the *dross* might be purged away from the pure gold, and that the *pat-tern age* of the true church might be an age of tested, purified, and duly developed faith and love.

These were times when they "endured a great fight of afflictions," that the church in all subsequent ages might have before her "examples of suffering, affliction and patience." This was the time of "the present distress," when Christians were called to show whether they loved their master better than houses, lands, parents, companions, and life.

(Remainder of) Verse 9. AND YE SHALL BE HATED OF ALL NATIONS FOR MY NAME'S SAKE.

By noticing Mark, verse 12, it will be seen that these words are to *follow* the account of these afflictions; and by Luke, verse 18, we learn that these words are to *precede* the reference to the hair of the head not being suffered to perish.*

It is thus that we prove not only the *transposition*, but find the appropriate *place* for this sentence.

And it may as well be remarked here, that all the transpositions exhibited in the Harmony are settled by definite reasons.

This persecution and alienation will not be *limited* to any

* See the Harmony.

particular section; it will be *general*. The church everywhere must pass through this fiery furnace. It will be the *world against the church, and the church against the world*.

The faithful disciples must be "crucified unto the world," and the world "crucified" unto them. The "offence of the cross" will be great everywhere. The preaching of Christ will be a "stumbling block unto the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness." Then "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," no matter where they happen to dwell. The world hated Christ, and he told his disciples not to marvel if the world hated them also. Now was it fully accomplished. If they had been of the world, the world would have loved its own; but because they were not of the world, but had been chosen out of the world, therefore the world hated them. And this extended to all nations, Jews and Gentiles. In this place, however, it seems to allude more particularly to the Gentile nations: the hatred of the Jews, being first in order, was more particularly described previously.

It is wonderful how systematic and precise our Saviour was in this prophecy. He pays particular attention to the successive order in which the many things would transpire. He did not speak of their being "hated of all nations," until he had first described how they would become *known* to all nations, by being brought before rulers and kings. And this hatred of the nations would be on the same account as that of the Jews; it would be "for his name's sake." And how was this? Simply because "for his name's sake" they should be brought before rulers and kings; and the knowledge which the people everywhere would obtain of them, would be associated with their relation to Christ.

[*Luke*: BUT THERE SHALL NOT A HAIR OF YOUR HEAD PERISH.]

Does this mean that none of them should suffer bodily injury, or be put to death? Certainly not; he had just admonished them of the reverse.

Does it refer to the *probable* fact, that all the Christians fled from Jerusalem during the siege, and did not in any case *perish* then? Probably not.

For (1.) All the apostles, as it is supposed, with one exception, perished by violent deaths before the siege. (2.) To speak of the escape from that danger would be anticipating the time without any evident reason ; for the period of which he was now speaking was obviously that which preceded that great event. The effort to apply it to that event appears strained and unnatural. Besides, it does not seem to harmonize with the spirit and design of such a promise.

It seems to have been designed for the comfort of the Lord's people in all ages of the world ; *and especially for the comfort of those whose severe afflictions, and imminent dangers, occasioned the first giving of the promise.* Now to take it entirely, or almost entirely, away from *them*, and apply it only to a single circumstance, and a circumstance which had not yet been even alluded to, and, by so doing, deprive all the coming generations of sufferers from claiming it, seems rather more than common sense can submit to.

But what does the promise mean? Probably this: they were to comfort themselves with the belief that all their dangers, trials and sufferings were directed or permitted by a Providence which was not only personal, but minutely particular. It numbered the very hairs of their head. They should even regard themselves as the objects of special divine watch-care. This would sustain them in that affliction, and in every other ; and, indeed, it would be a standing promise for all ages of the world.

This view beautifully harmonizes with our Lord's first efforts to inspire his disciples with a firm belief and trust in a special providence. Matt. x. 28. "And fear not them which *kill the body*, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30. *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* 31. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

The promise was also undoubtedly designed to assure them of a particular providence, not only in the sense of *preserving*, when it should be best, but also in the sense of *remuner-*

ating, when it should please God to cause or permit them to suffer “for his name’s sake.” In that careful estimation of all their sufferings and losses on his account, to serve as the basis of his gracious rewards, not a single hair injured in his behalf should be lost in the reckoning. And, in this sense, which is the only important sense, not one hair should be suffered to perish: it should be preserved in that final gain of glory and enjoyment which all who suffer for Christ, and “endure unto the end,” shall receive at the hand of their Master.

And this view of the subject is in precise accordance with Christ’s own application of this promise, when he first gave it to his disciples. Let the reader satisfy himself by turning to the place just referred to, and read for himself how the Lord designed to be understood.

Matt. x. 28–39. You will notice here that Christ was describing the identical condition of things which has already been enlarged upon, *without the least allusion to Jerusalem or the escape therefrom*. Has this matter been sufficiently noticed by those commentators who are forever referring to Jerusalem?

We notice in the passage alluded to, which the *judicious* reader has not failed to examine, that this is the conclusion and the application: “He that *findeth* his life shall *lose* it; and he that *loseth* his life for my sake shall *FIND* it.” May not this be applied to every *part* of the life? The *principle* involved in this promise which we are enlarging upon, is sufficiently exhibited in another place: Matt. xix. 20. “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Here is the principle on which nothing, however trifling in itself, can be lost, if it is sacrificed for the name of Christ. And by using and applying the common *proverb*, which forms the substance of the promise, the Saviour undoubtedly intended to teach them that all their sufferings and sacrifices—even to the very least—would finally be rewarded to them, in the gracious remunerations of the resurrection state. Not one hair should perish; in *equivalence* it would remain forever.

This would be comfort indeed; comfort in all ages, in all circumstances, even in maimings, bruises, and death itself. Not only would he put all their *tears* in his bottle, (Ps. lvi. 8,) but preserve all the *hairs of their head*.

[*Luke*: IN YOUR PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS.]

Rather, in your *perseverance*, or *patient endurance*, (*υπομονη*), of *affliction*, *preserve* (*κρησασθε*) your souls. Others will *lose* their souls, by trying to avoid these afflictions, and gaining the world. They will be like those mentioned in the parable of the Sower, (Matt. xiii. 20, 21,) who received the seed in stony places: "He heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for awhile; for when *tribulation* or *persecution* ariseth, because of the word, by and by he is *offended*." He is one who cannot *endure affliction*; he falls away, and, of course, loses the promise: *he does not endure unto the end*; and, of consequence, he *loses his soul*.

This is the very character which our Lord had just been describing: there would be many offended, or fall away, in consequence of these severe afflictions which would come upon the church everywhere. Seeking to save their *lives*, they would *lose their souls*. Shunning the dangers of the cross, they would renounce their Saviour, and their souls would perish. Bartering their Saviour for the world, they would make a wretched exchange: they would *lose their souls*.

Now, what our Lord desired in this verse, seems to be just this: (and how well it harmonises with the whole connections of the words!) Do not be of the number who fall away; who cannot *continue* through these afflictions. But persevere until the end is attained; for, whether you live or die, not a hair of your head shall perish; all will be treasured up to the day of final reward. "By *patient continuance* in well doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality," and God will "render" to you "eternal life." Rom. ii. 7. In this way you shall preserve your souls, "Thou, therefore, *endure hardness*, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," 2 Tim. ii. 3. "But

watch thou in all things, *endure afflictions,*" &c., chapter iv., v. See much more of the same import in the same epistle.

And what has the admonition now under notice to do with the escape of a few hundred Christians from the besieged city? How would such a restricted limitation of it apply to the world-wide, and age after age endured afflictions which are spoken of in connection with it? How does it happen that so many commentators appear to see nothing but Jerusalem in all these places? What *necessity*, or, rather, what *authority* is there for such restricted applications of these ever-during admonitions and promises, which Christ designed for the support and guide of his disciples forever; and which, notwithstanding all the unfortunate misapplications of them, will, should, and *must* be instinctively looked upon by the unperverted spiritual mind, as present admonitions, and present promises, for all similar conditions? It is not safe to overlook the instinctive promptings of the unsubverted spiritual mind.

CHAPTER IV.

Principal subject—CORRUPTION AND DECLENSION OF THE CHURCH.

False Prophets—Two classes of them—Influence upon the Church—Consolation and Warning—What preserves the Church—Difficult Text—Strange Salvation—Curious Comment—The Truth discovered—A true Exposition—Import of the term World—Examples—How extensively the Gospel was Preached in the Apostolic Age—Meaning of The End—Erroneous Impression—Explanation—Design of the Prophecy—A new Explanation—When, and How, the Jewish Dispensation was consummated—The Beginning and the Ending—Objects of that Dispensation—Its effect upon common Providence—Error of the Jews—How corrected by Christ—Objection—Answer.

Verse 11. AND MANY FALSE PROPHETS SHALL RISE, AND SHALL DECEIVE MANY.

THIS does not refer to the false *Christs* who had already appeared, but to false *teachers* who would arise in great num-

bers. And they would be successful in deceiving many. Our Lord seems to have the *church* particularly in view ; yet what he affirms would be also true respecting the *Jews* as a people. During the siege of Jerusalem, as Josephus informs us, (War, B. 6, c. 5, 2,) "A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who announced to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God."

But the false prophets, or teachers, now referred to by the Lord, were such as would come at an *earlier period*, and would more particularly affect the *church*. They were such as he had warned them against at a former time : Matt. vii. 15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

St. Paul also appears to have the same in view, Acts, xx. 29 ;— "I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And St. Peter has the same in view, 2 Pet. ii. 1, "There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. 2. And many shall follow their pernicious ways ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Jude also has a bitter complaint against these false teachers ; verse 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation ; ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

We find that not only were the most vital doctrines denied, and the most abominable taught, but the false teachers also encouraged the most filthy practices. With these things in remembrance, we are prepared for the next verse.

Verse. 12. AND BECAUSE INIQUITY SHALL ABOUND, THE LOVE OF MANY SHALL WAX COLD.

How could it be otherwise? either that iniquity should not abound, under these circumstances; or, abounding, that the love of many should not wax cold? With such a woful state of things in the church, iniquity would pour in like a flood, extinguishing the flame of love in many hearts.

But who would have anticipated such dreadful corruptions in the church, so soon after the resurrection of the Saviour? While the blood of martyrdom was even then fertilizing the earth, who would have expected such a luxuriance of wickedness in the church? It was even as Omniscience foretold. Even under the apostolic ministry and government; within the same generation that witnessed the baptism of Pentecost; in spite of divine admonitions, and living apostolic inspirations; notwithstanding all, the true church of Christ became infested with schisms and heresies, and cursed with abounding wickedness.

From this we may learn two things: 1. To beware of pride and vain glorying. 2. Not to despair: not even in the most discouraging times. And when we see wickedness abounding in the church, as well as in the world, we need not give up all for lost; it is nothing new under the sun; and God will still have a seed to serve him.

“The love of many shall wax cold.”

And it would be wonderful indeed if it were otherwise, in such circumstances as these. When the very fuel of purity and truth, that was designed to feed the flame of love, is withheld, and every disadvantage is in successful operation, love must grow cold; there is nothing left to sustain it. With these persecutions from without, making havoc of the church; and with these corrupters making havoc within, is it not surprising that the church was preserved? It is surprising, when we consider matters as they appear to the mere philosopher; but it is not surprising, when we consider that the church is founded upon a Rock, and that God has sworn by himself to defend and preserve it. The church has a vitality, in consequence of these divine provisions, which her ene-

mies are unable to destroy ; and her identity is as imperishable as the souls that compose it.

Verse 13. BUT HE THAT SHALL ENDURE UNTO THE END, THE SAME SHALL BE SAVED.

To the end of what? Shall be saved from what? Two celebrated commentaries now before the writer, which abound with the favorite Jerusalem idea, pass entirely over this verse! Did it stand in the way of a favorite theory? Two or three others touch it so lightly, as to hardly treat it with common respect. But one noted commentary of world-wide reputation thus expounds :

“ *But he that shall endure* — the persecutions that shall come — *unto the end* ; to the destruction of the Jewish polity, without growing cold or apostatising — *shall be saved*, shall be delivered in all imminent dangers, and have his soul at last brought to an eternal glory. It is very remarkable that not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, though there were many there when *Cestius Gallus* invested the city ; and had he persevered in the siege, he would soon have rendered himself master of it ; but when he unexpectedly and unaccountably raised the siege, the Christians took that opportunity to escape.” (*Dr. Clarke.*)

Shall be saved from what? Why, “ he shall be delivered in all imminent dangers.” How definite! How satisfactory! It is this, then : “ He that shall endure unto the end ” — “ *of the Jewish polity*, without growing cold or apostatising, *shall be saved* ; shall be delivered in all imminent dangers ! ”

Does this mean saved *from* all imminent dangers? or, being in such dangers, they shall be saved *in* them? To say they shall be saved *from* all imminent dangers, is flatly contradictory to the plainest historical facts, relating to the history of the church in those after days. To say they shall be saved *in* all imminent dangers, is nonsense, and a total perversion of the word. But the commentary means, that “ not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.” Ah, that is the salvation, then. He that endures to the *end of the danger*, shall be saved *from*, or *in*, that danger! Well, this is information! He that perseveres in endurance until all

the calamities are brought to an *end*, shall be saved from those calamities! What a salvation!

But what is the *end* until which they must endure? Until the end "of the Jewish polity," says the commentary. Very well; when did that end take place? This same authority applies the *29th verse* to that event, which relates to things, "immediately *after* the tribulation of those days!" Worse and worse! It amounts to this, then: If they endure until "after the tribulation of those days," they *shall be saved from perishing in that tribulation!*

There are two things in this comment which are deserving of especial notice: (1.) They must *endure to the end of the Jewish polity*, which was "*after* the tribulation of those days;" and, (2.) They made their escape from those calamities at the time Cestius Gallus invested the city, which was at the beginning of the war, and several years before the tribulation of those days was ended! Put this and that together, and call the product salvation!

But the *end* was the end of the war. No; the war lasted several years after this escape. It was the end of the *siege*. No; the final siege had not yet begun. Well, at all events, it was the *end of something* that terminated about those days. Very good; but as the promise reads, "He that *endureth unto the end* shall be saved," it is proper to ask two or three questions: (1.) Suppose, by reason of disease, accident, or violence, they should be *unable* to endure to the *end of the Jewish polity*; does the promise save them? (2.) Suppose they endure unto *that* end, and then apostatise, as some that we read of in the book of Revelation, does the promise save them?

It is worthy of notice that the commentator seemed to distrust his own teachings; for, in connection with this temporal salvation, he speaks of another; "Shall be delivered in all imminent dangers, *and have his soul at last brought to an eternal glory.*" Truly, this puts a new face upon the whole matter; it looks very differently now. But *how* does it look in the connection in which it stands? Let us see: "He that endureth to the end"—"of the Jewish polity," trouble, war,

siege, or something else that is going to end about those times—shall “have his soul brought to an eternal glory!” Well, this is both definite and evangelical! We know now just how long to remain steadfast in order to obtain eternal glory!

But you mistake the commentary: it means, He that endureth—to the *end of life*. Does it, indeed? Then why not *intimate* such a thing? Why not say it at once, and avoid this most wretched way of “darkening counsel by words without knowledge?” To the *end of life*. Very good; this is right; it is a pity that the thing was not stated so in the exposition!

This agrees with both common sense and Scripture; for *probation* continues *during life*; and until life is ended, the promise is not made sure. The spirit of the promise is this: “Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev. ii. 10. It was in prospect of immediate death that the apostle was permitted to say, 2 Tim. iv. 6, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day,” &c. And this agrees with our Lord’s use of the promise in Matt. x. 22, where there does not appear to be the remotest allusion to the Jewish war.

How much better than the above quoted comment is that of Richard Watson! Says he, on this text,—“Not to *the end* of these persecutions and troubles; for men may outlive their sufferings for Christ’s sake, and the grace, too, which carried them through the trial, and fall away in times of subsequent ease and prosperity. Much less are we to understand, with others, by being *saved*, being delivered from the calamities of the siege of Jerusalem; for these words, like the preceding verses, refer to Christians throughout the world, and not merely to those in Jerusalem, or even in Judea. The salvation, as the connection shows, is eternal salvation; and it is promised to them that endure. Here the word *υπομενω*

may be taken in the sense of *remaining* when others apostatise and depart; or in the sense of *patiently sustaining* all the afflictions, and conflicts, and temptations spoken of, *to the end of life*; for then only is our salvation secure and certain."

This is wholesome, scriptural, and satisfactory. But such expositions as the one just before examined, cannot be too earnestly deprecated. But our task with that kind of commenting is not yet finished; there is much more to come.

Verse 14. AND THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS; AND THEN SHALL THE END COME.

Whether the word *world* in this verse should be understood in its most extensive import, as it is used in some places; or whether it should be understood in a somewhat limited sense, as it is not unfrequently used, admits of a question. There can be no doubt, however, but that it should be understood in a very *general* sense, as including the greater proportion of the habitable earth. Perhaps the ordinary colloquial import of the term is sufficiently definite. We say all the world was represented in the great London Exhibition. But we do not wish to be understood in the most exact and extensive sense. Alexander conquered the world, is a very common expression; but no one understands it in its most extensive import. Luke ii. 2. "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed." Here is the same original word that is used in the verse under notice. But it evidently means the Roman empire, which did by no means include literally all the world.

But the word before us, in its present connections, should not be limited to the empire; for it was to be "unto all nations." It is possible that it should be as unrestricted in its application, as it is in Mark xvi. 15. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." True, the word in this text is *κοσμον*, and the word in the verse under examination is *οικουμενη*; but a little attention to the *use* of the words will show that they are used interchangeably. In Romans x. 18, we have this latter word used to show the general promulgation of the gospel: "I say, Have they not heard?"

Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the (οικουμενης) world." In Colossians i. 6, we have the other word; speaking of the general spread of the gospel, it is said, "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the (κοσμου) world." In Acts xvii. 31, where the universal judgment is spoken of, the same word is used that we find in the verse under notice. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the (οικουμενην) world in righteousness, . . . whereof he hath given assurance unto all men," &c. We perceive by this that the word *may* mean, and sometimes *does* mean, the whole habitable world.

And there is not only no particular reason for restricting the word in the verse before us; but, on the other hand, there is reason for understanding it in its fullest signification. This is shown by the above quotations from Rom. x. 18, and Col. i. 6, where it is distinctly affirmed that the gospel had been carried throughout the world. And the same thing is affirmed very plainly in the 23d verse of the last mentioned chapter: "Which was preached to every creature under heaven."

And this is proved also by reliable history. Eusebius, B. 2, c. 3, says, (and he speaks of the period before the destruction of Jerusalem,) "Thus, then, under a celestial influence and coöperation, the doctrine of the Saviour, like the rays of the sun, quickly irradiated the whole world. Presently, in accordance with divine prophecy, the sound of his inspired evangelists and apostles had gone throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." It would seem as if these proofs ought to be deemed sufficient to establish the conclusion respecting the extent of the signification of this word, especially as there is nothing to show to the contrary.

"And then shall the end come."

What *end* is here intended? Answer—the end about which they inquired; but not the end as they understood it. "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the (αιωνος) age, or dispensation?" This rendering is according to the best authorities. The question appears to have been this: What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the (συντελειας)

finishing, or *consummation* of the (*αιωνος*) *age*—the present age, or duration of time that is to *terminate* when thou comest? By examining the chapter devoted to these inquiries, (Part 1, chap. 3,) there will be no difficulty in understanding what follows. The end here spoken of is undoubtedly the same that they had in view in their interrogations. It had a *Jewish* signification, and related to the closing up of the *αιωνος* then passing, and the establishment of the Messianic dispensation. But the manner in which they propounded their questions, manifested confusion and error in their apprehension of the subject. And the Theory of this Exposition supposes that this discourse of our Lord was designed to correct their erroneous impressions, and confirm them in the truth.

The note of Wesley is to the point, and characteristic of his remarkable clearness and precision. “The disciples inquire confusedly, 1, Concerning the time of the destruction of the temple; 2, Concerning the signs of Christ’s coming, and of the end of the world, as if they imagined these two were the same thing.”

The *confusion* of the disciples had respect to two things—1. Supposing that Christ’s coming spiritually, for the establishment of the Mediatorial kingdom, which would be during their own natural lifetime, was the same as the personal, visible advent for the judgment of the world, which will be at the final consummation—not of the Jewish period—but of the probation of the nations of the earth, when all nations shall be judged. They were also in error, 2, In supposing that the destruction of the temple would be synchronous with the coming of Christ, as they understood that coming, and as just above explained. This statement of the case is of great importance to a correct understanding of what follows.

In view of the erroneous impression of the disciples, our Lord undertakes to show them three things: 1, The (*συντελεσια*) *consummation* of that age; 2, The destruction of the temple, and its attending calamities; 3, The judgment advent of the Son of man, at the end of the world.

These three things he presents in their respective order, and

pays the strictest regard to the chronology of the events. The verse under notice relates to the consummation of the then present (*αιωνος*) age; and it teaches not only *when*, but *how*, it should terminate.

The author is apprised that what he is about to advance concerning the time and manner of closing up the *Jewish age* is entirely new. And it ought to be new; for, after years of research, he has not had the happiness of finding any explanation of this subject that has appeared to be consistent either with the Scriptures, or with itself.

But to the question:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

The complete and literal accomplishment of the first part of this prediction, has already been shown in the proper place. And it has been proved to have been fulfilled during the apostolic times. We now proceed to speak of the *end* which should result from that fulfillment.

God raised up, separated, and peculiarly distinguished and governed, the Jewish people. And it was for the accomplishment of a distinct and peculiar purpose, during a definite and limited time. They were chosen to receive a particular knowledge of the nature and will of God, and to preserve that knowledge in the midst of the darkness and idolatry of the world; so that, at a more suitable time, when God should think advisable, it might be communicated to the world generally.

Intimately connected with this general design, there was another, more specific, and, if possible, more important: The world was, in due time, to be taught (perhaps it should read, re-taught) the divine method of salvation, through the sacrificial suffering and death of God's own beloved Son. Hence, for this two-fold purpose, the Jews received not only the moral law, by which is the knowledge of sin; but also the ceremonial law, by which to show the salvation from sin. The moral law of necessity implies and contains all appropriate doctrines and duties. The ceremonial law as necessarily

contained multiform typical services, designed to show both the necessity and nature of salvation, through the sacrificial suffering and death of another.

These statements need not be enlarged upon, in this connection, for they are understood by all who will candidly examine this Exposition.

Now this two-fold purpose God undertook to accomplish by means of the Jewish nation, until Divine Wisdom should see fit to fulfill the typical dispensation, by the sacrificial death and offering of Jesus Christ once for all. Christ was the Lamb of God to which all previous offerings significantly pointed. Whatever human ignorance may think of this, it was undeniably the design and method of Infinite Wisdom. And the Jewish people were selected for the purpose of carrying this double purpose forward to completion.

As one would reasonable expect, the divine administration over the world had always a particular respect to the accomplishment of this object, as it was, for a definite period, committed to the Jews. This great purpose was ever distinctly in view by the divine Mind, in all the principal events of that former dispensation. All would be dark, inexplicably dark, and unsatisfying, but for this.

Now, that period of time during which this matter was intrusted to that people, and for whose sake, on this account, the world was more or less affected and governed, was emphatically the Jewish (*αιωνος*) age. Everything in the divine administration was more or less Jewish in its reference and tendency, for this specific reason. It was a peculiar age for a peculiar purpose. And as it was not designed to be eternal, but temporary, it was necessarily limited to the period of its propriety, and then must terminate.

The time of limiting the light of God's will and nature to that people, must in due time have an end; and then God would send out his light and his truth abroad unto all people. Then there would be no longer any necessity or propriety in confining to that people the glad tidings of salvation through the redemption wrought out by the world's Redeemer. The door of information and privilege must then be opened to the

excluded nations. The middle wall of separating exclusiveness must then be broken down. And this must terminate that peculiar dispensation. It will then have accomplished its purpose; and will be dismissed from its position in the divine government.

But it would not be *completely ended* in a moment, for it did not *completely begin* in a moment. It required *progressive and gradual consummation both in beginning and ending*. We might suppose that *αιωνος* began with the call of Abraham; but did it then have the written and ceremonial law? Could it then systematically and significantly typify the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ? No; and yet that age was, to some extent, *begun*.

We might suppose it began with the Exodus from Egypt; but were the typical institutions completely selected and established? No; but there had been *progress*. It was not until after the giving of the law, and the consecration of the Levitical priesthood, and the setting up of the tabernacle, that the typical *αιωνος* was *fully established*. It was not *unbegun* before; but it was *uncomplete* until then.

Just so in the *ending* or *consummation* of that period; it is easy to perceive that even with John the Baptist it *began to terminate*: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Luke xvi. 16. And when Christ and his first embassy of apostles began to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," there had been *progress* from John; but there was still farther progress to make. The new dispensation began to jostle and to crowd the other; but both seemed for a time to coëxist. The dawning of the new day began to shed twilight over the Israelitish hills; but the day had not yet fully come. "Let thy kingdom come," was still the prayer of the church. And yet the Saviour affirmed, "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt but the kingdom of God is come upon you." Luke xi. 20. The view of the subject here defended, is the only one that can naturally harmonize those passages which teach that the kingdom *had come, was nigh, and was yet to come*. The fact is, the new

dispensation was *gradual in completing its beginning*; and the old dispensation was as *gradual in completing its consummation*. When the Lamb of God was made an offering for sin, so far as *saving efficacy* was concerned, the old dispensation was ended, and the new one established.

But still the time had not yet arrived for *opening the door to the Gentiles*; the keys were already in the hands of the apostles; but they had not learned how to use them. They were instructed in relation to their duty to disciple all nations; but commanded to begin at Jerusalem, and for a season to tarry there. God had not yet granted this salvation to the Gentiles. But the old dispensation, in regard to its *exclusiveness*, was now ended; the door of salvation was opened to the whole world. Yet one thing of importance remained: the hitherto excluded nations must now be *informed* of their common election to the privileges of the new dispensation; and the far-off and universally scattered tribes of Israel, yet remaining in conscientious observance of the fulfilled institutions of the Jewish *αιωνος*, must now be visited by the ambassadors of the new kingdom, and invited to bow to the sceptre that governs to save. The *obligation*, the *exclusiveness*, the *privileges*, and the *efficacy* of the *Jewish dispensation* have already ended; and but this one thing remains to complete its termination.

When shall the end be? and how shall it be? Answer: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; AND THEN SHALL THE END BE."

As from the call of Abraham to the setting up of the tabernacle, it was progressing to its *complete beginning*; so from the days of John until this universal testimony to the nations, it was passing away, one thing after another, until its *complete ending*. This shall be the end.

But the end would not come as they supposed it would. They thought Christ would then make his appearance in his judgment character, to establish such a worldly kingdom as the Jews were generally and fondly expecting. They anticipated some great and violent commotion, of which the

destruction of the unbelieving Jews, with their holy house, would be a part. The predicted commotions and general judgment of the nations, at the closing up of the Gospel age, as related in Matt. xiii. and elsewhere, they had confounded with the extensive commotions and particular judgment of the Jewish people, at the closing up of the Jewish age. And this great mistake originated from their erroneous conceptions of Messial's kingdom. The discourse of Christ was undoubtedly intended to correct their errors; and most clearly did it do so, if we may judge from its adaptation.

It is lamentable that this misconception of the matter which the disciples manifested, and which our Lord undertook to correct, should still be propagated, to the confusion of God's people, and the encouragement of error and delusion.

Up to this point in the prophecy, our Lord has accomplished two things: 1. He has corrected their misconception, that the end of the Jewish age would synchronise with his second personal coming to judgment. He has passed on from one event to another, with strict regard to the chronologic order, and conducted them down to the *end* of which they inquired, without a single reference to his personal coming. Thus has he corrected their erroneous impression in respect to that point. 2. In the second place, he has taught them that the nature of his kingdom* is not such as they expected: it will not come "with observation:" it will not be an earthly, visible kingdom; but one that will be established and spread abroad by the suffering, martyrdom, and testimony of his disciples; and its establishment completed by the universal proclamation of the Gospel.

To this view there may be urged this objection: That the phrase *συντελειας του αιωνος*, in Matt. xxiv., and which event terminated before the fall of Jerusalem, is the same as in Matt. xiii., where it evidently refers, not to the end of the Jewish age, but to the end of the world.

The point of the objection is this: That in Matt. xxiv. the *αιωνος* terminated previously to the destruction of Jerusalem;

* During the Gospel dispensation.

whereas, in Matt. xiii. we understand the term to refer to the end of the world, at the day of judgment.

Just so ; and this is the answer—

1. Του αιωνος, in Matt. xxiv., was evidently the Jewish age, which had just been the subject of discourse, and was then the matter of conversation and inquiry.

2. But, in Matt. xiii., the Jewish age or dispensation was neither directly nor indirectly referred to; and did not in any sense form the subject of inquiry or discourse.

3. The “kingdom of heaven”—the Messianic age—was distinctly and confessedly the subject of the parables containing the phrase in question. And in every instance, to guard against being misunderstood, the parables were thus introduced—“The kingdom of heaven is like,” &c.

4. Finally, as must be evident to all, the αιωνος referred to in both portions of the record, was the specific age which was then the special subject of inquiry and discourse. Therefore, what is affirmed of the end of the αιωνος in Matt. xiii, has no proper connection with what is affirmed of the end of the αιωνος in the verse under comment; for, in one place, the συντελεια of the *Jewish* dispensation is referred to; and, in the other place, the συντελεια of the *Messianic*.

CHAPTER V.

Principal subject — FLIGHT OF THE CHRISTIANS.

Progressive order of the Prophecy — What is indicated by the Inquiries that led to the Prophecy — When did the Christians flee from Jerusalem? — Difficulty in determining — Strange blunders in quoting History — What was the Signal for beginning the Flight — Abortive efforts to determine — The Source of Information — Probable time of the Flight — Three Considerations — Interesting Parenthesis — Further Information concerning the Flight — Two Aspects of the Signal — Wisdom of the Lord's Direction — Benefit to Christians of all countries — Description of the Flight — Regulations of the Flight — How the Families were Saved — Our Lord's Prophecy partly a Compilation — Why those days were called Days of Vengeance — How long they were to continue — An important consideration — Condition of Women with young Children — Time of the Year when the Flight occurred — Why not on the Sabbath — Numbers Destroyed and taken Captive during the War — The Elect for whose sake those days were shortened.

Verse 15. WHEN YE THEREFORE SHALL SEE [*Luke*: JERUSALEM COMPASSED WITH ARMIES] THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION SPOKEN OF BY DANIEL THE PROPHET [STANDING] [*Mark*: WHERE IT OUGHT NOT,] IN THE HOLY PLACE, (WHOSO BEAETH, LET HIM UNDERSTAND,) [*Luke*: THEN KNOW THAT THE DESOLATION THEREOF IS NIGH.]

Verse 16. THEN LET THEM WHICH BE IN JUDEA FLEE INTO THE MOUNTAINS.

HAVING finished his discourse respecting the events which would occur previously to the first siege of Jerusalem, and thereby answered the inquiry concerning the consummation of that age, our Lord now proceeds to speak of the time and manner of the destruction of the temple, and the attending and resulting calamities. This would answer another of their inquiries, and remove their erroneous impressions respecting the successive order of the events. From the order of their interrogations, it would seem that they had either no definite conception of the chronologic relation of the events, or else supposed that the first in order would be the destruction of the temple; following that, the coming of Christ; then, the end of the world.

Our Lord now gives them to understand, (1.) That the several

events would not occur at the same time, but would transpire in a determinate order. (2.) That the first would be the end of the *αιωνος*, about which they inquired; then, the destruction of the temple, and the general desolation. He now proceeds to speak of the period of time that follows the consummation of the Jewish *αιωνος*,—a period which is not yet finished; and will not be, until Jerusalem ceases to be trodden down under the feet of the Gentiles.

“*When ye therefore shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies.*”

The destruction and desolation would be effected by armies. The city should be besieged—compassed with armies. It would not be desolated by earthquakes, or by any natural convulsion; but men—men in armies—would destroy it. In this we observe again the definiteness and minuteness of our Lord’s predictions. When they should see these surrounding armies, they were directed to take their flight into the mountains.

Now it may be supposed by some that there could be no difficulty in ascertaining the precise time when the Christians were to begin their flight. But after a thorough investigation of this subject, the author finds that this point is involved in great uncertainty. It is generally supposed to refer to the siege at the beginning of the war, when Cestius Gallus so suddenly and unexpectedly retired from the city. There are many affirmations to this effect; but there are but few references to history. And, what is certainly surprising, *the usual references do not sustain the point which they are quoted to prove.*

For instance, Newton on the Prophecies,* p. 344, assumes and explains as follows: “When therefore the Roman army shall *advance to besiege Jerusalem*, then let them who are in Judea consult their own safety, and fly into the mountains. This counsel was wisely remembered, and put in practice by the Christians afterwards. Josephus informs us, that *when Cestius Gallus came with his army against Jerusalem*, many fled from the city as if it would be taken presently: and after

* Lond. ed., 1 vol. 8vo.; reprinted at Phila., 1850.

his retreat, many of the noble Jews departed out of the city, as out of a sinking ship," &c. The reference is to War, B. 2, c. 19, s. 6. Now this reference does not sustain the position assumed; for, (1.) Josephus is not speaking of Christians at all, but of a very different class of persons; and, (2.) he is not speaking of what was done, "when Cestius Gallus advanced to besiege Jerusalem," and "came with his army against Jerusalem;" but of what was done *after the city had been besieged*, and when the citizens thought the place was about to be taken. "And now it was that a horrible fear seized upon the *SEDITIONS*, inasmuch that many of them ran out of the city, as though it were to be taken immediately." But what has this to do with the point at issue? It neither relates to the *time*, nor to the *characters*, which Newton's use of the quotation supposes.

Newton also refers to two other periods, subsequent to the first, when he supposes the opportunity was given to the Christians to begin their flight. The first reference is to War, B. 2, c. 20, s. 1.: "After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink." Now it is by no means certain, and but barely possible, that this was the time of the flight; for it is exceedingly unlikely that Josephus would speak of Christians as "the most eminent of the Jews." And what stands in connection with the quotation, renders the inference still less probable. The third quotation is still less relevant than the former: War, B. 4, c. 8, s. 2: "Hereupon a great multitude prevented their approach, and came out of Jericho, and fled to those mountainous parts over against Jerusalem," &c.

Now, observe, (1.) That this happened several years after the former; so that if the signal for beginning the flight had appeared so long before, as the former quotations were designed to prove, then there could be no probability in the supposition that *these* fugitives were such as were guided by the prediction of Christ. Everything favors the conclusion that they were not Christians, but Jews merely, who had been engaged in the war, until further efforts were deemed to be hopeless. And observe, (2.) That the flight of the multitude

here alluded to, happened *near the close of the war*, when “all the places beyond Jordan had been subdued already;” and when the whole country north, south, and west, had been ravaged by the Romans. This flight of the multitude from Jericho was several years too late in the war for Christians to escape the calamities, as the Lord undoubtedly designed they should by giving them such a definite signal. Furthermore, observe, (3.) That Jerusalem was not then, and for several years had not been, “*compassed with armies*,” standing in the holy place, or in its immediate vicinity. So much for these quotations.

From this utterly abortive attempt of Newton to show from Josephus the particular time which the Lord had in view, in directing the period of the flight, we must be impressed with these two things: 1. The difficulty of determining the precise period: 2. The irrelevancy and insufficiency of these standard references to ancient history.

We have another example of the same kind in Dr. Clarke's Commentary on verse 13, of the chapter before us: “It is very remarkable that not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, though there were many there when *Cestius Gallus* invested the city; and had he persevered in the siege, he would have soon rendered himself master of it; but when he unexpectedly and unaccountably raised the siege, the Christians took that opportunity to escape. See Eusebius *Hist. Eccles. B. 3, c. 5*, and Mr. Reading's note there; and see also the note here on verse 20.”

Now, it is certain that Eusebius does not, in the place referred to, speak of Cestius at all; neither does he speak of the time when the Christians took their flight; but simply states the *fact* of their escape. If anything respecting the *time* can be *inferred* from Eusebius, it will be totally inapplicable, and directly at variance with the Doctor's use of him; for Eusebius understood our Lord to speak of the time when “the abomination of desolation, according to the prophetic declaration, *stood in the very temple of God*.” But this did not take place until *several years after the attack made by Cestius*, to which Dr. Clarke refers. And, furthermore, it was not until about

the end of the war ; and yet it was to be the signal for beginning the flight, in order to escape the calamities of the war !

It is worthy of notice, that Bishop Newton refers to this very place in Eusebius, not to prove that the flight occurred at the approach or retreat of Cestius ; but to show that it took place several years afterwards, “when *Vespasian* was drawing his forces toward Jerusalem !” Well, we know that even this was some time previous to the final siège of the city ; and, of course, still longer before the abomination of desolation “stood in the very temple of God,” as Eusebius understood it ; for this did not occur until the close of the war under *Titus* ! So much for the agreement, relevancy, and value of these standard historical references ! This will do for the present : there will be more examples hereafter.

Dr. Clarke and Bishop Newton both suppose that the signal by which the Christians were to regulate their flight, was displayed at different times during the war ; and, consequently, that the flight may have occurred at different times. The Doctor supposes “It was in these incidental delays that the Christians, and indeed several others, provided for their own safety by flight.” And the Bishop extends the time from the approach of *Cestius*, at the first siege, to the approach of *Vespasian*, a year or two afterward. Eusebius does not fix the date of the flight ; but speaks of the Christians removing from Jerusalem, in such a way as to make it easy to infer that they escaped the miseries of the war, and, consequently, that it must have been at an early period. His words are, (*B. 3, c. 5,*) “The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. Here, those that believed in Christ, having removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself, and the whole land of Judea,” &c.

Now, whatever may have been the signal, it is evident that it was something definite, easily and generally understood, and designed to arouse the believers to an instant flight from every part of the land, as well as from the capital city. Those

upon the house-top were admonished not to delay long enough even to go down into the house to take anything away. There was such pressing haste that it would be hazardous to return from the field, to get the garment that could not be worn conveniently as they went forth to labor. This signal to begin the flight must have been some definite, suddenly, and distinctly appearing signal, which would instantaneously admonish them when the precise moment had come. There can be no mistake in this. But does this agree with the suppositions above noticed, where the two excellent authors seem to find evidences that the signal and the flight occurred at various intervals during the war, even down so late as the flight of the multitude from Jericho, on the approach of *Vespasian*? Could a signal that was designed to excite such general and breathless haste, be of such a nature as to occur at intervals, and be several years in having its complete fulfillment?

It is possible, after all, to throw some light upon this interesting subject. But, in doing so, the Scriptures must be our principal source of information.

To know what the signal was, let it be observed, (1.) That it was "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, where it ought not." And our Saviour himself* defines it to be in some way associated with "Jerusalem compassed with armies." By turning to the prophecy of Daniel, chapter ix. 26, we find what our Lord probably had in view: "And the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." In chapter xii. 11, we have another reference to the same thing: "And from

* See the Harmony, or the passage at the head of this chapter.

the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up," &c.

Now, without the history of the fulfillment of what has already been accomplished, it would probably be very difficult to understand this prophecy to which Christ referred. And, even now, there are some expressions which we may not be able to comprehend. But, favored with a subsequent parallel prediction, and a subsequent history, we may safely conclude that the, "city and the sanctuary" that were to be destroyed, were Jerusalem and its temple. And, by "the people of the prince," we should understand the Romans. "The end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined," probably indicates that, at the beginning of the war, "the people of the prince" would come in comparatively small numbers; but, in "the end thereof," they would come in much greater numbers: they would overflow like a flood. "And unto the end of the war desolations are determined," seems to indicate that, from the small beginnings, there should continue to flow a full tide of desolations, until the whole land should be made desolate. "The daily sacrifice" was to be "taken away," and "the abomination of desolation set up."

The first part of this prediction would of course be accomplished, when the sanctuary was destroyed; and the setting up of the abomination of desolation may refer to the planting of the idolatrous Roman ensigns in the courts of the temple, where Jehovah had recorded his name. But when was this accomplished? There was a remarkable instance of the kind during the administration of Pontius Pilate, which occasioned a tremendous commotion among the Jews. See Josephus, *Ant. B.* 18, c. 3, s. 1. But this instance of setting up the abomination in the holy place occurred at too early a period to have been the one alluded to by Christ. Besides, it was not connected with the other circumstances which should attend the instance described by him. The most noted instance that happened subsequently, was, when Titus took and destroyed the lower city, and the holy house was burned. "And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into

the [upper] city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, *brought their ensigns to the temple,* and set them over against the eastern gate; and there they offered sacrifices to them.*" War, B. 6, c. 6, s. 1.

Now *this* instance of setting up the abomination in the holy place, "where it ought not," occurred when the daily sacrifice was permanently taken away; for the place of sacrificing was itself destroyed. But, notwithstanding, this could not have been the setting up of the abomination which the Lord had in view; for it was now *too late* for the Christians either to avoid the war in the country, or the siege in the city, since the transaction took place at the *close of the war*. Were it not for this single consideration, the exact correspondency of this event with the prediction by Daniel, would render it quite certain that it was the precise period which Christ had in view, as the signal for the Christians' flight.

These various considerations appear to make it almost certain, that the disciples beheld the watched-for signal for beginning their flight, at the time that Cestius so unexpectedly retreated from the city. But it must be evident that our reasons for this conclusion are founded less in the manifestation of the signal, as described by the Lord, than in the appropriateness of the time. Those who venture to assert anything on this subject, ought not to be very positive; and those who undertake to *prove* it by references to ancient history, undertake—as we have already shown—a very difficult thing.

There are three considerations which render the common conviction in reference to the time of the flight quite probable—perhaps certain. 1. The retreat of Cestius happened at the *right time* for Christians to escape, so as to avoid the miseries of the war. When the invader fled from the city, there was no hindrance from *without* to prevent their escape. And when the Jewish warriors rushed out in pursuit, there was probably nothing *within* the city to prevent the escape. Perhaps this was the only moment during the whole war when

* The walls, of course, were still standing.

both the parties that might have prevented the flight, were situated so as to offer no impediment. 2. As this hasty retreat and instant pursuit were wholly unlooked for by any of the people, and probably began in a moment of unaccountable panic on the part of the Romans, the Christians would very properly seize upon *that instant* to obey their Lord's direction, not knowing how soon the Romans, or the Jewish warriors, might return. And at that moment, probably, the gates were neither shut nor guarded. And this may satisfactorily account for the *urgency* and *rapidity* of the flight. And it may be observed, too, as an important circumstance, that the retreat of Cestius was down the north-western way to the coast, leaving unguarded the road by Jericho across the river, for the Christians to escape to the mountains east of Jordan. 3. Something may be offered, likewise, in relation to one of the signs which were to apprise them when to flee to the hills: Jerusalem was to be encompassed with armies. True, it was not so at *that moment*; for if it had been, how could they have escaped? But then it *had* been surrounded; and as soon as *this* part of the signal was fulfilled, the disciples probably understood that the time had arrived; and they may have been seriously embarrassed with the impracticability of obeying the Lord's admonition. It is not unlikely that it became a subject of inquiry, debate, and prayer. The signal was displayed; the voice of the Lord seemed to sound in their ears, Escape to the mountains; but how could they obey him? "Jerusalem was compassed with armies:" the very signal to flee prevented their flight. To endeavor to desert to the Romans would insure death from the Jews; and to try to escape in any other way would insure death from the Romans. Besides, supposing that the more courageous and athletic of the Christian *men* should succeed in spite of both Jew and Roman; what would become of the *women* and *children*? Would a Christian husband and father flee from danger and suffering, and leave his family without his presence and protection? Did our Saviour give such direction to escape, and foresee no appropriate opportunity? "Stand still," O ye believing, watching, yet trembling saints, and "see the salvation of the Lord!" The time

of flight has come. Prepare your families for the escape. Understand among yourselves how and where to go. Post your sentinels upon the house-tops, and wait and listen for the *moment* to flee. All *appearances* are against you; but the word of the Lord is sure: wait in readiness; wait in faith. Hark! do you hear that tumult? Is it the battle cry of the Romans as they break into the temple? Nay, verily: *they retreat! they retreat!* The Jews rush out in disorder after them! They pause not to close the gates! The highway to the hills is open! Fly! fly to the mountains! Christian father, bear the youngest on your bosom; lead the feeble by the hand: the God of the individual is the God of the family; ye may all escape together.

And it may be observed, furthermore, that "the abomination that maketh desolate," if it referred to the *ensigns* of the Romans, was at that time seen to "stand in the holy place, where it ought not." For Cestius had just then succeeded in making his way to the very gates of the temple, and seemed on the very point of breaking in. And, if the symbols of idolatry were not set up within the very shadow of the sanctuary, at least the idolaters were there, and were battering the very gates that enclosed it.

From this position of progress and success, the panic-struck besieger desisted and fled, to the surprise of the besieged, and to the pleasure and deliverance of the Christians.

"Whoso readeth, let him understand."

This parenthetic admonition was perhaps spoken by our Lord himself; not with reference to the foreseen record of his own prophecy, but to the prophecy of Daniel, to which he had just referred. It is possible, however, that it was added by the evangelists Matthew and Mark, and referred to what they had just recorded. It is an unusual and remarkable addition to the discourse, whether spoken by Christ, or added by the historians. The wisdom of the advice, however, is quite evident; for, plain as the matter may be deemed by some, the foregoing observations have probably proved that unusual attention must be given to the subject, in order to

understand it. This is a principal reason for permitting it to occupy so many of these pages.

“Then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.”

The ruin of the city, and the destruction of the temple, about which you inquire, will then be nigh at hand. The Jews may, indeed, obtain some immediate advantage over their enemies, and chase them away; and the city may be delivered from the imminent danger. But it will be for a short time only; for the desolation of the city is nigh at hand. The retreating Romans will soon return with a still mightier force, and overflow the land with desolation and death, as the prophet Daniel has foretold. Understand the prophecy, for it applies to this very thing; and when you behold the signal which I give you, remember that the ruin which he foretold, and which I foretel, is nigh at hand.

“Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.”

Do not trust the appearance of the triumph which the Jews may gain over the Romans, and settle down, hoping not to be molested again. When the danger shall seem to be removed, and men shall rejoice, and anticipate an easy defence in future attacks, then do you improve the opportunity, and flee into the mountains. Not only flee from Jerusalem, but from every part of the country; for the desolation that shall destroy the city, shall first deluge the whole land: every part shall be laid waste. Men may cry, Peace and safety; but do not be deceived; flee for your lives to the mountainous refuges, where the destroyer may not pursue you.

“Let them which be in Judea” flee.

As before observed, the signal which was to determine the flight from the city, was also designed to notify the whole country. And it may somewhat relieve the difficulty in determining when the specific signal appeared, by considering the fact, that it was not designed for the inhabitants of Jerusalem only, but for those in every part of the land. To those living *out of Jerusalem* it would be a favorable time for flight, when the invading forces were concentrated about the capital. They would not then be likely to obstruct the flight of such as might endeavor to escape to places of safety. The intense

interest which the Jews felt for their holy city and temple, would lead them to watch with sleepless anxiety the progress and positions of the enemy. The fact of the siege of the city, and the success of the besiegers, would, in some way, be perceived or understood by the inhabitants in the vicinity; and the reports of the case would fly with almost telegraphic despatch to every part of the country. As soon, then, as it should become known that the invaders had settled down about the city, and planted their standards for a permanent encampment, then the disciples in Judea must begin their flight. Then the Romans would not be in a situation to hinder them; and the unbelieving Jews would be much interested and occupied with the affairs of their beloved metropolis. Thus the signal for beginning the escape would answer for those in the country, as well as for those in the capital. There would be this difference, however: when Jerusalem was compassed with armies, it would indicate to those in the country that the time had come to *begin* their flight; while, to the inhabitants of the city, it would indicate that the *time* had come, and that they must be every moment on the watch for the *opportunity*. This would tend to keep them constantly in readiness, so that the very moment the Jews rushed out after the retreating invaders, (supposing that the flight occurred at this time,) the Christians would perceive that the moment—the precise moment—had come, and would be in perfect readiness to improve it.

[*Luke*: AND LET THEM WHICH ARE IN THE MIDST OF IT DEPART OUT; AND LET NOT THEM THAT ARE IN THE COUNTRIES ENTER THEREIN.]

The connection of these sentences shows that they refer to the country more particularly than to the metropolis. However safe the country may appear, when the Romans are concentrated about Jerusalem, or when they are chased out of Judea, yet do not let those who may then be in the neighboring countries venture to enter the ill-fated territory. There were many inducements which would be likely to draw the neighboring people into the dangerous region; such as, (1.) The romantic, as well as religious, attachment which the peo-

ple—both Jews and Christians—felt for the land of their fathers, and which tended always to draw them as frequently as possible to visit the land of promise. (2.) The great festivals which occurred with frequency, and which the Jews from all parts of the world naturally desired to attend, would—unless they were admonished of the danger—bring vast multitudes into the country. (3.) Perhaps, also, the scarcity of provisions resulting from the unsettled condition of the country, might induce many to come thither for a market. (4.) Some of the great thoroughfares between the northern and southern countries led directly through Judea; and, without previous warning, the people would be likely to continue their journeys through that country as they had been accustomed to do. (5.) And it is evident that there could be no sufficient occasion for Christians to enter Judea at that time, for the purpose of preaching the gospel; for, first, The minds of the unbelieving Jews would not be favorably disposed, at such a time, for hearing and obeying the doctrines of Jesus. And, secondly, God had provided expressly for the publication of the gospel in that country, before it was proclaimed elsewhere; and the day of especial privilege for that people would now be past.

There would be two principal reasons for not coming into the country at that juncture, even should the invaders be driven away: They would soon return again with greatly increased numbers, to ravage and desolate the land. And, again, the moment they should be driven away, the Jews, in expectation of their return, would be everywhere occupied in organizing their armies, manufacturing armor, and fortifying their cities. And they would desire to press into these services every man they could lay hold of. And if the Christians did not escape before this juncture, it would be difficult for them to do so. That such were the facts in the case, is particularly shown in the second Appendix.

Thus the two-fold admonition to those living within Judea, and those living without it, was equally important in both of its parts. And it should be borne in mind, that this prophecy of Christ soon became distributed, and was in the hands of

Christians in all parts of the world ; so that these specific directions of our Saviour not only served to show his people how to shun the calamities of the war, by fleeing from the country, but also by keeping away, if they were not at the time residing there.

Verse 17: LET HIM WHICH IS ON THE HOUSE TOP NOT COME DOWN TO TAKE ANY THING OUT OF HIS HOUSE.

We cannot, perhaps, perceive any reason for this breathless haste for those who dwelt in the country ; but it has already been shown that those in Jerusalem would be watching for the moment when to begin their flight. And nothing would be more natural than to be observing the progress of the siege from the house-tops. From that position they could witness the sudden retreat of Cestius, and the tumultuous rushing forth of the Jewish warriors in the pursuit. And, in the case of the Christians, there would be a necessity for this urgency, that would render it improper to delay even to go down into the house for the purpose of taking anything away. They would undoubtedly be clothed sufficiently to protect them in that season of the year ; and the less they carried, the more easy and expeditious their flight. Besides, as the house-tops generally extended in almost unbroken connection, they could flee, without coming down, to the outer avenues and walls of the city. And they would be likely, probably, to meet with less interruption in their passage over the house-tops, than in the streets, which would be likely to be crowded at such a crisis, and less convenient for the flight. The counsel, not to take anything out of the house, to carry with them, possibly may not refer to articles of clothing, but to such valuables of other kinds as they might desire to carry with them.

Verse 18. NEITHER LET HIM WHICH IS IN THE FIELD RETURN BACK TO TAKE HIS CLOTHES.

It is difficult to conceive how this could apply to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, at this specific period ; but as the admonitions were equally addressed to those who would be residing in the country places, it is reasonable to suppose that it was

intended for them, for at this time they would not be hindered by the invading army.

In some places in the country they would still be quietly pursuing their ordinary labors in the field, not anticipating, perhaps, any immediate danger. Leaving, as was usual in such cases, their heavy outer garments at home, they would go into the fields to labor, having on only the more closely fitting raiment that would not encumber their motions. But they undoubtedly understood, and intended to obey, the admonition of the Lord, to flee for their lives at the appointed time; and were only waiting to learn the precise period for beginning their flight. Not expecting it that day, they would go forth into the fields.

But, while in the fields, the intelligence arrives that the Romans are encamped about Jerusalem; their ensigns are gleaming from Mount Scopus; the legions are set in battle array. Sudden and unexpected as the intelligence may be, at that moment, yet those who believe the word of Christ understand that the moment has come to escape to the mountains. Dropping the implements of labor, they abandon all, and flee. We may suppose that those living in the vicinity of the metropolis, and can watch the progress of the invaders, first begin the flight. As they proceed through the country, they give the alarm to such as they happen to meet, until finally it becomes generally understood by the Christians, and there is a general escape. May we not also suppose, that, as they were expecting the signal about these times, though unable before hand to determine the hour or the day, *they had made arrangements among themselves, by which they might all be duly notified?* To suppose otherwise, would be supposing that the Christians of that day were without even common prudence and sagacity. Yet they were at this time regularly organized into societies, and had all appropriate officers and regulations for self-government and extension. Without greatly disparaging them, we cannot suppose they were either ignorant or heedless of so important a matter as this prediction and counsel of the Lord. To say nothing of piety, even the common principle of self-preservation would

sufficiently prompt all who had confidence in the wisdom of their Lord.

How would any intelligent association of people act in a case like this? Would they not carefully consider, and endeavor to understand, the admonitions that were designed to preserve them? Would they not have an understanding among themselves, in relation to the manner of escaping, and the place of final rendezvous? And as those who might be in the fields at the time to begin the flight, were warned not to return for their garments, can we suppose they were so destitute of both intelligence and affection, as not to have made provision for the escape of their families, and for a future assembling? After making the time and the method of escape a matter of conference, reading, and (verse 20) prayer, as would be very natural, would they go to the fields to labor, with no certainty—and in case of hearing of the signal—with no permission, of returning, and yet have made no provision for the escape of the families at home? Impossible.

How could the Christian husband and father, in these circumstances, go to his distant labor in the fields, and be so intent on making his own escape, as to leave his wife and little ones to perish at home? No doubt when the pious parent presented his family to the care of God in his morning worship, he made this subject one of the fervent themes of supplication; and when he gave them his morning adieu, and went into the fields, he was assured, from previous arrangement, that if he should be obliged to begin his flight before returning home, he should greet his family again at the appointed place of gathering. And why has not this subject been deemed worthy of a place among the multitudinous themes of our commentaries? A little light shed upon a matter of this kind is more congenial to the pious heart, and more favorable to the reputation of primitive Christianity, than many volumes of merely critical speculations, and the usual horrible details of corruption, carnage, and death.

Are we attentive enough to what some may call the *little* things of history—the minuter developments of sanctified

humanity? Is not our knowledge usually too much addressed to the *head*, and too little to the *heart*? And may not this be affirmed too generally of our standard biblical literature? Does it not tend more to make us merely learned, and critical, than affectionate, humble, and holy?

This is the author's apology for deviating from the beaten track of Scripture exegesis in so many instances; and for endeavoring to make the heart of exegetical theology pulsate with a common feeling, and its countenance glow with a familiar experience.

[*Luke*: FOR THESE BE THE DAYS OF VENGEANCE, THAT ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN MAY BE FULFILLED.]

In many things the prophecy of Christ was strictly original; but in respect to some things he merely affirmed what had been uttered by the more ancient prophets. We have noticed his reference to a part of the predictions of Daniel; and now we have a more general allusion to the whole course of ancient prophecy. Much of the prophecy of Moses, and several other of the principal prophets, appears to point to the desolation of the Jewish nation and country; and therefore our Lord distinctly identifies the calamities of which he was discoursing with those which had been predicted by others.

"These be the days of vengeance."

There had been other days of vengeance, when wrath was poured out with severity upon the Jewish people. But the time of which the Lord was now speaking, was "the days of vengeance." These days of vengeance differed from the former in three particulars: 1. The vengeance was *more severe*. 2. It was of *longer continuance*; so much so, that it was to last until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in; thus extending through many centuries, and reaching forward even beyond the present time. 3. And let it be observed particularly, these days of vengeance of which he was then speaking, were to continue until "ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN MAY BE FULFILLED."

To notice this appropriately is of vast importance to a true exposition of this discourse. The Roman war, and even the

fatal siege, were but the *commencement* of those predicted days of vengeance. He who ventures to limit our Lord's prediction to the term of a few years, already long since past, assumes a responsibility which the author dare not covet. Popular, or unpopular, hazardous, or unhazardous, the author of this Treatise is fully determined to "speak as the oracles of God." If Moses, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel, or any other of the prophets, has written of calamities which the Jews yet suffer, or are yet to endure, as a people, *then let it be distinctly understood, and remembered for future use*, THAT THOSE AFORE PREDICTED AFFLICTIONS WERE INCLUDED BY OUR LORD WITHIN THOSE DAYS OF VENGEANCE WHICH BEGAN WITH THE ROMAN WAR. And our Lord distinctly affirms that the days of vengeance of which he was speaking, were to last "UNTIL ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN MAY BE FULFILLED." Reader, do not forget this: it will have much to do with several portions of the Exposition.

Now, as a specimen of what has been written by the prophets, read attentively Deuteronomy from the beginning of the twenty-eighth chapter. Much of it still continues unfulfilled; and will not be accomplished until the final restoration of Israel to their father-land, and their father's God.

It should be observed, however, that Christ was not now describing the events of this long continued period of vengeance; but he was now simply stating what he more particularly affirms in the 24th verse, that the days of vengeance which should begin as he predicted, would continue for a long time, until all the prophecies concerning them had been fulfilled. But the inquiries of the disciples, and the consequent design of the discourse, led him to speak with especial reference to that part of those days of vengeance in which Jerusalem should be destroyed.

Verse 19. AND WO UNTO THEM THAT ARE WITH CHILD, AND TO THEM THAT GIVE SUCK IN THOSE DAYS!

Not during the *whole period* of the days of vengeance, lasting, as we have seen, until the fulfillment of all that had been written; but during the time of which he was *then*

particularly speaking, in order to adapt his discourse to the object he then had in view. For reasons too evident to be enlarged upon, the women who might be in the condition he describes, would be subject to peculiar dangers and sufferings. They would neither be in a condition to *escape* the calamities of the war, nor to *endure* them.

Then would be affectingly fulfilled Christ's own prediction to the women of Jerusalem, as they wept and lamented over him, as he was led along through the streets to the cross: Lu. xxiii. 28. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck." Josephus relates some instances of the suffering of women and children, which are too horrible to be repeated without necessity.

Verse 20. BUT PRAY YE THAT YOUR FLIGHT BE NOT IN THE WINTER, NEITHER ON THE SABBATH DAY.

As there is no probability whatever that the flight of the Christians occurred so late as the siege of Jerusalem by Titus; nor during the conduct of the war by Vespasian, when Jerusalem was not "compassed with armies;" as all the probabilities of the case point to the invasion and siege by Cestius, at the beginning of the war; there can be no propriety in diverting attention from the point in question, by showing that the approach of Vespasian, and the final siege by Titus, were not in the winter. It is sufficient to show that Cestius besieged the city when the Jews were celebrating the feast of Tabernacles, which was in the most pleasant part of the year. It was on the 30th day of Tisri that Cestius brought his army into the lower city. Tisri answers to the latter part of our September and the first part of October. This would be the date for beginning the flight from the *country*. It was eight or nine days after this that Cestius fled from the city. This was undoubtedly the time of flight from *Jerusalem*. A more favorable season of the year could not have been selected. Perhaps it is not susceptible of *historical* proof

that the flight was not on the Sabbath. But there is sufficient *moral* proof that the prayers of the disciples were answered, as well with respect to the time of the week, as to the season of the year.

It would have been unfortunate for them to begin their flight on the Sabbath; for, (1.) The conscience of many would have been troubled on account of the strictness with which they had been taught to observe the Sabbath day. And, 2. It is certain that the Jews would have regarded their Sabbath traveling with offence; and with increased prejudice against the religion of the disciples. And, likewise, (3.) The gates of the cities and villages would be closed on that day, and entrance into them, or escape from them, would be difficult. Besides, (4.) If the Jews should be disposed to hinder their flight from the country, they would—by their Sabbath traveling—be much more likely to be suspected of fleeing away, because all ordinary travel on that day was generally suspended.

The Jews of *Jerusalem*, however, as we learn from Josephus, (*War*, *B.* 2. *c.* 19,) were almost disregarding of the Sabbath day, so generally and so deeply had they sunk in moral degradation.

Mr. Watson has a good thought concerning this *praying* about the day of their flight: “And were the march of Roman armies, and the decisions of Roman councils, to be interfered with in answer to the prayers of a few poor Christians? Let philosophy scoff; but let faith adore; so it was.” Prayer has much more to do with the destiny of nations and man, than unbelievers are willing to acknowledge, or even Christians have power to comprehend. It was well, then, for the disciples to pray that their flight might neither be in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day.

Verse 21. FOR THEN SHALL BE GREAT TRIBULATION [*Luke:* IN THE LAND, AND WRATH UPON THIS PEOPLE,] SUCH AS WAS NOT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO THIS TIME, NO, NOR EVER SHALL BE.

Some are disposed to consider this language hyperbolical; but we should beware how we charge our Lord with exaggeration.

tion. Mr. Watson observes, "This is not a hyperbolical expression; for no one can read the narrative of the Jew Josephus, without acknowledging that this national calamity has no parallel. This narrative appears to have been written and preserved under a special providence, of which Josephus himself was unconscious, that future times, in the testimony of an eye-witness, and he not a Christian, might have a full and unexpected proof of the exact accomplishment of the words of Christ."

Josephus himself says, (*War, Pref. s. 4.*) "Accordingly, it appears to me, that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were."

Some idea of the unparalleled sufferings and desolations of those troublous times, may be obtained by considering merely the statistics of the deaths that occurred, and of the captives that were taken, during the war. Bishop Newton, refering in each instance to Josephus, gives a general summary of the carnage and captivity of the war. "Of those who perished during the whole siege, [of Jerusalem,] there were, as Josephus says, 1,100,000. Many were also slain at other times and in other places. By the command of Florus, who was the first author of the war, there were slain at Jerusalem 3,600. By the inhabitants of Cesarea above 20,000. At Scythopolis above 13,000; at Ascalon, 2,500; at Ptolemais, 2,000; at Alexandria, under Tiberius Alexander the president, 50,000; at Joppa, when it was taken by Cestius Gallus, 8,400; in a mountain called Asamon, near Sepphoris, above 2,000; at Damascus, 10,000; in a battle with the Romans at Ascalon, 10,000; in an ambuscade near the same place, 8,000; at Japha, 15,000; of the Samaritans upon Mount Gerizim, 11,600; at Jotapata, 40,000; at Joppa, when taken by Vespasian, 4,200; at Tarichea, 6,500; after the city was taken, 1,200; at Gamala, 4,000 slain; besides 5,000 who threw themselves down a precipice; of those who fled with John of Gishcala, 6,000; of the Gadarenes, 15,000 slain, besides an infinite number drowned; in the villages of Idumea, above 10,000 slain; at Gerasa, 1,000; at Macherus, 1,700; in the

wood of Jardes, 3,000; in the castle of Masada, 960; in Cyrene by Catullus the governor, 3,000. Besides these, many of every age, sex, and condition, were slain in the war, who were not reckoned; but of these who are reckoned, the number amounts to above 1,357,660; which would appear almost incredible, if their own historian had not so particularly enumerated them. But besides the Jews who 'fell by the edge of the sword,' others were also to be 'led captive into all nations;' and considering the number of the slain, the number of the captives too was very great. There were taken particularly at Japha, 2,130; at Jotapata, 1,200; at Tarichea, 6,000 chosen young men were sent to Nero, the rest sold to the number of 30,400; besides those who were given to Agrippa; of the Gadareness, 2,200; in Idumea above 1,000.

"Many besides these were taken at Jerusalem, so that, as Josephus himself informs us, the number of the captives taken in the whole war amounted to 97,000; the tall and handsome young men Titus reserved for his triumph; of the rest, those above seventeen years of age were sent to the works in Egypt; but most were distributed through the Roman provinces, to be destroyed in their theatres by the sword or by wild beasts; those under seventeen were sold for slaves.

"Of the captives many underwent hard fate. 11,000 of them perished for want. Titus exhibited all sorts of shows and spectacles at Cesarea, and many of the captives were there destroyed, some being exposed to the wild beasts, and others compelled to fight in troops against one another. At Cesarea, too, in honor of his brother's birth-day, 2,500 Jews were slain; and a great number likewise at Berytus in honor of his father's. The like was done in other cities of Syria. Those whom he reserved for his triumph were Simon and John, the generals of the captives, and seven hundred others of remarkable stature and beauty. Thus were the Jews miserably tormented, and distributed over the Roman provinces; and are they not still distressed and dispersed over all the nations of the earth?" (*Newton on the Prophecies*, p. 365.)

Of their sufferings from continual alarms, from fatal accidents and diseases, from terrible famine, from ghastly wounds, from

cold, heat, weariness and bereavement, it is impossible to express or imagine. Josephus is not the only source of information; but he is every way sufficient to show the literal and minute fulfillment of our Lord's most extraordinary prediction.

Verse 22. AND EXCEPT THOSE DAYS SHOULD BE SHORTENED, THERE SHOULD NO FLESH BE SAVED; BUT FOR THE ELECT'S SAKE, [*Mark*: WHOM HE HATH CHOSEN,] THOSE DAYS SHALL BE SHORTENED.

But who are the *elect*, for whose sake those days should be shortened? Probably the same as in verse 24. The general impression that it refers to the *Christian Jews*, is most likely to be correct. God did not intend to make a full end of that race of people; they have yet an important part to accomplish in the great purposes of Divine Wisdom. But so general and terrible was the destruction that was brought upon them, that they might well have exclaimed, (Isa. i. 9,) "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." That is, they would have been so totally overthrown as to leave none of them alive. From the beginning God determined not to suffer them to be utterly destroyed. He would have a portion in Jacob. The idea of a chosen remnant being preserved was familiar to the Jewish mind. Moses in his wonderful prophetic discourse and song, beginning in the twenty-eighth chap. of Deut., very distinctly describes the general and long-lasting desolation of the Jewish people; but he just as distinctly affirmed the perpetual continuance of the race. By the prophet Isaiah, chap. x. they were likened to a *forest* of innumerable trees. Whereas, in their desolation, they should be thinned out until but a few were left. Verse 19. "And the rest of the trees of the forest shall be few, that a child may write them. 20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the *remnant* of Israel, and such as are *escaped* of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. 21. The *remnant* shall return, even the *remnant* of *Jacob*, unto the mighty

God. 22. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a *remnant* of them shall return."

The same idea of preserving a chosen remnant, is promised also in chap. lxxv. verse 8. "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servant's sake, *that I may not destroy them all.* Verse 9. *And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine ELECT shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.*"

By Jeremiah, in several places, the same idea of preserving a remnant is set forth, as, e. g. in chap. v. verse 10. "Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; *but make not a full end.*" Verse 18. "Nevertheless, in those days, saith the Lord, I will not make a *full end* of you." In chap. xxx. verse 11, we find the same idea: "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a *full end of thee.*"

So in Amos, chap. ix. verse 8. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will *not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,* saith the Lord." St. Paul, in Rom., chap. xi., speaks also with particular reference to a chosen remnant which God preserved for himself: verse 5. "Even so, at this present time, there is a *remnant according to the election of grace.*" Verse 7. "Israel [in the general] hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the *election* hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

These, undoubtedly, were the elect for whose sake the days of desolation, of which Christ was then particularly speaking, were shortened. They were preserved because they believed in Christ, and obeyed his admonitions. God, in fulfillment of many promises, saved them by special interposition. But even this chosen and preserved part of that unhappy people were not saved from the inconveniences and dangers of that period of tribulation. Their hasty flight into the mountainous regions did indeed save them from the destruction that

befel those who remained in Judea; but did it provide for them abodes of comfort and permanency in the places to which they fled?

Was it not especially for their sakes, as exiles from their native soil, that those days should be shortened, lest, after having escaped one form of destruction, they should perish by another? And the shortening of those days was also necessary on account, also, of those who, by reason of age, infirmity, or other hindrances, could not escape from the ravages of the war. Some who were not previously converted were undoubtedly preserved, and became believers after the war had past. We should not *limit* the elect to those who were at that time believers, for several reasons: (1.) It is a fact that many others were preserved through the whole war. (2.) Many of those who were thus preserved were afterwards, probably, converted to the true faith. (3.) The elect, and the remnant which are so frequently spoken of in the Scriptures, have, it is likely, usually included a portion of such as were not, at the time, true believers. It is so at present; it has been so from the first; and it is to such that the promise of the renewing Spirit is given. See Ezek. xxxvi. 21-38, and similar passages.

That there might not be an utter extermination of even the unconverted Jews; but that some might be preserved for future conversion, and to be parents of subsequent converts, those days of special suffering were providentially shortened.

It is, perhaps, less evident that those who escaped from the country, stood in need of having the time of distress shortened, as much as those who remained during the war.

“Those days should be shortened.”

Yet several years were spent in completing the terrible devastation that was begun by Cestius Gallus. The last siege of Jerusalem continued only a few months. And it was so strongly fortified, and so desperately defended, that even the conquerors were constrained to acknowledge that God had fought for them. In view of the strength of the walls and towers, Titus himself exclaimed, “We have fought with God on our side; and it is God who hath pulled the Jews out of

these strong holds; for what could the hands of men or machines do against these towers?" The internal dissensions and slaughter among the Jews themselves contributed not a little to hasten the final catastrophe.

CHAPTER VI.

Principal subjects — FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS.

Renewed appearance of Impostors — Why so successful — Two-fold Caution — Simon Magus — Menander, his Successor — Claims to be Jesus Christ — Character of the Signs and Wonders wrought by the Impostors — Why the Jews, who were imposed upon by *false* Miracles, did not credit the true — Illustration from modern Infidelity — Modern Wonder-workers — Deceiving the Elect — Import of the phrase, "If it be possible" — Facts in the case — Origin and Names of the principal Heresies during the Primitive Times — Origin of the False Christs and False Prophets — Two ways in which they appeared — Why Christ was expected in "the Secret Chambers" — Use of Josephus' History.

Verse 23. THEN IF ANY MAN SHALL SAY UNTO YOU, LO, HERE IS CHRIST, OR THERE; BELIEVE IT NOT.

THIS should not be regarded as a mere repetition of what was said at the beginning of the discourse; but as a warning against false Christs and false prophets, who would make their appearance at the precise time of which the Lord was now speaking: they would come during the terrible siege of Jerusalem.

The Jews did not believe that God would abandon them to their enemies. They were constantly looking for some divine interposition, by which they should be delivered. And it seems to have been generally understood among them, that, according to the prophecies, it was time for Messiah to come. Hence, they were easily imposed upon by the impostors who appeared in their midst. As their calamities increased, and utter destruction threatened them, their hope of Messiah's

appearing seemed to increase, and, as it were, concentrate itself within the limited space which seemed to intervene between them and total destruction. They expected a deliverer who should perform miracles, and exhibit astonishing signs among them.

The impostors would not fail to adapt themselves to the expectations of the people; and would come claiming to be Christ, and working, or appearing to work, miracles.

Our Saviour gives this additional caution, to put his disciples on their guard against plausible and successful impostures. If they say, *Lo, here is Christ*, believe it not. If any who may associate with the impostors, shall endeavor to persuade you to join with them, do not be deceived: remember that you have been forewarned of this very thing. Or if they shall point to the pretenders, and say, *There is Christ*, and try to persuade you to go after them, do not be deceived: others will run after them, but be you constantly guarded against them.

Verse 24. FOR THERE SHALL ARISE FALSE CHRISTS, AND FALSE PROPHETS, AND SHALL SHOW GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS.

This did actually occur. Notwithstanding the disappointments and calamities that were occasioned by former impostors, the Jews would not abandon their expectation of a deliverer; and a succession of deceivers continued to impose upon them.

At an earlier period than Christ was now speaking of, there appeared Simon Magus, who is referred to in Acts viii., 9–11. *Eusebius, B. 3, c. 26*, describes another: “Menander, who succeeded Simon Magus, exhibited himself an instrument of diabolical wickedness, not inferior to the former. He also was a Samaritan; and having made no less progress in his impostures than his master, reveled in still more arrogant pretensions to miracles, saying that he was in truth the Saviour, once sent from the invisible world for the salvation of men.”

Several impostors are mentioned by Josephus, and will be referred to in connection with a following verse.

“And shall show great signs and wonders.”

The comment on this prediction by Watson is worthy of notice :

“What these were, we have now no means of judging; whether deceptions, or the result, to a certain extent, of a permitted supernatural agency.

“From the detected character of popish ‘signs and wonders,’ which bear so strong a resemblance to those of Jewish and pagan miracles, we may conclude it probable that they were impostures and ‘lying wonders,’ but artfully contrived by the more skillful to mislead the ignorant mass, prepared for delusion by that gross superstition and belief in magic which prevailed among them. Simon Magus bewitched the people with his ‘sorceries,’ and Josephus calls the false prophets who appeared at this time among the Jews, *magoi* and *goetes*, magicians and sorcerers.

“As to amulets, charms, sorceries, and enchantments, the Jews of that age were notoriously credulous; and as incredulous as to the real miracles of our Lord and his apostles.

“The truth of these miracles obtains from this a stronger evidence, and the unbelief of the Jews a MORAL solution. By a credulous people, they must have been admitted as demonstrative of the doctrines in confirmation of which they were wrought; but they hated the doctrine itself, and this passion overpowered every mental habit, and changed, as to those glorious evidences of pure and holy truth, the whole character of their minds. Nor is this without a parallel. The CREDULITY OF INFIDELITY in our own age has often been remarked; and it is exemplified in the readiness with which both those who entirely reject the Holy Scriptures, and the critics who would explain away their supernatural character, admit the most absurd theories in opposition to them, and the deceived confidence with which they teach them to others.”

In all ages, there have been those who have wrought astonishing wonders. Our own times are not without the wonder-workers, whose doings form the topic of private gossip and public reports. By mysterious and little understood natural laws, by which one person may affect another, and by which even inanimate things may, to some extent, be affected; and

also by permitted diabolical agency, such as is frequently alluded to in the Scriptures, those impostures may have been really astounding, and well calculated to deceive the superstitious and credulous Jews.

Verse 24, (last part.) INASMUCH THAT, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, THEY SHALL DECEIVE THE VERY ELECT.

The note of Whitby is quite appropriate and satisfactory, with respect to the phrase, "if it were possible:"

"First. That the phrase *εἰ δυνατὸν*, 'if it be possible,' or, 'if it may be,' doth not denote an absolute impossibility, but only a great difficulty in the performance of an act possible. So Acts xx. 16. 'Paul hastened *εἰ δυνατὸν* αὐτῷ, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem before Pentecost;' and yet sure he made not all this haste to do what was impossible. The apostle commands, *εἰ δυνατὸν*, 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, have peace with all men;' (Rom. xii. 18,) and yet doth not he exhort us to use our utmost endeavors to do what was impossible. *Εἰ δυνατὸν*, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' saith Christ, (Matt. xxvi. 49,) and yet he adds, 'all things are possible to thee, O Father,' (Mark xiv. 35,) and hence the phrase is changed by St. Luke into *εἰ βούλει*, 'if thou wilt.'

"Now, that the deceiving of Christians in those times of miraculous endowment was very difficult, is evident from that speech concerning a thing hardly feasible, *Θάττον τις τοὺς ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ μεταδιδάξεις*, 'Sooner may a Christian be turned from Christ.'

"Secondly. This phrase imports, not what the event would be upon the elect, but the vehemence of the endeavors of the seducers, that they would do the utmost that they could possible to shock the Christian, and seduce him from his steadfastness, as is evident from the words of St. Mark, xiii. 22, 'They will show signs and wonders, *πρὸς τὸ ἀποπλανᾶν, εἰ δυνατὸν*, to deceive, if they are able, the elect.'

"Now, to say such a one will do you mischief, if he can, or if he be able, is surely no security that he can do you none.

"And, Thirdly. Should this phrase respect the event, it may

do it not absolutely, but only with relation to the means here mentioned; i. e. 'they shall show great signs and wonders,' which shall prevail to seduce Jews, heathens, and Samaritans, and even Christians, were it possible for impostors by lying signs and wonders to deceive them, who are invested with the power of making true and greater signs and wonders by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and will attend to the things wrought among them or by them."

Much more of the same import may be found by consulting Whitby's annotations on the text under notice. This part of his argument has been adopted, as containing the substance of about all the *logic* which the passage has called forth. There are now before the writer a variety of commentaries, in all of which this passage is brought under notice. But strange as it may be, not one of them undertakes to settle the matter by referring to facts. Yet, there are historical evidences which ought to be deemed sufficient to settle the point in question.

St. Paul says, 1 Tim. iv. 1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter time, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 2 Tim. ii. 17. "And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus: 18. Who concerning the truth, have erred, saying the resurrection is passed already; and overthrow the faith of some." 2 Tim. i. 15. "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." Rev. ii. 20. "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman, Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." 2 Cor. xi. 3. "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*

In the various schisms and corruptions which crept into the church during the latter part of the apostolic age, there is

* See Note C, in the Appendix

every reason to believe that many real believers in Christ were turned away from the faith, and gave heed unto fables.

Eusebius' *Eccles. Hist. B. 4, c. 22*, contains an extract from Hegesippus, a Christian divine, who was born in the beginning of the second century. He treats of the introduction of heresies in the church, and of the origin of false Christs, and false prophets. "But after James the Just had suffered martyrdom, as our Lord had, for the same reason, Simeon, the son of Cleophas, our Lord's uncle, was appointed the second bishop, whom all proposed, as the cousin of our Lord. Hence they called the church as yet a virgin, for it was not yet corrupted by vain discourses. Thebuthis made a beginning secretly to corrupt it, on account of his not being made bishop. He was one of those seven sects among the Jewish people.

"Of these also was Simcon, whence sprung the sect of the Simonians; also, Cleobius, from whence came the Cleobians; also Dositheus, the founder of the Dositheans. From these, also, sprung the Gortheonians, from Gortheus, and the Masboteans, from Masbotheus. Hence, also, the Menandrians, and Marcionists, and Carpocratians, and Valentinians, and Basilidians, and the Saturnilians, every one introducing his own peculiar opinions, one differing from another. From these sprung the false Christs and false prophets, and false apostles, who divided the unity of the church, by the introduction of corrupt doctrines against God, and against Christ."

Euseb. B. 4, c. 7, speaking of Satan's efforts to corrupt the church, observes, "He employed the agency of wicked impostors and deceivers, as certain abandoned instruments and ministers of destruction. Intent upon every course, he instigated these insidious impostors and deceivers, by assuming the same name with us (Christians) to lead those believers whom they happened to seduce to the depths of destruction, and by their presumption, also turn those that were ignorant of the faith, from the path that led to the saving truth of God."

Perhaps it may appear to some that all this testimony, which, after all, is but a specimen of what might be exhibit-

ed, does not prove that any of the true believers were deceived, and turned from the gospel faith. But it must result from extreme unwillingness to believe what this array of evidences is designed to prove.

It may, indeed, be objected, that the false Christs, and false prophets here spoken of, were not those to which Christ particularly referred. The objection is, to a degree, perhaps, founded in truth. But these false teachers were those who began to corrupt the church, previously to the time of which Christ was speaking, and they continued until after that time. There is sufficient reason for believing that some of them were among the very ones that Christ particularly referred to.

It may be objected still further, that those who were deceived and corrupted were not, after all, real believers. But the objection is directly opposed to all the appearances and historical teachings in the case. Indeed, does it not flatly contradict the express declarations of the inspired word?

It may be still further objected, that those of whom these quotations speak, as having been deceived, were not *the elect* of whom Christ was speaking. But is this anything more than a mere assumption, without a particle of proof? All the probabilities in the case are against the assumption. Besides, nothing can be gained for the doctrine which the objection is designed to defend, by admitting that true believers of one period may be deceived, but not those of another period.

[*Mark*: BUT TAKE YE HEED;] *Verse 25.* BEHOLD, I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFORE.

“But take ye heed.”

Be always on your guard against these impostors, for they will come among you, even occupying the highest places in the church, and many shall be seduced by them, and shall follow their pernicious ways. Take heed for yourselves, and also for the flock over which you may be overseers. Be at all times on the alert, that you may detect and expose the wolves in sheeps' clothing, not sparing the flock in the fold.

How vigilant and faithful the apostles were, in respect to these things, we may easily understand, by examining the writings and histories of Paul, Peter, Jude, and John.

The Lord knew beforehand what they were destined to witness and endure; and, as far as possible, prepared them for the watch-care and government of the church. This admonition was necessary at all times, and especially necessary for the particular time which Christ had then in view.

“Behold, I have told you before.”

Not only of the *fact* that such impostors will appear; but also the particular *manner* in which they will appear, and how they will succeed in their wicked devices. Let the fact that I have distinctly informed you of these things, so long before they come to pass, be an additional evidence to you of my Messiahship, when the false Christs and false prophets shall call it in question. And be ready, at all times, to expose these impostors, by the signs which I have given you.

Verse 26. WHEREFORE, IF THEY SHALL SAY UNTO YOU, BEHOLD, HE IS IN THE DESERT, GO NOT FORTH; BEHOLD, HE IS IN THE SECRET CHAMBERS; BELIEVE IT NOT.

In some instances the impostors would appear openly in public places. Then the procedure would be, “Lo, here is Christ, or lo there!” This would be the first method, and, therefore, it is first described. But they will also proceed in another manner: they will try to induce you to go into the desert.

Josephus, *Ant.*, B. 20, c. 8, s. 5, 6, thus refers to this very method of procedure: “And now these impostors and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God. And many that were prevailed on by them suffered the punishment of their folly; for Felix brought them back, and then punished them. Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives. . . . He said, further, that he would show them from hence how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down.”

War, B. 2, c. 13, s. 4. "There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, which laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. These men were such as deceived and deluded the people, under pretence of divine inspiration; but were for procuring innovations and changes in the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would show them there the signals of liberty."

We learn from the next section, that the Egyptian false prophet before mentioned, so prospered in his imposture, that "thirty thousand men were deluded by him. These he led round about from the wilderness [where he first induced them to go] to the mount which is called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place."

War, B. 7, c. 11, s. 1, gives an account of a weaver, by the name of Jonathan, who "prevailed with no small number of the poorer sort to give ear to him. He also led them into the desert, upon promising them that he would show them signs and apparitions."

How wonderfully distinct and particular was the Saviour's prophecy, both in respect to the events that should occur, and also with respect to the circumstances and succession! How very appropriate and necessary the admonition, not to go into the desert!

"Behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not."

The temple had many secret chambers; and it was not unnatural for these credulous rejectors of the true Christ, to suppose that the Messiah might have come, and might be hidden in the inner recesses of the holy house. They had been deceived in all those who had led the multitudes into the desert, as well as in those who had exhibited themselves publicly in their streets. Now, besieged in their capital, with destruction just ready to come upon them, if the still expected deliverer appeared, he would be likely to issue from the inner

chambers of the temple itself. Here, again, the Jewish historian, without intending any encouragement to Christianity, gives a distinct narrative of the fulfillment of this part of this most minute prophecy. *War, B. 6, c. 5 s. 2.*

Speaking of several thousands of men, women, and children, who were destroyed in consequence of their being induced to seek refuge in the temple, he observes, — “A false prophet was the occasion of these people’s destruction, who had made a public proclamation in the city that very day, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance. Now, there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the [Jewish] tyrants to impose on the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; this was to keep them from deserting, and that they might be buoyed up above fear and care by such hopes. Now, a man that is in adversity, does easily comply with such promises; for when a seducer makes him believe that he shall be delivered from those miseries that oppress him, then it is that the patient is full of hopes of such deliverance.”

How perfectly the discourse of Christ observes the chronologic order of events! Nothing less than Omniscience could have foreseen the precise succession of the multitude of items which make up the body of the prophecy.

And, in respect to the confirmatory history of the accomplishment of the predictions, the observation of Wesley is very just: “Josephus’ History of the Jewish War is the best commentary on this chapter. It is a wonderful instance of God’s providence, that he, an eye-witness, and one who lived and died a Jew, should, especially in so extraordinary a manner, be preserved, to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this glorious prophecy, in almost every circumstance.” *Note on verse 14.*

CHAPTER VII.

Principal subjects—THE COMING OF CHRIST, AND THE HISTORY OF JERUSALEM SINCE THE ROMAN WAR.

Does the 27th verse refer to the Romans?—Opinions of eminent Divines—The Issue announced—How the question is to be settled—The Passage examined—Its designed use—Things to be considered—The single bearing of the Illustration—The Carcass and the Eagles—Two Applications—How one could be *taken* and another left—An important Emendation of Matthew's Record—Position of the passage from Luke—Destruction and Dispersion of the Jews—Different from previous Dispersions—Jerusalem in the possession of the Gentiles—Import of the expression, "Trodden down of the Gentiles"—The city in the times of Constantine—Julian the Apostate—His attempt to defeat the fulfillment of the Prophecy—Result—How the city is to be in the possession of the Gentiles—Import of the expression, "Times of the Gentiles."

Verse 27. FOR AS THE LIGHTNING COMETH OUT OF THE EAST, AND SHINETH EVEN UNTO THE WEST, SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.

THIS verse is so important in its relations to the general subject, that a misapplication of it cannot fail to involve the exposition of the chapter in inextricable difficulty. *That it appears to refer to the second personal advent of our Lord* is sufficiently evident. But that it does primarily and exclusively refer to that event is generally denied. And, in this general denial, those who believe in such an advent make, to a certain extent, common cause with those who do not believe in it. The *passage itself* is probably as plain a reference to the second advent as any one in the whole Bible. And if it were placed almost anywhere else in the Bible, the believers in the second coming of Christ could scarcely find a reason for disagreement about its meaning.

But the connection of the passage with the other parts of the discourse is insisted upon by some as sufficient evidence that it must, in some way, refer to the temporal matters that were, at that precise point, the subjects of prophecy. If this

be allowed to decide the matter, then there can be but one primary application of the verse; and that must refer it to the temporal judgments which then formed the special topics of discourse. It is deemed advisable to lay before the reader the opinions of commentators whose works are in common use in our country.

BISHOP NEWTON (*On the Prophecies*.) “The Roman army entered Judea on the east side of it, and carried on their conquests westward, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army would take, was intended in the comparison of the lightning coming out of the east, and shining even unto the west.”* *Lond. ed. p. 354.*

DR. COKE. “His coming will not be in this or that particular place, but like the lightning, sudden and universal. The appearance of the true Christ will be as distinguishable from that of the false Christs, as lightning, which shineth all round the hemisphere, is from a blaze of straw; it is very remarkable, ‘That the Roman army entered into Judea on the east side of it, and carried on their conquests westward.’”

DR. CLARKE. “It is worthy of remark, that our Lord, in the most particular manner, points out the very *march* of the Roman army; they entered into Judea on the EAST, and carried on their conquests WESTWARD, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very *route* which the army would take, were intended in the comparison of the *lightning issuing from the east, and shining to the west.*”

DR. SCOTT. “The Christians, if they had not been forewarned, might have been deceived on another ground; for they expected their Lord to come, not to deliver, but to destroy Jerusalem; they were therefore reminded that his coming for this purpose, would not be *secret*, or *local*; but like the “*lightning, which shineth*” at once from east to west; for in his righteous providence, he would, with conspicuous

* This was not original with Bishop NEWTON; he professed to derive it from Bishop PEARCE.

and irresistible energy, desolate the whole land. The Roman armies entered Judea by the east, and carried their victorious ravages to the west, in a very rapid and tremendous manner."

RICHARD WATSON. "In the noble and illustrative comparison here used, his disciples were taught that he would not appear in the desert or in secret places, but, 1. In *public* majesty as Judge, to be known 'by the judgment which he should execute.' 2. Suddenly, without whispering premonitory rumors, even as the lightning from heaven. 3. Through the length and breadth of the land, by the sudden and general meeting of the Roman armies in march, *from the east even to the west*, all hastening from the Mediterranean coasts on the east, toward Jerusalem on the west."

DR. WHITBY. "You will then need none to instruct you where Christ is, or to say to you, He is here, or there; for by the Roman army, which shall pass through the territories of the Jews like lightning, his coming to take vengeance on that nation shall be manifest; and wherever the Jews, who, like dead carcasses, shall be devoured by the Roman eagles, are, thither shall he fly with them, to tear and to devour them."

MR. BURKITT. "There is a three-fold coming of Christ spoken of in the New Testament. 1. His coming in his spiritual kingdom by the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. 2. His coming to destroy Jerusalem forty years after his ascension. 3. His final coming to judgment at the great day. All these comings of the Son of man, for their suddenness and unexpectedness, are compared unto lightning, which in a moment breaketh out of the east, and shineth unto the west. Learn hence, that the coming and appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the judging of the wicked and impenitent sinners, will be a very certain, sudden, and unexpected appearance."

COTTAGE BIBLE. "The meaning appears to be, that as this surprising meteor shoots in the same instant from east to west, and pervades the whole horizon, so should the Roman

armies, which attend the coming of the Son of man, like a mighty tempest, at once cover the whole land of Israel."

MR. BARNES. "This is not designed to denote the *quarter* from which he would come, but the *manner*. He does not mean to affirm that the *Son of man* will come from the *east*, but that he will come in a rapid and unexpected manner, like lightning. Many would be looking for him in the desert; many in secret places. But, he said, it would be useless to be looking in that manner. It was useless to look to any particular part of the heavens, to know where the lightning would next flash. In a moment it would blaze in an unexpected part of the heavens, and shine at once to the other part. So rapidly, so unexpectedly, in so unlooked-for a quarter, would be his coming."

That Mr. Barnes understood the illustration of the lightning to be applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem, appears from several observations that follow the above.

"The words, therefore, had doubtless a *primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem*, but such an amplitude of meaning as also to express his coming to judgment."

Referring to the illustration of the eagles, in the next verse, he remarks:

"This verse is connected with the preceding by the word 'for,' implying that this is a reason for what is said there, that the Son of man would *certainly* come to destroy the city, and that he would come *suddenly*. The meaning is, *he would come by means of the Roman armies.*"

DR. BENSON. "The coming of the Son of man shall be in a very different manner, and for very different ends, from what you are imagining. It shall be like lightning, swift, unexpected, and destructive. His appearance will be as distinguishable from that of every false Christ, as lightning, which shines all around the hemisphere, is from a blaze of straw.

"What Bishop Pearce observes from Josephus is very remarkable. 'The Roman army entered into Judea on the east side of it, and carried on their conquests westward, as if

not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army would take, was intended in the comparison of the lightning coming out of the east and shining even unto the west."

There are many other smaller and less important publications, which adopt the same general method of explaining the verse under notice. They are usually but little more than mere compilations; and, as might be expected, copy from the more extensive commentaries their principal ideas, and their leading illustrations. Several of the more ancient standard expositions are quite confused and undecided in respect to the meaning of the illustration of the lightning. So far as the author has been able to extend his researches back along the succession of commentators, Bishop PEARCE appears to have been the ingenious discoverer of the happy mode of interpreting the illustration of the lightning. From Bishop Pearce the thing was copied by Bishop NEWTON in his work on the Prophecies. And this latter work appears to have been the principal source of argument and illustration, in commenting on this part of the Scriptures, for nearly all the later divines. "Honor to whom honor is due."

The foregoing quotations, considered with reference to their principal points, teach just two things: 1. That the lightning shining from east to west illustrates the invasion and conquest of Judea by the Romans: that they entered into Judea on the east, and carried on their conquests westwardly. 2. That as the lightning flashes out suddenly and unexpectedly, instantly illuminating the whole heavens; so would it be with respect to the coming and conquests of the Roman armies; it would be so sudden, so unexpected, and the conquests and desolations so general and rapid, as to be fitly represented by the flashing, spreading, destructive lightning.

The author is not sensible of doing injustice to the preceding quotations, by this condensed summary of their general

teaching; and his only object in making this summary is, to bring more distinctly before the reader the precise points to which he designs to reply.

Reader, consider attentively the principal points in these quotations; notice how confident the declarations, and the appeals to history; and how important to the proper understanding of the prophecy these historic illustrations are considered. Having done this, carefully consider now what you are about to read; for its importance commends it to your most serious attention. After a long, thorough, and entirely satisfactory examination of this matter; having critically examined the original authorities referred to; having in innumerable instances made it a subject of inquiry, and sought information from the living, as well as from the writings of the deceased; the author is now prepared to make his unexpected, startling, but well-weighed, and confident statement.

Reader, *there is no truth, or semblance of truth, in those quotations, so far as they relate to the history of the coming and conquest of the Romans. Not only is there no truth in them, but in respect to the point in question, they are diametrically opposite to the truth in every important particular. The whole thing is a fiction, with hardly a sufficiency of foundation truth to be called a romance. The positive affirmations are proved to be without truth by the very authorities which are appealed to!*

The issue is distinct, and the reader is challenged to investigate. But how shall the question be decided? by opinions, or assertions? Certainly not; it is purely a question of *fact*, and to *facts* the appeal is made. But as the investigation would necessarily interrupt the consecutive exposition of the prophecy, the facts in the case are brought together in a part of the book specially devoted to that purpose. The reader is therefore particularly requested, *before proceeding any further*, to turn to the second Appendix, and, with a good map before him,* examine the subject for himself.

* Robinson's is the best.

Verse 27. FOR AS THE LIGHTNING COMETH OUT OF THE EAST, AND SHINETH EVEN UNTO THE WEST; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.

Supposing the reader to have complied with the request to examine the application of this verse to the Jewish war, and that he is now ready to proceed with the Exposition, we come directly to the text.

We find several things in this verse to observe :

1. The Lord was not, at this point, discussing the subject of his coming ; but merely *alluded* to it for a particular purpose, to be hereafter considered. The reference to his coming, in this place, was evidently *anticipatory*, so far as it relates to chronological order. The proper position for the subject of his coming, to be regularly described, is after the 29th verse. *There* it is treated formally, particularly, and with special reference to its *preceding, attending, and succeeding* events. Will the reader do himself and the author the favor carefully to notice this evident and important fact.

2. Another thing to be observed is, that this reference to his coming was for the purpose of *illustrating another subject* ; NOT THE COMING OF THE ROMANS, but the coming of the FALSE CHRISTS, of which he was then particularly speaking.

3. And it should be noticed also, that the intention of the illustration was to point out a *contrast*, not a *similitude*. The Lord had in view the liability of his disciples to be misled by confounding things that had no proper similarity. They might be deceived by the false Christs, on the supposition that when the Lord should come, it might be in a manner similar to the appearance of the impostors. He at once secures them from this source of danger, by simply stating the manner in which he would appear, — as the lightning flashing through the heavens.

4. Christ undoubtedly desired that this illustration should have such an impression on the minds of his disciples as would be *natural*, — not needing a lengthy dissertation, or, indeed, any labored effort, to produce the proper impression. The minds for which the illustration was intended (supposing it designed for general use,) were not the critical, the investigating, and the superior ; but the *common* minds ; the minds

of the farmers, merchants, mechanics, fishermen, day laborers; those of the women and children; in a word, the ordinary minds of the people generally. And such would undoubtedly understand him to speak of *himself*, in a strictly *personal*, and not in a merely *representative*, or *judicial* sense. And this would be the more likely to be the case, from the fact that he did, immediately after, speak so evidently of his personal advent.

5. We should be careful not to judge of the impression naturally produced in *their* minds, by the groundless notions which *we* may have derived from the far-fetched, labored, metaphysical, and—as has been *proved*—*fictitious*, interpretations of this passage. The disciples of that day had not our numerous, voluminous, figurative, and wonderfully ingenious expositions of the Lord's discourse. They listened to its delivery, or they perused the record, with very different preconceptions from ours. So far as they prejudged the matter at all, they supposed that Christ would come, *in person*, about that time. Everything indicates this: the coming of the impostors; the danger of deception; the nature of the admonitions; the misunderstood predictions. *And the admonitions of Christ cannot be tortured into such a shape, as to show, or even to appear to show, that he desired or intended to remove from their minds the impression that the coming he referred to would be a personal coming.* His whole effort in the case was to guard them against other things; particularly, against a misunderstanding of the *time* and *manner* of his coming.

6. Our Lord most certainly knew what were the suppositions of the disciples respecting the *nature* of his coming; and it is sufficiently obvious that the reference to his coming in the 27th verse, was intended to guard them against deception on this particular point. But how did he do it? Did he say to them, You are mistaken in your impression that I am to come *personally*: it is not a *personal* coming, as the impostors will pretend, but only a *figurative* or *judicial* coming: I mean simply that I am to come in judgment, by means of the Roman armies?

Now if this was in fact the coming he referred to, and he

desired to guard them against being deceived by the impostors, how much more natural it would have been for him just to have informed them of this; and, by so doing, not only guard them from danger of deception on this point, but save many generations from misapprehending him. But, instead of removing their impression that he was to come *personally*, he made an allusion to a coming that he immediately described in a way that seems to be as personal as language can make it. And the difference between the coming of the impostors and his own coming, he did not in any way intimate to consist in being the one personal, and the other figurative; but in the *distinctly asserted fact*, this *his* coming should be *as the lightning flashing through the heavens*.

And when he introduced the subject in its proper order, not by a mere allusion, but for the purpose of *describing* it, he affirmed that he would come *in the clouds of heaven*, and that *all the tribes of the earth should see him coming in that manner*. This must certainly have been to the disciples, with their previous impression of the *personality* of his coming, not only a sufficient guard against deception by the false Christs, but also a deep confirmation of the reality of his coming in person at the proper time.

The subject is here treated incidentally, and will be resumed at the appropriate place to treat it particularly, as our Lord himself has done.

Verse 28. FOR WHERESOEVER THE CARCASS IS, THERE WILL THE EAGLES BE GATHERED TOGETHER.

But what is intended by the carcass and the eagles? This is a little obscure. Those who see nothing but the coming of the Romans in the reference to the coming of the Son of man as the flashing lightning, will of course find something to fix upon, in connection with the Romans, which may be used as an argument for such an application of the text. And it should be cheerfully admitted that among the images and other devices on the Roman ensigns, the image of the eagle was very conspicuous; as much so, probably, as the same figure on our own national standard. And this seems to have been consid-

ered a sufficient proof that the preceding verse refers to the Romans, because of this supposed allusion to their ensigns. But on this point there are several things to be considered.

1. It has been *proved* that the reasons assigned for referring the 27th verse to the Romans, are not founded in fact. Is it not more than useless, then ;—is it not reprehensible, to countenance and propagate so evident and so injurious an error ? If the eagles of the 28th verse refer to anything connected with the Romans, the proof must be drawn from some other source than the verse relating to the lightning.

2. If the 27th verse be acknowledged to have no reference to the Romans, but to be an anticipatory reference to the coming of Christ, then the 28th verse would be closely related to the 26th, and would seem to refer more particularly to the *impostors* of whom Christ was then discoursing. The body of the Jewish people might then be considered as the lifeless carcass, ready to be preyed upon by the false prophets and false Christs, who, like the eagles, would scent their prey, and gather to deceive and destroy. The advantages of this application over the usual one would be, (1.) That the subject of the discourse would not be interrupted by the introduction of an entirely new theme ; for, in this case, the 27th verse would be a mere allusion—parenthetic in nature—to a subject referred to for a moment to show, at a glance, the *contrast* between the *true coming of Christ*—which would soon be formally considered—and the coming of the *impostors*, which was then the immediate subject of discourse. And, (2.) This application would better agree with the *character of the eagle* ; for it is well known that this bird is not gregarious, and does not make its attacks in great numbers, like armies. It is an unsocial bird ; and, to quote Watson's Dictionary, "Providence has constituted it a solitary animal ; two pairs of eagles are never found in the same neighborhood, though the genus is dispersed through every quarter of the world."

Now the Romans rushed upon the Jews in large masses, totally unlike the gathering of the eagles to the prey, solitarily, or in single pairs. But the impostors, of whom Christ was then speaking, did not come upon the Jews in crowds, but singly,

or in small numbers at a time. And they were really as much instrumental in the destruction of the Jews as the Romans themselves, though not quite so immediately.

These considerations are not relied upon as proving the supposition beyond dispute; but as worthy of notice, showing very clearly that there is no *necessity* of referring the verse to the Romans. If, however, it should be deemed more appropriate to interpret the verse in connection with the 27th, then nothing can be more proper than to apply it to the destruction of the wicked at the second coming of Christ.

The Scriptures distinctly teach us, that when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, it will be in flaming fire, taking vengeance on the wicked, who shall then be destroyed. 2 Thess. i. 7; Rom. ii. 5. And we are just as distinctly taught that the angels will be the agents employed in that final destruction of the wicked. Sinners dead in trespasses and sins, might be represented as the lifeless carcasses; and the awful descent of the angels from heaven, to execute the judgments denounced upon the incorrigible, might be represented fitly by the terrible rushing of the eagles upon their prey. And this application, too, should be preferred to the one in common repute. It is not insisted upon however.

3. But, in relation to the application of the text, it should be remembered, that the illustration itself was neither new nor unusual. Long before the Romans were heard of, the gathering of the eagles to their prey was a proverb among the Orientals. Job. xxxix. 27-30.

The Old Testament contains several references to the eagles; and sometimes, it seems, the ravages of armies are illustrated by the habits of this bird. But whether the illustration in the verse before us was designed to apply to the Romans or not, it is certain that a little less positiveness in the matter would be more becoming: and a little more attempt at proof would be desirable, on the part of those who so confidently teach that the coming of the Romans is intended.

4. After all, this is a matter of but little consequence in its bearing upon this Exposition. If it refers to the Romans, its introduction in this *manner*, and in this *place*, is exceedingly

abrupt, and tends greatly to confuse the mind, in its efforts to discover the chronological relation of the events predicted.

Allowing the application of the illustration to the Romans, it seems appropriate to read it in connection with the passage which follows it in the Harmony, which is the next one brought under notice.

If any importance, touching this point, should be given to the seventeenth chapter of Luke, then this gathering of the eagles to the carcass should be considered as referring to that specific time when there should be "two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left." "And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." Luke xvii. 34-37.

It should be observed here, that our Lord is now, (Luke xvii.) speaking of a particular time of *separation*, between those most intimately associated. And it was to be "*in that night.*" And there is nothing in the whole passage that appears to have the remotest reference to the Romans. But, on the other hand, there are some considerations which make it appear exceedingly improper so to apply it; especially the specific time "*in that night;*" and likewise the nature of the occurrence which would then take place: not the *escape* of one, and the *taking* of the other; but a *taking* of one from the side of another, who is *left*.

Now what was there during the whole Roman war that was so prominent among the other events as to mark the specific time "in that night," when the gathering of the eagles should be dated? And, more particularly, what was there, "in that night," that corresponded with the predicted *separation* of intimates—the *taking* of one, and *leaving* the other? What does this mean? It must be admitted by every one, that our Lord was now, (Luke xvii.) discoursing of the "day when the Son of man is revealed."

Those who understand the Saviour to refer to his literal coming, to *separate between the righteous and the wicked*, find no indefiniteness or difficulty in the passage. For, in Matt. xiii.

30, we learn that the angels will be directed to “gather together *first* the tares,” in order to destroy them; and in verse 49 we read, “So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, *and sever the wicked from among the just.*” In this way it is easy to perceive how two may be together, and one may be *taken*, and the other *left*.

And it is worthy of remark, too, that the second coming of Christ is represented as being *in the night*. Matt. xxv. 6.

It may have been noticed that the quotation from Luke xvii. omitted the 36th verse. This was designed; for it is quite probable that that verse is not genuine.

Our best divines either leave it out, or mark as doubtful or interpolated. Our standard Bible has this marginal note, “This 36th verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies.” Dr. Clarke says, “The 36th verse is, without doubt, an interpolation.”

Finally, in view of the manifest impropriety of applying the illustration of the lightning to the coming of the Romans, as it has been sufficiently exhibited in the proper place; and in view of the consideration that the Lord was not then referring to the Romans at all, but to his own *personal advent*, as contrasted with the appearance of the *impostors*, why should the associated illustration of the eagles be so confidently — without any proof, or necessity — applied to the Romans, of whom he then had no occasion to speak?

Why should it not be judged to refer to the event with which it is associated in the seventeenth chapter of Luke? especially, since in *that* event there is an evident propriety of application, and since it was at that point the evident subject of discourse?

But, as previously observed, it is not essential to the theory of this Exposition whether the illustration of the eagles be applied to the Romans or not; yet, for the foregoing reasons, the author prefers the application either to the coming of the impostors, or the advent of Christ with his holy angels, to execute judgment upon the incorrigible at the end of the world. With these two events the illustration agrees better than in its application to the Romans, both in respect to its connections with the discourse, and with the nature of the events.

[*Luke*: AND THEY SHALL FALL BY THE EDGE OF THE SWORD, AND SHALL BE LED AWAY CAPTIVE INTO ALL NATIONS; AND JERUSALEM SHALL BE TRODDEN DOWN OF THE GENTILES, UNTIL THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES BE FULFILLED.]

The importance of this passage from Luke must be evident to all. It is surprising that it has had so little prominency in the endeavors of biblical writers to frame a theory of exposition that should be in harmony with itself. "But the passage has often been alluded to." Yes, truly, it has often been *alluded* to, and that is about all. It is proper here to remark,

(1.) This passage forms a part of the Lord's discourse, just as certainly as if it had been preserved in the record of Matthew; for, although it is not improper to suppose that some things in the discourse may have been, for wise purposes, *omitted* in the records, yet it would be inexcusable to suppose that any of the inspired writers had *added* a passage that the Lord did not deliver. This would be a false record. Let it be kept in mind, then, that the very words of this passage from Luke were spoken by Christ; and that they just as truly belong to this prophecy as if they were found in every one of the evangelists.

(2.) It is obvious that some importance should be allowed to the *position* which this passage occupies in the discourse. It will be observed from the Harmony that it is not placed where it is usually found in the Harmonies which are in common use. It is generally placed opposite to Matt., verse 21, 22, and Mark, verses 19, 20. But *why* it is placed there, remains yet to be discovered. Why it should *not* be placed there, will appear from several considerations.

First. *It is out of the chronological order.* The passage itself, as all may perceive, is indefinitely long, as it relates to the time of its fulfillment; and a principal part is yet unaccomplished. But it is made to occupy a position where it *separates events which transpired in connection with the war that desolated the land seventeen centuries ago.* This, of itself, ought to be sufficient to prove that the passage is out of place in our common Harmonies; for, as has been shown in this Exposition, our Lord had great respect to the chronological order of events in framing his discourse.

Secondly. In its present position in the Harmonies in common use, the passage *does not make good sense*. It is placed opposite to the verses which speak of the Lord's *shortening those days of tribulation, lest all flesh should perish*. Of course the passage in question is made to refer to the same days that the Lord had shortened for the elect's sake. But the passage itself speaks of days of tribulation that have already lasted nearly eighteen hundred years, and are yet unfulfilled. Now, to speak of having shortened the longest national dispersion that the world ever witnessed, is not to speak good sense. It is doing injury to the natural perception of propriety of speech which forms the groundwork of all intelligent instruction, and the only rational basis of conviction. And the inconsistency of making the passage speak in this way, is aggravated by the fact, that, *while these days are yet unfulfilled*, so far from there being a probability that "no flesh should be saved," "except those days should be shortened," the Jews have wonderfully increased; and probably at this moment number more than they did at the beginning of the Roman war.

Thirdly. The commentators and harmonists who have either made or adopted the usual arrangement of the parallel passages, *completely nullify the teaching of the verse in question*. They do it in this way: When pressed to define what days of tribulation those were that were shortened for the elect's sake, they invariably limit them to the time of the Roman war, and particularly to the final siege of Jerusalem. But this completely nullifies the teaching of the passage under notice; for this passage still reaches on to future times, after so many ages of partial fulfillment.

Fourthly. By putting the passage from Luke into its present position in the usual Harmonies, it of course comes in before the verses which refer to the appearance of the false Christs and the false prophets that so characterized the times of the Roman war. And, according to the ordinary arrangement of the verses, our Lord is made to say, after giving the prediction in question, "*Then if any man shall say unto you,*

Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets," &c.

Now, whether there shall be such impostors after the fulfillment of the passage in question, is possible, perhaps; but that the prediction of these impostors was literally fulfilled during the Roman war, is admitted by all. Why, then, by such a collocation of verses, divert the passage from its legitimate teaching, and make it refer to another period, to which it does not belong?

These are some of the reasons why the verse in question should *not* occupy the position where it is usually found. We will now notice a few things to justify the position of the verse in the harmony of this treatise.

First. We notice that the passage *cannot be out of place, as it respects what follows it*. For, as all can perceive for themselves, it was placed by Luke *before* the verses relating to the signs in the heavens. *Let this be distinctly understood and remembered.*

Secondly. As it relates to the general captivity and dispersion of the Jews, and the still continued downtreading of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, it *chronologically* belongs to the period *subsequent to the final siege of Jerusalem*. THIS CANNOT BE DENIED. Now, then, if our Lord continued to deliver his predictions in chronological order, where does this passage belong? *Precisely where you find it in this Harmony*. It is here made to *precede* the prediction of the signs in the heavens; and to *follow* the description of the final siege. Where else *can* it be placed, if any regard be had for the chronological order of events?

And do you not see that Luke himself has placed it precisely at this point? The *preceding* verse relates to the "great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people;" and it is evidently parallel with the verses in Matthew and Mark which speak of the unexampled tribulation which all our divines agree in referring to the final siege of Jerusalem.

In placing the 24th verse of Luke where it is found in this Harmony, we have not only strictly observed the chronologi-

cal order of events, but we have most certainly followed the inspired writer, who was moved to preserve this important passage.

The only thing necessary to add, is, that Luke, writing a supplement to the other records, and finding that Matthew and Mark had both given a particular narrative of the prediction of the appearance of the impostors, did not think it necessary to record that part of the discourse. And it will be observed that what he *omitted* belongs to the period of the war and siege of Jerusalem, and was, of course, *antecedent* to the period embraced in the verse under notice. Certainly, then, in a full record of all that is presented of our Lord's discourse, this verse must come in precisely where this Harmony places it.

So much (and is it not enough?) has been said to show that the verse in question does *not* belong where it is usually found in the Harmonies in common use; and so much, to show that it *does* belong precisely where this Harmony places it. The argument is intended for men of intelligence and candor.

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword."

This is a condensed statement of the destructiveness of that terrible war, particularly of the dreadful slaughter that attended and terminated the siege of the capital. A particular account of the Jews during that war has already been given, and need not be repeated. It is estimated that more than a million perished at Jerusalem alone.

"And shall be led away captive into all nations."

Never was a prediction more literally and terribly fulfilled. In the former general captivities there had been but comparatively little *dispersion*: they had been permitted to dwell together, to some extent, even in the land of their captivity. Even in Egypt the great body of the Israelites had a distinct portion of the country assigned them, and had their own religious and social communities, customs, and rules. And when the ten tribes were carried away into captivity, and the kingdom of Israel terminated, the people appear still to have inhabited the same region of country, as a general thing, and undoubtedly enjoyed more or less of their peculiarities of religion and government.

So, likewise, when the two tribes were carried away, and the kingdom of Judah destroyed for a season, the Jews seem to have been kept in the same region of country.

But the captivity predicted by the Saviour was not only more general than the former, but it reached the extremity predicted by Moses: they were driven to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is not designed to say, in the foregoing remarks, that the Jews were not, to some extent, dispersed among all nations, in consequence of the former captivities; but only that the dispersion was not so general as the one now under consideration.

The two tribes were carried to Babylon; and the ten tribes appear to have been carried east of the Tigris, into the further regions of Assyria. When Judea was finally laid waste by the Romans, and the people either destroyed or carried captive, the dispersion appears to have been more general than formerly. This may not have resulted immediately; but it did result finally, as the facts in the case demonstrate.

It is sufficient to answer the language of the prediction, if there was a dispersion among the principal nations then existing. But what then began by the Roman captivity has been ever since fulfilling, until now there is hardly an inhabited spot where the descendants of Jacob are not found. They bleach or blacken in all climes, and all the languages of the earth are spoken by Jewish tongues. For some divine purpose, the Jews have been preserved as a distinct people, during the long ages of their captivity; and for some divine purpose they have been scattered among all nations. Their destiny is so manifestly providential, that there is reason to believe that God will yet use them for some great work in the consummation of the gospel age. We shall have occasion to refer to this subject again in connection with another part of the chapter.

“And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

The meaning of this appears to be, (1.) That the city shall remain in the *possession* of the Gentiles during the specified term. But, (2.) By being *trodden down*, something more than

mere possession must be intended: it is a term that denotes violence, and, applied to a people, oppression. Now, speaking of the city with reference to its sacred associations, and speaking of it especially as a *Jew* would naturally feel, the Gentile occupants of it might well be regarded as trampling it oppressively under their feet, even when they did not particularly ravage or abuse it. In the possession of the Gentiles, the Jews have ever regarded it as an abused and injured place. It occasions great pain to them to see their holy city — the city of the living God — occupied and polluted by the uncircumcised nations. And so far as the Jews are concerned, the city has been more oppressed and abused than any other on the face of the globe.

For half a century after its desolation by the Romans, the city remained almost entirely unoccupied, except by the garrison that was stationed there to keep possession. After this the Roman emperor rebuilt the city, changed its name, and placed there a Roman colony. Thus it remained until the time of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, when the city, and indeed the whole country, was *Christianized*, if such a term may be used to describe such a conversion and revolution as were brought about by Constantine and his pious mother, the celebrated empress Helena. Jerusalem now became to the *Christian* what it had formerly been to the *Jew*; but still to the *Jew* it was a forbidden city, for it was kept under the control of the Christian Gentiles. And the Christians seemed to regard the *Jew* as being as great an abomination as the *Jew* had formerly regarded the heathen. The Christianizing of the country was not, then, any great favor to the Jews; the city of his fathers, and of his father's God, was to him a forbidden place. And this prediction of the Lord Jesus was doubtless as well understood by the people then as it is now. So far the prediction had been literally fulfilled. But Providence was willing to permit it to be publicly tested whether the word of Christ should fail in this important matter.

After Constantine had reigned thirty years, he was succeeded by Constantius the Second, who reigned twenty-four

years. Then that wonderful man, JULIAN, called the APOSTATE, became emperor of Rome, A. D. 361. Julian appears to have been the most learned and philosophic, the most able, brave, and successful, and, in his way, the most religious, of the emperors of that age of the world. He was educated in the belief and practice of the Christian religion by Eusebius, an Arian Bishop of Nicomedia.* But as Julian was finally brought into open conflict with his brother Constantius, the emperor, who was a professor of Christianity of the Athanasian party, Julian was not only brought to oppose the dominion of Constantius, but also his religion, and his Lord. Succeeding to the empire, he eventually made an open renunciation of Christianity, and embraced the religion of the Pagans, and became remarkably zealous in promoting paganism and conforming to its practices. This gained for him the title of *Apostate*. But he issued an imperial decree, granting free toleration to all the religions of the empire. Probably out of hatred to the religion from which he had apostatized, more than from any other motive, and from a desire to defeat the very prediction now under consideration, "he embraced the extraordinary design of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem." He must, of course, make some pretence of piety to explain such an unexpected and singular enterprise. "In a public epistle to the nation or community of the Jews, dispersed through the provinces, he pities their misfortunes, condemns their oppressors, praises their constancy, declares himself their gracious protector, and expresses a pious hope, that after his return from the Persian war, he may be permitted to pay his grateful vows to the Almighty in his holy city of Jerusalem."

Jerusalem was at this time, we should recollect, in the possession of the *Christians*. The church of the Holy Sepulchre, and other magnificent buildings of Christian origin, adorned it; and the church there was numerous, wealthy, and enjoyed a preëminence somewhat proportional to the remarkableness of the city itself. It was visited, as it is now, by pilgrims from all parts of the world. But the Christians then,

* This was not Eusebius Pamphilus, the celebrated Ecclesiastical Historian; but an Arian Bishop, who was contemporary with him.

as now, were almost exclusively Gentiles, and the prediction of the Lord Jesus was still fulfilling.

To quote again from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, "The vain and ambitious mind of Julian might aspire to restore the ancient glory of the temple of Jerusalem. As the Christians were firmly persuaded that a sentence of everlasting destruction had been pronounced against the whole fabric of the Mosaic law, the imperial sophist would have converted the success of his undertaking into a specious argument against the faith of prophecy, and the truth of revelation."

The Apostate at first designed to prosecute the Persian war, and then carry out his ambitious designs respecting the holy city. But as he contemplated the advantages which success in his building enterprise might give him, as an opposer of the religion of Jesus, he changed his plans: "The prospect of an immediate and important advantage would not suffer the impatient monarch to expect the remote and uncertain event of the Persian war. He resolved to erect, without delay, on the commanding eminence of Moriah, a stately temple, which might eclipse the splendor of the church of the Resurrection on the adjacent hill of Calvary; to establish an order of priests, whose interested zeal would detect the arts, and resist the ambition, of their Christian rivals; and to invite a numerous colony of Jews, whose stern fanaticism would be always prepared to second, and even to anticipate, the hostile measures of the Pagan government." The emperor now selected his men, and had the work commenced with the order with which all his enterprises were undertaken. The officer who was appointed to superintend the affair, "received an extraordinary commission to restore, in its pristine beauty, the temple of Jerusalem." "At the call of their great deliverer, the Jews, from all the provinces of the empire, assembled on the holy mountain of their fathers; and their insolent triumph alarmed and exasperated the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem. The desire of rebuilding the temple has in every age been the ruling passion of the children of Israel. In this propitious moment the men forgot their avarice, and the women their delicacy;

spades and pick-axes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish was transported in mantles of silk and purple! Every purse was opened in liberal contributions, every hand claimed a share in the pious labor; and the commands of a great monarch were executed by the enthusiasm of a whole people."

Here, now, we have a systematic and powerful combination to hinder the further fulfillment of this wonderful prophecy. All that imperial authority, wealth, influence and zeal could do,—all that they could do, assisted by such zeal and energy as were exhibited by the assembled Jews,—all this was brought to bear against the truth of this prophecy. What was the result? The sceptical historian has sufficiently answered: "Yet on this occasion, the joint efforts of power and enthusiasm were unsuccessful; and the ground of the Jewish temple, which is now covered by a Mahometan mosque, still continued to exhibit the same edifying spectacle of ruin and desolation." Providence interposed by taking away the life of the profane Apostate; he lived but six months after commencing his undertaking. "But," continues the historian, "the Christians entertained a natural and pious expectation, that, in this memorable contest, the honor of religion would be vindicated by some signal miracle. An earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption, which overturned and scattered the new foundations of the temple, are attested, with some variations, by contemporary and respectable evidence. This public event is described by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, in an epistle to the emperor Theodosius, which must provoke the severe animadversion of the Jews; by the eloquent Chrysostom, who might appeal to the memory of the elder part of his congregation at Antioch; and by Gregory Nazianzen, who published his account of the miracle before the expiration of the same year. The last of these writers has boldly declared, that this preternatural event was not disputed by the infidels; and his assertion, strange as it may seem, is confirmed by the unexceptionable testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus. The philosophic soldier, who loved the virtues, without adopting the prejudices of his master, has

recorded, in his judicious and candid history of his own times, the extraordinary obstacles which interrupted the restoration of the temple of Jerusalem. 'Whilst Alypius, [the superintendent under Julian] assisted by the governor of the province, urged, with vigor and diligence, the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner, obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned.' Such authority should satisfy a believing, and must astonish an incredulous, mind." See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

This writer last quoted by Gibbon, with such a commendation, was the emperor's private secretary, and finally wrote his biography. So this attempt to defeat the fulfillment of this prophecy proved abortive. The city continued in about the same condition two or three hundred years. Then it was taken and plundered by the *Persians*. Then it was taken from the Persians by the emperor Heraclius, who restored it to the *Christians* again; and the Jews were forbidden to come within three miles of the city. Not long after, it was taken by the *Mahometans*, and, with the exception of the time it was in the hands of the *Crusaders*, (who were also Gentiles,) it has been trodden under foot by the followers of the false prophet. How the city is situated at the present day, is too well known to need a particular description; the crescent of Omar's mosque still glitters upon Moriah, and the Gentile treads the summit of Zion; while the poor, despised, insulted Jew crawls to a remaining fragment of the ancient wall, that he may kiss the stones of his father's habitation, and lift up his wailing cry, "How long, Oh, Lord, how long?"

"*Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*"

The treading down of Jerusalem, though continued long, is limited. When that period has transpired which is here called "the times of the Gentiles," the holy city will cease to

be trodden down, as it has been since its desolation by the Romans. It seems rational to suppose, that at that time, it will again come into the possession of the Jews.

But what are we to understand by the *times of the Gentiles*? undoubtedly the same as St. Paul intends by the *fullness of the Gentiles*. Rom. xi. 25.

Wesley's annotation is, "*The times of the Gentiles*—that is, the times limited for their treading the city; which shall terminate in the full conversion of the Gentiles." His note on the expression in Romans is, "Till there be a vast harvest among the heathen." Wesley's view of the extent of this conversion of the Gentiles, is given more definitely in his note on the next verse,— "*And so all Israel shall be saved*,—being convinced by the coming in of the Gentiles. But there will be a still larger harvest among the Gentiles, when all Israel is come in."

Providence has limited a time, during which the Gentiles, in large numbers, will be converted; and a certain period, or extent, of that conversion among the Gentiles is called *their fullness*, and the *fulfilling of their times*. Until that period shall arrive, the Jews will be generally blinded: the vail will be upon their hearts; they will remain dispersed among the nations, and the Gentiles will possess their capital city. At a certain period of the prevalence of the gospel among the Gentiles, the blindness which had previously hindered the conversion of the Jews shall be taken away, and they be generally gathered unto Christ. With this change in their spiritual condition, will occur a change in their political. Providence will gather them in from their captivity among the nations, and their holy city shall be no longer trodden down by the Gentiles.

Dr. Clarke's comment on the words under notice is not very dissimilar to Wesley's. "Till the fullness of the Gentiles come in,—i. e., till all the nations of the world should receive the gospel of Christ, after which the Jews themselves should be converted to God."

Whitby's view is thus expressed: "Jerusalem shall be inhabited, not by the Jews, but by the Gentiles ruling there,

till the season for the full conversion of the still heathen Gentiles shall come in; i. e., till the time of the conversion of the Jews, and the flowing in of all nations to them."

These justly celebrated divines have undoubtedly given—generally speaking—the true sense of the passage. But there seems to be a necessity of speaking of the conversion of the Gentiles with some limitations; for the same passages which are relied upon to prove the ingathering, evidently teach that it will be only a general, not a universal, conversion. And some passages which refer to that time expressly teach that all will not be converted when the Lord comes to judgment.

CHAPTER VIII.

Principal Subject—DARKENING THE SUN, &c. VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS REVIEWED.

The Figurative Theory not very Ancient—Influence of a Mistake—Nature of the Argument—Plan of the Argument—Two Branches of the Figurative Theory—The Difference—Double Sense Theory—Robinson's—Arguments used in sustaining the Figurative Theories—Examination and Refutation—Review of Whitby—What led him into his Peculiar Views—Difficulties of Error—Whitby against Grotius and Whiston—Newton's Theory—The Argument on "Immediately after the Tribulation of those days," reviewed—Josephus—Facts—Appeal to Logic—Conclusion—The Argument relating to the Figurative Language of the Old Testament considered—The Prophecy of Joel—The Question Settled—An Exegetical Curiosity—Peter's Reference to the Prophecy of Joel—How did he understand it?—Other specimens from the Old Testament—An important Fact in the case—Origin and Proprieties of Metaphorical Language.

Verse 29. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS, SHALL THE SUN BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT, AND THE STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN.

Most of the modern divines have considered this verse, and those associated with it, as *figurative*, and have made their expositions accordingly. Their ingenious theories of exegesis

have become extensively and permanently incorporated with our standard biblical literature. And, such being the character of the books of study and reference in ministerial education and labor, it is not at all surprising that the opinions of our leading commentators should almost universally obtain with the ministry and membership of the modern church. It will be as difficult now to change the deep impressions and permanent modes of thinking on this subject, as to alter the deep-worn courses of our rivers, or change the direction of the streets of our cities.

It seems, however, from the concessions of some of our leading divines, that the figurative theory of expounding this portion of the Scriptures is *modern*: it was not so interpreted, usually, by the ancient commentators. Dr. Clarke, who was, perhaps, as well qualified to judge in this matter as any man, makes this concession. His words—or Bishop Newton's, rather; for he copies from the Bishop—his words are—“Commentators generally understand this, and what follows, of the end of the world, and Christ's coming to judgment: but the word *immediately* shows that our Lord was not speaking of any *distant* event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted; and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem.”

Upon whom rests the responsibility of changing the more ancient channels of thought, and diverting the former convictions of the church from the simple literal into the metaphorical, it may not be easy to determine. But there is a natural tendency in the reflective mind to follow up the streams of passing events, and discover, if possible, their first beginnings. We love to explore the majestic rivers that flow deep and broad along our borders, until we may stand with a foot on either side, and gaze down into the little fountains whence they originate. And even if these remote beginnings lie hid in the inaccessible regions where we may not extend our researches, still we like to ascend as near to the undiscovered sources as possible.

As it is evident that the present usual method of expounding this part of the Scriptures is not the more ancient—the

primary method — but one of quite recent origin, the author has felt a great desire to trace the principal figurative methods back to their origin. He has not succeeded, however, as well as he hopes some other person may do; but so far as he has accomplished his design, it appears that Bishop Pearce either invented, or, more probably, adopted from some earlier writer, the leading features of the common figurative theory; and that Bishop Newton, in his work on the Prophecies, endorsed and adopted the theory; and from him it has been borrowed by many writers of more recent date. The investigations of the author have not furnished him with any evidence that the present usually adopted methods of figurative exegesis are of any great antiquity, or of any such authority as might properly deter a man from examining them, with a view to test their truthfulness and propriety. Like all other merely human methods and opinions, they may be erroneous; and no one can reasonably censure an honest difference of opinion, or a respectful, but earnest, opposition, if they are conceived to be erroneous theories, and injurious to the cause of truth.

The author has employed a large portion of his time, and devoted his very best efforts, to the investigation of this subject. And the reader may be assured that what may be advanced for his consideration, is not the result of mere captiousness, or springs from any desire to be found arrayed against the popular opinions of the age.

In accounting for the origin of the figurative theories of exegesis in common use, it may be difficult to determine how much influence has been exerted by Bishop Pearce's *mistake* in applying the 27th verse to the coming and conquest of the Romans. But as that verse must be regarded as a key to much that follows, an essential error in the explanation of that verse must be fatal to the correctness of the exposition of the versé now under comment.

Of the probable history of that most egregious and fatal error, perhaps enough has already been said. If undeniable facts can demolish a fanciful theory, the usual application of

the 27th verse has been demonstrated* to be utterly without foundation. And so far as the explanation of that verse affects the passage before us, so far the argument is an argument of facts, and not of mere opinions. It is not the author of this Treatise in array against the good and great men from whom he has the fate to differ; but it is an army of authenticated facts arrayed against dignified, popular, but erroneous opinions.

With a full persuasion of the erroneusness and injuriousness of the usual methods of expounding this part of the prophecy of our Lord, conscious of entire purity of motive, and confiding in the great Author of truth, the writer resolutely braces himself to the task, which, undesired on his part, Providence seems, to some extent, to have assigned to so unworthy an instrumentality.

The plan of procedure, in this part of the Exposition, will be, Firstly, To notice the usual figurative exegesis of the passage. Secondly, To exhibit the arguments usually employed in support of such exegesis. Thirdly, Review those arguments. Fourthly, Give, and defend, the true exposition.

I. The figurative theory is first to be considered.

Whitby's comment may be selected as embodying the substance of this theory, though in some things he differs from most of the others, in relation to the time intended by the "tribulation of those days."

"It being foretold that this should happen immediately after the wasting of the Jews by *Vespasian's* army flying quickly through Galilee, Idumea, and Judea; this cannot be taken literally, because no such thing then happened to the sun, moon, or stars. It must be, therefore, a metaphorical expression, to signify, as it doth frequently in the Old Testament, and other writers, an utter desolation, and terrible destruction, brought upon a nation, and upon their capital cities, compared to the sun and moon; for in this language the prophet Isaiah speaks of the destruction of Babylon, saying, xiii. 9, 10, 'The day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with

* The reader is supposed to have read the second Appendix, in its proper connections.

wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate ; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it ; for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light ; and the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.’ The indignation of God against the Idumeans is represented in like dreadful words, Isa. xxxiv. 3, 4 ; so is the destruction of Sennacherib and his people, Isa. li. 6 ; so is the destruction of Egypt, Ezek. xxxii. 7. And in these words this very destruction is foretold by Joel, ‘The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall not give their light. (Joel iii. 15, ii. 31.)

“This, therefore, saith Maimonides, ‘is a proverbial expression, importing the destruction and utter ruin of a nation.’ Artemidorus also saith, that, ‘the sun darkened or turned into blood, and the stars falling, or disappearing, import the destruction of many people.’ And in this sense it is almost incredible, which Josephus saith, viz: that eleven hundred thousand perished in that siege.” Whitby continues, “Another exposition of these words is this, That then there shall be a destruction of their ecclesiastical and civil state, and of the rulers of them both ; according to these words of Maimonides, ‘This metaphor imports, that men who for their state and dignity might be compared to the sun, moon, and stars, shall suddenly fall down as a leaf from the vine and from the fig tree.’

“*And this happened a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem,* when the thieves and zealots, saith Josephus, ‘kept all the nobles, and rulers of the country, in close custody ;’ when the zealots ‘slew and consumed the nobility, and made it their business to leave none of the men of power alive,’ and when ‘twelve thousand of the nobility perished after this manner ;’ when the high priests, and among them Ananus, were destroyed by the Idumeans, which Josephus reckons ‘the beginning of their captivity ;’ when they ‘abolished the families of the high priest by succession, and placed in their room men ignoble and unknown, who neither belonged to the priesthood, nor knew what the office of high priest meant.’ That this was to happen before ‘the great and terrible day of the Lord,’ or at that time, we learn from the

prophet Joel, saying, that ‘ then shall the sun be darkened,’ &c. This therefore cannot be referred to any time after the destruction of Jerusalem.”

Thus far the learned and critical Whitby.

Dr. Clarke adopts, from *Lightfoot*, the same general principle of exegesis ; but it will be seen that he places the darkening of the heavenly lights *after* the fall of Jerusalem.

“The word *immediately* shows that, our Lord was not speaking of any *distant* event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted ; *and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem.*” Quoting *Lightfoot*, he continues, “The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the *sun* and *moon* of its glory and happiness shall be darkened — brought to nothing. The *sun* is the religion of the *church* ; the *moon* is the government of the *state* ; and the *stars* are the judges and doctors of both.” This is followed by the usual Scriptural references.

There is just this specific difference between Dr. Clarke and Whitby ; while both reject the literal interpretation of the passage, and refer to the *same Scriptures* for proof, yet, strangely, one places the event *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other *after* !

These two commentators may be regarded as having expressed the present usual understanding of the passage before us, with this most remarkable circumstance ; that the same texts of Scripture which lead one to place the event *previous* to the fall of the city, lead the other to place it *afterward* ! And the many divines who have more or less followed in the metaphorical theory, appear to have found some difficulty in deciding between these two opinions ; and they have generally not chosen to speak *definitely* on the point. Perhaps some of them did not think it was of much importance which way it was decided, if it was only figurative.

The theory of *double sense*, or the *typical* method of interpreting the passage, appears to have had less favor with our divines. *Matthew Henry* almost adopts it, and *Richard Watson* adopts it fully. Several others refer to it favorably. But, as a late writer has shrewdly remarked, (*Meth. Quar.*

Review, July, 1842,) “If commentators could make out a literal or a figurative sense, clear of difficulty, they would adopt it. But as they cannot do this, they destroy the difficulty by doubling it. Because they cannot make it either, they make it both; and thus make our Lord utter about two subjects at the same time, what seems to them to be applicable to neither.”

Dr. Robinson has a theory to explain this passage, which differs from all those which are found in the works consulted in writing this Treatise. He says, in his *Harmony*, “The subsequent desolation and calamity spoken of in Matt. xxiv. 29–31, and the parallel passages, I refer to the overthrow and complete extirpation of the Jewish people fifty years later under Adrian; when they were sold as slaves, and utterly driven out from the land of their fathers.”

The foregoing extracts contain all the essential points in the usual theories of figurative exegesis of this part of the chapter. They all agree in rejecting the literal exposition; and they all agree in the general application of the language to the Jewish government, church, and people. And, furthermore, with the exception of *Dr. Robinson*, they all agree in limiting the fulfillment of the prediction to the period of the Jewish calamities under the Romans.

II. The arguments relied upon to sustain the figurative theory, are of several kinds.

1. Because it was predicted that these things should take place “*immediately after the tribulation of those days.*” And the days spoken of are understood to mean the time of the calamities which befell the Jews during the Roman war, and, especially during the dreadful siege of Jerusalem. This latter sentence, however, will not apply to the argument of *Whitby*, who thinks that “*those days*” refer to an earlier period of the war. Now, as the darkening of the luminaries of heaven was to take place “*immediately*” after that time, and as we have no account of any such occurrence transpiring *literally*, it is concluded therefore, that the passage is metaphorical, and should be applied to the calamities of the Jewish people.

2. Another source of argument is found in the metaphorical use of just such imagery, which all admit was intended to apply to just such national and ecclesiastical afflictions. And there is no lack of examples of this kind. The passage from Joel is relied upon with great confidence, inasmuch as that prophet appeared to have this very time in view. And this is not a little strengthened by the consideration, that Peter applied this very prophecy of Joel to the Jews of that day. Indeed, it is an undeniable truth, that the prophets were accustomed so to speak of temporal things: the instances are very numerous. And this argument appears greatly to strengthen the other. For if this part of the chapter cannot be interpreted literally, and yet must be explained in some way; and if it was customary to deliver prophecies of temporal things in language identical or similar with this language; and if an inspired apostle has specifically applied one of those prophecies to this very people, and to this very time; —how can we refrain from the conclusion, that the Lord designed his prediction to be interpreted in the same manner? Have we not, first, a real *necessity* for expounding the passage figuratively? And have we not, also, many scriptural *precedents* for doing so?

3. And, furthermore, the Lord has distinctly said, “*ἡ γενεὰ αὐτῆς*,” “*This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*” And as this declaration was made after speaking of the things now under notice, how can we avoid coming to the conclusion, that all these signs in the heavens and in the earth were only metaphorical representations of things that transpired within the period which that generation of men then living survived?

4. And, still further, the coming of the Son of man is described as an event subsequent to the darkening of the heavenly luminaries; and yet the Lord declared, “There be some standing here which shall not taste death, till they have seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” Now, if his coming was to *follow* the signs in the heaven, and yet was to transpire before all of these men died, how can it be shown that the event is still future? Why not suppose it was a figura-

tive description of things that happened during that very age in which his hearers lived?

It will undoubtedly be admitted by those who have investigated the subject, that these are the principal arguments which are usually urged in favor of the figurative interpretation of this passage; and that they are here presented in a form as advantageous as the circumstances render practicable. It has certainly been the intention, not only here, but throughout the Treatise, to represent everything in a fair and candid manner. The real desire of the writer is to master the subject; to grapple with its most formidable difficulties, and either be defeated by what is so insuperable as to take away the shame of defeat, or to overcome what is really worthy of the conquest.

If the arguments advanced on the side of the figurative theory can be fairly met and overcome, then the way will be clear for the full strength of the argument on the other side. We shall now address ourselves to this undertaking.

III. The first of the arguments on the side of the figurative theory is derived from the declaration, that these signs in the heaven should take place (Εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων,) "*immediately after the tribulation of those days.*" Now, with the exception that the particle *ὅτε* (*but*) is not translated, it is admitted that the usual rendering of the sentence is perfectly correct and literal. The word rendered "*immediately,*" means immediately. It is but reasonable to suppose, however, that, in *applying* it, something should be allowed for the greatness and unusualness of the events. When the hand of a clock is within *five minutes* of striking, we may say that the clock will strike *immediately*; but we could not appropriately say so, if it lacked *half an hour* of striking. But we might just as properly say of a youth, that he will immediately become a man, or soon become of age, though it might lack a month, or a *year*.

The greatness and uncommonness of an event has *some* influence upon the adverb. The great event under consideration will transpire *soon* after the other; but the immediateness of its transpiration is to be estimated with some regard

to its greatness and uncommonness; we are not obliged to suppose it will be as immediately as the sound of thunder is heard after the sight of the flash. It will be the next great event after the former; and it will not be long after the former; it will *presently* occur; as quickly as one great event may be said to follow another without synchronising with it.

(2.) But what are we to understand by "*the tribulation of those days*?" Certainly, those of which the Lord had just been speaking. This we are obliged to admit, for the pronoun "those" must refer to something already mentioned. Whitby, who is the most critical on this subject; refers the time to a period *preceding* the destruction of Jerusalem. His comment on the verse under notice, opens in this way: "It being here foretold that this should happen immediately after the wasting of the Jews by Vespasian's army flying quickly through Galilee, Idumea, and Judea; this cannot be taken literally, because no such thing then happened either to the sun, moon, or stars." To this, it is replied, that it does not say it should happen immediately after the wasting of the Jews by VESPASIAN'S *army*. That is a mere *assumption* of the learned divine; and it is a most singular and unsupported assumption. No one of the commentaries and histories consulted in writing this Treatise, contains the least intimation that those days of tribulation to which Christ referred, were to be limited to the very beginning of the Jewish tribulations. So far as the authors in common use among us are concerned, Whitby appears to be alone in this singular opinion. The truth is, our Lord has so evidently referred to the horrible siege of Jerusalem, as forming a part of that unparalleled tribulation, that writers of all beliefs and all theories have almost, if not quite, universally (with this exception) agreed that the horrors of that terrible siege were particularly in the Lord's view when he referred to those days of tribulation. To conclude, as Whitby does, that the tribulation of those days refers to a period anterior to the final siege, necessarily leads to several absurdities:

First. That the notable siege, which *consummated* both the distress and the ruin of the church and nation, was *en-*

tirely omitted in our Lord's most minute and wonderfully comprehensive predictions.

Secondly. If, as Whitby supposes, the siege and final desolation are intended by the very passage now under review, then we must suppose that our Lord gave a very plain and literal account of the commencement and progress of the war through Galilee, Idumea, and Judea, where there is not one word of proper figurative language, but as soon as he came to speak of the finishing up of the war, he then suddenly broke forth into the most highly figurative language that can be found in all the confessedly poetic departments of the Bible! This is, indeed, *possible*; but the good sense of the innumerable conflicting writers on this part of the Scriptures, has usually kept them from conceiving or embracing such an opinion.

Thirdly. This second conclusion could not be entertained, without supposing that the siege and consummation of the war were so much more conspicuous and calamitous than the previous desolations, as to justify the abrupt transition from simple prose to the most highly wrought and imaginative poetry. But this would be expressly at variance with our Lord's declaration, — "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," — for the form of the theory now *under review*, necessarily supposes this declaration to refer to distresses *previous* to the final siege. Now, to suppose that the distress in the first stages of the war were greater than the distress of that unparalleled siege, is almost inexcusable in one who has examined the subject. And to suppose that the distress of that war, previous to the final siege, was greater than had ever occurred in all the wars since the beginning of the world, is supposing what no historic evidence is sufficient to sustain. Read the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and other references to the previous suffering of the Jews, and see if you can be satisfied that they suffered more under *Vespasian* than they did *previously* by Nebuchadnezzar, or *afterwards* by Titus.

Fourthly. Can we be justified in concluding, that there was *less distress* during that stage of the war which was so much more calamitous and fatal than the previous, as to have blot-

ted out the sun, moon, and stars of the Jewish government, church, and eminent people? Yet, according to Whitby, we must suppose that the distress that occasioned this consummation of ruin was less than that which affected them during the earlier periods of the war. If a siege that resulted in the death of eleven hundred thousand people in six months, was attended with less tribulation than a war of conquest that resulted in the death of only about three hundred thousand during three or four years, then we must begin to calculate the calamities of war by some other rule than the one in general use.

Fifthly. Whitby contradicts and overthrows his own arguments in the premises, when he considered the subject with reference to *other* things than this strange theory which he had endeavored to maintain. For instance—in justification of his conclusion, that the text under notice is merely a metaphorical description of the downfall of the Jewish government and church, he refers to those poetical predictions of the Old Testament which speak, as he says, of “*an utter desolation, and terrible destruction brought upon a NATION, and upon their CAPITAL CITIES, compared to the SUN and MOON.*” And, quoting Maimonides, in relation to the use of such metaphors, he says, — it “*is a proverbial expression, importing the destruction and utter ruin of a nation.*”

Now, we ought to suppose, as Whitby himself labors to show, that this utter ruin of the nation took place when their capital and temple fell into the hands of the conqueror, and what was left of the nation was utterly dispersed. But, distrusting, as it would seem, his own reasoning in support of his first theory, he immediately presents, and appears to adopt, another theory, so totally antagonistical to the former, that what was before quoted to prove that the sun, moon, and stars, (as he understood the text,) were blotted out at the time of the final siege and consummation of the ruin,—were, in fact, blotted out *previously to the siege of the capital!*

“Another exposition of these words,” he says, “is this: That then there shall be a *destruction of their ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL STATE, and of the rulers of them both*; according

to the words of *Maimonides*, [whom he had just quoted to sustain the other theory !] This metaphor imports, that men who, for their state and dignity, might be compared to the sun, moon, and stars, shall suddenly fall down as a leaf from the vine and from the fig-tree." And Whitby then adds, — "*And this happened a considerable time BEFORE the destruction of Jerusalem*, when the thieves and zealots, saith Josephus, 'Kept all the nobles, and rulers of the country, in close custody; and when the zealots slew and consumed the nobility, and made it their business to leave none of the men of power alive.'" Other quotations follow of the same general import. Then the commentator gives his own conclusion, "That this was to happen *before* 'the great and notable day of the Lord,' or at that time, we learn from the prophet Joel, saying, that 'then shall the sun be darkened,' &c. This cannot be referred to any time after the destruction of Jerusalem."

There are some remarkable things here to be observed. The first theory supposes that "the great day of the Lord" was that identical time when the Jewish nation met with its utter desolation at the siege and destruction of their capital. And the prophecy of Joel was brought to sustain *that* position. The second theory supposes that the day alluded to by Joel, when the sun, moon, and stars should be darkened, was "a considerable time *before* the destruction of Jerusalem." And the prophecy of Joel was made to sustain *that* position, also. Now, as both of these theories are favored by the same author, and one must be *erroneous*, if the other is *true*, since they depend upon a different application of prophecy, and upon a different understanding of the facts in the case, differing essentially in relation to not only the *time*, but the *nature* of the darkening of the luminaries; — and as the author has not informed us which one is the true one; it will be safe to leave one theory to combat the other.

But why did such a writer as Whitby labor to sustain either of these conflicting theories? It was not from the natural teaching of the passage in its connections: *it was from the logical foresight of an insuperable difficulty which must fa-*

tally embarrass the theory that teaches that the tribulation of those days meant the afflictions of that horrible siege.

Whitby was logician enough to perceive that previously, or *during* that siege, the so called sun, moon, and stars of the nation perished; and he could not bring himself to the task of showing that it was *afterwards*. Hence, these most embarrassed, contradictory, and unsatisfactory efforts to fix "the tribulation of those days," at an earlier period of the war.

It is an inconvenient thing to have a troublesome theory. We have a fine specimen of this in his comment on the next verse, which relates to the coming of the Son of man.

Now any one can, and must, perceive that this coming of the Lord was *subsequent* to the "tribulation of those days." And as the learned divine does not understand it literally, he must, of course, understand it metaphorically. So he applies it to the coming of the Romans to conquer and destroy the Jews; and, as usual, refers to the Old Testament figurative descriptions of the invasion and ravages of a conquering army. Now, in the first of these theories, when he justified this use of such passages of Scripture, he was careful to apply them to the *earlier stages of the war*. "The tribulation of those days" were accomplished during the war under VESPASIAN! And, in the latter theory, the darkening of the luminaries took place "*a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem.*"

But *now*, in verse 30, we have not a personal, but a judicial, coming of the Lord "by the Roman army," to punish the wicked Jews. When does the commentator fix upon the time of this judicial coming "by the Roman Army"? Does he *now* speak of the "invasion" of the country? No. Does he *now* speak of that time of tribulation in "the wasting of the Jews by *Vespasian's* army quickly flying through Galilee, Idumea, and Judea"? No. Does he *now* speak of that period "a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem," when, according to his own showing, their "*ecclesiastical and civil state, and the rulers of them both*" were destroyed? No. When, then, according to this commentator, did the Lord

come "by the Roman army," to judge and punish that people?

His own words are, "Our Saviour's coming here seems, therefore, to import his coming by the Roman army to BE-SIEGE AND TO DESTROY JERUSALEM, and the unbelieving Jews; for so Christ seemeth plainly to interpret this 'coming of the Son of man,' verse 27. 'The coming of the Son of man shall be as the lightning shining from the east to the west; for, wheresoever the Jews are, thither shall the Roman army be gathered'! Indeed! Then this judicial coming by the Roman army, was not the "coming" of the Romans when they made the invasion; it was not that visitation that brought about the "tribulation of those days," which was under *Vespasian*; neither was it the destruction of their "ecclesiastical and civil state, and the rulers of them both," which took place "a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem," when their sun, moon, and stars were blotted out, and the government and rulers were utterly destroyed;—No;—in *this* case the judicial coming was "to besiege and destroy JERUSALEM AND THE UNBELIEVING JEWS"! That is, after the nation had been destroyed, as he understood it; after their sun, moon, and stars were blotted out; then the Lord came, by the Romans! to judge and to punish them!

When such profound, logical, and laborious divines as Whitby are driven to such wretched, self-destructive reasonings, it is time to suspect that their *theories* are wrong. What reliance can we place upon Scripture, if it may thus be made to teach *any* and *every* thing, just as men may choose to make it? The *theories* are wrong: that is the difficulty. It should be observed, in passing, that in Whitby's Appendixes there is a lengthy and very labored defence of his theory against *Grotius* and *Whiston*. Much of it is irrelevant to the purpose of this Treatise; but so much of it as really comes in the way of the exposition attempted in this work, has been already answered in the former portions of this work, or will be answered in the comment upon verses yet to come under notice. His argument in that part of his work, however, it will not be appropriate to review formally, as

has been done with his comment on the passage now before us.

Having thus disposed of Whitby's theory of placing "the tribulation of those days" at a comparatively *early period of the war, before Jerusalem was besieged*, we now pass to notice another form of the figurative theory, which teaches that *the tribulation of those days refers especially to the horrors of the final and fatal seige of the capital city.*

This branch of the figurative theory may be called, for distinction's sake, the *Newtonian* theory, inasmuch as it appears conspicuously in Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, and from thence is copied substantially—without credit, however,—into several of our standard commentaries. Newton's language is, (referring to the verse under notice,) "Commentators generally understand this and what follows, of the end of the world, and of Christ's coming to judgment: but the words, 'immediately after the tribulation of those days,' show evidently that he is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent upon the tribulation before mentioned, *and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem.*"

This is quoted and adopted by Dr. Coke, and also by Dr. Clarke. Dr. Scott also takes the same view, as may be seen from his words, "The clause, 'immediately after the tribulation of those days,' restricts the primary sense of these verses to the *destruction of Jerusalem*, and the events consequent to it." Burkit's view is the same: referring to the verse before us, he says, "Our Lord goes on in figurative expressions to set forth the calamities that should befall the Jewish nation, *immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem.*" Watson takes the same view, as may be seen by his note on the previous verse. Barnes takes the same view; and how many others adopt it, it is not necessary to mention: it is the popular understanding of the passage.

This branch of the theory, then, thus far, presents just two points; 1. That "the tribulation of those days" refers particularly to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem; 2. That immediately after this would occur the darkening of the heavenly luminaries, which is understood to apply to the

Jewish state and church. The application is thus stated, in the language of Lightfoot: "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the *sun* and *moon* of its glory and happiness shall be darkened—brought to nothing. The *sun* is the religion of the *church*; the *moon* is the government of the *state*; and the *stars* are the judges and doctors of both." This states specifically the usual method of applying the passage.

Now, in relation to this matter, it should be observed, (1.) That it is not to be decided by *opinions*, but by *facts*. It is not a *doctrine*, or an *opinion* that is to be tested, but a plain matter of *fact*; and to *facts* the appeal should be made. The witness shall be the Jewish historian, whose testimony in the case cannot be impeached.

(2.) We learn from Josephus, that even previously to the siege, both the church and government were in a state of absolute anarchy; and that the officers and priests were deposed and destroyed; so that all law, and all official authority, were absolutely overthrown.

Josephus says, (*De Bell. Jud.*, lib. 4, cap. 11,) the thieves and zealots "*kept all the nobles, and rulers of the country, in close custody.* And (*Lib.* 5, cap. 20,) the zealots "*slew and consumed the nobility, and made it their business to leave none of the men of power alive.*"

He tells us (*Lib.* 4, cap. 19,) that "*twelve thousand of the nobility perished after this manner*; when the high priests, and among them Ananus, were destroyed by the Idumeans, which Josephus reckons "*the beginning of their captivity.*" He tells us (*Lib.* 4, cap. 11, 12,) that they "*abolished the families of the high priests by succession, and placed in their room men ignoble and unknown, who neither belonged to the priesthood, nor knew what the office of high-priest meant.*" These quotations are taken from Whitby's Commentary. All this, it should be remembered, was before the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans.

If the reader wishes to see the proofs of the absolute ruin of the *government* and *church* of the Jews at this time, he is desired to examine *Jewish War*, B. 4, c. 3, and others. The *priesthood* of the *church* was overthrown, and the whole mat-

ter managed by a diabolical combination of *murderers* and *thieves*. They seized upon the temple, defiled it, turned it into a fortress, and the *robbers* who had the temple in possession, occupied even the inner court. The *robbers* who had obtained possession of the temple sent to the Idumeans for assistance; and the Idumeans came in great numbers, obtained entrance into the city, joined themselves to the robbers in the temple, and then went about slaughtering in every part of the city. They not only butchered many thousands of the common people, but also the high-priest, and the common priests, who were cast out naked to be food for dogs. The robbers and Idumeans continued their slaughter of the common people, and their imprisonment and destruction of the nobles, until, as Josephus says, they "were quite weary of barely killing men, so they had the impudence of setting up fictitious tribunals and judicatures for that purpose." As these unauthorized judges did not see fit to do just as their masters, the robbers and Idumeans wished them, "they struck the judges with the backs of their swords, by way of abuse, and thrust them out of the court of the temple; and spared their lives with no other design than that, when they were dispersed among the people in the city, they might become their messengers, to let them know they were no better than slaves."

The unconquered portion of the nation were now generally assembled and kept at Jerusalem; not because the city was besieged by the Romans, but because the people had fled to the capital from all parts of the country, which was now everywhere ravaged by the Romans.

Of the state of the government and the church, there is abundance of evidence to show that all government and ecclesiastical authority were overthrown. In the conclusion of the seventh chap. of B. 4., Josephus gives a kind of summing up of the anarchy that prevailed.

"To say all in a word, no other gentle passion was so entirely lost among them [the robbers who ruled the city] as mercy; for what were the greatest objects of pity did most of all irritate these wretches; and they transferred their rage from the living to those that had been slain, and from the dead to

the living. Nay, the terror was so very great, that he who survived called them that were first dead happy, as being at rest already ; as did those that were under torture in the prisons declare, that, upon this comparison, those that lay unburied were the happiest. *These men, therefore, trampled upon all the laws of men, and laughed at the laws of God ; and for the oracles of the prophets, they ridiculed them as the trick of jugglers,*” &c. “The zealots came at last to that degree of barbarity, as not to bestow a burial either on those slain in the city, or on those that lay along the roads ; but as if they had made an agreement to cancel both the laws of their country and the laws of nature, and at the same time that they defiled men with their wicked actions, they would pollute the *Divinity also*, they left the dead bodies to putrify under the sun.”

Never was a city or nation reduced to more complete and horrid anarchy. “The zealots grew more insolent,” after the retirement of the Idumeans, who had hitherto, in some measure restrained them, “not as deserted by their confederates, but as freed from such men as might hinder their designs, and put some stop to their wickedness. Accordingly, they made no longer any delay, nor took any deliberation in their enormous practices, but made use of the shortest method for all their executions ; and what they had once resolved upon they put in practice sooner than any one could imagine. But their thirst was chiefly after the blood of valiant men, and men of good families ; the one sort of which they destroyed out of envy, the other out of fear ; for they thought their whole security lay in leaving no potent man alive.” “And, indeed, there was no part of the people but they found out some pretence to destroy them ; for some were, therefore, slain, because they had differences with them ; and as to those who had not opposed them in times of peace, they watched seasonable opportunities to gain some accusation against them ; and if any one did not come near them at all, he was under their suspicion as a proud man ; if any one came with boldness, he was esteemed a contemner of them ; and if any one came as aiming to oblige them, he was supposed to have some treach-

erous plot against them; while the only punishment of crimes, whether they were of the greatest or smallest sort, was death. Nor could any one escape unless he were very inconsiderable, either on account of the meanness of his birth, and on account of his fortune." *B. 4, c. 6.*

At this stage of the Jewish anarchy, when nothing but death awaited the rulers, priests, and nobles, and all who could be suspected of being opposed to the robbers and murderers who ruled the city, and made the temple, even the inner courts, their fortress;—at this time, the virtuous and eminent Jews who had not already fled from the city as from a sinking vessel, used every endeavor to escape from terrible sedition and anarchy within the capital. And now the bloody, seditious combination became divided into two rival parties, the leader of each striving for the supreme dominion, and fighting against one another, and against the common people. "And because the city had to struggle with three of the greatest misfortunes, war, and tyranny, and sedition, it appeared upon the comparison that the war was the least troublesome to the populace of them all."

All this, it should be remembered, took place while *Vespasian* was in Judea; and it was not far from *two years before the destruction of Jerusalem*. Nor was this terrible anarchy confined to the capital;—there was a regular combination of ruffians, called *Sicarii*, out of Jerusalem, as well as within it. They seized upon the fortress of *Masada*, dispersing and killing all the men, women, and children within the place, and commenced a systematic career of murder, desolation, and plunder. "And, indeed, these men laid all the villages that were about the fortress waste, and made the whole country desolate; while there came to them every day from all parts not a few men, as corrupt as themselves. At that time all the other regions of Judea, that had hitherto been at rest, were in motion, by means of the robbers. Now as it is in the human body, if the principal part be inflamed, all the members are subject to the same distemper, so by means of the sedition and disorder that was in the metropolis, had the wicked men that were in the country opportunity to

ravage the same. Accordingly, when every one of them had plundered their own villages, they then retired into the desert; yet were there men that now got together, and joined in the conspiracy by parties, too small for an army, and too many for a gang of thieves; *and thus did they fall upon the HOLY PLACES* [the *proseuche*, or *houses of prayer*] and the cities; yet did it now so happen that they were sometimes very ill treated by those upon whom they fell with such violence, and were taken by them as men are taken in war; but still they prevented any further punishment, as do robbers, who, as soon as their ravages are discovered, run their way. Nor was there now any part of Judea that was not in a miserable condition, as well as its most eminent city also." *B. 4, c. 7.*

At this time some who succeeded in escaping from the metropolis, fled to Vespasian to persuade the Roman general "to come to the city's assistance, AND SAVE THE REMAINDER OF THE PEOPLE."

Soon after this, another eminent robber, by the name of Simon, joined the two rival gangs in Jerusalem, and, in concert with them, "went out and ravaged and destroyed the country with them." He soon left the metropolis, and fixed his head quarters "in the mountainous parts of the country." "And as he had now a strong body of men about him, he overran the villages that lay in the mountainous country; and when there were still more and more that came to him, he ventured to go down into the lower parts of the country; and since he was now become formidable to the cities, many of the men of power were corrupted by him; so that his army was no longer composed of slaves and robbers, but a great many of the populace were obedient to him as to their king."

Now occurred most horrible conflicts between the different gangs, or armies, rather, of the robbers. The two parties in Jerusalem united against the party under Simon, and came to a regular battle. Simon got the better of the Jerusalem robbers, and drove them back into the city. Then, having an army of twenty thousand men under him, he made an attack upon Idumea, and fought with them a whole day.

Not succeeding in his undertaking at this time, he withdrew for a while, and then came up against them again. Meeting with some reverse at this time also, he renewed his attack the third time, and succeeded in getting possession of *Hebron*, and plundering it. "Hence did Simon make his progress all over Idumea, [the southern part of Judea] and did not only ravage the cities and villages, but laid waste the whole country; for, besides those that were completely armed, he had forty thousand men that followed him, insomuch that he had not provisions enough to suffice such a multitude. Now, besides this great want of provisions, he was of a barbarous disposition, and bore great anger at this nation, by which means it came to pass that Idumea was greatly depopulated; and as one may see all the woods behind despoiled of their leaves by locusts, after they have been there, so there was nothing left behind Simon's army but a desert. Some places they burnt down, some they utterly demolished; and whatsoever grew in the country they either trod it down or fed upon it; and by their marches they made the ground that was cultivated harder and more untractable than that which was barren. In short, there was no sign remaining of those places that had been laid waste that ever they had a being."

After a season, during which Simon came into collision with the robbers at Jerusalem, and practiced great cruelties there, "he returned back to the remainders of Idumea; and driving the nation all before him from all quarters, he compelled a great number of them to retire into Jerusalem; he followed them also himself to the city, and encompassed the wall all around again; and when he lighted upon any laborers that were coming thither out of the country, he slew them. Now this Simon, who was without the wall, was a greater terror to the people than the Romans themselves, as were the zealots who were within it more heavy upon them than both of the other." John, the principal man of the robbers in the city, became "very potent" by means of the gang that sustained him, and he "made them a suitable requital from the authority he had obtained by their names; for he permitted

them to do all things that any of them desired to do, while their inclination to plunder was insatiable, as was their zeal for searching the houses of the rich; and for the murdering of the men and the abusing of the women, it was sport to them. They also devoured what spoils they had taken, together with their blood, and indulged themselves in feminine wantonness, without any disturbance, till they were satiated therewith; while they decked their hair, and put on women's garments, and were besmeared over with ointments; and, that they might appear very comely, they had paints under their eyes, and imitated not only the ornaments, but also the lusts of women, and were guilty of such intolerable uncleanness, that they invented unlawful pleasures of that sort; and thus did they roll themselves up and down the city, as in a brothel-house, and defiled it entirely with their impure actions; nay, while their faces looked like the faces of women, they killed with their right hands; and when their gait was effeminate, they presently attacked men and became warriors, and drew their swords from under finely dyed cloaks, and ran every body through whom they alighted upon."

ENOUGH! in all reason, enough! He that wants any more proof of the complete overthrow of the ecclesiastical and civil government of the Jews, is not the person for whom this Treatise is intended. Now, let it be recollected that these disorders and calamities were not occasioned by the Romans: as yet they had not approached Jerusalem, nor the southern, nor eastern portions of Judea. These terrible commotions and slaughterings were occasioned entirely by the different parties among the Jews. Let it be remembered, also, that all this took place while Vespasian was in the northern portions of the country, and a year and a half or so before the destruction of the metropolis.

Look now at the condition of the Jewish nation.

(1.) Their high priest and many of his associates had been murdered, and the whole body of priesthood overthrown, and if there were any religious services, it was by such wretches as the robbers saw fit to put up.

(2.) Their temple was changed into a citadel and strong

hold for an army of the vilest and most abominable robbers and murderers that ever disgraced the human race.

(3.) Their "holy houses," or places of prayer in the country had been pillaged and destroyed by the bands of ruffians called "*Sicarii*," that prowled about the country, butchering, pillaging, and destroying wherever they went.

(4.) Their judiciary and temple officers had either fled for their lives to the Romans, or had been murdered by the robber gangs in the city.

(5.) Their nobles and men of wealth had been murdered by myriads, or had fled from the tyrants who permitted their gangs to plunder and murder without restraint.

(6.) There was no legal ruler, there was no regular priest, there was no proper judiciary in the capital; the whole had been overthrown.

(7.) The northern parts of the country had been conquered and laid waste by the Romans; the eastern parts of Judea had been plundered and ravaged by an organized army of robbers; and the southern parts by another army of robbers of forty thousand strong.

(8.) Jerusalem itself was in the entire control of different bands of organized robbers, who were almost continually at war between themselves, and whose only agreement was to murder and plunder, and commit lewdness without restraint.

And thus it continued unto the end; there was no restoration of judicial, civil, or ecclesiastical order; everything of the kind was ruined, totally ruined, ruined without remedy.

THESE ARE THE FACTS IN THE CASE. And yet our commentators have trusted the interpretation of some of the most important parts of the Bible to the theory whose principal argument lies in the supposition, that the Jewish ecclesiastical and civil government was destroyed "*after*" *the destruction of Jerusalem!*

What shall we say to this? He that is capable of appreciating the truth in the interpretation of this most important part of God's word, will find himself incapable of saying anything, unless it be to ask God to have mercy upon us! It must be a dreadful thing to reject the literal teachings of the

divine word, and adopt a theory of exposition totally destitute of foundation. It is time men began generally to use their own eyes in searching the divine word, and its various sources of illustration. We cannot safely depend even upon what is almost universally adopted. As in the plausible, popular, but totally erroneous fiction which has been used to explain the reference to the flashing lightning; so in relation to the common supposition that the Jewish sun, moon and stars (as they are explained) were darkened *after* "the tribulation of those days,"—the writer here distinctly and unequivocally affirms, that the whole matter is fictitious, foundationless, and totally at variance with the truth as it is taught in the very history which has been supposed to confirm it. So far as this declaration is concerned, all the favor the writer asks, is, that those who are startled or offended by it, shall search carefully for themselves, and think for themselves, at the same time. The writer claims that he has settled the question by undeniable *facts*; yet still the appeal to logic may not be inappropriate.

(1.) If by the sun, moon, and stars be meant the ecclesiastical and civil government of the Jews, and the nobles and eminent men of the nation; and if the darkening of the luminaries means the overthrow and destruction of these institutions and men; and if this was effected by the Romans under Vespasian and Titus; then it must follow that it was done either *before*, or *during*, the tribulation that resulted in the entire destruction of the government, church, capital, temple, and principal men.

(2.) That it occurred *before* that war under these Roman generals, no one can be willing to affirm; for the very *object* of the war was to reduce the nation to obedience, or to bring it to ruin.

(3.) That it occurred *during* the war must be evident from this undeniable fact,—*the war did not cease until its object was effected; the nation was in ruins before the war was ended.* This is not an *opinion*; it is a *fact*. And it is a *fact*, also, that the *predicted tribulation continued undiminished to the last.* If there was any difference in the intensity of that

tribulation, it rather increased than diminished toward the close of it. Now, how any regard to logic, or to fact, will permit any one to say, that it was "*after* the tribulation of those days" that the eminent men, and the civil and ecclesiastical government were overthrown, is one of those inexplicable things that remain yet to be revealed.

(4.) Besides, the language of the prediction shows that the event in question was not to transpire in *connection with* that tribulation, but *afterwards*. There was to be a *distinct separation between them in the time of their occurrence*. And it is unfortunate for the common translation, that one of the words which Christ used is entirely omitted! And it is a word of great importance in making the transition, not only from one *subject* to another, but from one *period* to another. "Εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ"—are the words with which Christ began this paragraph. "But immediately after," &c. Why the particle which makes the transition was omitted in the translation, it is not possible, perhaps, to explain. In the parallel place in Mark it is retained. "Ἀλλ' ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις, μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην"—"But in those days, after," &c. Now, we *know*, because it is an undeniable historic *fact*, that the darkening of the *Jewish* sun, &c., was *not after* those days of tribulation, but *during* that period of time.

(5.) The question, then, is *settled*,—historically and logically settled; it was *during*, and not *after*, that time of trouble that the so called *Jewish* luminaries were darkened; and this shows conclusively that Christ was not speaking of THAT event in the verse under notice.

Some of the divines who have examined the subject *personally*, as it would seem, have seen the insuperable objections to the popular theory now under review, and have made most unnatural and unfortunate efforts to avoid them. We have seen how this was attempted by the learned Whitby, and what was the result. Some later divines, perceiving, and wishing to avoid, the rocks on which so many have made shipwreck of all history and logic, have steered as far in the other direction. For instance, Dr. Robinson, who says, "That the 'abomination of desolation,' Matt. xxiv. 15, &c., refers to

the Roman armies by which Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed, is shown conclusively by Luke xxi. 20. The subsequent desolation and calamity spoken of in Matt. xxiv. 29-31, and the parallel passages, *I refer to the overthrow and complete extirpation of the Jewish people FIFTY YEARS LATER under Adrian; when they were sold as slaves and utterly driven out from the land of their fathers!*" And, to complete the matter, he understood our Lord's expression, "This generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled," as referring to the people then living! Verily, the people must have lived long in those days!

Now it is incomparably less difficult to give this passage the true explanation. But if the reader should find *some* difficulty, let him not forget what he has found in the efforts to expound the text figuratively.

2. Having shown the inconclusiveness of the argument in favor of the figurative exposition which is founded on the declaration, 'Immediately after the tribulation,' &c. — we proceed to notice the argument which is founded on the use and application of language similar to that in the verse under notice, where all admit that it must be interpreted metaphorically.

(1.) It is distinctly admitted that examples of such use of language are found in the Old Testament. Isaiah xiii. is a clear example of a figurative prediction of the overthrow of *Babylon*; and the language is similar to that in the text before us. Ezek. xxxii. presents another example of the use of such language, and applies to the destruction of *Egypt*. Isa. xxxiv. affords another specimen, and applies to the overthrow of *Edom*.

Isa. li. 6, which Whitby quotes as another specimen, and applies to the destruction of the army of Sennacherib, is not a specimen, and there is *no authority whatever* for referring it to any such event.

Dan. viii. 10 is, perhaps, in some measure, another specimen, and is a symbolical description of the doings of the little horn in the vision of the prophet.

There are yet two other passages which are usually quoted

to justify such a metaphorical reference to the luminaries of heaven ; and great reliance is placed upon these passages, because, as Whitby, Clarke, and others say, "This very destruction of Jerusalem is represented" thus in those passages. The reference is to Joel ii. 30, 31, and iii. 15.

Now, let it be well understood, that the writer of this Exposition takes issue with the commentators on this point, and *distinctly denies* what they so confidently affirm. The writer has at hand only two commentaries on this part of the Old Testament,—the one by Patrick, Lowth, &c., and the work of Dr. Clarke. He is not prepared, therefore, to exhibit all that men may have said on this subject ; nor does he deem it necessary ; *the appeal is to the word of God—to the very chapters in dispute.* Attention is called, first, to Joel ii. 30, 31.

Verse 30. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." This, it is affirmed, relates to the destruction of Jerusalem. But what does God say on the subject ?

Verse 32. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered ; *for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance*, as the Lord hath said, *and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.* Chapter iii. 1. FOR, BEHOLD, IN THOSE DAYS, AND IN THAT TIME, WHEN I SHALL BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM, 2. I will also *gather all nations*, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, *and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*"

Then follows from verse 3 to 6 a narration of what the enemies of Israel *had done* to Judah and Jerusalem, and *for which* God was going to *interpose in behalf of his people*, and *recompense the evil which had been done to them upon all the nations which had afflicted his heritage.* Then God speaks to the nations which have afflicted his people : Verse 7. "Behold I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head :

8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters *into the hand of the children of Judah*, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, — to a people far-off; for the Lord hath spoken it.”

Then follows the proclamation of the general war between “the Gentiles” — “all nations” — “all the heathen” — and God’s people Israel. They were to beat the plow shares into swords, the pruning hooks into spears; and they were told where the great battle should be. 12. “Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: *for there will I sit* TO JUDGE ALL THE HEATHEN ROUND ABOUT. 13. Put ye in the sickle, for the *harvest is ripe*; come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.”

Then follows a description of the scene; how God will *interpose in behalf of his people*; how *they shall triumph*, and *evermore dwell in prosperity and safety*. It shall be a *great battle*; a *great and terrible day* for the *Gentiles*; a *great and glorious triumph* for the *Jews*. Verse 14. “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the *day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision*. 15. *The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining*. 16. *The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL*. 17. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God *dwelling in Zion*, my holy mountain: *then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more*. 18. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim. 19. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. 20. *But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation*. 21. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.”

The reader is particularly desired to read the foregoing quotations and remarks, and also the observations which shall follow, *with the Bible open before him*, that he may perceive their relevancy and conclusiveness.

In respect to these chapters in Joel, it is observed,

Firstly. That the foregoing remarks are not designed for a general comment, but only to direct the reader's attention to the general scope of the passage, and the connection between the two chapters.

Secondly. *The third chapter is God's own explanation, not only of the time, but of the nature, of the events referred to in the second chapter.* There was no division into chapters when the prophet gave the word of the Lord: he made a general statement of the great events of the day of the Lord; and then, without any division or interruption in his discourse, went on to give God's own explanation of the matter. Let this be noticed and remembered.

Thirdly. *The time of this darkening of the sun, moon, and stars was NOT the time when the Jews were under affliction. It was NOT when their state, church, temple, and people perished. It was NOT the time when God helped the heathen against the Jews. It was NOT the time when God's people went into captivity. It was NOT a day of terror and suffering to Israel. It was NOT a day of judgment that brought in desolation upon Judah and Jerusalem.*

The commentators who refer these signs in the heavens to the calamities of the Jews, take the *affirmative* of the foregoing declaration; this Exposition takes the *negative*.

But, lest there might be a suspicion of injustice towards the commentators in thus pointing out their position in the argument, their own words will be given. The first quotation is from the work of Patrick, Lowth, &c.

Joel ii. 30. "This and the following verse principally point out the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by the Romans, a judgment justly inflicted upon the Jewish nation for their resisting the Holy Spirit, and contempt of the means of grace. So Malachi, after he had foretold the coming of the Messiah, (iii. 1.) immediately adds that his coming

should be attended with terrible judgments upon the disobedient, (iii. 2, iii. 5, and iv. 1.) The prophet here takes notice of the extraordinary signs which will be the forerunners of that destruction; such were the great slaughters of men, and burning of the towns and cities of Judea, which preceded that last and finishing stroke of the divine vengeance; and chiefly the comet which hung over their city, and the fearful sights seen in the air some time before, which are mentioned by Josephus, *De Bell. Jud.*, lib. 6, cap. 31, and foretold by Christ, Luke xxi. 11."

Verse 31. "Compare Mal. iv. 5. Particular judgments upon kingdoms and nations are often described in such terms as properly belong to the general judgment. The expressions here used, in the literal sense, import the failing of light in the sun and moon, whether by eclipses (when the moon looks of a bloody color,) or any other cause; and here they denote the dark and melancholy state of public affairs at the destruction of the Jewish nations by the Romans; and the utter overthrow of that state and government." (See the note upon Isa. xiii. 10.)

Dr. Clarke's annotations are equally definite in applying the signs under consideration to Jewish calamities:

Verse 39. "*Wonders in the heavens and in the earth.*] This refers to the fearful sights, dreadful portents, and destructive commotions, by which the Jewish polity was finally overthrown, and the Christian religion finally established in the Roman empire. See how our Lord applies this prophecy, Matt. xxiv. 29, and the parallel texts."

Verse 31. "*The sun shall be turned into darkness.*] The Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be entirely destroyed."

With this application of the passage, agree all the commentators that give a figurative interpretation to the language in Matt. xxiv. 29. The issue, then, is distinct: the commentaries generally take the *affirmative* of the foregoing summary of statements; this Exposition takes the negative. Now for the proof: the prophet—or the Lord, rather, by the prophet—shall give his own explanation.

(1.) That the *last verse* of the *second chapter* refers to the *same period of time, is perfectly evident from its connections.* AND THE COMMENTATORS UNDERSTAND IT SO; only they give it a *spiritual signification!*

(2.) That the *first verse of the next chapter* refers to the *same time,* GOD HIMSELF DISTINCTLY AND REPEATEDLY DECLARES. If the commentators affirm differently, it is sufficient that God has made his own statement: "Let God be true and every man a liar." "FOR, behold, IN THOSE DAYS, and IN THAT TIME, (how specific!) WHEN I SHALL BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM." Now, this does not refer to a time when Judah and Jerusalem are brought *into* captivity, but *out* of captivity. And so it is understood by the commentators themselves. And well they may, for it is precisely the meaning which is everywhere else attached to this form of expression. See, for example, other places: Jer. xxx. 3, "For lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will *bring again the captivity* of my people, *Israel and Judah,* saith the Lord: and I will *cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.*" See also verse 18. "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will *bring again the captivity* of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof." See likewise, chap. xxxiii. 7. "And I will cause the *captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return,* and will build them as at the first." Verse 11. "For I will cause to *return the captivity* of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord." Examine also all the parallel places.

We have now advanced two steps in the argument: it has been proved, by the commentators themselves,—or, rather, by the undeniable connections of the passage,—that the *last verse* of the *second chapter* refers to the same time that the sun and moon are to be darkened. And it has been proved— it is spoken with reverence—by *God himself,* that the *first verse* of the *next chapter* refers to the days spoken of in the former. And from the declaration of the Almighty, we learn that "THOSE DAYS," and "THAT TIME," do *not* refer to the time

of the Jewish *calamities* and *destruction*, but—and God is witness—to the time when he “*shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem:*” i. e., when he shall bring them back again to their own land, to build them up and to bless them, as is proved by the parallel predictions. The issue thus far has been plain, and the evidence undeniable and decisive. But more yet remains.

(3.) “*In those days, and at that time,*” God will, indeed, bring all the heathen nations against Jerusalem to battle; it will be a time of terrible commotion and slaughter. Verse 2. “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will *plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.*” God’s controversy at this time is not to be with *his people*, but with their *enemies* who come up to fight against Israel. And his *pleading* with the *enemies* of his “heritage Israel,” will be such as he describes in Isa. lxvi. 16: “For by *fire*, and by his *sword*, will the Lord *plead with all flesh*; and the slain of the Lord shall be many.”

The nature of the contest, and who are to be the sufferers, may be still further seen by the Lord’s threatening to the heathen nations that came against Jerusalem: Verse 6. “The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. 7. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return you recompense upon your own head.”

Now, as previously shown, follows the divine proclamation of the general war of the Gentiles against the Jews. In noticing this, we shall observe the *specific time* when the sun is to be darkened.

Verse 9. “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war; make up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. 10. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. 11. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about; *thither cause*

thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. 12. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; *for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.* 13. Put ye in the sickle, *for the harvest is ripe*; come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great."

And now the scene is depicted; the vast gathering of Israel's enemies; the day of God's vengeance upon them drawing nigh; God's method of interposing "for his heritage Israel," by wonders in heaven above and in earth beneath; and the triumph and permanent prosperity of Israel ever after.

Verse 14. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. 15. THE SUN AND THE MOON SHALL BE DARKENED, AND THE STARS SHALL WITHDRAW THEIR SHINING. 16. *The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; BUT THE LORD WILL BE THE HOPE OF HIS PEOPLE, AND THE STRENGTH OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.*"

The battle over, the enemies of Israel slain by the divine vengeance, the "children of Israel" triumphant by the strength of the Lord, now follows the permanent result to Jerusalem and the Lord's heritage.

Verse 17. "So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, *dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain*; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more."

The remainder of the chapter, like the verse just quoted, sufficiently shows that the prophecy does not relate to the time of trouble and desolation, but to a time of triumph and permanent prosperity. There is no way to avoid the perfect conclusiveness of the argument thus far, except by affirming, (1.) That the last verse of the second chapter does not refer to the same time as the verses preceding it; or, (2.) That the first verse of the third chapter does not refer to the same period as the conclusion of the second chapter. But the inseparable connection of these specified portions is so evident and undeniable, that probably no intelligent man can be brought to

deny it. The commentators are under the necessity of admitting it; and it is only by the irresponsible and unjustifiable liberties taken by the figurative theory of interpretation, that anything can be said by way of explaining this portion of the Bible, with any degree of relation to the Roman war. There is a possibility that the merely superficial or casual reader might, at first, be led to suppose that the specific and repeated allusion to the time which we see in the 1st verse of the third chapter, may not refer to the time described in the preceding chapter, but to the time "when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." But the critical divines know very well that the language does not afford a doubt of the reference being to the times described in the second chapter. Even those who are utterly perplexed in their endeavors to explain the third chapter in its connections with the second, honestly admit the relation.

Take, for example, the admission of Dr. Lowth in the Commentary of Patrick, Lowth, &c.; "Verse 1. *In those days, and in that time.*] The time called 'the last days' ch. ii. 28," &c. It is true, indeed, that this divine supposes what is recorded in this chapter, will not take place until "the latter part of these last days, or times," which he thinks include the whole period between the first and second advent. Dr. Clarke is equally clear in making this admission: Verse 1. *For, behold, in those days.*] According to the preceding prophecy, *these days* should refer to *gospel times*, or to such as should *immediately precede them.*" The italicising is retained as it is in the book. Now, as the reader is desired particularly to notice, the very commentators who refer the darkening of the sun to the Jewish calamities under the Romans, acknowledge the unbroken and inseparable connection between the 2d and 3d chapters; but, behold, when they come to comment on this very darkening of the sun, *in connection with the events with which it is so undeniably associated, as God explains it in the 3d chapter, they totally abandoned the ground of their former exposition, and refer it to other events, or confess their inability to understand it.*

This is the course of Dr. Lowth, as may be seen by consult-

ing his notes on the chapter. And, as for Dr. Clarke, his comment is so remarkable that it shall be quoted here not only as a *curiosity* in Bible exegesis, but as a demonstration of the utter insufficiency and inconsistency of the usual figurative theory for explaining these portions of the Bible.

“Verse 1. *For, behold, in those days.*] According to the preceding prophecy, *these days* should refer to *gospel times*, or to such as should *immediately precede them*. But this is a part of the prophecy which is *difficult to be understood*. *All interpreters are at variance upon it*;—some applying its principal parts to *Cambyzes*; his unfortunate expedition to Egypt; the destruction of *fifty thousand* of his troops (by the moving pillars of sand,) whom he had sent across the desert to plunder the rich temple of Jupiter Ammon; his return to Judea, and dying of a wound which he received from his own sword, in mounting his horse, which happened at Ecbatane, at the foot of Mount Carmel. On which his army, composed of different nations, seeing themselves without a head, fell out, and fought against each other, till the whole were destroyed. And this is supposed to be what *Ezekiel* means by Gog and Magog, and the destruction of the former. See Ezek. xxxviii and xxxix. [!] Others apply this to the *victories* gained by the Maccabees; and the destruction brought upon the enemies of their country; while several consider the whole as a figurative prediction of the *success of the gospel* among the nations of the earth. It may refer to those times in which the Jews shall be brought in with the fullness of the Gentiles, and be reëstablished in their own land. Or, there may be portions in this prophecy that refer to *all the events*; [!] and to *others that have not yet fallen into the range of human conjecture*; [!] and will be only known when the time of fulfillment shall take place. In this *painful uncertainty*, rendered still more so by the discordant opinions of many wise and learned men, it appears to be my province, as I have nothing in the form of a new conjecture to offer, to confine myself to an explanation of the *phraseology* of the chapter; and leave the reader to apply it as it may seem best to his own judgment.” [!!!]

It is really painful to observe the indefiniteness, confusion,

and contradictions which characterize most of the usual annotations on the times of general gathering and conversion of the Jewish people. And yet the fact of their final gathering is too evident from the prophecies to be denied. And this unhappy state of difference and difficulty among the commentators, which Dr. Clarke has so truly described and exhibited, may be attributed mainly, if not entirely, to the trouble which is occasioned to them by their unfortunate theory of literalizing what they happen to understand, of *spiritualizing* what is a little obscure, and *allegorizing* here and there through the chapters and verses, with little or no respect to the proper rules of literary criticism. When the times and events of this chapter are spoken of in other places, they sometimes refer them to one thing, and sometimes to another, without any apparent standard of certainty to guide them. And yet the reference to the darkening of the sun and moon in these two chapters, in the first place, is affirmed confidently (without a shadow of proof, however,) to refer to the result of the Roman war. But when the same thing is considered in the connections with which the prophecy has placed it, we meet with little else than obscurity, confusion, and contradiction in the annotations of our numerous divines. And yet the time of the events in this third chapter of Joel is proved to be the same period which is described in the chapter preceding it.

But did not *St. Peter*, in the discourse recorded in Acts, 2d chapter, apply this darkening of the sun, &c., to the destruction of the nation by the Romans? *No; he did not do any such thing:* Those who assert it, do so without a particle of proof: they do so against proof: All that Peter affirmed in quoting the prophecy of Joel, was simply that the dispensation, or period of time, spoken of in the prophecies as "the last days," *had now begun*; and this outpouring of the Spirit was the *proof* of it. And he quoted the paragraph including the reference to the darkening of the sun, not only because it was originally associated with it in the prophecy, but because there was an object in showing that these last days were to continue until the final closing up of the Messianic dispensation. He wished to show to them that the very time had be-

gun which should continue until, as he afterwards said to the Jews, (ch. iv. 21,) "the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." "Yea," continued he, "and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." But Joel has distinctly predicted, that these days, thus begun, are to continue until the restoration of the Jews, and the final overthrow of their enemies in the great battle that should result in the complete and permanent establishment of Israel in their own land. And Peter knew that the prophet, *when he spake of this darkening of the sun in its relation to associated events, described it as occurring at the closing up of the tribulation of the Jews, at the great battle that should destroy their enemies!* As there is not one word in Joel that favors the application of this event to the destruction of the Jews,—as everything in his prophecy goes against such an application;—so, in the address of Peter: there is not one word that favors such an application; the scope of his argument did not admit it; his reference to the period of consummation of all the prophecies forbids it. Such an application has been historically *proved* to be utterly at variance with the recorded facts; it has been proved to be contrary to logic,—reasoning from admitted premises; and it has been incontestibly demonstrated from the prophecy of Joel itself, that the darkening of the sun, &c., relates to a time of general deliverance to the Jews, and not to a time of desolation.

Having now spoken thus lengthily of the prophecy in Joel, because it is the one chiefly relied upon to sustain the figurative interpretation of the verse in Matthew, which relates to the darkening of the luminaries, it will be appropriate now to offer some observations on the several passages where the same or similar language is used, and admitted to be figurative in its character.

1. Such passages are always found in the evidently and confessedly *poetic* portions of the prophecies. But the discourse of Christ is simple *prose*, without a single attempt at poetic images and adornment. The advocates of the figura

tive theory will admit this, so far as it applies to the discourse generally, excepting only the passage in dispute.

2. In every instance of such use of this language in the prophecies there is an explanation of its meaning, and a literal application of it, in connection with its figurative use. God deemed it not expedient to trust the human mind with such metaphors without giving them his own explanation. This most extraordinary and important fact, so far as the writer recollects, has never yet been published. We will notice all the texts which are usually quoted to justify the figurative interpretation of the passage in Matthew. The first is Isa. xiii. 9, 10. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate : and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." After this figurative description follows the literal explanation, which, in so many words, tells us that it refers to the overthrow of *Babylon by the Medes*.

The next is Isa. xxxiv. 4. "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll ; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree." Then the prophet goes right on to say expressly that it applies to the desolation of *Idumea*.

Jeremiah xv. 9, may be considered, perhaps, in some measure an example of such use of language. Whether it is or not, the context gives a literal and clear application of the language to the judgments of God upon Jerusalem and the nation, on account of the sin of Manasseh, the king.

The next passage is Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. "And when I put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark ; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light." Then it goes right on to say expressly that it refers to the *desolation of Egypt by the king of Babylon*.

Amos viii. 9, is usually quoted as another example. "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the

earth in the clear day." This is both preceded and followed by clear and literal applications to the judgments of God upon the Jews for their oppression and idolatry. Daniel viii. 10, is also referred to. "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them." This is a symbolical representation of the doings of one of the successors of the Grecian king, and is thus literally explained and applied in connection with the account of the vision.

Another reference is to Joel ii. 10, 11. "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great; for he is strong that executeth his word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" This is preceded by a description of a visitation of the *locusts*, under the idea of an army; and is followed by a plain statement (verses 20, 25,) of the fact that it means a visitation of locusts and other destructive insects. Then follows the passage in verse 30, 31, of which so much has already been said. Now, let it be distinctly noticed, that, if this is *figurative language*, it is an EXCEPTION to all the other passages, for it is nowhere explained! This ought of itself to be deemed decisive of its literal character. Although it is nowhere *explained*, it is elsewhere *applied*; for in the third chapter, where the time and the events are more distinctly described, it is applied to the time of God's deliverance of the children of Israel, and the destruction of their enemies, at the final redemption from captivity.

If anything more need to be said to show the utter failure of the common attempts to justify the figurative interpretation of the darkening of the heavens, as described in Joel, and in our Lord's discourse, it should be by way of inquiry into the origin and propriety of metaphorical language. The argument can only be touched upon in this connection, as it is too extensive, and perhaps not sufficiently relevant for the subject of the Exposition. A few observations only will be submitted.

(1.) The use of metaphoric language implies a knowledge or idea of what would be understood if such language were applied literally. No one ever uses figures without having in view the literal things from which the figures are derived. If we speak of a man as the *pillar* of the state, we have in view the nature of a literal column at the same time. If we say Christianity is the sun of the world, it implies that we have a previous understanding of the nature and fact of the sun.

(2.) Now, whence did this ancient figurative use of the darkening of the luminaries arise? How did it happen that it was so common for the prophets to speak of ordinary, limited judgments, in language which all admit would, if used literally, apply to the general judgment? How became it so common to speak metaphorically of the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, and the passing away of the heavens? Figures are the shadow of the literal. Where is the substance that originates the shadow? Metaphors are borrowed from literal speech. Where is the literal speech, and the revelation of the literal idea, of the blotting out of the bright heavens, and the downfall of the world?

(3.) This question is to be settled by those who seize upon every reference to these great events, and pronounce them figurative. Will they please to tell us where there is a spot in all the Bible where the literalist may plant his feet, and stand up in defence of orthodoxy, and give a philosophical explanation of the commonness of such language as appears to refer to the day of judgment?

CHAPTER IX.

Principal subject—DARKENING OF THE LUMINARIES, AND THE ATTENDING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Preliminaries—Plan of the Argument—“The Tribulation of those days”—The days defined—Important Consideration—An Omitted Verse—How long the Time is to last—Conclusion of this branch of the Argument—Darkening the Luminaries—An Error of the Literalists—Nature of Metaphorical Language—Where is the Original?—How the Scriptures speak to men—Important Distinction—The Prophecy of Joel and of Christ compared—The specific Time and Circumstances of Darkening the Luminaries—Parallel Predictions—Parallelism of Times and Events—Gog and Magog—Objection, that St. John describes the great Battle as taking place after the Millenium—John and Ezekiel Harmonized—Different Expositions compared.

Verse 29. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS, SHALL THE SUN BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT, AND THE STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN. [*Luke:* AND UPON THE EARTH DISTRESS OF NATIONS, WITH PERPLEXITY; THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING; MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR, AND FOR LOOKING AFTER THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE COMING ON THE EARTH;] AND THE POWERS OF THE HEAVENS SHALL BE SHAKEN.

HAVING disposed of the figurative method of interpreting this passage, the true exposition will now be given. Up to this point there has not yet occurred a single instance of departure from a literal rendering of our Lord's language. And the inconsistency and ruinous results of the metaphorical exposition of this passage, have been sufficiently shown. There is no more necessity for departing from the literal in this passage than in any of the previous portions. And it may be expedient to remark, before proceeding further, that as there has been no departure from strict orthodoxy in the previous annotations, so there will be none in the comments on this and the subsequent passages. The doctrines of the church, as set forth in reliable standards, will be rigidly maintained throughout the Treatise.

The method of procedure in this part of the discussion

will be, 1. To show what is meant by the "Tribulation of those days." 2. What is meant by the darkening of the luminaries "immediately after." 3. Who will be the subjects of the perplexity and distress, on the occurrence of these wonders.

I. "The Tribulation of those days" is to be explained.

1. The remark, that the relative pronoun must refer to its antecedent, may appear so trite as hardly to justify its repetition. But there is a positive propriety in refreshing the memory with this most familiar and self-evident truth. The word "*those*," then, must refer to something which had previously been the subject of remark. And "*those days*" must, consequently refer to some days previously described.

2. Now, we learn from the passage itself that the days referred to were days of "*tribulation*;" and the scope of the passage, particularly as recorded by Luke, shows that the days of tribulation last mentioned, were days of tribulation particularly to the Jews. "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." It is evident, then, that the "tribulation of those days" means the period of affliction of the Jewish land and people, of which the Lord had previously spoken.

3. There is one other remark that should be introduced in this connection: where two things are referred to for the purpose of distinguishing them from each other, and the word *these* is used in connection with *those*, then the relative *those* does not refer to the things *last* spoken of, but to things further back in the discourse. Now, in the case before us, as *those* is not used to distinguish between different times or things that have been previously mentioned, it must refer to the described days of tribulation, *without any restriction: it must include all that had been mentioned of that description*; and especially such as was so *prominent* or remarkable as to have particularly *impressed the memory*;—otherwise, the antecedent of the relative would be so uncertain as to leave the hearer or reader in doubt respecting the teacher's meaning. Such being the relation of *those* in the passage before us,

there can be no propriety in the supposition that it does not include all the tribulation, as far as it had been particularly described. If we can ascertain, then, how long the tribulation mentioned was to continue, we can understand with certainty one thing in relation to the signs that were to follow "immediately after;" we can ascertain a time *before* which the signs should not transpire, though we may not be able to define how soon after. For as the *signs* were to be *after the tribulation was ended, so far as it had been described*; when we have ascertained how long those days were to continue, we have ascertained a period *during* which, and *before* which there can be no propriety in looking for the manifestation of the signs. And this of itself should be deemed conclusive against any assertion or conjecture concerning the predicted *signs*, if they happened *before*, or *during*, the period of tribulation to which reference is had by the relative *those*.

(4.) One thing further;—in defining the "tribulation of those days," we are not to rely upon the assertions, fancies, or conjectures of men: we are to depend on the *Lord's own* declaration; not on what he did *not* say; not on what he may be *supposed* to have said or intended; but on what he *did* say. And now the inquiry arises,—in making up our judgment of what the Lord intended, shall we base our conclusion on *only a part* of his words, or shall we found it upon a consideration of *all that is preserved of his discourse*? There can be but one rational answer; and yet who would suppose from the usual method of settling the question of the continuance of those days, that any very great importance was to be attached to an omission from the record of Matthew and Mark, which is supplied only by Luke? The supplementary verse has not only been usually misplaced in the gospel Harmonies, but it has been almost entirely neglected in the comments on the twenty-fourth of Matthew. It is hardly allowed a respectable reference. To use an expressive, though not an elegant, word, the supplementary verse from Luke has been almost *ignored* out of existence, so far as it relates to the exposition of the twenty-fourth of Matthew. And yet our Lord just as certainly uttered the words recorded in Luke xxi. 24,

as the words in Matt. xxiv. 29, or any other verse in the chapter. And is that supplementary verse of such little signification and importance as to be of no influence in the exegesis of the 29th verse of Matthew? Does it not bear upon its very face character of the greatest consequence in determining the *days of that tribulation*?

(5.) In relation to the position which the supplementary verse occupies in the accompanying Harmony, nothing more need to be said; the reader is requested to examine again, if necessary, the argument on that point, in its proper place in the Exposition.

Let *all* that is preserved of our Lord's discourse be brought together in its proper order, and then it will not be difficult to determine the question concerning how long the tribulation referred to is to continue.

(6.) After our Lord had brought down his description of Jewish suffering to the siege of Jerusalem, and had given also predictions of some things which happened *during the siege*, did he *pause* then, in that department of his prophecy, and *begin to speak of the signs in the heavens and earth*? No; HE CONTINUED HIS DISCOURSE ON THE SAME GENERAL SUBJECT OF TRIBULATION DOWN TO THE PERIOD OF THE TERMINATION OF THE AFFLICTION, *and then he proceeded to speak of the signs in the heavens, &c.*

(7.) The connection of the 29th verse of Matthew will appear from reading the record of Matthew as amended by the supplementary verse from Luke. And it will appear from the very face of the words that the tribulation last spoken of previously to the 29th verse of Matthew, *began at the siege, or at least at the downfall, of the city, and reaches forward even to the fullness of the Gentiles, and the here IMPLIED, (but elsewhere predicted,) redemption and restoration of the city to the Jews.* Matt., verse 28: "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Luke, verse 24: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles

be fulfilled." Matt., verse 29: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened," &c.

(8.) Now, here were days of tribulation just as really, and just as distinctly pointed out, as the tribulation before, and during, the siege. And these days of tribulation yet continue; and are to continue until the specified time of termination. And there ought not to be any doubt that the relative *those* in the verse under comment, referred to this very, this long continued, period of affliction; for, whether all do, or do not, admit the propriety of placing the supplementary verse in the precise location that it sustains in this Harmony; yet all do, and must, admit that it belongs somewhere *before* the verse under comment; and it must, then, of course, be included in that period of tribulation of which the Lord had been speaking, and to which the relative *those* referred.

(9.) Besides, as it must have been remarked in the previous sections of the discourse, our Lord paid the strictest regard to the chronological succession of events, as they affected the same class of persons; he never confuses or reverses the order of things, but describes them as if they were passing before his omniscient eye in regular panoramic succession. And, in the very nature of the case, the chronological order of the events described in the verse from Luke, not only required that it should be placed *before* the verse relating to the signs in heaven, as it is in Luke; but, also, that it should be placed *after* the verse relating to the siege of Jerusalem. If so, then the order must be as it is presented in this Harmony; and the "tribulation of those days" refers as specifically to this yet continuing period of affliction as to anything previous. But see this argument more fully presented in the comment on the passage in question.

(10.) Here, then, we have direct, affirmative proof that the signs in the heavens relate to something else than the downfall of the Jewish nation. What may be called the negative argument—though it implies the affirmative—has been more fully exhibited in the last chapter. But now we have the affirmative proof that the signs in the heavens have not yet

transpired, *because the time for them has not yet arrived*. Those days of tribulation, as Christ himself affirms, are to include *all that has been foretold by the prophets*. Luke, verse 22: "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." Now, the Lord did not, and could not, mean, that *all things foretold* were to happen at any one particular time of those days, because the prophecies speak of a long continued succession, age after age, of tribulation. He undoubtedly meant to apprise them that the ages of affliction had begun, and they were to expect all those terrible judgments, which had been foretold.

(11.) But the same prophets — particularly Moses — who so clearly foretold that *beginning* of those tribulations which were then witnessed, just as distinctly predicted the *continuance* of them through a succession of ages not yet terminated. *The predicted days of Israel's distress and desolation had then begun*. How long were they to continue? Answer: Until "all things that are written may be fulfilled." These were the days; Jerusalem's destruction was but one of the earlier calamities; ages of tribulation are to follow, for they have been foretold by the prophets, and the time has not yet expired.*

(12.) In concluding, then, that the days of tribulation to which the relative *those* refers, were not limited by the fall of Jerusalem, we are sustained by these several considerations:

First. The prophecies of the Old Testament favor it.

Second. Christ's reference to those prophecies, and his declaration concerning their being *entirely fulfilled* during the "days of vengeance" of which he was speaking, should be regarded as a demonstration.

Third. The connection and specific teaching of the verse from Luke ought to be considered a positive proof of the justness of the conclusion.

Fourth. The utter insufficiency, the logical absurdity, the self-contradiction, and the downright variance with the facts in the case, which characterize the attempts to apply the verse

* See note D, in the Appendix.

under comment to the occurrences of the war under the Romans, ought to drive any man in disgust from such an exposition, whether he finds any other theory of interpretation or not.

Fifth. The prophecy in Joel *proves* that the time is yet in the future.

Sixth. There is a plain, scriptural exposition of the passage.

II. We are next to consider the darkening of the luminaries of heaven, immediately after the tribulation of those days.

(1.) Those who have fancied that this darkening took place at, before, or soon after, the destruction of Jerusalem, have not wandered more widely from the truth, than those who have endeavored to find the fulfillment of the prediction in the unusual conditions of the atmosphere, or in the remarkable revolutions of the nations, since that time. All have equally overlooked the plain, Scripture teaching that it will not occur until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and Jerusalem ceases to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. It is really surprising that those who profess to be literalists are so prone to fix upon almost anything as a fulfillment of this prediction, without the least regard for the fact, that it will not occur until the Jews again become possessed of Jerusalem, and, as Joel describes it, the nations of the world combine and meet in the vicinity of the city to fight with the Jews.

(2.) If a man professes to disregard the literal teaching of the prophecies, and holds himself under no obligation to believe what the Bible *says*, but allows his imagination full play, to conjecture what he thinks lies *hidden* under a veil of apparently literal teaching;—in such case there is nothing to surprise us in the innumerable and unscriptural fictions which are so pleasing to human fancy. But where there is a disposition to censure the fanciful expositors, and a claim to believe what the Bible *says*,—it is astonishing that such errors as have been rife among us for a few years past, in relation to the second advent, should be countenanced and defended with a zeal worthy of truth itself.

(3.) The author of this Exposition, after becoming wearied, and, in some instances, disgusted, with the examination of the common figurative expositions of this, and similar passages, has deliberately, solemnly, and unchangeably determined to be a literalist throughout in his exegesis of the *unfigurative* portions of the Bible; and in the figurative portions he determines to be guided by what is, in connection, or elsewhere, taught in literal prose. He understands precisely what he means in this declaration, and holds himself in readiness to meet the consequences of abiding by it. One thing is certain,—if he errs in this matter, he will have this to console him, that he honestly understood God to mean what he was pleased to reveal.

(4.) In giving a philosophical account of the origin and commonness of the *metaphorical* use of language, which, applied *literally*, would naturally belong to the scenes of the closing up of this world's probation,—it would be necessary to suppose that the people were acquainted, and, to some extent, familiar with, the great revelation that the world is destined to be renewed at the second coming of Christ. And as there is nothing in nature that teaches this doctrine, we must suppose that it was made originally, and renewed occasionally, by revelation from heaven.

(5.) But where are those intimations and revelations of this great truth which the church in all ages has fixed upon as principal stones in the foundation of orthodoxy?

They must be somewhere in the writings of the prophets, if the church has spoken, in this matter, “according to the oracles of God.” But where are those revelations of this truth, if our commentators may explain *every* thing of this kind in a figurative manner? Where is there *one* text which they admit to be purely and independently literal? *If the prophecy of Joel does not contain such a revelation, IT IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT! And if the text under comment does not contain such a revelation, IT IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!*

(6.) There is just this one remark further, at the present position in the argument: The Bible speaks to the *common mind*,

—not with strict philosophic precision, as things would be treated in a scientific discourse,—but as things *appear to the general mind*. In other words, the Bible speaks, as we converse and preach, in the ordinary language of our hearers, and with a designed adaptation to the common capacity. Hence, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, are to be understood as so appearing to those who may be witnesses of the awful events. *How* the phenomena may be explained scientifically, forms no part of the present design. When men have given a satisfactory scientific explanation of the sun and moon standing still in the days of Joshua, or of the sun being darkened three hours at the crucifixion of Christ, then it will be time for the author to go beyond the *facts* of revelation, and attempt the philosophic solution of the mysteries which are hidden with God.

(7.) If the prophets ever taught that Israel and Judah should be scattered among the nations; if they ever foretold the downfall of their metropolis, and the possession of their land by others; if they ever predicted the ultimate triumph of Messiah's kingdom; they have just as clearly taught that the present tribulation and dispersion of the children of Israel should finally be brought to a termination, and they again brought back to the everlasting possession of their own land. The predictions of the restoration and conversion are so definite, so full, so frequent, and so connected with other matters that we know to be literal, that we cannot consistently deny the latter without wholly denying the former. Our commentators, our hymnologists, our most influential preachers of all evangelical churches, are constrained to admit the doctrine of Israel's future conversion and restoration; and it is generally admitted that St. Paul argued the matter by appealing to the prophecies.

(8.) Now, there is not, probably, a plainer prediction of these things than in the second and third chapters of Joel, although the same things are taught elsewhere with a fullness and a definiteness that remove all reasonable occasion of misinterpretation in respect to the principal events. And the divines who see fit to refer the prophecy of Joel to the down

fall of the Jewish nation, are compelled to admit that, primarily or secondarily, suggestively or typically, it refers also to the closing up of the present dispensation of things. The truth of these observations will be admitted by all who have examined the subject.

(9.) Before proceeding to apply these extended remarks to the exposition of the verse under comment, the reader is desired particularly to acquaint himself with the preceding argument on the identity of the time and events described in the latter part of the second chapter of Joel and the whole of the third chapter. He will then perceive that the prophet has gone over precisely the same period of time that is elsewhere described as the times, the days, or the age, of the Messiah; a period that begins with the setting up of the kingdom, and extending to the complete establishment of it, either by the conversion or destruction of the nations. It is a period which opens with an outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh; not all flesh in *extent*, as including *all people*; but all flesh in *variety of condition*, as excluding none. But the prophecy was not to be *limited* to that first outpouring, and to that first ingathering, as of the first fruits of the general harvest. The period still continues; and we of this generation may claim the same promise, and so may all generations until the great day of the Lord.

(10.) “*Before the great and terrible day of the Lord come,*” which will hereafter be explained, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon turned to blood, and the stars withdraw their shining. The *time* of this change in the luminaries of heaven is clearly indicated both by Christ and by the prophet Joel. It will be (Joel iii. 1) at that period of time when God “shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem.” That is, as has already been shown by numerous quotations to the same effect, at the period when “God shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left.” Isa. xi. 11. “For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land

that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." Jeremiah, xxx. 3.

(11.) It appears, however, that the Jews will not be permitted to possess their own land without a great conflict with the Gentile nations. (Joel iii. 2.) "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of *Jehoshaphat*, [Hebrew — valley of the *judgment of God*.] and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." Verse 7. "Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return you recompense upon your own head." After a description of the preparation for the general war, and the gathering of the nations in the valley of *God's judgment*, called also the "valley of *decision*," God says, (verse 12,) "For there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." Then comes the description of the mighty gathering: (Verse 14,) "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

(12.) And now occurs the darkening of the luminaries of heaven. Multitudes upon multitudes have been gathered from "all nations" into the judgment valley — "the valley of decision." They come with weapons of war to fight against God's "heritage, Israel;" and God is going to "plead with them there for his people." "The harvest is ripe;" "the press is full; the fats overflow." The times of the Gentiles are now fulfilled. God now says, "For there [in the valley of decision] will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." The times of affliction for Israel are now ended: "the tribulation of those days" is over; God is now going to recompense the heathen of all nations upon their own head, as he pleads with them in behalf of his people.

(13.) But how is it done? It is done as God has done before: nature, with all its elements, is made to do God's battle-service. The first thing is to involve them in utter darkness, as he once did the Egyptians, and as was done also at the crucifixion. Verse 15. "The sun and the moon shall be

darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." The moon will seem to turn to blood, and the stars shall appear to fall from heaven. God's people shall now see, as their fathers did, the terrible interposition of Jehovah in their behalf; and the multitudes assembled against them shall be met and vanquished by the Almighty himself, as lesser armies had been before.

(14.) Verse 16. "The Lord shall also roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake." God will roar against them with that dreadful voice that terrified the Israelites around Mount Sinai. See Exodus xix. 16-20. "There were thunderings, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled." Some such terrible interposition of God will now be seen in behalf of his people; and the voice and roar that shake the earth and heaven, will be attended by commotions in the elements around: "the sea and the waves roaring." The earth, the sea, the sky, will be terribly affected; and the whole demonstration will be against the multitudes upon multitudes in the valley of judgment. The sun as in sackcloth, the moon crimsoned, the falling and extinguished stars, the roar and voice of God from Jerusalem that makes the earth and heaven tremble, and the waves of the sea roaring with the horrible commotion;—all of these things shall bring about what the Saviour next describes: Luke, [*And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*]

(15.) This is God's method of *pleading* with the nations in behalf of his heritage Israel. For, (Joel iii. 16,) in the midst of this terrible demonstration against the assembled nations, "The Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." It will be the set time to favor Zion. The God who did wonders in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Sinai, at Gibeon, and at other times when he vanquished Israel's enemies; the God who had seemed to cast away his

people whom he foreknew, will at this time return to save his people, and to accomplish all the blessings that were promised to them in the latter days, when they should return to the Lord. This is undoubtedly the great battle between Gog and Magog and the children of Israel, which is so graphically described in Ezekiel, chapters xxxviii. and xxxix., which the reader is earnestly desired now to read.

(16.) The correspondency between our Lord's predictions and those of the Old Testament, is wonderful. We find a correspondency, first, in the fact that the things predicted by him in the passage now under comment, occur in the *exact order* which is observable in the prophets; namely, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," which Moses as well as himself had distinctly predicted as continuing until the final restoration of Israel to their own land. (Our Lord's prediction of this will hereafter be noticed.) Second. There is a correspondency in the signs themselves; only our Lord is more particular in describing the effect upon the nations. Thirdly. As will immediately be shown, the coming of the Lord in the midst of this darkness, and elemental commotion, and general distress of the nations to redeem his elect, (Luke, verse 28,) has a perfect correspondency with the prophets' declaration, that it should be to redeem his people, as will be found by reading Joel and the parallel prophecies.

(17.) It is not strictly necessary to the exposition, that the prophecies of the Old Testament should further occupy our attention in this connection; but still, in order to throw additional light on the *time* when these wonders in heaven and earth shall be exhibited, in behalf of God's heritage, and, of course, against Israel's enemies;—and especially to show still further the impropriety of applying the prophecy in Joel to the downfall of the Jewish nation;—for these reasons, and others that might be mentioned, the reader's attention may be detained for a little for the purpose of considering one of the parallel prophecies to which reference has already been made. Our Saviour and Joel seem to have had distinctly in view the terrible judgments of God upon the assembled nations of Israel's enemies, at the closing up of the present dis-

pensation of things. In order to exhibit this parallelism more distinctly, attention will be directed to several things which strikingly identify the *time* and the *occasion* of the divine manifestation in behalf of the ancient covenant people.

(18.) The *first* thing we notice from our Saviour's prediction is, that it should not *be during the continuance of the days of the tribulation of which he had been speaking*. And it is undeniable that he had spoken of their tribulation in all its days of continuance to the time when Jerusalem should be trodden down by the Gentiles no longer; when the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Our Lord had declared in so many words that the days of calamity, and of Jerusalem's oppression, should continue so long, and until that time. And then he added, "Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened," &c. Now this is precisely what Joel teaches, as has been sufficiently shown in the preceding sections; it should be at the time when the Lord shall "bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem;" and when he should assemble all nations in the "valley of judgment," or "decision," at the time when they should gather to fight against the Jews. And this is evidently parallel with the prophecy of the gathering of Gog and Magog, at the same time, and for the same purpose.

(19.) In the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth of Ezekiel we have general, but very distinct, declarations of God's purpose in respect to his ancient heritage. In the thirty-seventh we have the matter exhibited in the form of a vision; *and accompanied by God's own explanation of what the vision signified*; Then in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters, we have a particular account of the gathering of the nations against the Jews, and God's terrible interposition in behalf of his people, by the judgments upon their enemies. In the thirty-eighth we have God's address to Israel's enemies, as we have also in Joel iii. Verse 8. "After many days thou [Israel's enemies] shall be visited: in the *latter years* thou should come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always 'waste: but is brought forth out of

the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. 9. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land; thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. 15. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army. 16. And thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; *it shall be in the latter days*; and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. 17. Thus saith the Lord God; Art thou *he of whom I have spoken in old time*, by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them? 18. And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. 19. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel. 20. So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, *and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence*, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. 21. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. 22. *And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire and brimstone.* 23. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

(20.) Now who can fail to perceive here a parallel with the prophecy of Joel? It relates to *the same time* of gathering in the captivity of the Jews. It speaks of the same *gathering of the multitudes of their enemies* into the land to fight against Israel. It alludes to the same *terrible shaking of earth*,

sea, and heaven, when God interferences in behalf of his heritage Israel. In both places this is spoken of as God's *pleading* with them then in behalf of Israel. In both places it represents the result as a total overthrow of Israel's enemies, and a perfect and permanent establishment of Israel in their own country. And what is worthy of especial notice, in the prophecy by Ezekiel (xxxviii. 17,) this same gathering and judgment of the heathen, and Israel's redemption, are declared to have been spoken of by the prophets of a former period. And we should observe that *Joel* prophesied *before Ezekiel*.

(21.) "In those days, and at that time," then, according to the prophets, will occur this terrible judgment that shall darken the heavens and convulse the earth and sea. Then will be the judgment and punishment of the nations, and the redemption of God's "heritage Israel," that they may dwell forevermore in their own land in peace and purity. This, then, as our Lord himself declared, is only the fulfillment of the things that have been written. And the tribulation that was experienced by the Jews during the Roman war, was only the beginning of the sorrows that have been predicted, and that shall continue until all that has been foretold shall be accomplished. And "immediately *after* the tribulation of those days," shall the wonders in heaven, and the commotions among nations occur, and the divine glory will be manifested in the judgments which shall destroy the ungodly.

(22.) There is one specific objection that may be urged against this conclusion respecting the time of the fulfillment of this part of the prediction: it is this: John, in Revelation xx. 8, represents the battle of Gog and Magog as occurring *after the Millennium*; whereas, Ezekiel clearly represents it as occurring at the *conclusion of the present days of Israel's tribulation*, which we cannot suppose will last during the thousand years of holiness and peace.

(23.) The reply to this objection is very easy, and ought to be deemed satisfactory.

In the first place, nothing would be gained to either side of this controversy, by supposing that Ezekiel and John contra-

dicted each other. It cannot be deemed admissible that there is any such contradiction in the Bible.

In the second place, the prophecy of Ezekiel is so clearly parallel with many others, as it respects the *time of the fulfillment*, that there is no room for a doubt of its being at the close of the present period of Israel's dispersion. And if one prophet must be explained by another, the *one* ought to be explained by the *many*; the less clear and literal, by those that are more easily understood. In the third place, and particularly Ezekiel and John are in the most delightful harmony; and it is *precisely the character of the harmony* which the book of Revelation so conspicuously displays in its relations to the other parts of the prophetic Scriptures.

This is the agreement between John and Ezekiel: what Ezekiel represents *literally*, as the closing up of the ante-millennial dispensation, John uses *symbolically* to illustrate the closing up of the Millennium itself. And this is precisely the leading characteristic of this part of John's writings: He uses the prophecies and histories of the *literal* as *symbols* to represent something else, and similar events of other times. Prophecies and histories respecting *literal Jerusalem*, he uses *symbolically* to describe the church in its future glory. Prophecies and histories which were applicable *literally* only to Babylon on the Euphrates, he uses *symbolically* to illustrate the Papal abomination. *Rome literal*, in its situation, domination and character, is made a *symbol* of *Rome spiritual*. Now this character of John's Revelation is sufficiently evident; and no one ever thought of stumbling, because he could not harmonize the *chronology* between John's *symbolical* Jerusalem, Babylon, and Rome, and the *literal* cities whose characters and destinies furnished him with some of the principal actors in his symbolical drama. And why need we stumble because his *symbolical* Gog and Magog do not come upon the stage just when the *literal* did.* Why does he use Jerusalem, Babylon, Rome, and other things to *illustrate* his drama? Because such things had existed *literally* and had

* See Note E.

become subjects of prophetic and historic knowledge; and, therefore, in this way, by using them, he could convey a volume of meaning in a single verse.

(25.) And, if any object, that he has used as a symbol something of which we are yet in doubt,—something which is still future to us,—the answer is ready: He wrote *this* part of his Revelation for the special admonition of those who will survive during the Millennium, and will be in danger at the close of that period of being deceived by the devil, who will then for a little season be released from prison. And at *that* time, the history of Gog and Magog will be as well understood as is now the history of Babylon or Rome. And we might as well suppose that there will be no *literal resurrection*, because it is sometimes used symbolically, as in Ezek. xxxvii.,—or that there was no *literal Jerusalem*, because it was used symbolically,—as to suppose there will be no Gog and Magog at the close of the present dispensation, because they are used symbolically to illustrate the close of the Millennium. The figurative *proves*, rather than *disproves*, the literal.

(26.) Two things are here worthy of remembrance: First. That the gathering of the Jews, and the great and decisive destruction of their enemies, are so evidently taught in the prophecies, that almost all divines are constrained to admit the literal fulfillment of, at least, the principal things predicted. It is to be regretted, however, that so few have spoken out distinctly concerning those things which they are constrained to admit. Another thing to be remembered is,—that the language of our Saviour, in the part of his discourse now under notice, is generally admitted to be applicable to the very time to which it is referred in this Exposition. Even those who are most confident in their application of the whole to Jewish affairs, admit that it may refer to the day of Judgment.

(27.) Even Dr. Scott, after referring it specifically to Jewish matters, closes thus: “But the whole passage will have a more literal and far more august accomplishment, at the day of judgment.” Dr. Clarke, who seems unwilling to allow any part of the twenty-fourth chapter to refer to the day of judgment, nevertheless concedes that the 1st verse of the twenty-

fifth chapter refers to the day of judgment, in connection with a reference to Jewish and Roman affairs. Yet our Lord himself limits the application of the twenty-fifth chapter to the times described in, at least, the closing part of the twenty-fourth, by introducing his parable by a "*Then,*" which ought to be considered sufficiently specific in defining the time. Dr. Benson acknowledges that our Lord spoke of both events at the same time, one being considered as a type of the other. Dr. Coke expresses himself in about the same manner. Burkitt admits that some part of the chapter may refer to the day of judgment. Watson considers it a clear example of double prophecy; one event illustrating the other. Barnes expresses the same conviction. Wesley is positive that our Lord here begins to speak of his coming to judge the world. Dr. Robinson admits that from verse 43, the discourse refers to the day of judgment.

(28.) It appears, then, from the admission of all, or nearly all, of the divines most commonly in use in this country, that at some place or other in this discourse, and in some form or other, the Lord did speak of his second coming to judge the world. Why not, then, suppose that he began just where it came in chronological order, and in accordancy with the teaching of the prophets, and introduced the subject in close subsequent connection with the termination of the tribulation of God's ancient people. If the darkening of the luminaries of heaven is to be one of the signs of the judgment, where is it taught, if not in Joel and in Matthew? Where do our standard hymnologists and preachers obtain authority to promulgate such views to the church, if not from Joel and from Christ? Surely they will not refer to similar expressions, where there is in connection a specific application of the language to other events. They must go to Joel and to Christ. And, if so, why not suppose that Christ and the prophet referred specifically to the great event?

(29.) The only difference between this Exposition and most others, on this point is, that here the application is decided, literal, definite; and, in the others, the application is rather to be *inferred*—a sort of *may* be, instead of *must* be. And

then the application usually comes rather in the form of a *concession*, as if it was with reluctance, rather than with clear, definite perception of the necessity of such application. And there is usually a loading upon Jerusalem and the Jews just as much as can possibly be made to take that direction, and the rest is thought to refer to the judgment. To this general state of things, two noble exceptions have come under the writer's notice: they are *Wesley's Notes*,* and *Henry's Exposition*. Doubtless there are some others, but the writer has not had the good fortune to obtain them.

CHAPTER X.

Principal subject—THE COMING OF CHRIST. EXAMINATION OF SEVERAL RELEVANT SUBJECTS.

How the Subject is Introduced—Erroneous Interpretations—Two Forms of the Interpretation—Whitby's—Newton's—The first Reviewed—Logic versus History—The second Reviewed—Injurious Tendencies—Animadversions—Objection founded on Scripture Precedents—Great Mistake—Important Difference—Old Testament Metaphors—Objection founded on Christ's Declaration to the High Priests, Matt. xxvi. 64—Objection founded on Christ's remark concerning John, ch. xxi. 22—How difficult to defend Error—Objection founded on Christ's Declaration that some should not die till they had seen him coming in his kingdom, Matt. xvi. 27—True Interpretation—Dissimilarity between that Passage and the one under comment—How David Typified Christ—Two Kingdoms, or the same in two different Dispensations.

Verse 30. AND THEN SHALL APPEAR THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN : AND THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN, AND THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, 'WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.

HERE we have the coming of Christ described, both in respect to the *manner*, and with respect to its chronological *order*. The word *then* sufficiently shows its connection with

* More recent and thorough examination of *Wesley's Notes* compels the reluctant admission, that, after all, he was not as free from defect in this mat-

the scenes described in the preceding verse. The darkening of the luminaries would first occur, succeeded immediately by the dreadful commotions on the earth, and the distress and terror of the nations, as has already been shown in the comment on the 29th verse. The reference to the second advent in the 27th verse has been explained in its appropriate place, and shown to be a merely parenthetical allusion to it, for the purpose of guarding the disciples more perfectly against being deceived by the impostors, who would make their appearance at the time of which the Lord was then speaking.

2. In the verse before us we have the subject introduced in its appropriate place and form. But we cannot proceed with the exposition until something more is done to exhibit the errors which have become so prevalent in the usual interpretations of this verse. Like the 27th verse, this also is usually applied to the coming of the Romans, and treated as a mere figurative representation of the divine judgments upon the Jews.

Whitby may be considered as having given the popular opinion in respect to this verse. "Our Saviour's coming here seems therefore to import *his coming by the Roman army to besiege and destroy Jerusalem, and the unbelieving Jews*; for so Christ seemeth plainly to interpret this 'coming of the Son of man:' (Verse 27.) 'The coming of the Son of man shall be as the lightning shining from the east to the west; ὅπου γὰρ, for wheresoever the Jews are, thither shall the Roman army be gathered' (see verse 27, above:) his coming therefore must be with the Roman army."* "And this interpretation," he

ter, as the writer at first gladly hoped and supposed. Wesley, it appears, from his own explanation of the case, (Preface, Sec. 7,) followed, almost without deviation, in the track of BENGELIUS, whom he regarded as a "great light of the Christian world." Bengelius did not mislead Mr. Wesley in *divinity*, but in critical exegesis of certain passages, where—not the *theology of the Scriptures*—but common history and unfulfilled prophecy, have to be depended upon for primary sources of argument and illustration;—in *this* department of biblical exegesis, it is undeniable that Mr. Wesley was misled, not only in the passage before us, but in several others, by his too great reliance upon Bengelius.

* Certainly, if Christ used the words you put in his mouth.

continues, “will not seem strange if we consider, (1.) That *God's coming to destroy*, or execute his vengeance on a wicked generation, is represented as his ‘coming in the clouds of heaven.’” Then follow several references to the Old Testament.

3. Now, after the historical demonstration of the error of applying the 27th verse to the coming of the Romans; and after the argument against the metaphorical interpretation of the 29th verse, it cannot be necessary to detain the reader long with preliminaries to the true exposition of the verse under notice. The common figurative theory of interpretation, as it is exhibited by Whitby, consists of two different branches; one of which makes the coming of Christ to be a *literal coming of the Romans* to execute the judgments of Christ upon the Jews; and the other branch of the theory supposes that the coming of Christ here described, though in some way connected with the coming of the Romans, does not so much refer to the actual coming of that people, and of the calamities they occasioned, as to the *subsequent manifestation of the Lord Jesus by the judgments which he, by means of the Romans, inflicted.*

4. This branch of the theory is sufficiently stated by Newton in his dissertation on the Prophecies; and it has been adopted by several of our principal commentators. “Our Saviour proceeded in the same figurative style, (verse 30 :) ‘And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven,’ &c. The plain meaning of it is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ’s power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will be led from thence to acknowledge Christ and the Christian religion. In the ancient prophets, God is frequently described as coming in the *clouds*, upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power; and the same description is here applied to Christ. The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of Christ’s power and glory, as if he was himself to come visibly in the clouds of heaven.” [!] See *Newton on the Prophecies.*

5. If this form of the figurative theory were not to be found in most of the Expositions in common use, the writer would consider it too absurd, not to say ridiculous, to meet a formal notice. But when we find it maintained, either in whole or in part, by such divines as Newton, Clarke, Watson, Coke, Benson, Barnes, Macknight, &c.; and when we find that it is the best explanation that the defenders of the figurative theory can give of this coming of the Lord; it then stands us in hand to expose this absurdity. The reader's attention will be directed, *first*, to the branch of the theory as maintained by WHITBY,—that the coming of Christ here means “his coming by the Roman army to besiege and destroy Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews.”

6. Now, if reason and fact can be allowed to have an influence in settling a disputed question, it will not take long to exhibit the utter inconsistency of this form of the theory.

(1.) If the coming of the Lord at this time was merely “the coming of the Roman army to destroy Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews,” then it will follow, of necessity, that it occurred at the *same time*, since, in fact, it is affirmed to be the *same event*.

(2.) Now, the Romans came *several years before* the destruction of the city. But our Lord places the coming here spoken of *afterwards!*

(3.) Again, the destruction of the Jewish state, and church, their city, and people, *resulted from* the coming of the Romans, and must, of course, have been *after* that coming, because *results* must be *subsequent* to the *causes which produced them*.

But our Lord describes this coming as being *after the tribulation of those days*, and *subsequent in order to the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars*. Which shall we believe, man or the Lord? Who is to be sustained and justified,—those who pay less respect to human wisdom, and more to divine,—or those who do otherwise? The answer should be a practical one.

7. It is but justice to Whitby to observe, that he had logical foresight enough to avoid this palpable contradiction, by sup-

posing that "the tribulation of those days," *after* which *this* coming was to be, occurred at an earlier stage of the war, "a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem," while "Vespasian's army was flying quickly through Gallilee, Iudæa, and Judea." And he makes it out—truly, and undeniably—that the Jewish ecclesiastical and civil government was indeed overthrown, and their eminent men and rulers destroyed, before Jerusalem itself was overthrown. Hence his distinct affirmation that the coming *now* spoken of by the Lord, was "the coming of the Romans to destroy Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews."

8. So far as the writer has extended his investigations, Whitby appears to be alone in the peculiar turn which he gives to his exposition. He was too strongly wedded to his figurative theory to abandon it for a literal application of the verse; and he was too keen a logician to blunder into a palpable contradiction of the Lord. Therefore he adopted this singular method of saving his *logic*, whatever might happen to his *divinity*. *To this singular modification* of the figurative theory, there are objections, which seem to have prevented any, or many, from adopting it; although the *theory in the main* has been almost universally received.

(1.) The first thing that may be noticed is, that his comment on the verse under notice does not agree with his explanation of verse 27, where the same coming of the Lord is incidentally alluded to. In explaining the coming of Christ there, he does indeed refer it to the coming of the *Romans*; but it is applied to their *first conquests* of the country. Whereas, the coming here mentioned is *restricted* to the coming of *Titus* to finish up the war by besieging Jerusalem and destroying the Jews that remained!

(2.) Another thing to be remembered is this: this same able divine has labored, and successfully, too, to show that there was a total destruction of the Jewish "ecclesiastical and civil state, and the rulers of them both," "a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem." There was, indeed; and previously to the siege of Jerusalem, the whole country, north, south, east, and west, had been conquered and ravaged;

while in the metropolis itself, before the coming of Titus to besiege it, not only the priesthood, but the judiciary, the civil government and the eminent men of the nation, had been destroyed, and the temple itself had become a fortress for an army of robbers.

Now, to save the *logic* of his strange theory, the learned divine has to plunge into the palpable absurdity of supposing that the great manifestation of the Lord's judgment upon the Jews, by which Christ was to be seen coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, was *not* the coming of the Romans to invade and ravage the length and breadth of the land; was *not* the destruction, by death and captivity, of the bulk of the nation, till but a single city was left; was *not* the utter overthrow of their state, church, judiciary, and eminent men, like the darkening of their sun, moon, and stars;—no—all this formed no part of that work of judgment which was to manifest so amazingly the glory of Christ, by his vengeance upon the Jews;—but, after all the country was conquered, the state, church, and eminent men destroyed, and there was but a single city left, and that so near destruction in consequence of the ravages of the robbers within, that it was rather a *relief* than otherwise, (so it was expressly affirmed,) to be assailed by the Romans;—*then*, as the author under review says, this judgment-coming of the Lord took place! *Then* it was that he was so conspicuously seen coming in the clouds of heaven to punish the unbelieving Jews! All before this time was to be counted as nothing! The destruction of the church, government, rulers, cities, provinces, and people without number, was nothing! But when Titus came to besiege the metropolis, and destroy what remained of the people, *this* was the surpassingly glorious manifestation of the Lord coming in the clouds of heaven. It is not surprising that this strange peculiarity of the troublesome theory should have but few, if any, supporters. There is yet left in the common mind a little of that common sense which is rather troublesome to the sophist who labors to save his logic at the expense of reason.

The other branch of the figurative theory of applying this

verse, is thus stated by Bishop NEWTON in his work on the Prophecies: "The plain meaning of it is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will be led from thence to acknowledge Christ and the Christian religion. In the ancient prophets, God is frequently described as coming in the *clouds*, upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power; and the same description is here applied to Christ. *The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of CHRIST'S power and glory, as if he was himself to come visibly in the "clouds of heaven."* [!]

Now, wonderful as it may seem, the defenders of the figurative exposition are so hardly, so desperately pushed by the difficulties of their fanciful theory, that this is the best explanation of the passage that they can give! The most particular, the most generally quoted, the most evidently literal description of the second coming of the Lord that can be found in the Bible, is explained to mean nothing more than the *moral effects upon unbelieving men of a terrible judgment upon the wicked Jews!* And this is the favorite theory of nearly all our modern divines! Let us look once more at the words of which such a statement is designed to be a comment.

Verse 30. AND THEN SHALL APPEAR THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN. AND THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN; AND THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.

Now, who, that is not hopelessly committed to the figurative theory, would suppose that it was possible for such divines as Newton, Clarke, and a host of others, to satisfy themselves with such a view of such a passage? Such an unnatural, unsatisfying, unimpressive exposition would be the less objectionable, if it were not for several considerations:

1. The literal interpretation of the passage would not introduce into the church any sentiment that was new, unfamiliar, or unprofitable.

2. It would be only treating the passage just as we are

habitually treating many other passages which are less particular, less evidently literal, less important, and less impressive.

3. The passage is acknowledged by these very divines (most of them) to have a *remote* reference to the second advent at the end of the world. They usually contend, however, that its *primary* reference is to Jewish affairs.

4. The figurative interpretation of this passage is no more natural or justifiable than the figurative interpretation of any other, and every other, of the same character, contained in the Bible. And the same arguments which are used, to set aside the literal rendering of this verse, may be used just as successfully, and generally more so, to evade the literal teaching of every passage in the Scripture on which we rely to prove the coming of the Lord to judgment. Hence, those who deny the second advent of our Lord, have only to *extend* as far as they please the application of orthodox (?) arguments, and where does the Bible teach the judgment-coming of our Lord?

5. The figurative theory of interpretation naturally tends to prevent the confidence which the mass of readers would have in the Scriptures, if commentators did not almost universally betray a distrust of the literal teaching of the divine word. But when great men set the example of metaphorizing, and poetizing the most important communications of the Holy Ghost, it is not surprising that the common people are so generally unaffected by those very portions of the Bible which seem to have been designed for the principal permanent sources of warning to the careless, and encouragement to the faithful. If the people are warned and religiously influenced by the passages relating to the second advent, it is rather in spite of, or in contempt of, the fanciful and unnatural theorizings of men renowned for wit, research, and learning. The hope of the world, in respect to these things, is in the natural, unsophisticated confidence and reverence which common people usually have for what they believe to be the teachings of Inspiration. But just as soon as this simple-hearted confidence is destroyed, by the clashing, far-fetched,

mystifying comments of men, so soon the foundation on which to build the hope of conversion is to a great extent undermined. And the question, after all, is simply this: Was the Bible designed for the *common* people—for the *many* people—or was it designed for the *few*—the learned? If for the *common* people, then it was *adapted* to them, as common people; and it was done by the Infinite Wisdom that arranged all the wonderful adaptations in nature. Whence, then, the propriety, or even lawfulness, of wresting from its natural and easy import such passages as the one before us, and expounding them in such a way that no common, unsophisticated mind would ever be likely to adopt from its own spontaneous convictions? If the Bible was *not* designed and adapted to the common mind—to the many—then it either had *no* adaption, or it was designed for the *few*—the *learned*. And, if this be so, then the *Romish church* is right in withholding the pure word of God from the masses, and teaching that the priesthood alone are capable of understanding it.

6. This loose and fanciful method of expounding this, and other similar portions of the Scriptures, is most evidently the source of theoretic Universalism, and other forms of semi-infidelity. And it occasions a *lack of intensity* in the impressions which these portions of the Bible were evidently designed to produce. The injury is incalculable, and ordinarily incurable. This painful truth meets us at every point, and probably eternity will disclose an extent of injury from this source that will be absolutely appalling.

7. Great must be the necessity then, that should justify any departure from literality in expounding such passages as this. It ought to be ascertained, first, that a literal interpretation is absolutely impracticable; that it either clashes with other portions of the Bible, or with indubitable facts. Nothing less than this should be deemed sufficient to warrant us in concluding that the Lord did not mean just what he said, in a discourse intended for the common mind.

8. But are there any such reasons for wresting this passage from its literal and natural import? No; there is not one. Does its literal teaching conflict with well ascertained facts?

No; it does not: the whole race of learned men may be safely challenged to produce a single fact that can possibly be brought into conflict with the literal teaching of this text. Does it clash with other portions of Scripture? No; it does not: there is not only no disagreement, but the literal teaching of this text is in the most perfect harmony with those portions which undeniably relate primarily to the second coming of the Lord. What, then, can justify this almost universal practice of poetizing one of the most rigidly prose portions of the Bible? Let him answer who can.

9. There is one objection that may be anticipated here: Have we not examples of undeniable figurativeness in many portions of the Old Testament, where the language is similar, or just like that now under notice? No; THERE IS NOT ONE. These are passages which speak of God being in the clouds at the giving of the law, and during the exodus and journey of the Israelites. But they are all *literal*, for they refer to literal occurrences. But there is not a passage in the Old Testament, excepting Dan. vii. 13, that is just like or even *similar*, to the passage under notice. One would naturally infer from the confident manner in which writers are accustomed to appeal to the Old Testament, as presenting many examples of using this kind of language figuratively, that nothing was more common, and nothing more evident, than the figurative use of such descriptions of the coming of God or Christ. There is a vast amount of *assertion*, and a great deal said about the hieroglyphical and prophetic style of prediction; and there are, indeed, a great number of passages which are usually referred to as specimens and proofs. But, with the exception before noted, there is not one, no, not one, that is even *similar* to the verse under notice. This is written as the convincing conclusion of an examination of all the passages that a learned and laborious defender of the figurative theory could produce. His attempt has utterly failed. There are a few *expressions* in the poetical parts of the Old Testament which do, indeed, contain a similar *word*, as, for instance, the word *come*; Isa. lxiv. 1. "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst *come down*!" Hab. iii.

3. "God *came* from Teman." Gen. xi. 5. "The Lord *came down* to see the city and the tower." Ex. iii. 8. "I am *come down* to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." But what similarity is there between these mere *expressions* and the *descriptive passage* under notice? There is, indeed, the similarity of a *word*. But if this establishes a *parallelism*, then what passages are not parallel? And whereunto would this thing grow, if it should be diligently encouraged? But it may be replied, that these, and many other similar expressions, present a similarity of idea: they represent God as *coming down, going forth, rising up, &c.* This is true, indeed; but whoever thought, on any other subject, that the similarity of a *single idea* made the expression conveying it parallel to a *group and succession* of ideas? The passage before us is not merely an *idea*, or an *expression*: it is a *graphic description of a scene, with its attending results*. And, with the aforementioned exception, the whole race of metaphorizers may be safely challenged to point out a parallel in the Old Testament. If men should reason so loosely and unphilosophically on almost any other subject, they would be in danger of losing their reputation for common intelligence. And why the world has so long tolerated this superficial method of explaining away the most solemn and literal teachings of Inspiration, is really wonderful.

10. The same observations are just as applicable to the many references to the passages which speak of God *coming in a cloud, riding upon a cloud, &c.* These figurative expressions which abound in the poetical Scriptures, are no more parallel with the passage before us than those noticed previously. There is about the same parallel that there is between a regular, well painted *picture*, and a *single daub of one of the colors on something else*. Besides, they either state, or refer to the fact, that was so prominent in the early and never-forgotten history of the Jews, when God did *literally come down in a cloud, dwell in the thick cloud, make clouds and darkness his pavilion, march forth "in the pillar of a cloud," &c.* Where, then is the force of the argument to justify the *metaphorizing* the passage before us, on the ground of parallelism

with these representations? In the first place, they are *not parallel*. In the second place, if they *were* parallel, it would be fatal to the reasonings of those who make this use of them.

11. The advocates of the figurative theory are confident that the New Testament affords them many examples of even such *descriptions* of the coming of Christ as the passage under notice presents, where a figurative interpretation must be adopted. For example, Christ's declaration to the high-priest, Matt. xxvi. 64, "Hereafter shall *ye see* the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The use the advocate of the figurative theory would make, is this: As it is certain the high-priest could not live until the day of judgment, and as the second advent will be *prior* to the resurrection of the dead, therefore, it is not possible that the high-priest can ever be a witness of the second coming of Christ. For this reason, then, it is concluded that the coming spoken of must be a figurative coming to destroy Jerusalem. This is the most plausible argument that can be produced in favor of the figurative theory. But let us analyze it, and see what it contains.

In the first place it *assumes* that that identical high-priest, Caiaphas, lived until the time of destroying the Jewish nation. Of this there is no proof whatever, but several things which render it exceedingly improbable: (1.) He had already been a priest five or six years, and was probably nearly forty years of age. The strong probability is that he died long before the so-called coming to destroy Jerusalem. About four years after Christ was brought before him, he was deposed from the priesthood under the displeasure of the emperor; and what became of him is not known. (2.) There was a terrible destruction of the eminent men of the nation previous to the great catastrophe. And men so eminent as the son-in-law of Annas would not be likely to escape. (3.) The strong probability is that he was made way with, like myriads of others of eminent position, during the dreadful years of commotion that preceded the final overthrow of the nation.

In the second place the argument *assumes*, that because the advent is to precede the resurrection, therefore, the resurrected high-priest could not witness it, since he would not be raised until afterwards. The entire force of the assumption rests upon the presumption that Christ would not *remain* in the clouds a single moment after giving the word that wakes the dead. And the resurrection will undoubtedly be as instantaneous as the change of the living—“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised,” &c.

Now, if Christ should see fit to sound the trumpet at the *beginning* of his advent, or while he remains in the air, what force could there be in this plausible *assumption*, which the objector deems so conclusive? That Christ *will* remain for a time in the air, is demonstrated from the declaration, 1 Thess. iv. 15–17, “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not *prevent* (*go before*) them which are *asleep* (*dead*.) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and *the dead in Christ shall rise first*. Then we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air!*” Thus it appears to be the very design of God, and he has so declared it, *that the voice that wakes the dead is to be sounded while the Lord remains in the clouds; and the dead are to be raised and caught up to meet him there!* What then becomes of this specious objection? It is annihilated. And the ministers who make it ought to be ashamed of their ignorance of this most interesting part of the Bible.

The Church has been accustomed to sing,

“The living look with dread;
The frighted dead arise,
Start from their monumental bed,
And lift their ghastly eyes.”

And this view is rigidly Scriptural: “*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him; and THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.*” Rev. i. 7.

If it should still be urged, that this seeing him, and wailing because of him, will be true only with respect to the wicked who shall be alive at the last day, — then the objector will, in the third place, *assume* that the wicked will not be raised at the second advent. Let this objector, then, recollect that *he* must not object to the doctrine of two resurrections, if he should hereafter meet with it. And the objector further *assumes* that Caiaphas did certainly live and die an impenitent man, so that he cannot be raised at the “resurrection of the just.” Yet multitudes of these very Jews were afterward converted; even the “murderers and betrayers” of Christ. And at one time, “a great company of priests were obedient unto the faith.”

In the fourth place, the objector *assumes* that Christ’s declaration was to be *restricted* to the person of Caiaphas himself: “Hereafter YE shall see,” &c. Yet the same divines that so restrict the word are trying to convert the world under the authority of the commission given to the apostles; “Go YE, therefore, and teach all nations; and lo I am with you unto the end of the world.” Those to whom he said YE, according to the objector’s principles, must be still alive, because they were to continue to the end of the world! And these same divines ought, according to their own reasonings, to suppose that Paul and his brethren then living expected to live until the coming of the Lord to raise the dead; for he says — “We shall not all sleep, (die,) but *we* shall all be changed,” &c. And “then *we* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” &c.

Now, what has become of this popular and plausible objection to the literal theory? It is wholly a series of mere *assumptions* arrayed against, (1.) The *probabilities* in the case of Caiaphas living beyond the common age of man during *such* times as those; (2.) Mere *assumptions* opposed to the *direct Scripture declarations* respecting the fact of the risen dead seeing the Lord in the clouds; (3.) Mere *assumptions* against the theories of the very divines who make them, in respect to the fact of two different resurrections; (4.) *Assumption* in direct opposition to Scripture usage in respect to

restricting declarations to the individuals to whom they were first addressed.

More time has been occupied with this popular objection to the literal rendering, because it has been deemed a *posse* to the literalist. Has there not been enough said to demonstrate its perfect nothingness and unworthiness?

12. A moment may be occupied in noticing another argument to prove that Christ spake of his coming with reference to Jewish affairs. By an eminent divine it is thus stated :

“In John xxi. 22, is a very significant passage. ‘And Jesus said: If I will that he [John] tarry until I come, what is that to thee?’ John’s fellow disciples spread abroad a report from this, that the Saviour had said to him, that he should not die. But John himself remarks, that ‘Jesus did not say, He shall not die,’ but, ‘If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee.’” “In other words,” continues the writer, “John understood Jesus not as promising exemption from death, but only that he should live until his *coming*. And when, now, was that to be? If his coming meant the general judgment, then John would not have to die at all; for saints then alive were not to die, but to be immediately ‘caught up to meet the Lord in the air,’ doubtless with an appropriate metamorphosis. The *coming* in question, then, *after* which John was to die and not before, must have been some coming during that generation. And what else could it be referred to, except to his coming to punish the unbelieving Jews?”

Now, who would ever dream of such an explanation of this matter, if his whole field of vision were not entirely occupied with “the destruction of Jerusalem?” This is the same writer that attempts to make so much of Christ’s declaration to the high-priest; inferring, as a matter of course, that Caiaphas lived to witness that so-called coming. And the writer also understands Christ to have affirmed repeatedly in the hearing of his disciples, that “the generation of men then living” should not pass away until all that he had foretold

about Jerusalem's desolation should be fulfilled.* Now, if the disciples understood Christ to refer to a judicial coming to destroy Jerusalem, and also understood him to say, that all should be fulfilled before that generation of men then living should pass away, how came they to spread abroad the report, that "that disciple should not *die*?" Observe, the report was not, that he should live to be *very old*; not that he should not die a *violent death*; but that he should NOT DIE. The disciples had been distinctly and repeatedly informed, according to the figurative theory, that these temporal judgments should occur within the lifetime of that generation of men; and yet, because *John* should live to witness them, therefore *John* should never die! Was there ever a more unnatural and improbable conclusion? How hard it is to prop up a foundationless theory!

The whole matter is susceptible of an easy, natural, and scriptural explanation. The incident occurred after Christ's resurrection, when the disciples had been enlightened in respect to many things which previously they had not understood. It occurred among the last incidents recorded by John, and probably just before the ascension. Now Christ continued with his disciples, after his resurrection, forty days, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts i. 3. Now it is morally impossible that so important a matter as his coming to raise the dead, and change the living, could have been omitted during all those finishing instructions which Christ tarried to give them, in order to prepare them for their work after his ascension. Let us suppose, then, what we are morally obliged to suppose, that *now*, after receiving their final instructions from the Lord Jesus, the disciples understood the matters pertaining to the second advent as Paul has described it in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. Those who "remain unto the coming of the Lord" will not *die*; but will be "changed," without passing through death, into immortal be-

* Christ's remark concerning John was made after all his discourses about Jerusalem had been delivered.

ings. With this view of the case, all is natural and plain. The disciples understand Christ to say, or at least to intimate, that it would be his will that John should "tarry" until his coming. Then the saying immediately goes abroad, that John should not die. How natural! How scriptural! They understood that John was to be kept "alive unto the coming of the Lord;" and, of course, supposed that he would not die. "Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but. *If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.*" Christ had just signified to *Peter* "by what death *he* should glorify God;" and said to him, Follow me. But Peter, instead of attending to his own affairs, began to meddle with Christ's; and wanted to know what should be the destiny of *John*. Christ gave him to understand that it was none of his concern; it was wholly a matter of his [Christ's] own determination. "If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

How much easier it is to support the truth, than to support fiction! If men were really anxious to find out a literal interpretation of the Lord's words, it is surprising that they should go out of the way to avoid the literal explanation, and be satisfied with unnatural and improbable speculations.

13. There is another passage on which great reliance is placed, to show that the coming of Christ could not mean his coming at the end of the world, Matt. xvi. 27-28, compared with Mark viii. 38, and ix. 1, together with Luke ix. 26-27.*

Verse 27. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. 28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Now, it is evident that verse 27 does refer to the coming to the general judgment. And if verse 28 refers to the same thing, then there is an end of the matter: Christ came to judgment—the final judgment—while some of those disciples were living in this world! But who will adopt this?

* See the whole passage harmonized in Part I, chap. 3.

No one who cares a groat for his orthodoxy. Then those who are ever on the lookout for figures must find some other method of interpretation. Dr. Clarke may be selected as presenting the popular view.

“Verse 27. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.*] This seems to refer to Dan. vii. 13, 14. ‘Behold, one like the Son of man came to the Ancient of days—and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him.’ This was the glorious mediatorial kingdom which Jesus Christ was now about to set up, by the destruction of the Jewish nation and polity, and the diffusion of the gospel through the whole world. . . . It is very likely that the words do not apply to the final judgment, to which they are generally referred; but to the wonderful display of God’s grace and power after the day of Pentecost.

“Verse 28. *There be some—which shall not taste of death.*] This verse seems to confirm the above explanation, as our Lord evidently speaks of the establishment of the Christian church after the day of Pentecost, and its final triumph after the destruction of the Jewish polity; as if he had said—‘Some of you, my disciples, shall continue to live until these things take place.’ The destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jewish economy, which our Lord here predicts, took place about forty-three years after this; and some of the persons now with him, doubtless survived that period, and witnessed the extension of the Messiah’s kingdom,” &c.

It will be readily seen that Dr. Clarke does not admit that verse 27 refers to the judgment advent. He supposes it to refer to the setting up of the mediatorial kingdom. In this he differs from most other divines, who, nevertheless, agree with him in the adoption of the figurative theory of exegesis in the main.

A sufficient answer to *Dr. Clarke’s* view may be found in the Exposition of *Richard Watson*.

“Verse 27. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory, &c.* In the full manifested glory of the Godhead, accompanied by the whole host of holy angels; in strange contrast to his then

humble condition, surrounded by a few poor disciples, despised and rejected of men! That these words relate, not to the setting up of his mediatorial kingdom, as predicted by Daniel, nor, figuratively, to his coming to judge the nation of the Jews, is most evident from what follows: *And then he will reward every man according to his works.* This is not an act of *gracious mediation*, but of strict judgment; so that the coming of Christ in the fullness of his glory, as mediator, could not be intended; nor is a *national* judgment a rewarding of *every* or *each* man according to his work; for sinners of widely different degrees of delinquency are involved in the same public calamities, and the comparatively innocent share the penalty equally with the most guilty. Besides, those who apply this to the desolation of Judea by the Romans, which was no doubt a judicial act of Christ in his exalted state, ought to show how the pious and faithful, as well as the wicked, were then rewarded; which is undoubtedly intended in rendering to 'every man according to his works.' The passage has clearly no meaning but as it refers to the end of the world, and the general judgment; for then, only, can those be fully rewarded who have laid down their lives for the sake of Christ,* one of the subjects on which he had been discoursing, and which stands intimately connected with these words.

Verse 28. *Till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* That this coming of the Son of man relates to the setting up of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ in its fullness and perfection, is as certain as that the coming of the Son of man in the preceding verse relates to his second advent as Judge. The parallel places sufficiently explain the meaning. St. Luke says, 'Till they see the kingdom of God;' and St. Mark, 'Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.' 'The kingdom of Christ,' 'the kingdom of God,' and 'the kingdom of heaven,' are all phrases used to express the gospel dispensation, or Christian economy. . . . Those commentators who apply these words to the judicial visitation of the Jewish nation, and the destruction of Jerusalem, adopt an

* See verses 24-26.

interpretation which is wholly forbidden by the parallel places from Mark and Luke, above referred to; for how that direful event could be the 'coming of the kingdom of God with power,' is utterly inconceivable, when the established sense of the phrase, 'The kingdom of God,' as used in the gospels, is considered."

14. These extracts are characteristic of the clear discrimination and powerful logic of that great modern divine, RICHARD WATSON. Whenever he brought a subject to the test of *his own personal examination, and did not rely upon others*, his own almost infallible judgment in logic and divinity guided him to sound conclusions. But when he depended upon the testimony and researches of others—as he unfortunately did in his adoption of the errors which have already been pointed out in his annotations on the 24th chapter of Matthew—then he, of course, was as liable to mistakes as those whom he followed, without personal examination of the matters of which they treated. He could not fully adopt the figurative theory; but he appears all along to be more or less trammelled by it. He may be regarded as a good specimen of what is known as the "double sense" expositor. He applies—in almost every case—the passages relating to the judgment advent to their appropriate subjects, in a clear and decided manner, but frequently seems to hesitate to break entirely loose from the fanciful methods of interpreting these portions of the Bible; and in trying to keep within the limits of the figurative theory, he has, as might have been expected, exhibited weaknesses and inconsistencies in his generally unsurpassed annotations on those portions of the divine word.

It will be safe to leave the explanation of Matt. xvi. 27, 28, as he has most convincingly presented it. It may be observed, however, that the language applied to the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom, is not at all similar to the 30th verse of Matt. xxiv., which is now before us. In the verse in Matt. xxiv., we have the *appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven*; but there is nothing of this in the other. We have also the declaration that all the tribes of the earth shall *see him coming in the clouds of heaven*; but there

is nothing of this in the other. To see him "coming in his kingdom," or his "kingdom come with power," or to see the "kingdom of God," is a very different thing, indeed, from seeing Christ himself coming in the clouds of heaven with all the angels of God. And, besides, this is seen by all the tribes of the earth; but that is restricted to them: "There be *some* standing here, which shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God come with power." Then, in the passage in the 24th chapter, there is the sound of the trumpet, the gathering of the elect from the four winds, and, in verses following, many other circumstances which clearly show that there is no parallelism between the two passages. The 27th verse of the former passage is parallel with the latter as far as it goes; the 28th verse is not parallel at all. There is, indeed, the resemblance of a word or two, and, perhaps, of an idea or two; but beyond this the parallelism is not perceivable. It is certain, then, that there is a sense in which Christ is said to "come in his kingdom," which has no reference whatever either to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the judgment day. But the kingdom spoken of is not the kingdom usually spoken of by the prophets and others, where the Messiah sits upon the throne of David, and reigns over the house of Jacob; for David was in no sense a type or forerunner of Christ, in his *mediatorial* office, but only in his *kingly* office. Christ, as *mediator*, now sits at the right hand of God, being made head over all things to the church. And his present dominion is certainly called a kingdom. But all this may consist with the literal fulfillment of those many predictions of a future kingdom, when the present dispensation of mediation has passed away. By not discriminating between these two kingdoms, or the same dominion in two widely different dispensations,—and by confounding together the passages of Scripture which relate to the two respectively, great confusion has prevailed in the church, and our Expositions of the sacred word have been perplexed, contradictory, and unsatisfying. The two verses in Matt. xvi., then, as Mr. Watson has most convincingly proved, relate to things very different in nature, and widely sep-

arated in fulfillment. And it is not objectionable that verses relating to such very different times and things should be found in such close connection. The one naturally suggested the other, as in many other instances where other things as dissimilar were spoken of. Take, for a convenient example, John v. 25-29, where a spiritual, and the literal resurrections are both referred to.

15. Some divines, both ancient and modern, suppose Matt. xvi. 28 refers to the transfiguration of Christ a few days after, when he took Peter, and James, and John up into the mountain to meet Moses and Elias. By referring to 1 Pet. i. 16-18, the argument is made very plausible: Verse 16. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the *power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were EYE-WITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY.* 17. For he received from God the Father, *honor and glory*, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' 18. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, *when we were with him in the holy mount.*"

The explanation derived from this remarkable passage is not to be contemned; but it does not appear to be as natural as the one adopted by Watson, and in its essential features, quoted above.

CHAPTER XI.

Principal subject—THE COMING OF CHRIST. REVIEW OF THE FIGURATIVE THEORY.

Remarkable Exposition—Its Objectionable Character—Defectiveness, even if the Text be Figurative—Common Rules of Interpretation Reversed—No Parallel Texts, with one exception, in the Old Testament—The Point to be proved—No Historic Proof of the Figurative Theory—Inconsistent with Christ's Mediatorial Offices—A Word for Universalists—Character of the Mediatorial Dispensation—Fatal Results—Self-contradiction—Variance with the Words of Christ—Ingenious Evasion—Singular Logic—Embarrassment of Commentators—How Occasioned—Dr. Tower's Opinion—Dr. Campbell's—Dr. Mede's—Tense of the Saviour's words.

Verse 30. AND THESE SHALL APPEAR THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN: AND THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN, AND THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.

“THE plain meaning of it is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will be led from thence to acknowledge Christ and the Christian religion. In the ancient prophets, God is frequently described as coming in the *clouds*, upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power; and the same description is here applied to Christ. The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of Christ's power and glory, as if he was to come himself visibly in the clouds of heaven.”—*Newton on the Prophecies.*

However remarkable these declarations may appear, as a comment on the passage before us, yet they express the present usual method of expounding these words of our Lord. Nearly all our commentators, as, e. g., Dr. Whitby, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Warburton, adopt this method in full. Mr. Burkitt, Mr. Watson, Mr. Barnes, and several others, likewise adopt it, but connect it with a supposition that the passage

also refers to the day of judgment. The comment of Newton, quoted above, may be considered as expressing, with some modifications, the usual modern understanding of this matter, so far as the Commentaries give expression and direction to the general mind. To this method of explaining the text, there are many and weighty objections.

1. It is an exceedingly *indefinite* exposition of a very *definite* prediction. The passage contains several distinctly named particulars, arranged in a definite order of succession; and perfectly corresponds, in its literary character, with preceding and succeeding portions that are strictly literal, not only as a whole, but in respect also to their individual sentences. But this figurative exposition does not define anything with clearness, pays little or no regard to the arrangement of the successive parts, and leaves the mind with no distinct impression of anything that appropriately develops or confirms the sentiments of the prediction. It is, to all intents, indefiniteness from beginning to end; and is, nevertheless, intended as a comment upon a passage that is particular and definite throughout. What the text means as a *whole*, the comment is very positive in asserting; but what its individual *parts* mean, it might not be easy to determine! We can give the solution of the problem: but, alas, we cannot tell what its component figures are!

Now, even if the passage were confessedly figurative, we should be bound to suppose that each distinct *subject* introduced was intended for some distinct application; as, e. g., that the *sign* of the Son of man does not mean the Son of man himself, but something that *refers* to him, and in some way *represents* him; for the *sign* must be different from the thing *signified*. But this figurative expression pays almost no regard to this important matter; but, to a great extent, confounds things together with no discrimination between signs and things signified. But this is of vast importance in the exegesis of figurative language; so that, even supposing the passage to be metaphorical, this exposition does not expound it in accordance with any well defined principle of interpretation. If the text treated of matters of no importance, such

loose methods might be tolerated, perhaps; but the subjects treated are vastly important. Yet the moment the attempt is made to show what is *signified* by the *sign*, that moment confusion marks the exposition. Nothing but the most indefinite, general statements, and without proofs, too, can be trusted in the application.

And we must be compelled to suppose that our Lord was, in this part of his discourse, a mere *rhapsodist*, speaking without distinct ideas, and without definite arrangement, meaning much in the general, and little or nothing in the particular; — we must come to this conclusion, if we admit that such indefinite and irresponsible expositions do justice to the prediction. In the preceding verse, the figuratist professes to find an application for each individual idea: the sun, the moon, the stars, all *mean* something. The darkening, the falling, and the shaking of the luminaries of heaven, all *mean* something. And he has at hand an application for the whole, as a whole, and for the parts, as parts. Viewing the passage as figurative, he is consistent with himself: his common sense, without much proficiency, perhaps, in the knowledge of literary rules, guides him to such conclusions. He thereby saves the Lord from being a mere rhapsodist, carried beyond all literary propriety, by the ungovernable excitement of his own ardency.

But when the figuratist attempts to apply his rules to the explication of the several parts of the passage under notice, he finds himself in as much difficulty as the Universalist does, when he undertakes to apply the various parts of the so-called parable of the rich man and Lazarus. What it means as a whole, is very clear to him; but what is meant by its several parts, is yet to be discovered! In the meantime, let him who has — not the best understanding of literary rules — but the most ingenious fancy, take the lead in search after the hidden idea!

So, in relation to this part of our Lord's prophecy: it requires the utmost *ingenuity* — not a sober, common sense understanding of literary propriety — to make anything out of it, treated as a figurative description of something else.

There are no well ascertained facts, and no evident scriptural example, to suggest to the common mind the application of the several parts. It is judged to be figurative — not because it *may not be literal*, but because it is associated with other passages which are also supposed to be figurative. And even these other passages would not contradict either fact or Scripture, if they should be interpreted literally, as has been shown in previous chapters.

In the usual treatment of this passage, the ground of procedure is — not virtually merely, but really — that the established rules of interpretation must be *reversed*, and, instead of concluding that the passage is *literal*, until it is *proved* to be *figurative*, it must be regarded as *figurative* until it is *proved* to be *literal*! And this is the principal source of the indefiniteness and difficulty that characterize this, and all other figurative expositions of this part of the prophecy. *This text has none of the characteristics of figurative language, and there are no well ascertained facts that suggest themselves to the common mind, as the things signified by what are considered as merely signs.* The text is undeniably definite in all its parts, and the comment is as undeniably of the opposite character.

2. To this figurative interpretation it is further objected, *that it is not warranted by a single scriptural example.* As this point has been sufficiently treated in the preceding chapter, it will not be necessary to enlarge upon it here.

One would suppose, from the confident assertions of figuratists, that such descriptions as this text contains are very frequent in the Old Testament, and are very commonly applied to extraordinary manifestations of divine power. Well, now, here is the Bible, within reach of every man; if there is a similar description to be found in the Old Testament, it cannot take long to discover it: let it be found and compared with this; and so annihilate this objection. The text in Dan. vii. 13, is admitted to be similar, to some extent; but the figuratist will not bring that up as parallel in its application with his supposition of the text in Matthew.

3. It is objected, again, that the figurative exposition and

application *is not sustained by a single fact*. Yet it is, in its very nature, a question of fact. And Providence has wisely so ordered it that an unimpeachable historian was raised up, qualified, and wonderfully preserved, as if on purpose to record, with tiresome particularity and profusion, the facts that were developed during the fulfillment of the times which the figuratist supposes to be alluded to here. And there were not wanting other historians, heathen, Jewish, and Christian, whose pages are filled with matter pertaining to these times.

The fact to be proved is this — that the judgment visitation of the Jews at that time, was, to “all the tribes of the earth,” such a manifestation, not of common Providence — but of “*the Son of man*,” that “all the tribes of the earth” (or land, if any prefer) should mourn at this revelation, as if they beheld the Son of man visibly coming in the clouds of heaven. In the very nature of the case — to do anything like justice to the text — that visitation should be so unlike all preceding ones, and so peculiarly appropriate to the Lord Jesus Christ, as to affect the people — even those that were not believers in him previously — (for none but such would mourn at the sight of him) as if they personally witnessed his descent from heaven.

The figuratist may perhaps shrink from this definite statement of the fact in question: he wishes to have the matter so indefinite that almost anything will pass for proof. But if the text does not warrant and require this definiteness, then it does not warrant anything. “To the law and to the testimony.”

And even this definiteness is assumed by some of the figuratists themselves: Bishop Newton says, “The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of Christ’s power and glory, as if he was himself to come visibly in the clouds of heaven.” Dr. Clarke says, in substance, the same thing, quoting from Newton, and somewhat modifying. Mr. Watson says the same thing, with the exception that he takes the liberty of substituting, against the plain words of the passage, the word “Christians,” in place of “all the tribes of the earth.” His words are, “*The sign of the Son of man* is that demonstration of the supernatural character of the judicial

visitation of the Jews, that to the Christians it should be as sure a sign that it was Christ who was then inflicting his vengeance upon his enemies, as though there should be a visible appearance of him.' If this substitution of the word *Christians*, and entirely omitting the characters who should *mourn* as *they* see the *Son of man*, is not a clear misconception of the whole scope of the passage, then it would be difficult to define a misconception. To such dreadful consequences has the *labor* of defending the figurative theory driven the wisest and best of men.

Now, with the question at issue thus definitely settled, that the judgments then inflicted upon the Jews did thus manifest the power and glory of Jesus Christ, so that the effect was as if he himself had been seen coming in the clouds of heaven,—it is again objected, that there is not one clear instance of historic proof brought to substantiate the point asserted. Men of the largest capacity, and of the most astonishing industry, with a zeal almost unparalleled in any other department of research, have devoted months and years to this very subject; and where is the first historical *fact* that they have adduced to prove a question which, in the nature of the case, *must* be decided by fact, if it is decided at all? Where are their *proofs*? The defenders of the figurative theory were generally men of keen penetration, and logical accuracy; and they have not failed to perceive the exact nature of the thing to be maintained. Why, then, have they brought forward nothing but *assertion*—*bare assertion*—to prove a point so evidently vital to their whole system of exegesis?

This is a dreadful state of things; and, especially, when, in this way, men venture to explain away the most definite and literal of all the prophecies of the Bible, so that, in effect, they are *dead*. Let every man clear himself in this matter! There is a cry of blood from the ground! These slain witnesses—the Old and New Testaments—that have lain unburied in the midst of us, are destined to have a resurrection.

4. To this method of interpretation, it is objected still further,—that the *character* it necessarily ascribes to Christ is *inconsistent with his present offices*. The only thing in which

the calamities of the Jews, at the time in question, differed from former and subsequent afflictions of the same kind, was their *greater severity*. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." And this is the only probable difference between the judgments of that period and those of other days: they were not in *nature* different, but in *degree*.

No one ever supposed that previous desolations had been manifestations of *Christ*, as distinguished from other persons in the Godhead: no one will venture to point out any especial revelation of *Christ*, as the *Son of man*, in the present manifestations of divine wrath. On what, then, can Bishop Newton and his followers base their opinion, that the judgment of the Jews, at the time in question, was as much a manifestation of *Christ*, as if he had been seen coming down in the clouds of heaven. How were those sufferings, and that desolation *peculiar*, except in being more terrible, and longer continued? And is *this, only this*—the distinguishing feature of *Christ*, so that when this is witnessed, it is as if the Son of man himself were seen with all his power and glory in heaven?

Now, to this, it is objected, that the *character* necessarily ascribed to *Christ* is inconsistent with his present relations to the human race — Jew as well as Gentile. It is the dispensation of *grace*, not of *judgment*. LET THE UNIVERSALISTS REMEMBER THIS! We are living under the Mediatorial dispensation, in which *Christ* sustains a peculiar relation to the human race; and which relation originates appropriate offices. We may easily learn what is *Christ's* peculiar office and work, in this dispensation, by the testimony of the Scriptures. "God sent not his Son into the world to *condemn* the world; *but that the world through him might be saved*." John iii. 17. For this object he labored all his life, as he "went about doing good," both to the bodies and to the souls of men. When he died, he died as the world's Redeemer, having the same object in view that he had when he "came to seek and to save that which was lost;" for it was only by death that he could prepare the way for the bestowment of mercy upon the guilty,

whom he came to redeem. And when he rose from the dead, he still had his own appropriate work to accomplish: he was raised for our justification. And when he ascended to heaven, he still had his own peculiar work, as the world's Mediator, to accomplish there: he was to "appear in the presence of God for us." He was exalted "a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, FOR TO GIVE REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL, AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS." Acts v. 31.

This is his peculiar work, during the present dispensation, as the "one *Mediator* between God and man." "He ever liveth to make *intercession* for us." "If any man sin, we have an *Advocate* with the Father." If we receive the Spirit, or any other favor, it is through his mediation. But it forms no part of his appropriate work to administer wrath, or pursue his enemies with vengeance. If vengeance overtake men, Christ has no agency in bringing it about. His work during this dispensation is *saving* men; and it is his only work: it is wholly, so far as Jesus is concerned, a dispensation of *grace*.* And this doctrine is understood by all the orthodox churches. It is the great bulwark against Universalism and open infidelity. We sing it, and preach it, and pray it, and give thanks for it, and in every possible way testify our rejoicing and hope in this doctrine. Now, to say that an unparalleled exhibition of divine vengeance is such a manifestation of the *Son of man*, that it exhibits his power and glory, as the *Son of man*, as much as if he was himself to come in the clouds of heaven, is saying (to speak mildly,) what no orthodox divine will say, unless he is terribly bewildered by an erroneous theory. And for this reason the figurative theory of interpreting the passage before us is objected to.

To maintain the figurative interpretation, we are required, (1.) To violate the most essential laws of literary criticism; (2.) To adopt such an interpretation without one clear example in the Scriptures; (3.) Without a solitary proof from authentic history; and, (4.) At the sacrifice of the very foundation principles of orthodoxy. If this is not enough to blast with perpetual withering any theory whatever, it is difficult to know what is capable of doing it.

* See Appendix, Note G.

5. The figurative theory is objected to, also, because it is at variance with itself, and diametrically opposed to the distinct affirmation of Christ himself. So that if this can be shown, the theory must be unworthy of countenance, even if all the previous objections could be answered.

The advocates of the figurative theory assume.

First. That the darkening of the heavenly luminaries refers to the destruction and desolation of the Jewish ecclesiastical and civil polity. Verse 29 is thus explained :

DR. WHITBY. "All the government both in church and state shall be overthrown, as it was by the zealots." "It being foretold that this should happen immediately after* the wasting of the Jews by Vespasian's army flying quickly through Galilee, Idumea, and Judea; this cannot be taken literally, because no such thing then happened either to the sun, moon, or stars. It must be therefore a metaphorical expression, to signify, as it doth frequently in the Old Testament, and other writers, an utter desolation, and terrible destruction brought upon a nation, and upon their capital cities, compared to the sun and moon," &c.

DR. CLARKE. "Commentators generally† understand this and what follows, of the end of the world: but the word *immediately* shows that our Lord is not speaking of any *distant event*, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted: and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem." Then quoting from

DR. LIGHTFOOT. "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the *sun* and *moon* of its glory and happiness shall be darkened — brought to nothing. The *sun* is the religion of the church; the *moon* is the government of the state; and the *stars* are the judges and doctors of both."

BISHOP NEWTON advances precisely the same opinion as Dr. Clarke; indeed, the principal part of Dr. Clarke's comment on this part of the Bible, is taken almost verbatim from Newton.

MR. BARNES adopts the same view.

* Dr. Whitby dare not leave the Lord to make his own statement: he has to put words into his mouth.

† He probably refers particularly to the more ancient.

MR. WATSON takes the same view; but he supposes it also refers to the day of judgment.

PROF. STUART understands the passage to be figurative, applying to Jewish affairs, without any reference to the judgment day.

MR. BURKITT adopts the theory of applying it to the Jewish calamities; but he is confused, self-contradictory, and undecided in fixing upon the exact time.

This is sufficient to show the general course of explaining the phenomena described in the 29th verse, — referring it all to the overthrow and desolation of the Jewish nation by the Romans.

Secondly. These commentators understand the next verse, (30,) and the 29th verse to refer either to the *coming of the Romans*, or to the coming (metaphorically,) of Christ *with the Romans*, and effecting the destruction and desolation described in the 27th verse, under the similitude of the darkening and falling of the luminaries of heaven. But whichever way it is modified, *they do not understand Christ to have come in any other way than JUDICIALLY by the Romans* to inflict these terrible judgments.

DR. WHITBY, on verses 27, 28, remarks: “You will then need none to instruct you where *Christ* is, or to say to you, He is here, or there; for by the *Roman army*, which shall pass through the territories of the Jews like lightning, *his coming* to take vengeance on that nation shall be manifest.” Again, on verse 30: “Our *Saviour’s coming* here seems therefore to impart *his coming by the Roman army* to besiege and to destroy Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews; for so Christ seemeth plainly to interpret this ‘coming of the Son of man.’ Verse 27: ‘The coming of the Son of man shall be as the lightning shining from east to west; for wheresoever the Jews are, thither shall the Roman army be gathered: *his coming therefore must be with the Roman army.*”

DR. CLARKE understands it in the same way: he thinks it was a *judicial coming by the Roman armies*. He comments in this way on verse 27 even more distinctly than Dr. Whitby. Dr. Clarke, in this matter, follows

BISHOP NEWTON, who understands the coming to be only a *judicial coming* by the invasion and conquests of the *Roman armies*. In this he copies verbatim from

BISHOP PEARCE, who should have the credit of leading Newton and a host of others in the same conclusion.

MR. BARNES adopts the same conclusion: Referring to the 28th verse, he says, "This verse is connected with the preceding by the word 'for,' implying that this is a reason for what is said there, that the *Son of man would certainly come* to destroy the city, and that *he would come suddenly*. The meaning is, *he would come by means of the Roman armies,*" &c.

MR. WATSON understands it in the same way; but thinks it also refers to the day of judgment.

MR. BURKITT in the main agrees with Watson.

These are enough to show how the coming of the Son of man, in this place, is to be understood. It is supposed to be nothing *separate* from the coming of the Roman armies; it being merely a *judicial coming* by that instrumentality.

Now, one thing is *absolutely certain*: If this coming of the Son of man was merely *judicial*, and by means of the *Romans*, it is *absolutely certain* that it must have occurred at the *same time*, for it was, in fact, only another view, and another name, for the *same event*.

Thirdly. We are now prepared to maintain the *objection* against this theory of interpretation.

(1.) *That it is at variance with itself;*

(2.) *That it is diametrically opposite to the distinct affirmation of Christ himself.*

1. That *cause* is invariably *antecedent* to *effect*, is an *axiom* in philosophy. And it is of universal application; it must, then, apply to the subject in hand.

2. But the *Roman armies* were, under Providence, the *cause* of this overthrow and desolation of the "sun, moon, and stars"—as the figuratist interprets it—of the Jewish people. This is admitted by every one.

3. Then, as certainly as the certainty of an axiom, the Romans must have come *BEFORE* *these judgments were inflicted*, for they were, under God, the *cause* of them.

4. But this method of interpretation, as it has been shown in the foregoing quotations, maintains as a prominent feature, that the coming of the Son of man was only a *judicial coming* "by means of the Roman armies, to destroy Jerusalem, and the unbelieving Jews." Then, undeniably, *it took place at the same time*—since, in fact, it was but another view, and another representation, of the *same thing*. And, just as certainly, as cause is before effect, *his coming must have occurred BEFORE the infliction of the judgments which RESULTED*. And the judgment which *resulted* were, the overthrow of the Jewish church, government, temple, and metropolis.

5. *But Christ distinctly declares that his coming would be AFTERWARDS!* He first describes the whole series and succession of events, down to the final desolation, including, as a distinct feature, the *gathering of the eagles to the carcass*, which the theory applies to the *coming of the Romans*; and then goes on to say, "Immediately AFTER the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened," &c. "And THEN"—not before, when the Romans came to inflict the tribulation and overthrow—"And THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and THEN shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall SEE the Son of man COMING in the CLOUDS OF HEAVEN with power and great glory."

6. *Was there ever a contradiction more distinct?* The theory teaches that the Son of man came *before* the infliction of those judgments. The Lord declares it would be *afterwards*. Now, this particular point will not be pressed any farther: it would be useless. The contradiction is so palpable, so undeniable, that if any confidence whatever is to be placed in the declarations of our Lord, the point must be regarded as established—completely established. The figurative theory teaches what is diametrically at variance with the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. There is an *evasion* of this issue, however, which will develop the other point in the objection, viz: That *the figurative theory is at variance with itself*. The effort has been made by several leading commentators to show that the "coming" spoken of in the 30th verse is not, in fact, the

coming it is usually understood to be, but only the *evidence* or *manifestation* of the coming, judicially by the Romans, which was not so clearly discovered during the progress of the execution of the judgments; but now, "after the tribulation of those days," after the darkening of the "sun," "moon," and "stars" of the Jewish nation, the *fact* that it was all effected by the judicial "coming of the Son of man," "by means of the Roman armies," will be such a manifestation of *Christ* to the people, that it may be represented by his "coming in the clouds of heaven!"

8. Now, this is, in fact, a virtual abandonment of the essential elements of the figurative theory. It is, in truth, admitting that the most particular *statement* and *description* of the coming of Christ means neither the coming of Christ *personally*, nor his coming *judicially*, "by means of the Roman armies;" but merely that, *after* his coming, some length of time after, the EVIDENCE of that coming shall "come," and be so clear and convincing, that it shall be *as if Christ himself* were then coming in the clouds of heaven!

What then, let it be asked, with all seriousness, becomes of their fond speculations about the "coming of the Son of man, by means of the Roman armies," being as the *lightning* flashing from east to west, from one end of heaven to the other? All this metaphorizing, and rhapsodizing, in the comment on the 27th verse, about the coming of Christ, by the Roman armies, being like the sudden, startling, blinding, flashing lightning, amounts to nothing: when he came at that time, as the theory maintains, the people do not appear to have had any intimation that there was any Christ about it; but, some time afterwards, after all the results of that coming had been effected, *then*, yes, *then* the remnant that survived the overthrow of the nation, suddenly awoke to the conviction that all this had been accomplished, some how or other, by the "*coming of the Son of man*," though they were not impressed with the fact at the time! But now, so truly had he come in "secret," in the "secret chambers," in the "desert," *just as Christ had forewarned them that he would not come*, — now, the astonished people, the few that are left, wake up to the

terrible impression that the Lord had come down in terrible majesty, and they knew it not!

Now, after all this, they just begin to *see* him! *His sign appears in the heavens!* They now see him — no, not him — but the *fact*, the *proof*, or whatever else *it* may be called — they now behold, as if it were the actual coming of the Lord himself in the clouds of heaven! Well done! Splendid theory! Making out that the coming of the Lord, “*by means of the Roman armies,*” was so *evident*, so *sudden*, so much like the *flashing lightning*, that all the poetic and hyperbolic expressions found in the Old Testament could hardly suffice to convey an adequate idea of its “*power,*” “*glory,*” and “*public majesty;*” and then — oh consistency! the people unapprised of it! and, months or years after, a surviving remnant suddenly awake to the appalling assurance that the Son of man HAD COME! that he *came* so many years or months ago! *Now*, not really, not as a present perception of a present fact, but as a conception, or conviction, of a fact of *previous occurrence*, they — in recollection, suspicion, or conviction, or in some other *mental operation*, “*see* the Son of man *coming* in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory!” Indeed! Well this must be a valuable theory! It certainly *costs* a great deal to maintain it!

9. But is this maintained by those who support the figurative theory? Yes, by all of them, excepting those who leave the theory at the point where the former part of this objection meets it, viz: in diametrical opposition to the affirmation of the Lord Jesus.

We will now bring to the point more distinctly the opinions of those who try to evade *that* issue by taking the one under present notice. Mr. WATSON — commenting on the 30th verse — “*The sign of the Son of man is that demonstration of the supernatural character of the judicial visitation of the Jews, that to the Christians* it should be as sure a sign that it was Christ who was then inflicting his vengeance upon his*

* Indeed! It was “*Christians,*” then, who were to *mourn* at the appearance of their Lord! What is this, but adding to, and taking from, “*the words of this prophecy?*”

enemies, *as though there should be a visible personal appearance of him.* Even Josephus, a Jew, acknowledged in these events the special displays of the more immediate agency of an angry God ;* and much more to Christians, taught by Christ to expect his coming in this manner, would they be *the sign* of his majesty to whom ‘all power in heaven and earth’ had been committed, and thus prove a mighty confirmation of their faith.” †

MR. BARNES—commenting on the same verse—“*The sign of the Son of man.* The evidence that Christ is coming to destroy the city of Jerusalem.” ‡

DR. CLARKE—“*Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man.* The plain meaning of this is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ’s power and glory, that all the *Jewish tribes* shall mourn, and many will, in consequence of this manifestation of *God*, § be led to acknowledge the Christian religion.”

MR. BURKITT—“*Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn ;* that is, *then shall the Jews be convinced that their destruction was the punishment of their sin*, in rejecting and crucifying Christ ; and accordingly they that had pierced him shall behold him, and mourn over him. *Thus it was BEFORE the destruction of Jerusalem*, and thus will it be before the final judgment.” ||

* Did Josephus belong to one of “all the tribes of the earth” who should “see the *Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven?”

† And yet, as it seems, even these “*Christians, taught by Christ to expect his coming in this manner*,”—i. e. as Mr. Watson holds, by the Roman armies, — were so blind as not to see him until “after the tribulation of those days!”

‡ How is this? The evidence that he is *coming to do* the very thing which Mr. B. supposes to have been done previously ; for this is his method of expounding the previous verses.

§ He dare not interpret his own text ; it was a manifestation of *Christ* that he was commenting about.

|| Well, how is this? Here are several contradictions. In his comment on the *previous* verse, he says, “Our Saviour goes on in figurative expressions to set forth the calamities that should befall the Jewish nation, *immediately AFTER the destruction of Jerusalem.*” In commenting on the 30th verse, as quoted first above, he says, the Jews would be convinced that their destruction was —

BISHOP NEWTON—"The plain meaning of it is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of the divine vengeance, *such a signal manifestation of CHRIST'S power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will be led thereby to acknowledge Christ and the Christian religion. . . .* The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of CHRIST'S power and glory, *as if he was himself to come visibly in the clouds of heaven.*"*

10. It is useless to extend these quotations: enough have been given to show the general course of interpreting the passage under notice. This method of treating it brings the theory fully upon the point of the objection of which we are now treating; and showing its utter absurdity, and self-contradictions. It not only does no sort of justice to the text under comment, but it completely nullifies all the fanciful interpretations of the 27th verse, and all the usual applications of the "coming of the Son of man," when the particular point of objection now under notice is not present to the mind, to expose the absurdity of the whole theory. This justly subjects the theory to all the animadversions of the 7th and 8th sections of the present division of the chapter, which the reader is requested once more to read, if it is not already familiar to him.

11. Of the figurative theory of this coming of Christ, it may be truly said, that even the most learned and ingenious of men, singly or combined, can do nothing satisfactory with it. Their writings are full of contradictions, as has already been shown; and they cannot explain the 30th verse without

this refers to things past—"the punishment of their sin," &c. Then this is followed directly with the observation, "Thus it was BEFORE the destruction of Jerusalem." This is a troublesome theory. Great men act strangely in trying to maintain it.

* Does he affirm this of "all the tribes of the earth?" If he does not, he does injustice to his text. If he does, he does injustice to the facts in the case. How does it happen that these great masters in Israel are so careful not to interpret the Lord's words as he uttered them? What is there about *truth* that requires such evasions and misrepresentations. This is characteristic of *error*, not of *truth*.

utterly overthrowing their own explanation of the 27th and 29th verses. And, instead of examples from Scripture to justify such an application of the description of a *scene*, with its attending and subsequent *results*; instead of historical proofs of the principal facts affirmed, we have nothing—absolutely nothing—but the bare assertions of men. The fact is, our leading divines have unfortunately been led to adopt an *erroneous theory* of interpretation; and this occasions their embarrassment, indefiniteness, self-contradictions, and palpable misconceptions of the words of our Lord.

The author cannot better express himself on this point, than by quoting the observations of Dr. TOWER, in his “*Illustrations of Prophecy.*” And Dr. Tower, be it remembered, was an advocate of the figurative theory. But he was too penetrating and logical not to perceive the surprising inconsistencies of his fellow-laborers in the great work of metaphorizing this part of the Lord’s prediction. In vol. 2., p. 160, he says,

“That the prophecy of Jesus is of very difficult interpretation, is very generally admitted. Grotius, and Lowth, Sykes, Benson, and Macknight, Bishop Watson, and the Taylors, have, Mr. Nisbitt acknowledges, (he is here speaking of the Scripture doctrine of the *coming of Christ*,) ‘*all of them without exception, manifestly discovered their embarrassment, and the difficulties which they labored under, in considering the subject.*’” “Surely,” resumes the Doctor, “*this affords a strong presumption, that they have all failed of discovering the true import of Christ’s celebrated prediction.*”

12. This part of the subject cannot be closed better than by quoting the words of this same Dr. TOWER, who has manifested a candor, a comprehensiveness, and, generally speaking, a soundness, that render his work worthy of a wider circulation. Vol. 2, p. 192.* Quoting verse 30, the text under notice—“The expression translated, *all the tribes of the*

* First American edition, Philadelphia, 1808. He had critically examined the works of Joseph Mede, Vitringa, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Dr. Henry Moore, Dr. Owen, Dr. Cressener, Peter Jurieu, Brenius, Bishop Chandler, Isaac Newton, Dr. Lowth, Fleming, Bengelius, &c. &c., &c.

earth, Bishop Newton asserts, signifies merely the *Jewish tribes* inhabiting the province of Judea ; and he maintains, that this passage plainly signifies, ‘that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of *Christ’s* power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn.’ But unfortunately for this interpretation, IT IS COMPLETELY AT VARIANCE WITH THE TESTIMONY OF CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY. So far from authorizing us to conclude, that the Jews discerned or acknowledged, in the destruction of their city, any display of Christ’s power ; or that they attributed to their rejection of him, and the cruel death which he received at their hands, the overthrow of their armies, their capital, and their polity ; it informs us that they still insulted the memory of their crucified Messiah, and still remained hardened in infidelity.”

This is able, sound, and sustained by positive historical testimony. For the theory objected to in this Treatise cannot boast of a single authentic statement to prove it.

DR. CAMPBELL, with his clear perception of logical and literary propriety, also speaks of the inconsistency of the usual figurative exposition of the subject before us. “The prediction, which the verse under examination introduces, is accurately distinguished by the historian as not commencing till *after* the completion of the former. *It was not till AFTER the calamities which were to befall the Jews should be ended ; after their capital and temple, their last resource, should be invested and taken, and the wretched inhabitants destroyed or carried captive into all nations ; after Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles ; nay, and after the triumph of the Gentiles should be brought to a period, that the prophecy contained in this and the two subsequent verses [29, 30, 31,] should begin to take effect. The judicious reader, to be convinced of this, needs only give the passage an attentive perusal.*”

DR. TOWER adds, in a note : “So extremely brief are Dr. Campbell’s observations on our Lord’s prophecy, that the passage above, to every word of which I subscribe, constitutes a large part of them ; and though that passage is accompanied with no doubts, the learned translator, nevertheless, in direct

opposition to it, renders the 32d verse, [Luke,] “Verily I say unto you, that this generation* shall not pass, until *all* be accomplished.”

MR. MEDE † speaks in this manner concerning the point now in question: “To interpret the *coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven*, and his kingdom then, of his coming to the *destruction of Jerusalem*, is contrary to the CONTEXT of our Saviour’s prophecy; for the *coming of Christ ‡ to destroy Jerusalem*, was the *beginning and cause* of that *great and long tribulation of that people*; but the *coming and appearing of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven* is expressly said should be *after* it: *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, &c.*, Matt. xxiv. 29, Mark xiii. 24. To the same purpose Luke says, after, or when the ‘times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, THEN shall be the signs in the sun and moon, and THEN they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud.”

13. There is just one thought more that did not occur at the time of writing the section more appropriate, perhaps, for containing it; although it is not inappropriate in this connection: it is this: Those who seek to evade the issue of direct contradiction of the words of the Lord, by explaining the seeing the Son of man coming in the clouds, to be only becoming convinced that the calamities of the Jews were inflicted judicially by the Son of man,—do not appear to have noticed the *tense* of the word *coming*. The entire force of their argument requires that it should be understood in the *past tense*: the people now become painfully convinced that their calamities were occasioned by that Jesus whom they had crucified.

* Dr. Campbell and Dr. Tower differed in their understanding of the original term *γενεά*.

† Joseph Mede was reputed to be, as in the language of Dr. Warburton, “the greatest divine and scholar” of the age of James the First.

A learned bishop thus represents him, “Cool, deliberate, and severe in forming his judgments, he was so far from being obsequious to the fancies of other men, that he was determined only by the last degree of evidence, to acquiesce in any conclusions of his own.”

‡ Mr. Mede seems to have admitted, perhaps for argument sake, however, that in some sense Christ may be said to have come to destroy Jerusalem.

They are now convinced that this was the fact in the case. And the defenders of this explanation maintain that this perception or impression of that fact is what is meant by their seeing him coming in the clouds of heaven!

But now see how perfectly this perverts the words of our Lord: First should *appear the sign* of the Son of man in heaven; and the people would begin to mourn; and they should *see the Son of man COMING in the clouds of heaven. Their perception of him should be at the very time that he was COMING.* This, the figuratist positively and distinctly denies. He maintains that *when the Son of man came*—as they explain it, “by means of the Roman armies”—the people did not perceive him; though they apply to his coming the illustration of the blazing lightning, in verse 27. But, “after the tribulation of those days,” when the sun, moon, and stars of their state and church had become darkened, in consequence of the judgments which the Son of man inflicted at his *coming*, by means of the Romans,—then—after all this—then the unbelievers become so convinced that it was the work of Christ, that it was as great a demonstration as if they had seen him coming in the clouds of heaven. The figuratist makes it necessary to understand the passage as teaching that they would perceive that he *had* come. But Christ declares they should see him *coming*. Which is most worthy of belief?

CHAPTER XII.

Principal subject — JUDGMENT ADVENT OF CHRIST. THE TRUE EXPOSITION.

Order of Events — Sign of the Son of Man — Distinguished from Christ himself — Where it will appear — Its Nature — Difference between a Sign and a Wonder — The Sign the occasion of universal Mourning — The Reason — Effect upon the Jews — A day of salvation to them — The Reason — A Scene of mourning among the Jews — Occasion and Result — Literal Coming of Christ — Scoffers, and their Excuse — Believers, and their Danger — The Personal Coming Proved — Source of the knowledge of the Thessalonians — Design of the Parables in connection with the Prophecy — Christ's application of the Parables — The Judgment at his Coming — Extent of Time embraced in the Prophecy — Conclusion of the Prophecy.

Verse 30. AND THEN SHALL APPEAR THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN IN HEAVEN; AND THEN SHALL ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH MOURN, AND THEY SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY.

HAVING shown the palpable inconsistency of the usual figurative interpretation of this passage, its literal exposition will now be given.

“Then shall appear.”

The word *then* denotes the order of succession in the great events predicted in this part of the discourse. After the signs in the heavens, the perplexity and distress of the nations, and the agitation of the sea, which the Lord had just predicted,* *then* should occur the scenes which are subsequently described.

1. The *first* in order will be the *sign* of the Son of man. Some do not distinguish the *sign* from the Son of man himself. But they are clearly *distinguished* in the text, and *separated* by the mourning of the people. Not only so, but, in the nature of the case, a SIGN CANNOT be the THING SIGNIFIED; if it were, it would not be a sign. An alphabetic letter is the

* The reader must refer to the *Harmony* to understand fully the relation of these things. And he should consult the *Harmony* with respect to many other passages.

sign or representation of a certain sound ; but it is not the sound which it represents. Words are the signs of ideas ; but they are not the ideas which they signify. It is attributing to our Lord an improper use of language, to suppose that by the *sign* of himself he meant *himself*, and not a sign. What this sign may be, he has not seen fit to inform us ; and conjecture may mislead us. It will not be wise, therefore, to occupy much time in an effort to ascertain the precise nature of that sign. There are some things, however, which we may ascertain with respect both to its nature and design.

(1.) It will appear "*in heaven*." It will not be anything transpiring on the earth. Neither will it be any ordinary phenomenon among the luminaries of heaven ; for if it were, *it could not be a sign of any particular person or thing*, since it would have been seen before, and might be explained without any special significancy in its design.

(2.) It must, in the nature of the case, be *luminous*. This is indicated by the original word for *appear*. But it must be luminous from this single consideration : it will *appear*, or shine, at a time of *total darkness*. The sun will be previously turned to darkness, and the moon and the stars will have withdrawn their shining. All the great sources of light being thus totally obscured, whatever shall *appear* must be luminous in its nature.

(3.) And it seems evident, also, that it must have some *definite form* : a mere blaze, or limitless glow of light, being without any definite form, could not, so far as we can apprehend, be significant of the *Son of man*, unless it had been *previously designated* as having this particular signification. Without this previous notice, it might indeed be a *wonder*, but it could not be a *sign*. Of what *shape* this sign may be, we must remain uninformed until it shall *appear* ! It *may* be a *luminous cross*. In ancient times, many of the Christian fathers advanced such a conjecture. Whether it will be so or not, one thing is certain : we cannot probably think of anything, which, to the whole world, would so clearly suggest the religion and person of the crucified Lord. In what nation would the sign of the cross be insignificant ? Even

now, is it not the distinguishing symbol of Christianity, and its divine Redeemer? God may even overrule the idolatrous superstition of the Romish church, in a way, perhaps, which has not been previously suggested. But on this delicate point the author would not venture to advance anything more than a simple suggestion.

(4.) Whatever it may be in *nature*, and whatever in *form*, it will be "*the SIGN of the SON OF MAN.*" And this is but saying, after all, that it will be something by which "all the tribes of the earth" shall *understand what it signifies*: it will be, to them, a *sign* so clearly understood in its signification as to cause them to mourn.*

This part of the prediction was probably designed to answer the inquiry of the disciples, "What shall be the *sign* of thy coming?" He does not see fit to give them all the particulars respecting it; but he informs them that it would *appear in the heavens, visible, and significant to all*; and he tells them *when* it it would appear, as it will be related to other events. See Note H, in the Appendix.

2. The *second* thing predicted is, the universal mourning when this sign appears. "*And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.*" Evidently this must be restricted to the *wicked* among the tribes of the earth: it cannot include those who "look for him," to whom he "shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." Those who, "love his appearing" certainly cannot mourn when they discover the sign of his glorious appearing; for now "their redemption draweth nigh." The *heathen* will of course mourn, for they will now discover that their destruction is near: they will not mistake the import of the sign. And, besides, the previous convulsions and portents in earth and heaven will terribly perplex and distress them, as they gather in battle array against the "remnant of Israel," whom now it is God's pleasure and de-

* Mr. WESLEY's note is to the point: speaking of the words under notice, he says the sign will appear, "It seems, a little while before he himself descends. The sun, moon, and stars being extinguished, (probably not those of our system only,) the sign of the Son of man (perhaps the cross) will appear in the glory of the Lord."

termination to save. The appearance of the "sign of the Son of man in heaven" will now awfully assure them of the signification and design of all this commotion in the sea, in earth, and heaven. It will terribly increase the "distress of nations, with perplexity."

To the unbelieving *Jews*, too, it will be a time of great mourning; though, by the gracious purpose of God, it will be a sorrow unto repentance and salvation. The appearance of the sign of their crucified Messiah, in these awful circumstances, and the unmistakable import of that sign, will at once convince them of their obstinate infidelity, and long, long rejection of their own Redeemer. Their rejected and insulted Christ, appearing thus, may seem to come in anger towards them; but the sequel will show that it is the day of Israel's deliverance and hope. This, through grace, will give them brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit; to perceive that, after all, he does not appear to destroy them, according to the multitude and greatness of their provocations, but according to the many and gracious promises made unto their fathers, to save their posterity, for his own name's sake, and in fulfillment of his own gracious covenant with them.

With this conviction of their aggravated unbelief and wickedness, by the discovery of the sign of the Son of man, followed, too, by the appearance of himself in the clouds of heaven; and with the immediate discovery that he comes not to punish, but to save them; the astonishing forbearance and forgiving goodness will break and melt their stubborn hearts. They will, in this state of mind, understand why, notwithstanding all their iniquities, they are made the objects of redeeming mercy. Now will be realized the astonishing grace of God, and his faithfulness and friendship for their fathers and their posterity. Ezek. xxxvi. 19: "And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: *according to their way, and according to their doings*, I judged them. 21. But I had pity, *for mine holy name*, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. 22. Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, — *I do not this for*

YOUR SAKES, O house of Israel, BUT FOR MINE HOLY NAME'S SAKE, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went." He now, as from Egypt, Ps. cvi. 8, saves them "*for his name's sake*, that he might make his power to be known." They will now clearly perceive that it is not on account of their being better than others, or less ill-deserving, but as recorded in Deut. x. 15, "Only the Lord had a *delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them*, even you above all people, as it is this day." Deut. ix. 5: "Not for *thy righteousness*, or for the *uprightness of thy heart*, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Deut. vii: "Because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers." At the time specified in the text under comment, when the Lord might be expected to destroy, but gloriously comes to save, — to save even a guilty and ill-deserving people, — it will truly appear that it is "*not for their sakes or uprightness of heart*;" "*but for his own name's sake, and to fulfil the word which the Lord sware unto their fathers.*" Thus will it be seen in that day, that "God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew." Rom. xi. 2. And it will be clearly understood by the Jews themselves, that it is in fulfillment of the covenant made with their fathers, and not because they do not deserve God's displeasure for their sins. The seed of Jacob that remain to be delivered, will be "*a remnant according to the election of grace.*" Rom. xi. 5. Verse 6, "And if by *grace*, then it is no more of *works*; otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of *works*, then is it no more *grace*; otherwise, work is no more work."

The salvation of Israel at that day will be seen to be just as much a work of *sovereign grace* as their *conversion* was, at the time the apostle wrote the epistle to the Romans. In the former part of the chapter last quoted the apostle speaks of the unbelief of the Jews, and their general rejection of the gospel. But in the latter part he clearly speaks of the very

time now treated of, when, *for his own name's sake, and to keep the covenant made with their fathers*, he appears to save them at the fullness of the times of the Gentiles. Verse 28, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the *election, they are* BELOVED FOR THE FATHERS' SAKES. 29. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." This clearly points to the very time now under consideration, as the context shows, when, at the "fullness of the Gentiles," (verse 25,) the blindness which had happened to Israel shall be taken away. 26. "And so all Israel [all who remain until that time] shall be saved; as it is written, (Isa. lix. 20.) There shall come out of Zion the *Deliverer*, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The context of this latter quotation evidently points to the very time now being considered.

It is thus that the *goodness* of God, and a sense of his *faithfulness*, joined with a painful discovery of *their own wickedness*, will lead them to repentance. All these quotations, and multitudes more, clearly refer to these latter days of Israel, and to the specific time of their final triumph over their foes. Perhaps this scene of penitent mourning to Israel is not described anywhere more distinctly, than in Zech. xii., xiii., and xiv. Chap. xii. 9: "And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that I will seek to *destroy all the nations that come* AGAINST JERUSALEM." It will not be a time of calamity to the *Jews*, then, for, verse 28, "In *that day* shall the Lord *defend* the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at *that day* shall be as *David*; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." Now, *let it be distinctly observed, that it is to be precisely at this very time, — this time of deliverance — that the general mourning shall be witnessed among the Jews of all classes.* Verse 10. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; AND THEY SHALL LOOK UPON ME WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED, and they shall MOURN for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first born. 11. In *that day* shall there be a *great*

mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.* 12. And the land shall mourn every family apart; the family of the house of David apart,† and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart," &c. Chap. xiii. 1: "In *that day* there shall be a fountain opened in the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

This surely cannot relate to the general opening of the fountain of salvation for the whole world, which was done at the death of Christ; but for that special cleansing which will then be realized by the guilty, unworthy, but now penitent Jews. This is the precise time, as described by St. Paul, Rom. xi. 26, when, at the fullness of the Gentiles, until which time Jerusalem shall be trodden down, (Luke xxi. 24,) and at which time the blindness shall be removed from the remnant of Israel; — "Then there shall come out of Zion the *Deliverer*, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Verse 32. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." And is this, reader, a depth of riches to you incredible? Is it a judgment to you unsearchable? Is it a way past finding out? Do not therefore disbelieve it; but read the next verse, and see how it appeared to St. Paul. Verse 33, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

This is the precise time when God will not only restore them to their own land, *never to be removed again*, but will bring them spiritually to himself. Ezek. xxxvi. 24: ‡ "For I will take you from among the heathen, and will gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25. THEN will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall

* See 2 Kings, xxiii. 29. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.

† The house of David, and the people of Judah would be distinguishingly prominent in the general mourning; for they will recollect that the crucified Messiah was of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David.

‡ Read the context, particularly, from the 16th verse, and consider God's reason for doing so, as declared in verses 21, 22, 32.

be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 31. THEN *shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall LOATH YOURSELVES IN YOUR OWN SIGHT for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* 31. *Not for YOUR SAKES do I this,* saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: *be ASHAMED and CONFOUNDED for your own ways,* O house of Israel."

How perfectly this corresponds with the great mourning, when all the families shall mourn — not in sight of each other, but every family apart, in their own sight! The great mourning, then, so far as the *Jews* are concerned, *is mourning over sin*, of which the appearance of their pierced Messiah has clearly convicted them: their sorrow is a godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation.*

The reader may not now be prepared to receive this doctrine; but let him not hastily reject it: there is yet much more proof to be considered. "*And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.*"

Having already devoted much time to the inconsistencies and insufficiency of the figurative theory of interpreting this passage, it will be appropriate now to proceed directly to the literal teaching of these words.

1. *The Son of man will come.* There have been thus far from the beginning of these "last days," or days of the Messiah, some who have been constantly saying, "Where is the *promise* of his coming?" And, truly, if the "*scoffers*," as St. Peter calls them, (2 Pet. iii. 3,) have had access to the writings of the defenders of the figurative theory, they may well ask, where is the promise; for even *this* passage, one of the most evidently literal, and one of the most unmistakable of all the Scriptures that *promise* his coming, has been, of late years, almost uniformly expounded so as *not* to mean the real coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This has been sufficiently proved in previous chapters. And it has been done, too, by

* See note I, in the Appendix.

those who have professed to believe in his coming, and who have been obliged to acknowledge that the language and "costume" of the ideas might have been, and probably were, derived from, or suggested by the *real* coming of the Son of man. But in relation to the specific *promise* of his coming, they have given occasion to this sneering inquiry of the scoffers. The figuratists have, indeed, pointed out some few passages *that could not be conveniently metaphorized to mean something else*, and intimated that those passages probably, or certainly, should be understood literally; but the scoffer has not been able to perceive why those passages should be interpreted *literally*, and such passages as the one under notice *figuratively*. He has not discovered any *rule* for such methods of interpretation; and he looks upon it as a system of *guess work*, where men, left without any certain guide, are at liberty to follow their own creeds and fancies. No wonder, then, that Universalism, and all the other semi-infidel, and wholly infidel, speculations obtain, which do not look for any literal, visible, judgment-coming of the Son of man. *But the Son of man will come. The promise is here*, and in very many portions of both the Old and the New Testaments.

2. The *proofs* of his coming are too numerous to be quoted in a work like this. A few of them, however, cannot be out of place; for not only do *scoffers* need to see them, but even *believers*, the multitude of them, are so little *convinced* and *impressed* with the fact, that they are not "looking for, and hasting unto the day of the coming of God;" but are living so, and are instructed so, that if the day of the Lord should now come, "as a thief in the night," it would come as a *snare* on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

When our Lord ascended to heaven, he went up bodily, and visibly, and a cloud received him out of sight. Acts i. 10: "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; [angels, undoubtedly;] 11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? THIS SAME JESUS *which is taken up from you into heaven*, SHALL SO COME, IN LIKE MANNER, *as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" If this

does not touch unequivocally the reality, personality, and visibility of the second advent, then it is not in the power of language to do it. To the same import is the declaration of St. Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 16: "FOR THE LORD HIMSELF shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The addition of the word "himself" was perhaps intended so to define and restrict the meaning of the apostle, that no common perversion could ever succeed in obscuring the passage.

3. It is admitted by all who believe in the doctrine of the resurrection, that it will occur at the coming of the Lord Jesus. And the reality and the personality of his coming are just as distinctly taught, as the reality and personality of the resurrection of the dead. Speaking on this subject, St. Paul says, (1 Cor. xv. 23,) "Christ the first fruits; afterwards, they that are Christ's *at his coming.*" So Phil. iii. 20: "For our conversation, [*πολιτευμα,*] citizenship, is *in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:* 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." To the same import is the passage before quoted from 1 Thess. iv. 15-17, where the expressions, "remain unto the *coming of the Lord,*" "the *Lord himself shall descend from heaven,*" "caught up . . . *in the clouds to meet the Lord,*"—all are connected with the resurrection of the dead, and *must be understood literally.*

4. His coming is also spoken of in connection with the assembling and rewarding of his people. Thus, 2 Thess. ii. 1: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,* and by our gathering together unto him." Chap. i. 10: "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints." 2 Tim. iv. 10: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me *at that day:** and not to me only, but unto all them that *love his appearing.*" Titus ii. 13: "Looking for that *blessed hope, and the glorious appearing* of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Col. iii. 4: "When Christ, who is our life, shall *appear,* then shall ye also appear with him in

* Mentioned in the 1st verse. See it quoted hereafter.

glory." 1 John iii. 2: "We know that when *he shall appear*, we shall be like him; for we shall *see him as he is*." 1 Thess. i. 10: "And to *wait for his Son from heaven*." Chap. ii. 19: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? * Are not even ye *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*" Chap. iii. 13: "To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* with all his saints."

5. And the coming of Christ is also spoken of in connection with the judgment of the living and the dead. 2 Tim. iv. 1: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the *quick* and the *dead* at his *appearing* and his kingdom." 2 Thess. i. 7: "And to you who are troubled [he will recompense] rest with us, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven* with his mighty angels, 8. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction *from the presence of the Lord*, and from the glory of his power; 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,*" &c.

6. This "*revealing*" of Christ "*from heaven*," this "*coming*" of Christ, this "*appearing*," this "*glorious appearing*," this "*descending from heaven*," all are spoken of in connection with what *must* be regarded as *strictly literal*, and, of course, what is affirmed of Christ must, according to all wholesome rules of interpretation, be explained as literal. Any theory that would explain away the literality of his coming, as described in these, and many other similar passages, could explain away anything else, and everything else, that is revealed in the Bible. Yet none of these passages is more evidently literal, or even as particular in description, as the text at the head of this chapter.

7. In the *parables* which form a *continuation* of the Lord's prophetic discourse, the same literal events are predicted and described, that we find in connection with the many passages which have been already quoted. For instance, the parable

* They would be seals of their ministry, and stars in their crown of glory at that day.

of the chief servant, Matt. xxiv. 45-51. In the case of his *unwatchfulness* and *improper behaviour*, as he was saying "in his heart, *My lord delayeth his coming*. Verse 50, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. 51. And shall cut him asunder and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

How perfectly this corresponds with the results of Christ's judgment-coming, as related in the quotation from 2 Thess. i. 7-10! And it also has the same correspondency with 1 Thess. chap. v., where the apostle *continues* his discourse about the coming of the "*Lord himself*" to raise the dead and change the living. Verse 2: "For yourselves *know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night*. 3. For when they shall say, *Peace and safety*; then *sudden destruction* cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 6. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us *watch* and be *sober*."

Now here are some very remarkable things, which are worthy of the deepest thought. How came these Thessalonian brethren to *know perfectly that the day of the Lord*, to raise the dead and change the living, *would so come as a thief in the night*? There is no evidence or intimation that they learned it from Paul, or from any of the apostles.

The expressions similar to this which are found in Revelation and the epistles of Peter, were written *subsequently* to this letter to the Thessalonians. Is it not sufficiently evident that their *perfect knowledge of this matter was derived from our Lord's repeated and varied declarations and illustrations in the very prophecy which we are examining*? Our Lord himself used this very illustration of the *thief in the night*! And he also illustrated the unpreparedness of the wicked and the slothful by this very reference to the eating and *drinking with the drunken*! And it was our Lord also who specifically admonished them to *watch* for his coming! And this *sudden destruction from his presence*, of which Paul speaks, our

Saviour first set forth in the destruction of the servant that did not look and watch for the coming of his master! And the necessity of being in readiness for the *coming of the Lord*, to receive his people into his presence and glory, that Paul speaks of in so many places, was first distinctly taught by our Lord in his prophetic discourse, by the parable of the ten virgins. He uttered this illustrative parable expressly to enforce the admonition, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." And in this parable the destinies of the final judgment are distinctly set forth: As, for example, the midnight cry, Behold, the *Bridegroom cometh!* It is in this character that he is represented as coming at the last day. See Rev. xix. 7-9. And the final separation of characters at the last day, and the closing up of the day of salvation, are distinctly set forth by the sequel of the parable.

And the final judgment and rewards and punishments are distinctly taught in the parable of the servants, as recorded in connection with the Lord's discourse. Matt. xxv. 14-30. There was the Lord's *departure* from his servants, after giving them their charge. (Verse 15.) Then, "*after a long time,*" the master *returned to reckon* with them: that is, to bring them to *judgment*. Then, to the faithful, there is the reward, by exalting them to *dominion*, (verse 23,) *and entering into the joy of their lord*. Now, is not this precisely what St. Paul has taught in some of the passages previously quoted, where the whole is associated with the *return of the Lord Jesus*, the awakening of the *dead*, and the receiving of the saints into glory with himself? And so, likewise, with the final punishment of the wicked, when he comes in glory, as it is set forth in the parable, (verse 30,) by casting the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

It appears evident that this very prophecy of our Lord, in connection with the parables which are combined with it, formed the great TEXT BOOK from which the apostles and primitive Christians mainly derived, not only their DOCTRINES, but their ILLUSTRATIONS, of the second advent and the destinies that

shall result! And thus was fulfilled our Lord's avowed intention of keeping his words before the church in all ages: "And what I say unto *you*, I say unto *all*: WATCH!"

Now, let it be distinctly noticed and remembered, that our Lord himself applied these very parables to his SECOND COMING! Let the reader open to the twenty-fifth of Matthew, and examine the connections between the *preceding* and the *succeeding* statements of his coming. The parables begin in connection with predictions of his coming, (verse 42,) and they close at verse 30; then comes the *formal application*: verse 31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32. And before him shall be gathered ALL NATIONS: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." This is not a merely temporal judgment; it is the determination and execution of eternal destinies. Verse 34, "Then shall the *king** say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Verse 41, "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Verse 46, "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*; but the righteous into *life eternal*." Thus closes this wonderful prophetic discourse. Beginning with events which occurred soon after his ascension, the Lord has given an unbroken, though — of necessity — a very brief account of the principal events, relevant to the inquiries which originated the discourse, during the long lapse of time from his ascension to heaven, in his Mediatorial office, to his descending again, in his kingly dignity.†

This, then, is the coming of which he speaks in the text now under comment. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." In Rev. i. 7, we find his coming described in almost the same words. And, in truth, the *scene* is evidently the same. "Be-

*The Son of man, when he comes in his kingdom, comes in his *kingly* character. So it is described in many other places. See Dan. vii. 13, 14.

† See Note J, in the Appendix.

hold, he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him!"

Let it be distinctly remembered, too, that this passage in Revelation was written *after the destruction of Jerusalem*, and it cannot, therefore, have any reference to that event. Nothing is more easily and indubitably proved from authentic history.

The reader has been detained a long time in the examination of our text. But this subject is of too much consequence to be passed over in a hurry. Besides, it was supposed that this method of elucidating the passage, by comparing it with others, would be more successful than any other. All this labor might have been dispensed with, however, if the wisdom of men had not been virtually exalted above the wisdom of God, in the present common methods of interpreting this part of our Lord's prophecy.

In this Treatise it has been the constant aim of the author to speak "as the oracles of God;" and by appeals "to the law and to the testimony," to call attention more to the words of Inspiration, and less to the sayings of men.

CHAPTER XIII.

Principal subject—GATHERING THE ELECT. REVIEW OF VARIOUS EXPOSITIONS.

Applied by some to the Escape of Christians from Judea—Objection founded on the Chronology of the Events—Objection from its being unwarranted by the Language of the Text—Also from its conflict with Christ's own Declaration—Difference between the Comment objected to and the Words of Christ—Encouragement of Sceptics—The passage applied to the Call of the Gentiles—Review—Misapplication of Texts—Erroneous Impression—The Issue taken—Limitation of the Gospel to the Jews—When the Gentiles were called—How extensively the Gospel prevailed previously to the Fall of Jerusalem—St. Paul's Testimony—Eusebius'—Mosheim's—Surprising Statement—When the Gospel Kingdom began—Result of the Fall of Jerusalem—State of the Church subsequently—Professor Stuart's Opinions—His method and spirit of treating the passage—Is it a literal Trumpet?—Extremities of the Heavens—Whence are the Elect to be gathered?—Difference between Accuracy and Literality—God's Trumpet—Can the Dead hear?—Illustrations.

Verse 31. AND THEN SHALL HE SEND HIS ANGELS, WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY SHALL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, [*Mark*: FROM THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH,] FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER.

THOSE who see nothing but Jerusalem and the Jews, or other things relating to the Roman war, in the prophetic scenery so impressively portrayed in this part of the prophecy, must, of necessity, interpret this verse so as to mean something exceedingly different from what it *appears* to mean, and what no man would ever be likely to suppose, if he had not a favorite and troublesome theory to sustain. And it is truly painful to observe the far-fetched, unauthenticated explanations which the defenders of the figurative theory have given to this passage. According to some, "It means, that God shall send forth his messengers—whatever he may choose to employ for that purpose—signs, wonders, human messengers, or the angels themselves, and gather Christians into a place of safety, so that they shall not be destroyed with the Jews."

Will the reader do himself the favor to *read* the passage of which this quotation is designed to be, in part, at least, an exposition?

The author from whose comment the quotation is copied, appears himself to have had little or no confidence in the exposition which he adopted, for he immediately adds, "If it refers to the last judgment, as it doubtless in a primary or secondary sense does, then it means that he will send his angels to gather his chosen, his elect, together from all places. This shall be done before the living are changed."

How exceedingly and uncomfortably indefinite to minds bewildered by an erroneous theory, must appear this definite, unfigurative prediction! First, suppose it to refer to an occurrence that is no more described by it than almost any other in the history of mankind. Then, unsatisfied with the palpable inconsistency of that explanation, introduce, with a significant *if*, a supposition that it may refer, either in a primary or secondary sense, to the last judgment!

As this is a common method of treating this passage, it is worthy, for that reason, to receive a little attention. That Christians are sometimes entitled "the elect," is certainly true. That they will be finally collected together, and by the angels, too, is just as certain. But that the passage refers, in any sense, to the escape of Christians from the calamities that befell the Jews, is most distinctly denied. It is utterly without proof.

The same commentator remarks on another page, that "it *might* here refer to deliverance granted to his people in the calamities of Jerusalem. It is said there is reason to believe that not *one* Christian perished in the destruction of the city, God having in various ways secured their escape, so that they fled to Pella, where they dwelt when the city was destroyed." Now, to such an application of the text, whether adopted in full, or in part, it is appropriate to object:

(1.) It violates the chronological order of the discourse; for the gathering of the elect is to take place *after the coming of the Son of man*, which is itself to be *after the darkening of the luminaries*, which darkening is to occur *after the tribula-*

tion of those days. And it is certain that the tribulation of those days was brought down to the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem. This was so understood by the very commentator whose language is above quoted! How, then, can this gathering of the elect refer to any period *previous* to the siege, so as to save Christians from suffering that siege, and yet not occur until some time *afterwards*?

Does the author referred to, and others adopting the same method of exposition, really mean that they should be gathered together, and delivered from the sufferings of the siege, *after the siege was past, and the tribulation of those days ended*? Can it be possible, either that they should not perceive, or, perceiving, nevertheless adopt, such a palpable inconsistency? How can it be explained that writers of the greatest capacity have entertained such a view of this gathering of the elect?

(2.) Another objection to this interpretation is, that it is utterly unwarranted by the language it professes to explain. Our Lord declares that he would “*send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet,*” for the purpose of gathering his elect. Now, what was there in the escape of the disciples from Jerusalem that deserves to be called the sending of the angels, and the great sound of a trumpet? By what rule of interpretation do we apply such definite language to *anything*, and to *everything* that any and every one may fancy? Did our Lord *mean* anything? or did he speak entirely at random, using definite terms without any particular intention? If by *angels*, and a *great sound of a trumpet*, nothing especial was meant, then let it be so understood, and let this method of interpretation be applied also to other prophecies, and see what would become of the Bible.

(3.) A third objection to this interpretation is, that it flatly contradicts the repeated, unequivocal statement of the Lord himself. His statement is, that the gathering of the elect should be “*from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, from one end of heaven to the other.*” If this does not teach that the gathering should be *from all parts of the habitable globe*, then it is not in the power of language to do

it. But what says the explanation which is objected to? Why, it says it was a gathering together FROM JERUSALEM—*a single city*—or, at most, *from Judea!* And this is an interpretation of the Saviour's language! Suppose such liberties should be taken with almost any other part of the Scriptures; would it not awaken the remonstrances of the disciples of Christ everywhere?

In addition to this objection, it may be replied, also, that the escape of Christians from Judea and Jerusalem was not a *gathering*, but a *dispersion*. It is true that *some* of them, probably quite a proportion, fled to *Pella* beyond Jordan. But it appears from history, and also from the direction of Christ, that—not *Christians* only, but many others—fled “*to the mountains*,” and there lived as best they could in the dens and vallies of the hilly regions, that were not likely to be visited by the Roman armies. And there their sufferings were so great that “for the elect's sake those days were shortened.” And yet this flight and dispersion of Christians and others, from a single city or country, in obedience to Christ's own personal advice, without any unusual voice, message, or means,—this is what we are to understand by sending “his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, to gather together the elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, from one end of heaven to the other!” Verily, the figurative theory is very liberal and accommodating! And this is the method of interpreting one of the most momentous, definite, systematic, and unfigurative prophecies of the Bible! No wonder that sceptics and infidels cavil at a book that receives such treatment from its professed friends! There is another method of explaining this gathering of the elect, which is, if possible, more objectionable than the former; because it is not only inadequate, and unauthentic, but positively inconsistent with sound theology. It is stated by Newton on the Prophecies, p. 363, thus: “This is all [the verse before us] in the style and phraseology of the prophets, and stripped of its figures, meaneth only, that after the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ by his angels or ministers will gather to himself a glorious church out of all the nations under

heaven. The Jews shall be *thrust out*, as he expresses himself in another place, (Luke xiii. 28, 29,) ‘and they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south; and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.’ No one ever so little versed in history needeth to be told, that the Christian religion spread and prevailed mightily after this period; and hardly any one thing contributed more to the success of the gospel than the destruction of Jerusalem, falling out in the very manner and with the very circumstances so particularly foretold by our blessed Saviour.”

This is the other branch of the figurative theory of interpreting this verse; and it is met with in several of our most popular Commentaries, somewhat modified, it is true, but essentially the same. Dr. Clarke, for example, comments thus: “31. *He shall send his angels*] Τοὺς ἀγγέλους, *his messengers*, the *apostles*, and their successors in the Christian ministry. *With a great sound of a trumpet*,] Or, a loud-sounding trumpet — the earnest, affectionate call of the gospel of peace, life, and salvation. *Shall gather together his elect*] *The Gentiles*, who were *now chosen*, or *elected*, in the place of the rebellious, obstinate *Jews*, according to our Lord’s prediction, Matt. viii. 11, 12, and Luke xiii. 28, 29. *For the children of the kingdom*, (the *Jews*, who were *born* with a *legal right* to it, but had now finally *forfeited* that right by their iniquities,) *should be thrust out*. It is worth serious observation, that the Christian religion spread and prevailed mightily *after* this period: and nothing contributed more to the success of the gospel, than the *destruction* of *Jerusalem* happening in the very *time* and *manner*, and with the very *circumstances* so particularly foretold by our Lord. It was *after this period* that the kingdom of Christ began, and his reign was established in almost every part of the world.”

It would be difficult to find a paragraph of the same length that contains more of truth and more of error than the quotation from Newton, as modified and extended by Dr. Clarke. To reject wholly, would be rejecting important evangelical truths. To receive it as it is found in their works, would be receiving impressions entirely at variance with Scripture and

authentic history. The texts referred to are totally misapplied, and the things asserted, respecting the spread of the gospel, without being altogether false, are, nevertheless, untrue in the *impression* which they are calculated to produce in the mind. And as for the remark, that "*it was after this period that the kingdom of Christ began,*" it is totally at variance with the express teachings of the Scriptures, and just as contradictory to Dr. Clarke's own commenting in other places.

In reviewing this singular, yet very common explanation, it may be observed, *First*, That the *impression* which the statement concerning the spread of the gospel is calculated to produce, is, that *previous* to the overthrow of the Jewish nation, the gospel was *quite limited* in its success, and confined mostly, or entirely, to the Jews; but that *after the fall of Jerusalem*, the gospel was extended to the *Gentiles*, and for the first time, spread to all the nations of the earth. By the *angels* is understood "the apostles and their successors." By the *trumpet*, "the earnest, affectionate call of the gospel of peace." By the *elect*, "the *Gentiles*, who were *now chosen*, or *elected*, in place of the obstinate, rebellious Jews." By sending the angels to gather the elect, "meaneth only, that *after the destruction of Jerusalem*, Christ by his angels or ministers will gather to himself a glorious church out of all nations under heaven."

Now, if such an interpretation has any propriety or force, it must arise from the consideration, that, previously to the fall of Jerusalem, the apostles had not been sent to the *Gentiles*; for this is intended to explain "*Then shall he send his angels,*" &c. And it has to be supposed, likewise, that, previously to the time mentioned above, the gospel trumpet had not been sounded in the remote portions of the earth; for this is intended to explain the gathering of the elect "from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

We may now come understandingly to the issue, in reference to the point before us.

THIS WHOLE IMPRESSION IS TOTALLY AT VARIANCE WITH THE FACTS IN THE CASE.

1. In relation to the supposition of the *previous limitation*

of the gospel to the Jews. Nothing is more clearly taught in the Scriptures, than that, long previously to the fall of Jerusalem, the gospel trumpet was extensively and effectually employed in gathering in the Gentile nations. After Peter had used the key of the kingdom, in the admission of Cornelius and his family, the door was effectually opened for the ingathering of the Gentiles. To whom was St. Paul especially commissioned to go? Was it not to the Gentiles? What did he mean by affirming that the middle wall of partition was broken down, and that the Gentiles were no more aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God? And who were the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians the Thessalonians, and those who composed the great body of the churches during the apostolic age? Were they not generally Gentiles? Yet all this was previous to the fall of Jerusalem. To convey the impression, then, that the call of the Gentiles was deferred until after that event, is directly at variance with the Scriptures. Yet on this supposition depends almost the entire relevancy and force of the usual exposition of the text before us.

2. As to the other implied supposition, that it was not until after the destruction of the city, that the gospel trumpet was sounded in the distant portions of the world,—it is equally at variance with the Scriptures, and directly opposed to authentic history. St. Paul, who died several years before the Roman war, yet lived to write, (Rom. x. 18 :) “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, THEIR SOUND WENT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS UNTO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.” Again, (Colos. i. 5-6 :) “Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, AS IT IS IN ALL THE WORLD.” In the 23d verse he declares distinctly, that the gospel which they had heard “WAS PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE UNDER HEAVEN.” Yet this was before the fall of Jerusalem.

That these passages mean just what they say, as to the general extent of the gospel call, is proved by unimpeachable

historic testimony. Eusebius says, *B. 3. chap. 1*, "But the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour, *being scattered over the whole world*, Thomas, according to tradition, received Parthia as his allotted region; Andrew received Scythia; and John Asia; where, after continuing for some time, he died at Ephesus. Peter appears to have preached through Pontus, Galatia, Bythinia, Cappadocia, and Asia, to the Jews * that were scattered abroad." "Why should we speak of Paul, spreading the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyrium, and finally suffering martyrdom at Rome under Nero?" †

Mosheim, also, referring to the apostolic age, speaks thus distinctly, *Part 1, chap. 4*: "And when they had exercised their ministry, during several years, at Jerusalem, and brought to a sufficient degree of consistence and maturity the Christian churches which were founded in Palestine and the adjacent countries, they extended their views, carried the divine lamp of the gospel TO ALL THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD, *and saw their labors crowned almost everywhere with the most abundant fruits.*" Again — "The apostles, having finished their work at Jerusalem, *went to diffuse their labors among other nations*, visited with that intent *a great part of the known world*, and *in a short time planted a vast number of churches among the Gentiles.*"

Once more — "*When we consider the RAPID SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE GENTILE NATIONS,*" &c. He still speaks of the apostolic labors, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. Here is still another — "The event sufficiently declares this; for, without those remarkable and extraordinary circumstances, no rational account can be given of the *rapid propagation of the gospel* THROUGHOUT THE WORLD." Again — "Such then were the true causes of that *amazing rapidity with which the Christian religion spread itself upon the earth.*"

And all this was previously to the destruction of Jerusalem. What, then, becomes of the supposition, that the gos-

* Peter, it seems, was especially the apostle to the Jews, as was Paul to the Gentiles.

† The historian asks, Why should we speak of this? It was so universally known and considered, that it seemed unnecessary to repeat it.

pel trumpet was not sounded among the Gentile nations until after the fall of Jerusalem? It amounts to nothing; or, rather, it amounts to a palpable contradiction of both Scripture and history. Who can deny this conclusion?

3. These testimonies from the Scriptures and from history also utterly overthrow the strange notion of Dr. Clarke, *that the Gentiles were not chosen or elected, until after the fall of Jerusalem*. This sentiment he expresses in these words — “*Shall gather together his elect — the Gentiles, who were now chosen or elected, in place of the rebellious, obstinate Jews, according to our Lord’s prediction, Matt. viii. 11, 12, and Luke xiii. 28, 29.*”

The Doctor was now, of course, as the whole connections show, referring to the period *after the fall of Jerusalem*. He also adds this most surprising declaration — “It was *after this period* that the kingdom of Christ began, and his reign was established in almost every part of the world.” How such a notion could consist with any proper idea of the kingdom of Christ, it is not easy to comprehend. Does the kingdom of Christ, spoken of in this connection, mean the *gospel dispensation*? Then, certainly, it began previously to the fall of Jerusalem. It was preached as being “at hand,” at the beginning of our Lord’s ministry. And he himself declared, Matt. xii. 28: “If I by the finger of God cast out devils, *then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*” St. Paul declared to the Colossians, that they *had been translated into the kingdom of Christ*. Col. i. 13. The whole tenor of New Testament teaching implies that the Mediatorial or gospel kingdom was begun, at the latest, as soon as the Lord Jesus, being exalted at the right hand of the Father, had shed forth the spirit at Pentecost.

Does the kingdom of Christ, as thus used, mean the church under the gospel dispensation? Then, of course, it must have begun as soon as the church was duly organized; which was certainly effected long before the fall of Jerusalem. If not, how could the apostles have gone into all the world, as they certainly did, preaching the gospel unto all nations, and gathering vast multitudes into churches? To maintain the

notion here objected to, respecting the beginning of the kingdom, and the time of choosing the Gentiles to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, (Eph. ii. 19,) absolutely requires that we should give up, not only all authentic historical testimony, and several distinct declarations of the Scriptures, but also our established doctrines relating to the nature of the gospel kingdom, and the time and method of establishing the Christian dispensation. And nothing but the saddest bewilderment by an erroneous theory of exegesis could have led such generally excellent and able divines into such inconsistent, unscriptural notions respecting some of the plainest teachings of the New Testament.

4. And to represent, too, that immediately after, and in consequence of, the destruction of Jerusalem, the church began anew its extension and triumphs, so as to justify the representation of "*then*" sending abroad the angels into all the world, is not only without any proof from Scripture or history, but contradictory to both. The most that can be gathered from history merely shows that the gospel *continued to prevail* during the second century, as it had, with "amazing rapidity," as Mosheim has it, prevailed over the world during the apostolic age. There was no *beginning* of an era in respect to this matter; no "then," after the fall of the city, to correspond with the language of the prophecy. There was nothing *new*, or *noticeable*, in the labors or success of the church, to correspond with the distinctly marked "then" in the words of Christ.

Besides, both Scripture and history show that fearful backsliding and heresy affected the church, at the very time that it is claimed to have spread with such rapidity, after the fall of Jerusalem. The letters to the seven churches in Asia show how it was in that quarter; and the history of that period speaks of numberless heresies and calamities that corrupted and crippled the church. Mosheim treats particularly of the various causes of the rapid spread of the gospel, not only before, but after, the fall of the city; but so far as the author has been able to discover, he has in no way affirmed or intimated that the destruction of Jerusalem had any influence in pro-

moting the prosperity of the church. Probably there cannot be found a single clear testimony to prove such an assumption. What then becomes of all these confident affirmations in regard to the unparalleled extension of the church, after, and in consequence of, the fall of Jerusalem? And what is there to justify the common method of expounding the text before us, by applying it in this manner? Let him answer who can.

Before proceeding to the true interpretation of the text, it may be expedient to notice the method and manner of Professor Stuart's treatment of the passage, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1852.

But let the reader first notice, and distinctly remember, the varied, yet definite, expressions of the prophecy, and then read the irreverent criticisms, or cavilings, perhaps, of the Professor.

"*And he shall, send his angels with the loud sound of a trumpet.* The angels are always at his bidding, 'swift to do his will.' But the *trumpet*? A *literal* one? And the *time*? Is it at the general judgment? Then how can the *literal* sound of a trumpet reach the ears of the unnumbered dead, who have slept in dust for thousands of years? The bare idea, if literally taken, is of course a manifest absurdity." Again: "*And they shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from the extremities of the heavens unto their extremities.* From the four winds, means, from every direction. Four points constituted the whole *compass* of the Hebrews. But what *literally* are the extremities of the heavens? Do the elect live there, so as to be summoned from those places? or have they died, and then been buried there? *The extremities of the heavens*, if literally, would be, we hardly know where. The *fixed stars* are a part of the Hebrew heavens; and can our text mean from their extremities? Surely not. The phrase merely means, from one extremity of the earth to the opposite one, wherever the elect may be found; at least, it means so, in case a *universal* gathering is meant here. I suppose Mark has explained it by the saying: 'From the extremity of the land, to the extremity of heaven. But is the

gathering together to be interpreted as *literal*? Or, does it mean, the affording to them an assylum or place of refuge from the evils which would overtake the wicked,* like the promise that the Messiah should ‘gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom’? Isa. xl. 11.” Again—“Finally, the elect are to be gathered ‘from (*ex, out of*) the four winds.’ Are there, in point of fact, no more than four? And if *literality* be insisted on, then we may ask whether the elect live *in* those winds, and so are to be gathered *out* of them?” And again, resuming his quibbling on the expression, from the extremities of the heavens,—and showing, very truly, how the Hebrews commonly used such terms,—“After all these explanations and modifications, we may now ask: What can be the meaning of literally gathering the *elect* from the very extremities of the earth and the heavens? Do they—will they live at the Arctic and Antarctic poles? These are extremities, indeed; but not such ones as will be inhabited, methinks, when the trumpet shall sound for the assembling of the elect.”

Now, what does all this quibbling about our Lord’s own language amount to, but to show that the author of it was resolutely bent on maintaining the figurative theory of interpretation, at all hazards; even to the almost—if not quite—ridiculing of the very idea of any literal gathering of the elect, even at the final coming of Christ? He does not seem to have had the faintest idea that there is any difference between *literality* and *scientific accuracy*.

Suppose we adopt the method of interpreting *figuratively* all the expressions in the Bible that do not quite comport with *modern scientific accuracy*; what would become of God’s revelation to men? There would be nothing left of it, unless it might be the bare skeleton; and that would be all dislocated and shattered into fragments.

The question is not, what may the language be *made* to mean, or what would it import in a *professedly and rigidly scientific treatise*, but what was the *common understanding*

* He understood the gathering of the elect to refer, some how or other, to events subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem.

and use of the language in colloquial discourse. With this consideration, there was not only no indefiniteness, no impropriety, no departure from the *usual LITERAL use and understanding of the same language*, but, on the other hand, our Lord conformed both to the scriptural, colloquial, and historical use of such language, where figurativeness—in the proper sense of the term—is altogether out of the question. The same quibbling with any other book would be deemed inexcusable. And as it relates to the almost scoffing at the idea of a trumpet being employed in the final gathering of the elect, because, forsooth, he does not understand “how the *literal* sound of a trumpet can reach the ears of the unnumbered dead, who have slept in dust for thousands of years—the bare idea of which, if taken literally, is of course a manifest absurdity;”—as to this matter, it is only necessary to say, that the Scriptures declare that *it will be so*, and the declaration is *in those portions that even Prof. Stuart did not dare to interpret figuratively.*

Take, for example, 1 Cor. xv. 51: “Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last TRUMP*; FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, *and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*” 1 Thess. iv. 16: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a *shout*, with the *voice of the archangel, and with the TRUMP OF GOD*; *and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*”

But the *Professor* did not see how the *literal sound* of a *trumpet* was going to wake the “unnumbered dead, who have slept in dust for thousands of years.”

Indeed! But can he comprehend how the blowing of *rams horns* overthrew the walls of Jericho? Or how *Moses' rod* brought a river out of a flinty rock? Or how the same rod, held in one position, caused Israel to prevail; held in another position, let Amalek? Or, to come a little nearer to our own times, can he explain how the carpenter's son opened the eyes of the blind with a little moistened clay? Or how he restored defective and missing members by a touch of his finger? Besides all this, did he properly consider the *differ-*

ence between "the trump of God," and a common trumpet,—a military trumpet, for instance, or a dinner horn?

There is doubtlessly as much difference between the *trumpet of God* and the *trumpets of men*, as between the *voice of God* and a *human voice*. What can a *man's* voice do? Something, certainly; it can gather a battalion of soldiers around an uplifted standard; or give direction to a war-ship upon the deep. But (Ps. xxix.) "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful. The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; yea, the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh." When there was no sun, and no light, and no world, God tried his voice. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast!" "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light!" "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth!"

Now, if any man will undertake to calculate the nature and power of the divine trumpet, by association with the instruments used by man, why not do the same with respect to God's voice, and God's word?

But the Professor met with another difficulty: "Is it a literal trumpet, one literally heard by sleeping dust and ashes of countless millions? That would be a very *forcible* exegesis, which should give *literal* ears and hearing to *lifeless dust*." Astonishing! Well, now, it would be useless to engage in a logomachy about this matter; and, as facts are stubborn things, suppose we test this matter by *facts*. The thing to be ascertained is, whether "lifeless dust" can hear a literal voice. If so, perhaps "lifeless dust" might hear a trumpet, provided the same being should use it. "LAZARUS, COME FORTH!" Will the Professor please ascertain whether this "lifeless dust" had literal ears to hear that literal voice? Let us try again: "TALITHA-CUMI!" Did that dead child hear that voice? But there must be *literal ears* in order to hear a *literal voice*, or a *trumpet*!

Well, let us try the *winds* and the *waves*. "PEACE! BE STILL!" Whether the wild winds, and the Galilean waters had *literal ears* to hear that literal voice, is the question.

Notwithstanding the irreverent quibbling that has provoked these few remarks, is it not enough for us to know that "*the hour is coming in which ALL THAT ARE IN THEIR GRAVES SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE, and shall come forth*"? Whether "lifeless dust" will have *literal ears*, or not, is but of little consequence, provided they hear, and live. But this method of caviling and quibbling with sacred things is deserving of universal reprehension.

CHAPTER XIV.

Principal subject—GATHERING THE ELECT.

The True Exposition—A Universal Gathering—Who are the Elect?—Applied to believing *Gentiles*—Scripture Proofs—Election of the *Gentiles*—To what Privileges—For what Reason—Applied to the *Israelites*—Scripture Proofs—Reason of their Election—Chosen as a *People*—By an everlasting Covenant—They should be preserved Forever—St. Paul's View—Two great Divisions of the Elect—Relation of the two—Relation of the two-fold Gathering—How the *dead* will be Gathered—Design of the Resurrection—Hope of the ancient Saints—Who will be raised at the first Resurrection—The Elect in two Conditions—God's purpose to gather them all—When—Where—Why—How—Views of the Apostolical Church—Gathering of those who will be alive at the coming of the Lord—The final Assembly—Examples of Gathering of the Elect—Design of the Transfiguration on the Mount.

Verse 31. AND HE SHALL SEND HIS ANGELS WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY SHALL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER.

THE more agreeable labor remains, of giving the true interpretation of this passage. And this will be done principally by referring, with a few observations, to other portions of the Scriptures which apply to the same subject. For hav-

ing shown the palpable inconsistency and untenableness of the common figurative interpretation, it is not necessary to linger in this part of the labor. It would be much easier to amplify the subject to a volume, than to condense it to a single chapter. The gathering of the elect will be one of the most astonishing and glorious transactions of the closing up of the present, and opening of the coming, dispensation. The text clearly teaches a *universal* gathering of the elect, for in the most emphatic manner, according to the Hebrew idiom, it affirms that they will be brought in from *all directions* and from *all distances*.

BUT WHO ARE INTENDED BY THE ELECT? "To the law and to the testimony."

First, *That true believers among the Gentiles* are entitled *the Elect*, is too plainly and too frequently taught in the Scriptures to be called in question by any one. St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians — who were mostly Gentiles — fully sets this matter forth to the comprehension of all. Chap. i. 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. 4. According as he hath *chosen* us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. 5. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself*, according to the good pleasure of his will." Chap. ii. 11: "Wherefore, remember that ye being in time past *Gentiles* in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. 13. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14. For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, (the law of commandments in ordinances,) for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16. And that he might rec-

oncile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body [the church, which is the body of Christ] by the cross, [by his sacrificial death on the cross,] having slain the enmity thereby: 17. And came and preached peace unto you [Gentiles] that were afar off, and to them [Jews] that were nigh. 18. For through him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access by one spirit unto the Father. 19. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." [God's family or people.] Chap. iii. 5: "Which in other ages [former times] was not made known unto the sons of men, [generally] as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6. That the Gentiles should be *fellow heirs*, and of the *same body*, [the church] and *partakers of his PROMISE IN CHRIST by the gospel.*"

These long quotations have not been selected on account of their having the *word* election, or elect, brought out with prominence; but because the identical thing called election is so fully set forth and described with reference to its *fact*, *nature*, and *application to the Gentiles*. And because, likewise, it so clearly represents *their* election as being of the *same nature* and *intention*, with reference to salvation by Christ, as the election of the Jews.

Their election to salvation was through Christ. Hence Paul wrote to the [Gentile] Galatians, (iii. 29,) "And if ye be *Christ's*, then are ye *Abraham's* [spiritual] *seed*, and *heirs according to the promise.*" As just quoted above, (verse 6,) "That the *Gentiles* should be *partakers of his PROMISE IN CHRIST*, by the gospel." Hence Paul could say to the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. i. 4,) "Knowing, brethren beloved, your *election of God.*" And, (2 Thess. ii. 13,) "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for *you*, brethren beloved in the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen you to salvation*, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." So he could say to the Colossians, (iii. 12,) "Put on, therefore, *as the ELECT OF GOD*, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness," &c. In the same way could Peter (1 Pet. i. 1,) say to the "strangers scat-

tered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia," verse 2, "ELECT according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Chap. ii. 9: "But ye are a *chosen* generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,* a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10. Which in time past were not a people, *but are now the people of God*; which *had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*" This harmonizes with the words of Paul. Rom. ix. 24: "Even us whom he hath *called*, not of the Jews only, but also of the GENTILES: 25. As he saith also in Osee, [Hosea ii. 23,]† I will call them My people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved."

This *election* of the *Gentiles* was distinctly taught in the great apostolic council at Jerusalem, which was convened on the occasion of the conversion of multitudes of Gentiles. Acts xv. 13: "And after they had held their peace, James answered them, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me. 14. Simeon [Simon Peter] hath declared how God at the first [in the case of Cornelius] did visit the GENTILES, TO TAKE OUT OF THEM A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME." [To be called by his name.] These many passages (and there are many others) sufficiently show that *believers among the Gentiles* are, to all intents, the *people of God*; they are *chosen, elected*, brought into *covenant relations*, are *partakers of the promise made unto the fathers*, are *Abraham's spiritual children*, and *heirs of a heavenly inheritance*. Among the *elect* who are to be *gathered from all directions*, and from *all distances*, are the *believing Gentiles*.

Secondly. That God has other elect people—people who have from the beginning sustained that title—is just as clear

* Not in the *political* sense. This refers to the *Gentile* Christians, as must be evident from the next verse.

† It is clear from the connections that Paul understood this to refer to the *Gentiles*, but the passage in Hosea is not as clear in relation to this application.

from the Scripture. *The natural descendents of Israel have been from the beginning the people of God in a peculiar sense, if not in the highest spiritual sense.* God chose the descendents of Jacob from all other people, that they might bear his name, and sustain covenant relations with him such as do not belong to any other people. This is taught in a multitude of places in the Bible; let a few passages suffice as examples; Deut. vii. 6: "*For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*" Their election, however, was not on account of their natural superiority in numbers: Verse 7: "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people."

Neither was their election founded on their superior excellence, as God often took occasion to remind them. Verse 8: "But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the OATH which he had SWORN UNTO YOUR FATHERS." Chap x. 15: "Only the Lord had a delight in thy FATHERS to love them, and he CHOSE THEIR SEED AFTER THEM, EVEN YOU, ABOVE ALL PEOPLE, as it is this day.

It was in virtue of the original covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that God not only elected their posterity to be his peculiar people, but continued to regard them as his people through all their rebellions and chastisements. The covenant, on God's part, was everlasting and irrevocable, out of respect to the oath sworn unto Abraham. Gen. xvii. 7: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. 8. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an EVERLASTING POSSESSION; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD."

This covenant of God was not made with the individuals, as individuals, but with the *people of Israel*, as a distinct generation of people. So that God might, without breaking his covenant, destroy multitudes of individual Israelites, until the

generation or race was reduced to a mere remnant; yet he would preserve the *race* as a *distinct generation of people*, out of regard to his everlasting covenant.

There are very many passages directly upon this point; but we call attention to only a few as specimens. In Leviticus, chap. xxvi., which the reader is requested to peruse, we have a prediction of the terrible destructions and desolations which should befall them on account of their iniquities, until they should be reduced to the last extremities, as if God had utterly abandoned them. But God would not forget his *covenant to be the God of the seed of Jacob*. Verse 42: "*Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.* [Then desolate.] 43. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes."

So dreadfully would the Jews depart from keeping their part of the covenant. Verse 44: "AND YET FOR ALL THAT, *when they be in the land of their enemies*, I WILL NOT CAST THEM AWAY, NEITHER WILL I ABHOR THEM, TO DESTROY THEM UTTERLY, *and to break my covenant with them*; FOR I AM THE LORD THEIR GOD. 45. *But I will, for their sakes, remember the covenant of their ANCESTORS, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen*, THAT I MIGHT BE THEIR GOD. I AM THE LORD!" With this understanding of the unchangeableness of the Lord's covenant to be their God forever, we may perceive the force of such passages as the following, which was uttered at a time when he was terribly threatening his people: Mal. iii. 6: "FOR I AM JEHOVAH, I CHANGE NOT; THEREFORE YE SONS OF JACOB ARE NOT CONSUMED!"*

This people are still, in the same sense as formerly, under

* Our Lord appears to have had this specific thing in view, when, after predicting the calamities of the Jews for eighteen hundred years, he declared—“Ε γενεὰ ἄουτη—*This race, lineage, or generation, shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.*”

the security of the same oath, the *chosen*, the *elect*, the *covenant* people of the *unchangeable God*. Time after time the Lord has given the most solemn assurances that his covenant should never be violated, though Israel should do wickedly, and be wasted with judgments. Such assurances as the following quotations express are not to be misunderstood.

Isa. liv. 5: "For thy Maker is thy husband: The Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: The God of the whole earth shall he be called. 6. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. 7. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. 9. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

Jer. xxxi. 35: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar: The Lord of hosts is his name: 36. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. 37. Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

It would seem as if the Lord had done all that he could to express the unchangeableness of his covenant with Israel, as a generation, or race of people. What has been quoted is only a small part of the multitude of expressed remembrances and assurances that he would continue to be their God forever, and that they should be kept from being consumed;

like the burning bush in Mount Sinai which Moses saw, ever burning, but never consumed.

They are still his *elect, chosen* for Jacob his servant's sake, and preserved according to the everlasting covenant made with Abraham.

How appropriately, then, and how affectingly did Paul speak, in Rom. xi. 1: "*I say, then, HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE? GOD FORBID! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.* 2. GOD HATH NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE WHICH HE FOREKNEW. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God *against* Israel, saying, 3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down their altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life."

Would not he cast them away for all this? Let us see. Verse 4: "But what saith the answer of *God* to him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. 5. *Even so, then, at this present time also, THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE.*" Ah, but, saith unbelieving man, who thinketh God's ways, and God's thoughts, are like his own ways and thoughts, — who forgetteth the sovereignty of God, and his faithfulness as a covenant keeper, — what have the Israelites *done* that they should be thus *avored*, after all their misbehavior? What *works* of well deserving have they to boast, that God should *distinguish* them by favors? On what ground of goodness on their part did they obtain, or do they still retain, their *election*?

Let St. Paul answer: Verse 5: "Even so at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the ELECTION of GRACE. 6. And if by *grace*, then is it no more of *works*; otherwise *grace* is no more *grace*. But if it be of *works*, then is it no more of GRACE: otherwise *work* is no more *work*. 7. What then? Israel [in general] hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: but the ELECTION (verse 5,) hath obtained it, and the rest [of the nation] were blinded." Verse 25: "For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blind-

ness *in part* hath happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. 28. As concerning the gospel, they [the unbelieving part] are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the ELECTION, *they are BELOVED for the FATHERS' SAKES.* 29. FOR THE GIFTS AND CALLING OF GOD ARE WITHOUT REPENTANCE." God will not repent of his choice. Nothing is plainer than that God still regards the descendants of Israel as his own people, his covenant people, his called people, his chosen, his *elect* people.

Thus we learn from the Scriptures that the *elect* are comprised in two great divisions, the believing Gentiles, and the children of Israel. Now, as the Lord Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and believing Gentiles, so as to make of twain one new man in himself; and as the Christian Gentiles are now reckoned as fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; as the Gentiles, by becoming Christ's, become the spiritual seed of Abraham, the father of the faithful; and as, in this way, they become heirs of the promise; therefore, it is but reasonable to suppose, that, in the final gathering of the elect, to enjoy the promised inheritance, the believing Gentiles and the seed of Jacob will be gathered into one; that the other sheep which were not originally of the Jewish fold, shall be gathered with the Jews, so that there may be one fold and one Shepherd. The Lord Jesus will come the second time to redeem *all* his people; and will not therefore overlook either portion of those who are in covenant relation with himself.

It is certain from the Scriptures that the believing Gentiles will, in some way, enjoy the felicities and glories of the natural descendants of Jacob in the day of their final triumph; though the precise manner in which the joint happiness shall be enjoyed does not appear to be clearly set forth in the Scriptures.

We may expect, then, that the elect, all of the elect, will be gathered together in the great day of the final deliverance of the saints. And this will be done in immediate connection with the coming of the Lord, as the Saviour has taught us in the text under comment.

When St. Paul had occasion to refer to this gathering of the saints, he does not appear to have made any distinction between Jews and Gentiles. It is certain, however, that he speaks of *believers* when he declares that such as “remain unto the coming of the Lord,” will be changed. And it is clearly revealed, also, that the unconverted Jews will be converted in connection with, or immediately after, their gathering. It may not be possible for us now to ascertain the precise *connection* which the gatherings of the two branches of the great family of the elect will sustain to each other. It is enough, however, that the *fact* of the gathering of both is clearly revealed in the Scriptures of truth.

And there is not, after all, any greater difficulty in understanding this matter, than there was, previous to the birth of Christ, in settling a number of points with respect to the *place* and *circumstances* of his nativity. After the fulfillment of the predictions all was plain. So it will undoubtedly be in respect to all the comparatively, or really obscure prophecies relating to the subject before us.

That all will be gathered into one glorious kingdom of purity and peace under the Lord Jesus Christ, is sufficiently revealed in the divine word. And this is to comprise all the elect, even those who have died and gone to their Redeemer’s immediate presence, whose bodies also sleep in Jesus, being included within that redemption which is in the Lord Jesus Christ; for it was man—a being of *two natures united*—that God created; it was the same complex being that sinned, making use of both natures; and it was in both natures that he suffered, in both natures that he died: That is, there was a *separation* between the two natures, the *union* of which constituted the *life of MAN*, as God created him to exist, not in the simple *oneness* of a *single nature*, but in the *unity* of a *complex nature*. Death is, in no proper sense, *annihilation* of either *soul* or *body*; but an *interruption* of man’s—complex man’s—existence, in the *mode* of the existence which was designed in his original creation: Death deprives the *spirit* of the originally intended association and mutual happiness of the *other part of man—the body*; and it de-

prives the *body* of its life-giving, and glory-giving connection with the *spirit*. In fine, death interrupts the *original* and *perfect* mode of *man's* existence: he is, in fact, no longer *man*, in the original sense of the term, after he experiences *death*: The *disembodied spirit* is never represented in the Scripture as being in its highest and happiest mode and state of existence: the period between death and the resurrection—though a period of measurable happiness to the holy, and unhappiness to the wicked—is never represented as the period of *consummation* to either. *Hades*—the *place* and *state* of the *dead*—is not to be the *everlasting condition* of the dead. The *wicked* are to have a *resurrection*, and *then*—after becoming *men*—complex beings, as they were originally—they are to be cast into the lake of fire. See Rev. xx. 13–15. This will be the consummation of their punishment; and the devil and his angels await the same punishment; (Rev. xx. 10,) this being undoubtedly what they had in view in their awful inquiry, “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? *Art thou come hither to torment us BEFORE THE TIME?*” Matt. viii. 29. So, on the other hand, the apostles and prophets always looked forward—not to their *disembodied* state—but to the *resurrection* state—as the time of their completed happiness and glory. Thus Paul—on the verge of the spirit world, with a crown of glory in view—did not expect to *receive* it until the judgment advent of the Lord Jesus. See 2 Tim. iv. 8. And so the *souls* of the martyrs are represented as being under [at the foot of] the divine altar, waiting for the time to come for their final glory; and the connections of the passage show that they expected it at the second coming of the Lord. See Rev. vi. 9–17.

And this final reward of the saints is elsewhere specifically connected with the judgment of the nations, and the resurrection of the dead. See Rev. xi. 15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. 16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God.

17. Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18. And the nations were angry, *and thy wrath is come, and the time of the DEAD, THAT THEY SHOULD BE JUDGED, and that thou shouldst give* REWARD UNTO THY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS, AND TO THE SAINTS, AND THEM THAT FEAR THY NAME, SMALL AND GREAT; AND SHOULDST DESTROY THEM THAT DESTROYED THE EARTH." *

To this very period the prophet Daniel was instructed to look for the consummation of his glory. Dan. xii. 13: "*But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt REST, AND STAND IN THY LOT AT THE END OF DAYS.*" And this was the hope of Job; chap. xix. 25: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26. And though, after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Like Daniel, he should rest until the time revealed—"the latter day"—and then he should come forth—retaining his identity—to see and enjoy his Redeemer, who should "*stand at the latter day upon the earth.*" Such views of the Scriptures give significancy to the passage, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, [or, from henceforth saith the Spirit, Yea] *that they may REST FROM THEIR LABORS; [the present condition] AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM,*"—for God to *reward* at the great day when Paul expected his crown, viz: at Christ's "*appearing;*" (2 Tim. iv. 8,) "*THE TIME OF THE DEAD, THAT THEY SHOULD BE JUDGED, and that thou shouldst GIVE REWARD UNTO THY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS, AND TO THE SAINTS [martyrs] AND TO THEM THAT FEAR THY NAME, SMALL AND GREAT.*" It is to be the time of giving reward unto *all the elect*, as this passage and others distinctly teach.

This sufficiently proves that the first resurrection described in Rev. xx. 4, 6, is not to be restricted to the martyrs, but to include all "which had not worshiped the beast, neither his

* The whole scope and connections of the passage show that all this belongs to the *beginning*—and not to the ending—of the Millennium.

image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." It is evident, however, that among these "*souls*" which were waiting to be raised at the *beginning of the thousand years*, those that were "*beheaded for the witness of Jesus*," were conspicuous; and perhaps John, without excluding others, (as described in chap. xi. 18,) did indeed refer particularly to the martyrs. At all events, we must not make one part of his prophecy contradict another.

Now, it may be asked, What has all this to do with the subject in hand—the *gathering of the elect*? Much, every way: these, in part, are the very elect which are to be gathered: Daniel and Job, the holy patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, "and all that feared the Lord, both small and great,"—these are to be gathered when the Lord Jesus makes his appearing. We desire to know *who* they are, with respect to their *character*; and *where* they are, with respect to their *condition*.

We have now arrived at this truly interesting and important Scripture doctrine;—that the *elect* are comprised in two great divisions—the natural descendants of Abraham through Israel,* and the spiritual descendants of Abraham through Christ. And we also learn that the *elect* are at present, and will be at the second advent, in two different conditions—living in the flesh, and dead in the Lord, or sleeping in Jesus. We must also understand that the *living elect* will be found in two different conditions—*actual believers*, and *unbelievers, under an unchangeable covenant*. The covenant, however, as has been abundantly shown, does not relate to Israel in respect to the *individual persons*; but it relates to Israel in respect to the *generation, or race*; so that there shall never be a casting away of that *people which God forcknew, and elected*. The inquiry is now naturally suggested—*Does God purpose to gather together all his elect*? And, if so, *when and how* are they to be gathered?

* Not all of the natural posterity, but the "*remnant according to the election of grace*." Rom. xi. 5. The generation of Jacob should never cease to be an *elect generation*, as God has abundantly shown in his word; and as has been proved in the previous quotations. *Individuals* might be cast away, but the *race* never.

To this inquiry, the following passage is applicable : Eph. i. 9: "Having made known unto us the *mystery of his will*, according to *his good pleasure*, which he hath *purposed in himself*.* 10. *That in the DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES, he might GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE, ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN, AND WHICH ARE IN EARTH, IN HIM.* 11. In whom also *we* [Jews, notwithstanding our unbelief and wickedness,] *have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him* who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will : 12. That *we* should be to the praise of his glory, who *first* [the Jews first believed on Christ] *trusted in Christ.* 13. In whom *ye* [Gentiles] also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*, 14. Which [the Holy Spirit of promise] is the *earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.*"

The fulfillment and application of the *promise of the inheritance*, is, in the nature of the case, and as the text itself teaches, something to be done *hereafter*, until which time of *redeeming the inheritance*, the Holy Spirit of *promise* is our *earnest*. That time is called "THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES." It does not belong to the *present* dispensation ; for during *this* dispensation we have only the *earnest* of the heavenly inheritance to be enjoyed without interruption hereafter. The plain truth is just this — Rom. viii. 17 : "If *children*, then *heirs* ; heirs of God, and *joint heirs with Christ* ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be *glorified together.* 18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this *present time* [present dispensation] are not worthy to be compared with the *glory which shall be revealed in us.* 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] *waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.* 20. For the creature [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but

* The thing is a *mystery revealed* ; but, however mysterious, or even incredible to men, yet it is *willed* of God's own *good pleasure*. He has not been moved to it by any *external influence*, but he hath *purposed it in himself* ; it is a mighty display of *sovereign grace*.

by reason of him who hath subjected the same *in hope*; 21. Because the *creature* [creation] *itself* also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the CHILDREN OF GOD. 22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.* 23. And not only they,† but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *waiting for the* ADOPTION,‡ to wit, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.”

This was what they were waiting for: the *adoption* or *redemption of the* BODY;—the *other part* of the being that Christ has redeemed. Well, this time for which they waited; this time of *receiving* the hoped-for and promised *inheritance*; this time of the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD IN GLORY; this is declared to be the time when the “BODY” should be “ADOPTED,” that is, *redeemed* by the resurrection from death; it is the time when the CREATION ITSELF shall be delivered “into the glorious liberty of the sons of God;” (which must be accomplished by the *renovation*, or *restitution* of the creation from the effects of sin;) and this period is called “THE FULLNESS OF TIMES,”—or “the DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES.” Eph. i. 10.

It is at this time—this time so abundantly and so variously defined and marked, that God intends to “gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, in him.” All things in both worlds that are in Christ. And it will be done, as we learn from the declarations of Paul, as well as from many others which are not referred to, at that period when the *redemption of the body* will be effected, and when the *creation itself* shall be renovated, or restored to its original condition. Now we ascertain from the Scriptures, that all this is to be accomplished at the second coming of Christ. The Scriptures that teach this are so numerous and so very plain, that it seems to be needless to detain the argument by a particular reference to them: some

* So dreadfully has sin affected the physical creation with which men in this world come in contact.

† The preceding verse defines this.

‡ Not spiritual adoption; that had been already obtained. See verse 15.

of them, however, have already been quoted for other purposes. The general gathering together unto Christ was a familiar idea to the apostolic church. St. Paul was specifically understood when he besought the Thessalonians in this manner: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and by our *gathering together unto him*."

It still remains to show how the elect, in their diversified conditions, will be finally gathered into one.

1. How will those be gathered who have died in the Lord, and whose spirits have been with Christ ever since their absence from the body? These are a part of the *things in Christ, in heaven*, that are waiting the *adoption* of their *bodies*. St. Paul will testify to the precise point in question: 1 Thess. iv. 13: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14. For if we believe that *Jesus died and rose again, even so* THEM ALSO WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM." This is the way, then, that saints who have died will be gathered: *they will come from heaven with Christ when he comes in his everlasting kingdom*.

This same doctrine of the coming of the saints with the Lord, is taught elsewhere, in the Scriptures, and very plainly. 1 Thess. iii. 13: "To the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* WITH ALL HIS SAINTS." This corresponds with the prediction previously quoted from Zech. xiv. 5: "*And the Lord my God shall come, AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE*." This doctrine of the coming of the saints was revealed so long ago as the time of Enoch: Jude 14: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, [wicked men of whom he was speaking,] saying, *Behold, the Lord cometh* WITH TEN THOUSAND OF HIS SAINTS." It is worthy of observation, that this prediction of the coming of the Lord with his saints, like those from Paul, clearly identify the coming with (1.) The *judgment and destruction of the wicked*; (2.) With the *bringing of the saints*, and the appearance before the *presence of the Lord in glory*; (3.) With the *renovation of the earth*, as taught by Peter. An examination of

the epistle of Jude will show this : Verse 15, speaks specifically of his coming to judgment ; verses 17, 18, identify the time of which Peter was speaking, (2 Pet. iii. 3,) when he spake of the coming of the day of the Lord, as a thief in the night, and renovating the heavens and the earth ; verse 24, evidently has in view the same glory in the presence of the Lord that both Peter and Paul referred to : “ Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, *and to present you faultless before the PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY with exceeding joy,*” &c. It was undoubtedly this that Paul had in view in 1 Thess. ii. 19 : “ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ?* Are not even *ye* [their converts] *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.*” He expected *THEM to meet the souls saved by his instrumentality*, and to rejoice with them in the *presence of Christ*.

Although this *gathering together*, this *coming*, and this *meeting* of the saints at that time would *naturally imply* the *resurrection of their bodies*, in order that those who then are gathered might be the *persons who were redeemed*,—i. e., complex beings, as they were originally formed,—yet we are not left merely to *infer* this fact ; we find it plainly revealed that their bodies will be raised at the same time ; and, in some way, unexplained to men, yet known to God, the two natures will be joined again in immortal union ; thus *consummating* the redemption of the saints by the “ *adoption*” of their bodies. This is taught by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 23 : “ But every man [will be raised] in his own order ; Christ the first fruits ; afterward, *they that are Christ's, at his coming.*” Verse 51 : “ Behold, I show you a mystery : we shall not all *sleep*, but we shall *all be changed*, 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump* ; for the *trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible*, and we shall be changed.” Phil. iii. 20 : “ For our conversation is *in heaven* ; *from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ* ; 21. *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*, according to the working

* As the successful ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." 1 Thess. iv. 16: "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*"

It is thus that our Lord will gather this portion of his elect, precisely as he predicted in the text under notice: "And then shall he send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet,* and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."†

It cannot have failed to strike the attentive reader, how naturally, and how abundantly the other portions of the Bible elucidate, identify, and sustain the text under comment, *when it is interpreted literally*. And it has been sufficiently shown what havoc of history and Scripture is made by the attempts to expound it *figuratively*.

Having thus explained the text, in reference to those who shall have died in the Lord, it will be very easy to explain it, with reference to those who will be found alive at his coming. They will be miraculously and instantly *changed* so as to be *immortal*. Their corruptible body will put on incorruption; their mortal shall put on immortality. This change will probably be such as the Lord exhibited in his transfiguration on the mount. He then appeared, for a time, in his glory, and exhibited himself as he will be seen when he comes to judge the world. Such a change was undoubtedly experienced by Enoch and Elijah when they were translated to heaven.

The saints will be found living in every part of the world, when the Lord shall come with all his holy angels, and the spirits of those who have died in the Lord; and they will, by the omnipotence of Christ, be so transformed as to be like the saints who will be raised from the dead. And all of them, whether changed from the living, or raised from the dead,

* Marg. "With a trumpet, and a great voice."

† Their dust will be sleeping in every part of the earth; and whether the returning spirit goes to meet the risen body, or the dust is gathered and quickened into life where the spirits are gathered, the agency of the angels will be according to the established method.

will have bodies like unto the Lord's glorious body; for they are to dwell in his kingdom, and see his face forever more. Hence St. John says, (1 John iii. 2,) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that *when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*" St. Paul says, (Col. iii. 4,) "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" And he also speaks of this transformation in 1 Cor. xv. 49: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50. Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*;* neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be *changed*, 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," &c.†

It will be at this time, and by means of this change, that the elect who shall be living at the coming of the Lord, shall be gathered with those who come with him from heaven. St. Paul was inspired and led to inform us of the order in which these two great divisions of the elect will be finally gathered unto one another, and unto the Lord.

This is done distinctly enough in 1 Thess. iv. 14. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, *even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* [When he comes.] 15. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, [the Lord had revealed it,] that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [go before] them which are asleep. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the triumph of God; *and the dead in Christ shall rise first*: 17. *Then we which are alive and remain,* SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS,

* From the connections of the passage it is evident that he is here speaking — not figuratively — but *literally*: a literal change of the body to prepare it for admission into a literal kingdom: therefore the necessity of the resurrection of the dead, and the transformation of the living.

† See Note K, in the Appendix.

TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: AND SO SHALL WE BE EVER WITH THE LORD.”*

Thus two portions of the elect will be gathered. It is worthy of solemn consideration, that this two-fold gathering at the coming of Christ, was represented in the scene of transfiguration on the mount: Matt. xvii. 1: “And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, 2. And was *transfigured* before them; and *his face did shine as the sun*, and *his raiment was white as the light*. [Mark — And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.] 3. And behold there appeared unto them *Moses and Elias*, [*who appeared in glory*, Luke,] talking with him.”

Here we find represented the essential events of the second advent: (1.) *Christ* with his *glorified body*; (2.) *Moses*, “in glory,” as the representative of those who have *died*; (3.) *Elijah*, “in glory,” the representative of those who are changed without experiencing death.

St. Peter seems to have understood this as being in some way a representation of the Lord’s coming in glory. 2 Pet. i. 10: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the *power* and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.” He seems to have had the coming of Christ in power and glory brought to his mind as a confirmation of his exhortation and encouragement to his brethren. In thus speaking to them, he assured them that they had “not followed cunningly devised fables,” when they made known to them the coming of Christ, because they had had ocular demonstration of the fact. The subject of which he was then treating was this: Verse 10: “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your *calling* and *election sure*; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: 11. *For so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the EVERLASTING KINGDOM of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

* See Note L, in the Appendix.

CHAPTER XV.

Principal subject—GATHERING THE ELECT. THE SUBJECT APPLIED TO THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

The point to be established—Prophecies of Jeremiah, identifying the People, their Restoration, Rebuilding of Jerusalem, Christ under the name of David, the New Covenant, &c.—Further Quotations referring to the People, the Time, the Event, the Extent, &c.—Confirmation by Hosea—Prophecies of Isaiah, relating to the Branch, the Ensign, the Gathering, the Union, the Conversion, the Great Battle, the Signs in the Heavens, the Destruction of the Wicked, the Judgment of Satan, the Resurrection of the Saints, the Coming of the Lord, the New Heavens and Earth, &c.—Prophecies of Ezekiel, relating particularly to Christ's Reign over Israel, the Renewal of Palestine, the Conversion and Restoration, the happy Results, &c.

Verse 31. AND [THEN] HE SHALL SEND HIS ANGELS, WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY SHALL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, [Mark: FROM THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH,] FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER.

In the foregoing chapter it has been shown from the Scriptures, how literally, and how exactly this will be fulfilled with respect to those portions of the elect whose cases are therein described, viz: those who have died in the Lord, and such as remain alive at his coming.

It has also been shown, in the same chapter, that there is still another portion of those who are called the elect, that seem to be treated in the Scriptures as, in some respects, apart by themselves. That is, they have been from the beginning a *peculiar people*. They have been the subjects of a *peculiar destiny*; and they have been preserved, and will be brought in, under a *peculiar covenant*. It will be perceived, of course, that the reference is to the descendants of Israel who shall be found on the earth at that period of time called, the fullness of the Gentiles. This period—whatever it may specifically mean,—evidently synchronises with the closing up of the present, and introducing the millennial dispensation.

At that time a change distinctly marked will characterize the destiny of both Jews and Gentiles. In respect to the Jews, two things of great importance to the subject in hand will transpire: 1. Their holy city will cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles. 2. The blindness which has happened unto Israel shall be taken away.*

At that time the Jews are not only to be converted, but restored to the possession of their fatherland. At first, probably, the conversion and restoration will be gradual; but, at a certain stage of the renovation, as the Scriptures appear to teach, the work will be cut short by unusual divine interposition, and hurried to its complete consummation. This distinctly predicted interposition will complete the gathering of the elect.

This is the point now presented for examination. The certainty of this people being still regarded as under the covenant of election made with their fathers, having already been demonstrated by the many passages quoted in the chapter devoted to that purpose, the application of the text under comment to this specific subject, seems to be as appropriate as its reference to the gathering of the other portions of God's family. We may not be able to trace all the links of relationship between the gathering of this portion of the elect and the gathering of the others, any more than we can comprehend the relationships that connect many other parts of the great renovation of the disordered and wicked world. There may be a thousand things above our comprehension. But this should not hinder us from crediting what God has seen fit to reveal. Comprehension of separate truths, as individual truths, is certainly much easier than the comprehension of all truths, in their intricate relations to one another. If we may not do the latter, with satisfaction to ourselves, it is no reason why we should not do the former, where distinct truths are communicated.

To illustrate—the fact of God's universal sovereignty is distinctly revealed, and also the fact of human freedom and

* Lu. xxi. 24; Rom. xi. 25.

responsibility ; but is it not much easier to comprehend each of these truths by itself, than to comprehend them in their relations? So the fact of the resurrection of the dead, and also the fact of continued identity, are both revealed ; but the relation of these truths to one another has confounded the mightiest minds, when they have considered some of the circumstances which result from the dissolution of the body,—as when it is eaten, and becomes a part of another human body, which also dies in that condition. And so of other circumstances which might be suggested. Yet we never, on this account, reject the two revealed truths of continued identity and bodily resurrection. Thus, in relation to the matter in hand ; if God has revealed the fact of the final gathering of the Jewish portion of the elect, in connection with the gathering of the others, we are not at liberty to disbelieve it, even if we may not be able to comprehend it in its relations. *Relations* of truths we are not required to comprehend ; it is the *truths themselves* that we are under obligation to believe. Has God revealed the fact, that the natural descendents of Israel, as such, who remain until the period of consummation, shall be gathered—not only unto himself spiritually—but unto the land of their fathers literally? This is the question ; and to this point shall be brought the “law and the testimony.”

1. In relation to the fact of their final gathering : Jer. xxx. 3: “For lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of *my people Israel and Judah*, saith the Lord ; and I will cause them to *return to the land that I gave to their fathers*, and they shall possess it.” The subsequent verses show that it has not yet been fulfilled : Verse 8 : “For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, [Israel and Judah, verse 4,] and I will burst thy bonds, and *strangers shall no more serve themselves of him* : 9. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and DAVID THEIR KING, *whom I will raise up unto them*. 10. Therefore, fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord ; neither be dismayed, O Israel ; for lo, I will

save thee from afar, and thy seed* from the land of their captivity; and *Jacob shall return, and be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.*" This has not yet been fulfilled. Verse 11: "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to *save thee*; though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." Alluding to their iniquities and punishments by which they have been *wounded*, God continues, verse 17: "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an Outcast,† saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. 18. Thus saith the Lord; Behold, *I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents,‡ and have mercy on his dwelling places*; [both the *people*, scattered, and the *land*, desolate;] and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof." Verse 22: "And ye shall be *my people*, and I will be *your God.*" xxxi. 1: "At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be *the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.*" Verse 6. "For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God! 7. For thus saith the Lord, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, SAVE THY PEOPLE, THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL! 8. [God's answer,] Behold, *I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither. 9. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead*

* As the Jews are beloved for the father's sakes, and their election was on the ground of a covenant made personally with Israel, their father, it seems to be kept in view by such addresses as this — where, meaning the posterity — the address is as to Jacob himself.

† As if God had cast them away.

‡ It will be noticed that this somewhat ambiguous form of expression means their restoration from captivity.

them; I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a *Father to Israel*, and *Ephraim is my first born*. 10. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and *declare it in the isles afar off*, and say, He that *scattered Israel will GATHER him, and KEEP him*, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11. For the Lord hath *redeemed Jacob*, and *ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.*"

See the whole chapter, and how the following is connected: Verse 31. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32. *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt;** which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;* and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, *for they shall ALL know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them*, saith the Lord; for I will *forgive their iniquity*, and I will *remember their sin no more*. 35. For thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar: The Lord of hosts is his name: 36. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever.† 37. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and

* That covenant did not require him to *forgive the guilty*; and therefore he slew them in the wilderness. And that covenant did not require him to renew their hearts. It was not the *original* covenant.

† The whole connections show that this reference to the most unchangeable things in nature, was designed to *confirm* the covenant of the Lord; but lest there might be some advantage taken of the fact that the heavens are said to pass away, and there be new heavens, the Lord uses another illustrative confirmation.

the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all they have done, saith the Lord. 39. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city *shall be built to the Lord*, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. 40. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. 41. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be *holy unto the Lord*; *it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more FOREVER.*"

In this long quotation, several things are undeniably evident: (1.) That it refers to the literal house of Israel and Judah; (2.) That it declares the purpose of God to restore and convert them; (3.) That Jerusalem shall be built again, to be thrown down no more forever. (4.) That it has not yet been fulfilled, and is just as certain to be fulfilled as it is certain that Jehovah's word is true.

And it should be observed, also, (1.) That it is connected with their *serving the Lord their God*, and *David their king*, who is to be *raised up unto them*. (xxx. 9.) This of course refers to *Christ*, in his *regal or kingly office*, as the *successor of David*, according to the covenant with David, that his throne should endure forever.* (2.) It should be observed again, that this is predicted of those that should be "left of the sword," found "in the north country," in "the coasts of the earth," "in the isles afar off," "among the chief nations;" that it is "the remnant of Israel," those that had been "wounded" with "chastisement," for a "multitude of iniquities;" of whom God would "not make a full end," but would "correct in measure," and not leave "altogether unpunished." It should be noticed, (3.) again, that their final restoration was to be accompanied with *thorough, spiritual, universal conversion*, leaving not one of them, little or great, that should not know the Lord. (xxxi. 33-34.) And, (4.)

* See Ps. lxxxix. 18-37. What follows in the remainder of the Psalm, is even now occurring; but the quotation above shows that David is to be raised up.

this was to be done under a *new covenant*, differing from that by which they were brought out of Egypt, judged, and *destroyed* by myriads; it is a covenant to “*forgive* their iniquity,” and “remember their sin no more.” It is a covenant that would secure their *repentance*: (xxx. 9.) “They shall come with *weeping*, and with *supplications* will I lead them.” And thus would God grant them a new heart, and a new spirit. (5.) It should be done because, as a generation, they were “beloved for the father’s sakes;” (Rom. xi. 28,) and because God “loved” them “with an everlasting love.” (xxx. 3.) (6.) Finally, all this originated in the often declared fact, that they were *God’s people*; (xxx. 3, 22, and xxx. 1, 7, 14, 20, 23, 33;) they were God’s *chosen* or *elect* people, as Paul said, (Rom. xi. 28,) “As touching the *ELECTION*, they are *beloved for the father’s sakes*.” For this reason they were to be *gathered unto the Lord*, and *unto one another*, *Judah and Israel both*. xxx. 3, 4, 7,* 10, 11, 18 and xxx. 1, 8, 10, 11, 16, 23, 27.)

Now if all this does not identify the people, the gathering, the conversion, the final and permanent upbuilding, then, of certainty, it is not in the power of language to do it; and if God *wished* to communicate information respecting their final destiny, he could not do it in human language, if it has not been done here.

The same general promises may be found in the thirty-second chapter, from the 36th verse.† And the same subject is resumed in the thirty-third chapter, in a connection that fully proves it to be yet unfulfilled. Verse 14: “Behold, *the days come*, saith the Lord, *that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah*. 15. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

* Jacob comprises both.

† It is no objection that this was *suggested* by the captivity in Babylon; (verse 36,) for it was done expressly to show what great things God was determined finally to do for them. Just as the troubles of this world frequently suggest the promises of the everlasting heaven.

16. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely : and this is the name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah-tsidkenu, (i. e.,) The Lord our Righteousness. 17. For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. [*Marg.* There shall not be cut off from David a man to sit upon the throne, &c.] 18. Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifices continually. 20. Thus saith the Lord ; If *ye* can break my covenant of the day, and *my* covenant of the night,* and that there should not be day and night in their season ; 21. Then may also *my* covenant be broken with *David* my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne ; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured ; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. 23. Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 24. Consider thou not what this *people* have spoken, saying, The *two families* which the Lord hath *chosen*, [ELECTED] *he hath even cast them off?* Thus *they* [Gentiles] have despised MY PEOPLE, that they should be no more a *nation* before them. 25. Thus saith the Lord ; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth ; 26. Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take of his seed rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob : for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.”

It should be observed, respecting this quotation, (1.) That this cannot possibly be applied to any people but the natural descendents of Jacob. (Verses 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26.) It should be noticed, (2.) That their return to their own land should be “*in those days, and at that time*” that God will “*cause the BRANCH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO GROW UP UNTO DAVID,*” to “*execute judgment and justice in the land ;*” when (verse 16,) “*in those days,*” Judah and Jerusalem should

* Gen. viii. 22.

dwell safely ; and she should be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (3.) This must, then, refer to the same time that is spoken of in Isa. iv. 2. “*In that day shall the BRANCH OF THE LORD be beautiful and glorious ; [Marg. beauty and glory ;] and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel.* 3. And it shall come to pass, that he that is *left in Zion*, and he that *remaineth in Jerusalem*, shall be called *holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.*” And this is also connected with Jer. xxiii. 1 : “*Wo be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture !* saith the Lord.* 2. Therefore thus saith the *Lord God of Israel* against the pastors that feed *my people ;†* Ye have scattered *my flock*, and driven them away, and have not visited them : behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. 3. And I will GATHER *the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds :* and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4. And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them : and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. 5. Behold, *the days come*, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER, and shall execute *judgment and justice in the earth.* 6. IN HIS DAYS *Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely : and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* 7. Therefore, behold, *the days come*, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt ; 8. But, The Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led *the house of Israel out of the north country, AND FROM ALL COUNTRIES WHITHER I HAD DRIVEN THEM ; AND THEY SHALL DWELL IN THEIR OWN LAND.*”

This final and universal gathering, it will be observed, is to be in the days when the righteous BRANCH *is raised up unto David*, and a KING *shall reign and prosper*, executing

* See chap. xxxi. 10.

† The priests and rabbies that assume the pastoral relations among the Jews.

righteousness and judgment in the earth. And the name of this *King* is JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU.* And these passages are unmistakably identified with such as this: Hos. iii. 4: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice,† and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim.‡ *Afterward* [after those many days] *shall the children of Israel RETURN, and seek the Lord their God, AND DAVID THEIR KING: and shall fear the Lord and his GOODNESS IN THE LATTER DAYS.*"

The eleventh chapter of Isaiah identifies this bringing forth of the Branch unto David with the final restoration of Israel. Verse 1: "And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Then follows a description of the universal peace which shall result from his judgment of the poor, and destruction of the wicked, (verses 3, 4.) Then, (verse 9,) "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This is after he begins his reign, and after the destruction of the wicked, (verses 3-6.) Then, (verse 10,) referring evidently to the same period, "And in *that day*, (verse 1,) there shall be a Root of Jesse,§ which shall stand for an *ensign*|| of the *people*: [the Jews, as the rest of the verse shows:] to it [the *ensign*] shall the *Gentiles* seek; and his [the *ensign's*] rest shall be glorious. 11. And it shall come to pass, in *that day*, that the Lord shall set his hand *again* THE SECOND TIME, *to recover the REMNANT of his people*, [his by election,] which shall be *left*, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. Verse 12. And he shall *set up an ensign for the nations*, [verse 10,] *and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel*, and GATHER TOGETHER *the dispersed of*

* See Note M, in the Appendix.

† There is no possibility of applying this to Christians, or to any people but the literal Jews.

‡ That is — as the titles sufficiently indicate — they shall have neither their own *temple service*, nor *idolatry*. How true of their present condition!

§ "A BRANCH shall grow out of his roots." (Verse 1.)

|| An *ensign* for them to rally about. "Unto him [*Shiloh*] the *gathering of the people* shall be."

*Judah from the four corners of the earth.** 13. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the *adversaries of Judah shall be cut off,*" &c.†

Chap. xii. 1: "And in *that day* thou [Israel] shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: *though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.* 2. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." They shall then know the Lord their God, and their Redeemer the Holy One of Israel. The veil is no longer blinding their hearts. This is, of course, all yet to be fulfilled.

In Isa., chapters xxiv, xxv., xxvi., and xxvii., we have the same gathering together of the elect, unmistakably identified in various ways with the portions previously quoted. And it is remarkable that all the principal facts respecting the fear and destruction of the assembled nations, are referred to: we have, for example,

(1.) The gathering of the nations against Israel at the time the sun and moon are darkened, when the Lord begins to deliver his people. Chap. xxiv 21: "And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that the Lord shall punish the *host of the HIGH ONES THAT ARE ON HIGH, and the KINGS OF THE EARTH THAT ARE UPON THE EARTH.* 22. And they shall be *gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison,* and after many days shall they be visited.‡ 23. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. [*Marg. or, there shall be glory before his ancients.*]

(2.) We have also the fear and perplexity of nations, and the physical convulsions which are to occur in connection

* Read the text from the prophecy of Christ now under notice. The Lord understood all about this gathering of his elect from the four winds.

† This synchronises with all the other places quoted in other parts of the Treatise, in reference to the distress and destruction among the nations.

‡ Let these remarkable expressions be remembered, to show the identity of this with portions hereafter referred to.

with the Lord's coming to redeem his people, and to destroy the wicked, when he shall come as a thief in the night; when the day of the Lord shall come as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Verse 17. "Fear and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. 18. And it shall come to pass that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for the windows from on high are open,* and the foundations of the earth do shake. 19. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved,† the earth is moved exceedingly. 20. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard; and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgressions thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again." Then follows the passage first quoted in this connection: verse 21 seems to refer to the *binding of Satan and his angels*: those "wicked spirits in high places," as Paul calls them, Eph. vi. 12.‡ Verse 22 refers to the gathering of all nations against Jerusalem, in the great battle of Gog and Magog, as it is described elsewhere. Verse 23, refers to the darkening of the heavenly luminaries, as it is described by the Saviour, and in Joel iii. Then follows in chapter xxv., the grateful reflections of the redeemed Israelites, in view of God's overthrow of their enemies, his faithful fulfillment of his ancient covenant, the deliverance of Israel, and the happiness that shall result. xxv. 1: "O Lord, thou art my God: I will exalt thee; I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things: *thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.* [He has fulfilled his old covenant.] 4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible

* They see wonderful and terrible things for them going on in the heavens, — even the sign of the Son of man. They see what is coming on the earth.

† 2 Pet., chap. iii.

‡ For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against [*Marg.*] *wicked spirits in HIGH PLACES.*

ones is as a storm against the wall.* 6. And in this mountain † shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees: of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. 7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. 8. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; *and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth*: FOR THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT. ‡ 9. And it shall be said, *in that day*, Lo, THIS IS OUR GOD; WE HAVE WAITED FOR HIM, AND HE WILL SAVE US: THIS IS JEHOVAH; WE HAVE WAITED FOR HIM; WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN HIS SALVATION! 10. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, *and Moab shall be trodden down* [threshed] *under him*,§ even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.”

In chapter xxvi. we have the song of Israel's gratitude: Verses 8 and 9 are affecting references to the ardent and perpetual longings and expectations which have characterized the Jews ever since their dispersion. Verse 13 alludes to their oppression under Gentile rulers. Verse 14 refers to their destruction when God visited and destroyed them:” and in verse 21 we find the manner of it stated: “*For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, for their iniquity*;¶ *the earth also shall disclose her blood*, [Marg. bloods,] and she shall no more cover her slain.” It will be a time of general judgment of the earth for all the violence done upon it. The martyrs, such as Isaiah, and the

* Ezek. xxxviii. 9. God says to Gog and Magog in reference to their coming against his people: “Thou shalt ascend and come like a *storm*,” &c.

† They were in their own land then.

‡ It will be found on examination of those places where “the Lord hath spoken” this, that it is to be accomplished literally for Israel, at the time of his final gathering together.

§ See Isa. xi. 13, 14, and the remaining verses of the chapter quoted above.

¶ This is not the description of a limited, but of a universal destruction, when the Lord cometh out of his place to destroy Israel's oppressors. And it has been shown that they are to be gathered together as prisoners into the pit.

righteous dead are to be raised: the earth "shall no more cover her slain."

And all this is connected with Israel's *gathering*; verse 15 sufficiently identifies this. Verses 16 and 17 show how they are brought to the deepest anguish, repentance, and supplication at the time of their delivery, just as it is described in Zach. xii. Verse 18 shows that, after all, their deliverance was not by their own might or wisdom, but by direct divine interposition, as it is elsewhere explained, by the "Lord coming out of his place," and when he "visited and destroyed" the wicked. This is what we might expect to find, for in several parallel places, as in the chapter forming the subject of this Exposition, it refers it to the coming of the Lord to punish the nations of the earth, and gather together his elect. But the coming of the Lord is elsewhere identified with the resurrection of the dead who "sleep in Jesus." And this must refer to all who died in the faith of Jesus, whether they lived after his first advent, and believed in him who had come; or whether they lived previous to the advent, and saw his day, and were glad.

So in the chapter now under notice, the resurrection of the righteous dead is not only inferrable from the expressions in the 21st verse, where the "earth shall disclose her bloods, and shall no more cover her slain:" Verse 19 states the thing expressly: "THY DEAD MEN SHALL LIVE, TOGETHER WITH MY DEAD BODY SHALL THEY ARISE. AWAKE* AND SING, YE THAT DWELL IN THE DUST: FOR THY DEW† IS AS THE DEW OF HERBS, AND THE EARTH SHALL CAST OUT THE DEAD." The concluding verses of the next chapter also serve to identify these things with the final gathering of Israel as it is described in the prophecy of Christ, by St. Paul, and by Isaiah in the eleventh chapter, verses 15, 16, which see. Verse 12: "And it shall come to pass in *that day*,‡ that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of

*The dead in Christ "sleep in Jesus."

† They will awake from the dust as the fresh, blooming plant covered with "dew."

‡ It is remarkable how definitely the times are marked and connected.

the river unto the stream of Egypt,* and ye shall be GATHERED one by one, O ye children of Israel. 13. And it shall come to pass in that day, that THE GREAT TRUMPET SHALL BE BLOWN, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of ASSYRIA, and the outcasts in the land of EGYPT, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

Now, comparing Scripture with Scripture, cannot fail to show that this *gathering of all the nations together against the Jews*; † this *coming forth of the Lord out of his place to judge all nations*, and to *make the earth disclose her bloods*, and *uncover her slain*; this *general gathering together* from the uttermost parts of the earth of the remnant of God's Jewish elect, according to his original and oft-repeated covenant; this *general gathering together* of this portion of the elect, (Isa. xxvii. 13,) "in that day that THE GREAT TRUMPET SHALL BE BLOWN, and they shall come which were ready to perish," when "the outcasts in the land of Egypt" shall be gathered in "one by one;" this time when the "dead men shall live," and "together with" Isaiah's "dead body" they shall arise; "and the earth shall cast out her dead;" this time when "the Lord shall set his hand again, *the second time*, to recover the remnant of *his people* which shall be left;" when "he shall set up an *ensign for the nations*, and shall *assemble the outcasts of ISRAEL*, and *gather together the dispersed of JUDAH, from the four corners of the earth*:"—it will be found that all these events synchronise, and are just as literal as words can well express them; that they are, in fact, so inter-

* The channel of the river evidently refers to the river Nile, which is to be smitten "in the seven streams," and men carried over it "dry shod." Isa. xi. 15. The approach of the Israelites from that part of the world will be across the river Nile, then along the coast to the "stream of Egypt," which is a little river on the south-west corner of Palestine. The Israelites are to approach Palestine from that part of the world, as Isaiah says, (xi. 14,) by the way of the Philistines toward the west. The map of Palestine will explain this in a moment.

† Against those who are assembled at Jerusalem before the general gathering of the Jews.

woven with what is undeniably literal, that nothing but unjustifiable violence can wrest them from their appropriate literal application and make them figurative.

In Isa. lxxv., we have also promises to the Jewish elect which must yet be fulfilled by their being gathered unto the Lord in their own land. Verse 8: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sake, *that I may not destroy them all.* 9. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine ELECT *shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.* 10. And Sharon shall be a fold for flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me." Then follows (verse 11,) a rebuke for their wickedness; (12,) the destructive judgments that their sins had provoked; (13-15,) the results of obedience and disobedience; (17,) the new heavens and earth: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind. 18. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21. And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. 24. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the

serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."

By comparing this with the eleventh of Isaiah, it will be identified as belonging to the same period, — the time of Israel's restoration.

In the last chapter of Isaiah, the creation of the new heavens and new earth is represented very plainly as belonging to the period of Israel's sudden restoration and conversion to the Lord; and it is also described in inseparable connection with the coming of the Lord to judgment at the time that "all nations" shall be gathered together against Israel, so that "all the tribes of the earth" may see the glory of the Lord's judgment-coming, when he appears in flaming fire to deliver his people, and destroy their foes. The battle of Gog and Magog, as it is described in Ezekiel, and in Joel, will be terminated in that manner.

The astonishing suddenness of Israel's conversion is strikingly illustrated in verses 7, 8; and God claims to do the work himself, verse 9; verses 10, 11, 12, and 13, show how it is to be applied to the religious and national capital of the Jews, for which they had mourned, verse 10. Verse 14 tells how they would be affected when they should see it accomplished: "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb; and the hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies." Then follows the way in which it shall be done, clearly identifying it with the second advent in glory, in the sight of all men, at the time that all nations are gathered before him, when Jerusalem shall be finally delivered, and the Jews restored forever. And the fire that consumes the wicked will renovate the earth and heavens. Verse 15: "For behold, THE LORD WILL COME WITH FIRE, AND WITH HIS CHARIOTS LIKE A WHIRLWIND, TO RENDER HIS ANGER WITH FURY, AND HIS REBUKE WITH FLAMES OF FIRE. 16. *For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many.* 17. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one in the midst, [*Marg.* one after another,] eating swine's flesh, and

the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord. 18. For I know their works and their thoughts; it shall come, that I WILL GATHER ALL NATIONS AND TONGUES; AND THEY SHALL COME AND SEE MY GLORY. 19. And I will set a *sign* among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. 20. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. 21. And I will take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord. 22. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another,* shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. 24. And they shall go forth, and look† upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”‡

That Israel is still regarded by the Lord as his *chosen people*, and that, for this reason, he will at last gather them together, appears most evidently from Ezek. xxxiv. 1-9, which contains God's complaint against those who have caused his people to err. Verse 10, contains a notification of what God intends to do for his "flock" that had been "scattered upon all the face of the earth."

Verse 11: "For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. 12. As a

*The new heavens and the new earth are the old heavens and the old earth *renewed*; restored to their original condition before man had sinned.

† Not forever, certainly, but at first; immediately after the great battle, when (verse 16,) "the slain of the Lord shall be many."

‡ See Note N, in the Appendix.

shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13. And I will bring them out from the people, and will *gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed* them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers,* and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14. I will feed them in a good pasture, *and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be ;* there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the *mountains of Israel.* 15. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. 16. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick : but I will destroy the fat and the strong : I will feed them with judgment."

Verse 22: "*Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey :* and I will judge between cattle and cattle.† 23. *And I will set up ONE SHEPHERD over them, and HE shall feed them, even my servant DAVID,‡ HE shall feed them, and HE shall be their shepherd.* 24. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant DAVID, A PRINCE among them : I the Lord have spoken it. 25. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land : and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.§ 26. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing ; and will cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessings. 27. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord,|| when I have

* They are represented under the similitude of a flock : hence the meaning of *feeding* them.

† "As a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

‡ This can be no other than Christ.

§ "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

|| In that day they will say, "This is our God ; we have waited for him, and he will save us : that is the Lord : [Jehovah] we have waited for him ; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isa. xxv. 9.

broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. 28. *And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen*, neither shall the beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. 29. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown,* and they shall be no more consumed with hunger, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. 30. Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, *the house of Israel, are my people*,† saith the Lord God. 31. And ye *my flock*, the flock of *my pasture, are men*, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.”

On this passage, the following conclusions must be considered undeniable: 1. That it relates to literal Israel. 2. That it foretells a *gathering* that they have never yet realized. 3. That they will then dwell in their own country. 4. That Christ will then be their Prince and Shepherd. 5. That they will all be truly converted. 6. That their residence in Palestine will be free from sorrow, danger, disappointment, or interruption.

The thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel will never cease to be regarded as teaching, as plainly as language can teach it, the final restoration and conversion of the whole house of Israel that shall remain until “the set time to favor Zion” shall come. And it all proceeds on the professed ground of God’s regard for his own name, in view of his unchangeable covenant with their fathers.

The chapter opens with an address to the mountains of Israel, and continues to the 15th verse. No possibility of fair interpretation can ever mistake the intention of God to define “the mountains of Israel” literally; and no proof whatever can be drawn from history to show that the promised restoration of the Israelitish inhabitants has yet been effected. In the connections of the passage, it must be as impossible to

* See Isa. xi. 1.

† “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and *Israel mine ELECT*, I have even called thee by thy name.” Isa. xlv. 4. “Yet hear thou, O Jacob, my servant; and Israel, whom I have CHOSEN.” Isa. xlv. 1.

misunderstand its literality, as to misunderstand the Scriptures that describe the exodus from Egypt, or the entrance into Canaan. Such language as this cannot reasonably be misinterpreted: Verse 8: "But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to *my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come.* 9. For behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: 10. And I will multiply *men* upon you, ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, EVEN ALL OF IT; and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded. 11. And I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: *and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.* 12. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, EVEN MY PEOPLE ISRAEL; *and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men.*"*

Verse 16. "Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 17. Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. 18. Wherefore, I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it. And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. 20. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, *These are the people of Jehovah,† and are gone forth out of his land!* 21. *But I had pity for my holy name,‡* which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen whither they went. 22. Therefore, say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God: *I do not this for*

* How strikingly the last seventeen hundred years of Jewish history, and Canaan's desolation, are alluded to in this chapter.

† The heathen knew the God of the Jewish nation by this name.

‡ See chap. xx. 9, 14.

*your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake,** which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am JEHOVAH,† saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.‡ 24. *For§ I will take you from among the heathen, and GATHER you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land."*

But, says an objector, we read that they will continue in blindness until the fullness of the Gentiles is come. How can wicked, spiritually blind, hard hearted Jews dwell in the renewed inheritance? Let God explain this matter.

Verse 25: "THEN || will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28. AND YE SHALL DWELL IN THE LAND THAT I GAVE TO YOUR FATHERS; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. 30. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations. 32. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confound-

* As men would say, out of respect for their own reputation for veracity.

† It is altogether more expressive to retain the *original name*, JEHOVAH, of the Lord God of Israel.

‡ Chap. xx. 41, and xxiii. 22.

§ This is the way his veracity will be displayed.

|| For *then* there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

ed * for your own ways, O house of Israel. 33. Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. 34. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.† 35. And they shall say, *This land that was desolate is become like the garden of EDEN!* and the waste and desolate and ruined cities ‡ are become fenced, and are inhabited. 36. Then the heathen that are left round about you § shall know that I JEHOVAH build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I JEHOVAH have spoken it, and I will do it. 37. Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock. 38. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am JEHOVAH.”

* See Zech. xii.

† How distinctly the prophecy describes the history of Palestine for the last thousand years and more!

‡ The ruins of cities overspread almost every portion of Palestine.

§ See Note N, in the Appendix.

CHAPTER XVI.

Principal subject—GATHERING THE ELECT.

Applied to the Restoration of the Jews—Reasons for continuing the Subject—Ezekiel's Vision of the Dry Bones—Design, and Substance of the Vision—God's own Interpretation—Figurative Language not used to interpret Figurative—Final Union, Gathering, and Blessedness of Israel—A Kingdom under the reign of Messiah—The Battle of Gog and Magog—Referred to in other parts of the Bible—Interpretation—Prophecy of Zechariah—The Great Battle—The Lord Revealed—The Victory—Prophecy of Amos—The Tabernacle of David raised up—Happy Condition of the People—Prophecy of Moses—The History and Prophecy blended—True conversion, and real Restoration—St. Paul's Reasoning—Synopsis of the Argument—Twenty-nine Particulars in the Argument—The Conclusion—Angelic Agency in Gathering the Elect—Examples—How the present Dispensation will be terminated.

Verse 31. AND [THEN] SHALL HE SEND HIS ANGELS WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, AND THEY SHALL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER.

THE only apology—if any be needed—for extending this subject, in its application to the Jews, is (1.) The very great importance of a thorough understanding of the divine will in respect to this matter; and (2.) Because the subject has not generally been investigated by either the common reader of the Bible, or by the ministers of the gospel.

The writer has conversed with a great many both of the membership and the ministry, who seemed, in too many instances, neither to know nor to care what the Scriptures teach in respect to the matter in question. And, even with many who are somewhat impressed with the importance of the subject, there have been manifested so much indefiniteness and indecision, and so little personal acquaintance with the Scripture doctrine, that the writer has been for several years painfully impressed, that the divine will in respect to the final destiny of the Jewish race has not received that prayerful attention by the churches, that has been directed to

other subjects of no greater, and probably of less, importance. Yet it requires but a moment's meditation to perceive that the final restoration of the Lord's ancient people, both to himself and their fatherland, must be regarded as the great event of the closing dispensation.

The vision of the resurrection of the dry bones is directly connected with the prophecy of Ezekiel, which was under discussion at the close of the preceding chapter. The reader is requested to keep open before him the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, that he may clearly perceive its connections with the preceding and subsequent portions of the prophecy. The *design* of the vision was evidently to illustrate and confirm what God had just declared concerning the conversion and final gathering of the children of Israel and Judah. From verse 1 to 10, inclusive, we have the *vision*, which the reader will perceive has a direct connection with the preceding chapter. Verses 11-14 *contain God's own application and interpretation of the vision*. LET THIS BE DISTINCTLY CONSIDERED; together with the fact, *that the Lord does not give one vision or parable to explain another*. There are many instances of the Lord's explaining his own figurative language, and the visions of his prophets. But the writer has not in recollection an instance where one parable, metaphor, or vision was given to interpret another. In all cases where the interpretation and application of figurative language and visions have been examined, not figurative, but simple, literal language has been employed.

The use of figurative language to explain figurative, would be a manifest impropriety; for, in that case, the interpretation itself would need to be interpreted. In other words, it would be no interpretation at all.

Now, God's own *interpretation* of the vision of dry bones is this: Verse 11: "Then said he unto me, Son of man, *these bones are the whole house of Israel*. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.* 12. Therefore prophecy and say unto them,

* Does not this mean, We are cut off *from* our parts? i. e. we are cut off from enjoying our parts of the everlasting possession promised to our fathers: Our hope is lost.

Thus saith the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.* 13. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. 14. And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD." Then follows (verses 15-19) a representation of the final gathering and complete union of all the children of Israel, under the similitude of uniting two sticks [rods or sceptres] into one. Verses 16, 19, sufficiently prove the universality of its application to the literal posterity of Israel. With verse 20 begins the statement of God's own explanation and purpose in the matter: Verse 20: "And the sticks whereon thou writest (verse 16) shall be in thine hand before thine eyes. 21. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, *I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will GATHER THEM ON EVERY SIDE, AND BRING THEM INTO THEIR OWN LAND.* 22. And I will make them ONE NATION IN THE LAND UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL; and ONE KING SHALL BE KING TO THEM ALL: *and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.* 23. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24. And DAVID my servant shall be KING over them; and they all shall have ONE SHEPHERD: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes; and do them. 25. *And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever: and my servant DAVID shall be their PRINCE FOREVER.*† 26. Moreover I will make a COVENANT OF PEACE

* See Isa. xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14.

† It does seem inexcusable for any intelligent person to pretend that this passage, in its connections, is of doubtful application. How could the Lord

with them; it shall be an EVERLASTING COVENANT with them; and I will PLACE them, and MULTIPLY them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever more. 27. My tabernacle also shall be with them; * yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

In chapters xxxviii. and xxxix. we have the prophecy of the great battle of Gog and Magog with the restored Israelites, just as we find it stated in Zech. and Joel, and as we find it predicted in Rev. twice; once as a literal occurrence, at the closing up of the present dispensation, and once as a symbolical illustration to represent the conflict and destruction at the closing up of the millenium. There can be no difficulty in discovering the identity of the event described in Ezek. xxxix. 17-22, and in Rev. xix. 11-21. And it will be seen that the restoration of Israel, the destruction of their enemies, the marriage of the Lamb, (Rev. xix. 7-9,) are all to transpire in connection with the judgment coming of the Lord, and at the closing up of the ante-millennial dispensation.

Now, it is freely admitted that in these various representations of the events of the same period, there are some things which are less easily understood than some other things which are related in the same connection. This arises principally from the fact, that God did not move any *one* of the prophets to predict *all* the circumstances of the Lord's second advent. And there is undeniably a degree of difficulty in all our attempts to analyze and arrange chronologically all the events which are related by the different prophets, as forming distinctive portions of that wonderful display of events which will introduce the millennial dispensation. But, previously to the *first* coming of our Lord, there was the same difficulty in the analysis and application of the many particulars which were predicted in connection with the foretelling of his advent. And the same thing is true with respect to many other

describe such an event, supposing that he desired to do so, if he has not done it in this chapter, and its associated passages?

* See Note O, in the Appendix.

prophecies, which, after their fulfillment, were sufficiently plain to be understood by all.

It is obviously our duty, in reference to such prophecies, to interpret what is less plain by what is more plain; and never to permit what we *do* know to be set aside by what we do *not* know. Who, for instance, can fail to understand such a prediction as this, which closes up the prophecy of Gog and Magog? Ezek. xxxix. 22: "So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God *from that day and forward*. 23. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies; so fell they all by the sword. 24. According to their uncleanness, and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them. 25. Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, *and will be jealous for my holy name*.* 26. After that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses wherewith they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their own land, and none made them afraid. 27. When I have brought them *again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' land*, and am *sanctified in them*† in the sight of many nations. 28. Then they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have *gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there*. [Among the heathen.] 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

And who can misunderstand such a prediction as this, which the connections show is yet to be fulfilled? Zech. vii. 12:

* By referring to the many places where the expression is used, it will be seen that God regards himself as being distinctly *pledged* to do this for Israel; and that he will yet justify himself in this matter before the whole world.

† In their dispersion and wickedness, God regarded himself as suffering reproach, as one that had promised without fulfilling; and in their final restoration and happiness, he will be sanctified in them; his character as a covenant keeping God will be cleared from all imputations.

(Referring to the wickedness of Israel,) "Yea, they made their heart as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets :* therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. 13. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear ; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts : 14. But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned ; for they laid the pleasant land desolate. Chapter viii. 1 : Again the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me, saying, 2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. 3. Thus saith the Lord : I am returned unto Zion,† and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem ; and Jerusalem shall be called, A city of truth ; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, The holy mountain. 4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for every age, [for multitude of days.‡] 5. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. 6. Thus saith the Lord of hosts : *If it be marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days*, should it also be marvelous in *mine* eyes, saith the Lord of hosts ? 7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts ; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country ; 8. And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem ; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness." Verse 11 : (After describing in verses 9 and 10 their days of affliction,) "But now I will not be unto the *residue* § of this

* "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. See also, John v. 39. It was these portions of the prophecies against which the Jews opposed themselves ; and for which wrath came upon them so terribly.

† Speaking — as was not unusual — of things future as if they were present.

‡ Isa. lxxv. 20, and the connections.

§ It is remarkable how frequently these latter day blessings are described as being given to the *residue*, the *remnant*, those that *be left*, those that *remain*, of Israel.

people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts. 12. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things." Let the reader examine the remaining portions of the chapter.

Read also chapters ix. and x. In the great battle which is so frequently referred to elsewhere, as occurring in connection with their final gathering to the Lord and their fatherland, the Israelites shall be aided by the visible presence of the Lord. Ch. ix. 14: "AND THE LORD SHALL BE SEEN OVER THEM, and his arrows shall go forth as the *lightning*, AND THE LORD GOD SHALL BLOW THE TRUMPET, and shall go with the whirlwinds of the south." Verse 16. "And the Lord God shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people." Chap. x. 5: "And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in battle; and they shall fight because the LORD IS WITH THEM, and the riders on horses shall be confounded. 6. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, *and will bring them again to place them*; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them. 8. I will hiss for them, and *gather* them; for I have redeemed them; and they shall increase as they have increased. 9. And I will sow* them among the people; and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. 10. I will bring them also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them again into the land of Gilead, and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. 11. And he shall pass through the sea with afflictions,† and [the Lord] shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up; and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall

* How fearfully, and yet beautifully, this expresses their present dispersion.

† This is an imperfect translation: the Septuagint and the Vulgate give the true sense; "And he [Israel] shall pass through the *straits of the sea*." The passage is parallel with Isa. xi. 15, which see.

depart away. 12. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord." Chapters xii., xiii., and xiv. clearly relate to this final *gathering* and *establishing* of God's Israelitish elect; and also fully identify the time of its accomplishment with the end of the present dispensation, the coming of the Lord, (chap. xiv. 1, 3, 4, 5,) and the everlasting happiness of those who are saved.

In Amos ix. 8, we find the same predictions: "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom; and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. 9. For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. 10. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake us nor prevent us. 11. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; 12. That they may possess the remnant of Edom,* and of all the heathen which are called by my name, [upon whom my name is called,] saith the Lord that doeth this. 13. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; [draweth forth;] and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.† 14. And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15. *And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them,* saith the Lord thy God."‡

* See Isa. xi. 14.

† See Joel iii. 18, and other parallel places. The renovated earth and heavens shall then exhibit the perennial bloom and increasing fruitfulness of Eden. See Isa. li. 3, Ezek. xxxvi. 35, and other places.

‡ What language can be more unequivocal in its identifying of both the people and their destiny?

It cannot be necessary to repeat, or to refer to all the passages which most evidently belong to the same people, and refer to the same destiny. The explicit testimony of Moses and of Paul, however, is too important to be omitted. If there was nothing more said in the Bible than was written by the chief prophet of the former dispensation, and the chief apostle of the present, it would be sufficient to establish the doctrine of the final gathering of God's ancient elect, in connection with the final gathering of those of more recent selection.

Deut. xxviii. contains a wonderfully particular prediction of the dispersion and sufferings of the descendants of Israel. There can be no possibility of misunderstanding either its application or its sentiment. It has been for many ages an immovable bulwark against the attacks of infidelity. But the thirtieth chapter is equally definite in its teaching, and as obvious in its application. It can refer to no other people; and cannot, without inexcusable violence, be understood otherwise than literally. Verse 1: "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee; and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee. 2. And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day; thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3. That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and *gather* thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. 4. If* any of thine be driven to the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God *gather* thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. 5. And the

* "But there is an *if* in the matter." There is indeed. But do you not observe that the *if* has reference to the *dispersion*, not to the *gathering*. In verse 10, however, there is an *if* in connection with the subject of their final obedience; and in verse 17, there is an *if* in connection with the reference to their apostacy. If the *if* in verse 10 renders that part uncertain, why should not the *if* in verse 17 render that also doubtful? The truth is, the *if* is used more to *intensify a previous statement*, than for any other reason; just as in John xiv. 3: "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again," &c.

Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 8. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day."

Here the same Inspiration that predicted the *dispersion* of the chosen people among all the nations of the earth, has just as clearly, and just as repeatedly, predicted their final *gathering* from one end of heaven to the other. It is difficult to perceive how any intelligent mind can be satisfied with anything less than a full, literal application of the part relating to the *gathering*, since it is undeniable that there has been a full and literal fulfillment of the part relating to the *dispersion*. And, if possible, it is still more wonderful how any pious mind can be indifferent to the teachings of Inspiration in respect to this glorious gathering. St. Paul, in Romans xi., has placed this matter beyond a rational doubt. It will not be necessary to quote all that he has said: it will be expedient only to give a synopsis of his argument. And it will be perceived that his reasoning is systematical, logical, and conclusive.

If the reader will keep the chapter open before him, as he peruses this review of Paul's argument, he will do himself a favor.

1. *The proposition to be considered.* Verse 1: "I say, then, Hath God cast away his people?*"

2. *The position of the apostle.* Verse 2: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew."†

* The people are identified in chap. x., 19-21; chap. xi., 1, 2, 7, 25, 28, &c.

† The nature of the case, and the whole structure of the argument, prove, that the question was *not* whether all the *individuals* of that people were cast away: no one ever entertained such an idea. Nor was it whether God had cast away those that he "*foreknew*" would be converted: that was never a matter of dispute. The point was this: Hath God cast away *Israel as a people*, so that, as a people, they shall not be restored; this was, and is, a matter of dispute.

3. *Statement of the case.* Verse 5: "There is a *remnant*" preserved, as at a former time.

4. *Reason for the preservation of the remnant.* Verse 5: "According to the *election*." By divine choice and purpose.

5. *Ground of the election.* Verse 5: "Grace."

6. *Character of the electing grace.* Verse 6: "And if by *grace*, then it is no more of *works*: otherwise *grace is no more grace*. But if it be of *works*, then it is no more *grace*: otherwise *work is no more work*." That is, the election does not in any degree depend upon any works on the part of the remnant chosen and preserved. It is purely a matter of divine purpose; just as God, when speaking of the final gathering of Israel, often took occasion to remind them of the ground on which he would proceed in the matter.*

7. *Present result of the election.* Verse 7: "What then? Israel [in general] hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: but the election [remnant elected] hath obtained it; and the rest [Israel in general] were blinded." Just as had been predicted.

8. *Subject of debate resumed.* Verse 11: "Have they [Israel in general] stumbled that they should fall?"†

9. *The apostle's position re-assumed.* Verse 11: "God forbid." By no means. They have not fallen so as to be cast away.

10. *Why their temporary fall was permitted.* Verse 11: "Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles."

11. *A presumptive proof that they shall be restored.* It would be a great blessing to the world. Verse 12: "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: HOW MUCH MORE

* "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." Ezk. xxxvi. 32. "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel; but for my holy name's sake." Ezk. xxxvi. 22. See also many other instances quoted in a previous chapter.

† The whole course of the argument shows that it was a final, irrecoverable fall that the apostle was considering; not the *temporary* fall, for that was not called in question: that was distinctly asserted.

THEIR FULLNESS!" Verse 15: "For if the [temporary*] *casting away of them*† be the *reconciling of the world*, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE BUT LIFE FROM THE DEAD?" It will be like a resurrection of a dead world.

12. *Another presumptive proof, founded on their relation to their holy ancestors.*‡ Verse 16. "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

13. *An illustration of the nature of the casting away of Israel.* It was not Israel, *as Israel*, but many of the *individuals* of Israel. Verse 17: "Some of the *branches* be broken off." The *tree* was not destroyed. The "*root*," and some of the "*natural branches*," were still preserved.

14. *Their rejection not final but conditional.* Verse 23: "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in" again.

15. *Their restoration not impossible.* Verse 23. "God is able to graff them in again."

16. *It is more likely that they shall be restored than it was that the Gentiles should be converted.* Verse 24: "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is *wild by nature*, and wert grafted, *contrary to nature*, into a good olive tree; HOW MUCH MORE shall these, which be the *natural branches*, be grafted into *their own olive tree*!"

17. *The blindness of Israel*, by reason of which they now miss of salvation, is *limited both in extent and duration*. Verse 25: "Blindness, *in part*, is happened unto Israel, *until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in*."

* It must, of course, be understood as temporary; otherwise the apostle would be made to contradict himself. See verses 1, 11.

† He must be here speaking of Israel, *as a people*: for in no other sense could the different parts of the argument be in harmony.

‡ Wesley's note, verse 16: "And this will surely come to pass. *For if the first fruits be holy, so is the lump.* The consecration of them was esteemed the consecration of all. And so the conversion of a few Jews is an earnest of the conversion of all the rest. *And if the root be holy*—the patriarchs from whom they spring, surely God will at length make their descendents also holy." In a former part of the Treatise, it has been abundantly shown that the fulfillment of the promise of restoration to Israel is placed solely on God's covenant with the patriarchs.

18. *The apostle's unequivocal statement*, as an inference from his own reasoning. Verse 26: "And so *all Israel* shall be saved." He does not speak of what some please to term *spiritual* Israel: this was neither the subject of his argument, nor at any time a matter of disagreement. Nor does he mean that *some*, a present election of a small number of believing Israelites, should be saved. This, as no one doubted it, was not the subject of either his argument, or his inference. It was Israel, as a *people*: the Israelites who should remain in the world at the time of the fullness of the Gentiles; unto which time, and no longer, should the blindness of the unbelieving Israelites be continued. Then—not a *remnant*, merely, of those *then surviving*, as it is *now*—but a *remnant*, considered in its relation to the *whole number that will have existed previously*:—Then, at the removal of the blindness from the blind, shall "*all Israel*" be saved.

19. *Direct proof*. It is predicted. Verse 26: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Not from what some may please to term "spiritual Jacob:" spiritual Jacob is not ungodly. Not from the present few among Israel who believe on the Messiah: that was not a matter of dispute or inference at all. But he "shall turn away ungodliness from *Jacob*:" the father's name being put for all his descendants.

20. *God has solemnly promised to do it*. Verse 27: "For this is my *covenant* unto them."

21. *They shall be made holy*. Verse 27: "When I shall take away their sins."*

22. *Their present enmity to the gospel does not either vitiate their election, AS A PEOPLE, or, AS A PEOPLE, remove them beyond divine love*. Verse 28: "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the *election*, THEY ARE BELOVED FOR THE FATHERS' SAKES."

23. *God does not repent of having selected that people, or of having given to them so many favors*. Verse 29: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

24. *They shall yet obtain mercy*. Verse 31: "Even so have

* See Ezek. xxxvi. 21-38; and parallel places.

these also not now believed, *that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*" Verse 32: "For God hath concluded them *all in unbelief*, THAT HE MIGHT HAVE MERCY UPON ALL."

25. *This will magnify God's wisdom and knowledge.* Verse 33: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" He not only knows what is best, but he is wise to bring it about.

26. *Objection.* "We cannot understand why he should do so." Verse 33: "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

27. *Contrast.* We should not have counseled the Lord to do so. Our minds would not have agreed with his. Verse 34: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"

28. *The wisdom of this purpose was purely divine.* Verse 35: "Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again."

29. *Consequence.* *This will give to God all the glory.* Verse 36: "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Thus, at the time appointed, when "the set time to favor Zion" shall come, at "the fullness of the Gentiles," Jerusalem shall be no longer "trodden down of the Gentiles," "blindness in part" shall no longer happen unto Israel; then "There shall come forth out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." This is God's "covenant unto them," "when he shall take away their sins."

The whole matter is predicted; the whole matter is covenanted; the whole will be fulfilled. The remnant of Israel — remnant considered with reference to those who have previously existed; — the remnant of Israel — the Israel that shall *remain*; — being, as the prophets have so frequently declared, "the whole house of Israel," and as Paul understood it, "all Israel;" — the remnant of Israel shall then be saved; saved from their sufferings; saved from their sins; gathered unto their fatherland; gathered unto, and into, Christ. Then will be realized the unspeakably glorious events referred to by St. Paul in Eph. i. 9-14, — "Having made known unto us

the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

See the whole passage explained and applied in chapter 14 of this Treatise.

There is just one more topic to be considered in this connection: Our Lord says, "*And he shall send his ANGELS, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect.*"

This is a delightful subject of contemplation; but the design of the Treatise will not render it expedient to linger long in its consideration. This employment of the angels will not necessarily introduce any new agency into the operations of grace and providence; for St. Paul informs us in Heb. i. 14, that the angels are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Examples of angelic agency are almost innumerable in the Scriptures; and we have reason to suppose that it has ever been God's established method of effecting many of his purposes. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, Matt. xiii. 36-43, our Lord has very distinctly set forth the offices of his angels in the consummation of the present dispensation, and the introduction of the next. The angels will be employed both in the destruction of the wicked, and in the preservation of the righteous: Speaking of the wheat and tares, with reference to the final result, the proprietor of the field is represented as saying, verse 30, "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the *reapers*, Gather ye together *first the tares*,* and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." The Lord's interpretation of the parable was this: verse 38: "The field is the world; the

* See Zech. xiv. 2, 3, 12, 16; Joel iii. 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16; Isa. lxvi. 18, 19; Isa. xxiv. 21, 22; Comp. with Isa. lxvi. 15, 16; Ezek. xxxviii. 21, 22, 23; Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21; Rev. xix. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

good seed [the wheat] are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. 39. . . The harvest is the end of the world; and THE REAPERS ARE THE ANGELS. 40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41. THE SON OF MAN SHALL SEND FORTH HIS ANGELS, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; 42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing,* and gnashing of teeth. 43. THEN shall the righteous shine forth as the sun IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER."

The reapers—the angels—will then gather the wheat—the righteous—into the garner—the kingdom of God. The same thing is taught by our Lord in the concluding part of the discourse forming the subject of this Treatise. Matt. xxv. 31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, AND ALL THE HOLY ANGELS WITH HIM, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: [upon his glorious throne:] 32. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another,† as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:‡ 33. And he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left. 34. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The chronological identity of the events described in Matt. xiii. 39–43; xxiv. 29–31, and xxv. 31–46, is too evident to be reasonably doubted. And we learn, consequently, that in the closing up of the mediatorial dispensation, and the establishing of the everlasting kingdom, by all the saints being gathered into it, after the wicked are gathered out;—that the angels will be conspicuously employed both in the de-

* See Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7.

† Matt. viii. 49: "So shall it be at the end of the world: *the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just,* 50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire."

‡ The process and result of the judgment.

struction of the wicked, and in the gathering and salvation of the righteous.

The principal difference perhaps between the angelic agency then, and the same agency now, will be, the *visibility* of it. It is now generally unperceived, and in many instances unsuspected; yet the reality, and the generality, of angelic agency are clearly taught in the Scriptures, both by precept and example. And the same thing is true with respect to the agency of Christ himself. During the mediatorial dispensation he exercises his office as the *High Priest*, hidden within the holy of holies, which is heaven itself: Heb. ix. 24: "*Whom the heavens must receive, UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS, SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.*" Then, "at the fullness of times," when he completes the fulfillment of prophecy, by "gathering together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," Eph. i. 10: then "The Lord Jesus shall be *revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels*, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the *presence of the Lord*, and from the glory of his power; WHEN HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, AND TO BE ADMIRER IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE IN THAT DAY:" 2 Thess. i. 7-10.

Thus, as Christ has in the discourse under notice, so the Scriptures elsewhere associate with him the *angels*, in the *visible revelation of himself* to close up the present dispensation, and consummate the fulfillment of all that has been predicted by all the prophets since the beginning. And the angels will be employed both in the gathering and destruction of the wicked, and in the gathering and preservation of the righteous. The Lord enable us to "believe in that day!" 2 Thess. i. 10.* "And to wait for his Son from heaven!" May "our conversation be in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ!" Phil. iii.

* Leaving out the *parenthesis*.

20. May "the testimony of Christ" be "confirmed" in us; "so that we come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," that we may be "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!" 1 Cor. i. 6-8. May we prove to be the "hope," the "joy," the "crown of rejoicing" of the apostles, "in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming!" 1 Thess. ii. 19. May he "establish our hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints!" 1 Thess. iii. 13. God forbid that we should be "ashamed" of him, or of his "words," before an "adulterous and sinful generation," lest the "Son of man be ashamed" of us, "when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels!" Mark viii. 38. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John ii. 28.

CHAPTER XVII.

Principal subjects — REDEMPTION OF THE SAINTS. “THIS GENERATION” — RENOVATION OF THE EARTH AND HEAVENS.

Change in the character of the Discourse — Redemption drawing nigh — Nature of the Redemption — When and How it will be effected — The Fig-tree — The Kingdom of God — The Parables all relate to One Period — Nature of the Period — Hope of the Saints — “*This Generation*” — Newton’s Definition — Whitby’s Review — New Testament use — Divine principle of Government — Dr. Clarke’s View — Opinion of Dr. Tower — Of Mr. Mede — Wolfius — Dr. Sykes — Ancient Divines — English Definitions — *Passing away of the Earth and Heavens* — Use of the declaration — Ignorance of the Time — Appropriate Duty — Nature of the Advent — Pre-Millennial — Proofs — Indications — Condition of the Glutton, the Drunkard and the Worldly-minded — Unexpectedness of the Event — Consequence.

[*Luke*: AND WHEN THESE THINGS BEGIN TO COME TO PASS, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NEAR.]

HERE begins the *hortative* part of our Saviour’s discourse. The *prophecy* is finished. It has set forth, in unbroken chronological succession, the principal events, relevant to the subject in discussion, from the first appearing of the false Christs unto the final coming of the true Christ, at the end of the present dispensation. There is no breaking of the thread of discourse; nothing to give occasion to the inquiry, which part belongs to Jerusalem, and which to the end of the world? There is no necessity whatever for the indefinite, unauthorized, and ruinous jumbling together of the different subjects of the prophecy, as we find it in many of the Commentaries.

The mass of readers are confused and dissatisfied with such a method of interpretation; and the dissatisfaction is constantly increasing. It is speaking safely, and, considering the importance of the matter, it is speaking softly, to say, that the usual methods of expounding this portion of the Scriptures have proved but little less than a total failure. The Harmony and Exposition herewith presented shows a natural, unbroken

succession of events from the beginning to the end ; for the verse supplied from Luke, put into its appropriate place, between the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth of Matthew, takes up the subject at the downfall of Jerusalem, and carries it along down to the fullness of the Gentiles, when Jerusalem shall be no longer trodden down by them. And, at the proper place, still preserving the true order of succession, the second coming of Christ is treated, with respect to its fact and character, and its immediately preceding and succeeding events. The parenthetical allusion to it in the 27th verse has been sufficiently explained in its proper place.

When it is remarked, that the prophecy is now finished, it is not meant that there is nothing afterwards introduced which is of a prophetic character, for there are several instances to be noticed. It will be observed, however, by the careful reader, that they are simply *additional* and *illustrative* particulars, which are used for the purpose of admonition and consolation. *And they all, without exception, relate to the closing period of the present dispensation.*

In relation to the verse at the head of this chapter, it may be remarked, that in all the Commentaries now before the writer, there is either nothing at all said, or nothing to the purpose. The wretched attempts to make it apply somehow to the period of the downfall of Jerusalem, are certainly too superficial, and too utterly destitute of any historical evidence, to deserve a formal reply. Let any one endeavor to fix upon some historic evidence of Christians being redeemed, as the figurative theory supposes, upon the downfall of the Jewish nation ;—let him satisfy himself as to what Christ meant by “these things beginning to come to pass,” and thus indicating their redemption drawing nigh ;—let him produce a single Scripture or historic proof that “the kingdom of God was nigh at hand,” implying that the gospel kingdom had not been previously established ;—let him refer to a single proof of any kind that the destruction of the Jewish nation had anything to do, either with the beginning, or the establishing of the gospel kingdom, and this portion of the Treatise shall be confessed to be a failure.

But when the text before us is considered in its proper relation to the second advent of our Lord, how definite, how evident, how consoling its teaching! In Dan. vii. 21, we learn that the "little horn" "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, verse 22, *Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High*; AND THE TIME CAME THAT THE SAINTS POSSESSED THE KINGDOM." And we learn also from the 25th verse, that he "shall wear out the saints of the Most High," "and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of times. 26. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end. 27. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High," &c. Chapter vii. 9-14, will still further explain the quotation, and so will chapter viii. 9-14.

The Bible has no where contradicted the declaration of Christ to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" John xvi. 33. The whole spirit, as well as the letter, of the Scriptures shows that God's people are not to expect any "continuing city" in this world. Their eye of hope has ever been directed to things beyond the present life. There is no promise, not one, of a time of general rest to God's people, before the second coming of Christ at the last day.

The "redemption" for which they are encouraged to "lift up their heads," is something more than a mere temporary cessation or alleviation of their sufferings in this world. They are taught to look for their redemption from sufferings, and their final blessedness, in connection with their reception of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, *ready to be revealed in the last time*; wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) we are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of our faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, *at the*

appearing of Jesus Christ." "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 4-7 and 13.*

During the whole period of existence in this sinful world, the saints are represented as groaning within themselves, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption" of their "bodies:" Rom. viii. 23. While dwelling in the "earthly house of this tabernacle," they "groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven:" 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. They are taught to expect entire redemption from all the sufferings of the present state, by being admitted into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord. But they were not to expect this until the return of the Lord Jesus. He goes to prepare a place for them; and he will come unto them again, and receive them unto himself: John xiv. 3. But previous to his coming, he has declared that there should be the signs in the heavens, and in the earth and sea, which are recorded in Matt. xxiv. 29.† All these events should transpire in rapid succession; and they should usher in his final coming to fulfill his promises to the elect, by gathering them together from the four winds of heaven. It is then that the servants that have improved their talents, shall "enter into the joy of their Lord." Chapter xxv. 14-23. "Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" chapter xxv. 34.

This will be the time of redemption to the saints. The very things that alarm the ungodly, and certify them of their doom, shall comfort the saints, and certify them of the coming of their Lord to save them. And when these things *begin* to come to pass, they are to look up, and lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh: these events which immediately precede the second advent will not be long in their fulfillment; and as soon as the Son of man cometh, the kingdom shall be given to the saints, to possess it forever.

* See also Eph. i. 10-14.

† As exhibited in the Harmony; which see.

Verse 32. NOW LEARN A PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREE; WHEN HIS BRANCH IS YET TENDER, AND PUTTETH FORTH LEAVES, YE KNOW THAT SUMMER IS NIGH. *Verse 33.* SO LIKEWISE YE, WHEN YE SHALL SEE ALL THESE THINGS, KNOW THAT IT [*Luke: THE KINGDOM OF GOD*] IS NEAR, EVEN AT THE DOORS.

After the foregoing observations, it is scarcely necessary to dwell for a moment upon these two verses. It should be carefully noticed, however, that the "*redemption*" of which he spake was to be realized in connection with the coming of the "*kingdom of God.*" And here it may as well be said, as anywhere else, that all the parables which the Saviour delivered in connection with his prophecy, relate to the same period: they all refer to his second coming to judge and to reward: See chap. xxv. 5, 6, 10, 13; 19-23; 31, 34, 46. They all hold forth the time of *separation between the two characters*: verses 10, 12; 23, 30; 34, 41, 46. They all intimate the *closing up of human probation*. They all seem clearly to teach the *final result of a life of obedience, and a life of sin*. And the coming of the Lord is set forth as the time when both characters are to be judged: the wicked punished by "outer darkness" and "everlasting punishment;" the righteous glorified and blessed by admission to the marriage: verse 10; by entering into the joy of the Lord, reigning with him: verse 21; and by inheriting the everlasting kingdom: verses 34, 46.

When the fig-tree puts forth its leaves, they would know that summer was nigh. So when these things should *begin to come to pass*, they would know that their *redemption* was nigh: the time of admission to the marriage feast; the time of being made ruler over many things; the time of inheriting the kingdom: And the Bible everywhere points to this period as the time of complete happiness and glory to the saints. To this period Paul looked for his crown: 2 Tim. iv. 8. To this period all the saints are directed to look for their final redemption: 2 Thess. i. 10. To this period the dead in Christ look as the time of receiving their full reward: Rev. xi. 15, 17, 18. For this period they are represented as praying, and looking with hope: Rev. vi. 9-11. By the saints living, and to them that sleep in Jesus, this time is longed

after as the period of final redemption; for when the Lord comes, he will bring with him such as have already died and waited in hope for the time of "judging the dead, and giving reward unto his servants;" and then shall be gathered unto him also all that are alive and remain unto his coming. It is the day of final redemption; to be ushered in as predicted by Christ and many of the prophets.

The reader is requested now to examine Note P, in the Appendix, which treats more particularly of the primitive Christian doctrine of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

Verse 34. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS, TILL ALL THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED.

By many this verse has been deemed of itself sufficient to prove that all that had been predicted by our Saviour must be applied to Jerusalem and the Jews of that age, and not to the end of the world, because *that generation* (interpreted to mean those then living) should not pass until all should be fulfilled.

Bishop NEWTON observes, "It is to me a wonder how any man can refer part of the foregoing discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, and part to the end of the world, or any other distant event, when it is said so positively here in the conclusion. *All these things shall be fulfilled in this generation.*" The Bishop makes no attempt to prove that *γενεα* has, or must have, this meaning in the verse under notice; he seems to have supposed that it should be taken for granted by every one, that this is the proper and common meaning of the word; yet he must have known that the word was not usually so understood either by classical or inspired writers; and that the meaning which he insisted upon was very generally disallowed by the more ancient Christian divines. And yet how *positive* he is in maintaining his assertion! He even deems the bare expression, "this generation," a sufficient proof that all that has preceded it in the prophecy should be applied to Jerusalem.

Dr. WHITBY is, if possible, still more positive than the former. But Whitby usually has the merit of undertaking to

prove his assertions. This, it may be observed, is, to some extent, the difference between these two great and excellent men: Newton more frequently asserts, without laboring to prove; Whitby almost always brings forth his strong reasons. One is the better historian; the other, the better logician. Newton labors to *illustrate* his position; Whitby labors to *establish* it. It is so in respect of the matter now before us. Whitby says, “These words, ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη, ‘this age, (or generation,) shall not pass away,’ afford a full demonstration that all which Christ had mentioned hitherto was to be accomplished, not at the time of the conversion of the Jews, or at the final day of judgment, but in that very age, or whilst some of that generation of men lived; for γενεὰ αὕτη, ‘this generation,’ never bears any other sense in the New Testament than the men of this age.”* Then follow quotations and references, as follows: Matt. xi. 16; xii. 42, 45; xxiii. 36; Mark viii. 12; Luke vii. 31; xi. 29, 30, 32, 50, 51; xvi. 8; Acts ii. 40.

In reply to this, let it be noticed,

1. That the affirmation concerning the New Testament use of the word, is by no means proved by the passages referred to.

(1.) Matt. xi. 16: “But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets,” &c. The whole passage relates to the captiousness and obstinacy of the Jews generally, in their treatment of their divinely commissioned teachers. The particular instances referred to had reference to the reception of John, and of Christ himself. Now let it be remembered that this trait in the Jews was not confined to the men of that time; nor was it, perhaps, any more characteristic of those then living than of men of former times, and of times subsequent. Captiousness and obstinacy were from the beginning a striking characteristic of that γενεὰ, — of that *race*, or *kind of people*. There are multitudes of references to this trait in Jewish character in both the Old Testament and the New. It may be admitted,

* As great and as learned men, as will be hereafter shown, have been of quite another opinion.

indeed, that Christ had more particular reference to his own and John's treatment by the persons then living; but the expression, "this generation," did not *limit the character developed to that age*; it had been developed in almost every age. That generation—that people—that *race* of people—had been accustomed to display the same character from the times of their fathers, who had "killed the prophets, and stoned those that were sent unto them."

(2.) The next references are to Matt. xii. 42, 45; to these there should have been added verse 39, which introduces the subject. Verse 38: "Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39. But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. 40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Then follow three other instances of the use of the word generation, which will be considered in due time.

In respect to that generation seeking a sign, though it was true of the people *then living*, they were not called a generation because they were then alive; but they were simply addressed as an evil and adulterous *people*. Neither was this *peculiar* to those then living, nor can it be justly *limited* to those then alive.

They were that *sort* of people. To seek for signs was a *Jewish* characteristic; "For the *Jews* require a *sign*, and the *Greeks* seek after wisdom:" 1 Cor. i. 22. This was not to be restricted to those of any particular age; it was characteristic of the *races*: the Greeks, as a *people*, were thus characterized; and the Jews, as a *γένεα*, were so characterized from the beginning.

Moses knew very well that some *sign* must be exhibited by him, in order to make the people believe; and the Lord gave him power to exhibit several signs to convince the people. See Ex. iv. 1-9. The people living at the time of Christ were "evil and adulterous," just as their fathers had been before them. Being in covenant relation with God, under the simili-

tude of a marriage contract, they were often charged with adultery on account of their evil conduct. But it is a question whether the people were in the time of Christ particularly distinguished on this account from their ancestors for many ages. A little acquaintance with Malachi and most of the other prophets, will suffice to show that the Saviour's expression in respect to their being "evil and adulterous," and "seeking after a sign," must not be restricted to the men of that age. The men of that age did exhibit the national traits, but they were not called a generation because they were then living, but on account of being of a certain *race*, or *lineage*. This appears the more certain from an expression of the Saviour just previously; verse 34: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?"

Dr. Clarke's note on a similar expression is impressive: Matt. iii. 7, (The words of John,) "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" "A terribly expressive speech. *A serpentine brood from a serpentine stock.* As their fathers *were*, so were they, children of the wicked one." Our Lord uses the same expression in Matt. xxiii., and it seems that he bestowed the epithet upon the men of that age, not because they were living at that time, but on account of their *descent*. Verse 31: "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, *that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.* 32. Fill ye up then the measure of *your fathers.* 33. *Ye serpents,* YE GENERATION OF VIPERS, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

The intention of the word "generation" here is too evident to need further elucidation; unless it be simply to repeat, that they were not called a generation because they were living at that time, but because of their *lineage* and *character*. So in respect to verse 36: "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon *this generation.*"

Now to limit the term to the persons then living, will necessarily lead to the following untenable conclusions: first, that the blood of all the martyrs from the beginning, should be visited upon the persons living at the same period of time. Now this is neither just, true, nor according to God's estab-

lished system of governing the world. It would not be *just*: it would be isolating the people of a particular *time*, and making them to bear the punishment for sins of which they of *that time* were not guilty. It would contradict all our convictions of equity and wisdom in the administration of justice.

Such a restriction of the term would not be in harmony with *truth*. It is not *true* that the men then living were punished for all the blood shed by their fathers. Much of the previous sufferings of the Jews were on account of their treatment of their prophets; and much of the after suffering should undoubtedly be attributed to the same source. The calamities that befell the Jews *then living*, were but a little more distressing than had befallen the Jews in previous ages; and but a little more distressing than befell them under the Emperor Adrian, about fifty years after their overthrow by Titus.

Now to suppose that *the men of that age* were punished for all the blood shed upon the earth from the beginning, in addition to their own blood-guiltiness in murdering the Lord Jesus; and yet suffered only a little more severely, in the same kind, than their fathers and descendents suffered, is, to say the least, speaking without demonstration. And it cannot help the matter by saying, that the overthrow and calamity of the Jews at that time lasted longer than any former desolation; for if the generation upon whom the whole was to be visited, meant *the men of that age*, then, of course, the eighteen centuries of continued affliction must be left out of the account. The restriction of the punishment of all the previous martyrdoms to the people that were *then living*, is not in accordance with *truth*. Neither is it in harmony with God's established principles of administration. He visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of them that hate him. But to concentrate the punishment of fifty generations — that is, fifty successions, or productions of men, reckoning from father to son, — to concentrate all upon those living at any one period of time, is directly at variance with this divine method of administration.

There is no difficulty at all in understanding this matter, and keeping rigidly to the etymological meaning of the term generation. Indeed, this is the only possible method of reconciling the declaration of Christ with truth, justice, and the divine principles of government. It is according to truth, justice, and the divine procedure, to deal with *races as races*. And this was particularly and eminently true in respect to the Jewish $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$ —*race, generation, or kind* of people. As a $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$, they had shed all this blood of martyrdom; as a $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$, they should be punished for it; not any part of it should be left out. What had not been before visited upon them, as a $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$ of people, should nevertheless be visited upon them. This is not only God's published method of dealing with men, but it is the historically and experimentally proved method of governing the world. Upon that $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$, thus scripturally and historically explained, there should indeed be visited all the iniquities that they, as a *people*, had committed.

But did not the Lord—speaking to those then living—say, “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth,” &c? He did, indeed. And did he not in the same connection—speaking of the death of Zecharias*—say, whom ye slew? Did he not also say, Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord?

What can be more certain, than that he was not here speaking restrictively to those before him, but of them as a particular $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$ —*race, or family* of men? As *such*, they had indeed slain not only Zecharias, but many others; as *such*, they possessed the house of the Lord: to them the temple should continue desolate, until they, as a *people*, shall be brought to say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And this they, as a $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$ —shall certainly do; for so it is written in the prophecies; and in the same connection, in many places, it is as clearly predicted that Jerusalem shall be again

* Commentators are obliged to refer this to a martyrdom several hundred years before the time of Christ. See Whitby, Clarke, Wesley, &c.

built, and be holy unto the Lord. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim: Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and *David their king*; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in in the latter days." Hos. iii. 4, 5.

Our Lord was accustomed to speak of a $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$, or class of men, as if they were all before him, though they might be expected to continue for many ages. The ministers of Christ, as a distinct $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$, are still acting under the authority, and still claiming the promise, of the original commission which was thus delivered to the apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: . . . and lo, I am with you to the end of the world."

Thus we see that the instances of the use of the word $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}$, which was supposed to be most decisive in limiting the term to the persons then living, so far from deciding the matter in that way, do most evidently decide it *against* that application, and in *favor* of the primitive and ordinary use of the term, — meaning a *race*, *lineage*, or *class* of people.

The other instances which Whitby cites to prove the limitation of the term to the men of that particular time, have no more logical potency than those already considered: the whole argument of Whitby is open to the charge of entire misconception, not only of the legitimate and Scripture use of the term, but also of the teachings of all history, our natural convictions of equity, and the established principles of divine legislation.

Besides, such a restriction of the term in question, not only hopelessly embarrasses all our endeavors to systematize and expound the Lord's discourse, but (to use a homely, yet expressive word) it entirely *ignores* that most important verse from Luke which refers to the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles. That verse cannot be otherwise than of the highest importance. But how has it been treated? The ink almost blushes that records the inquiry. It has indeed been *alluded* to by most, perhaps all, of our commentators. But

what *influence* has it been allowed to exert in explaining and modifying their theories of interpretation? What influence? Let him answer who can find in many of our Commentaries the least evidence that it was esteemed of any importance, either in its chronological relations, or historic teaching. Belonging necessarily to a *previous* part of the prophecy, and yet reaching forward for its complete fulfillment to a still future day, the expression, "This generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled," is affirmed to include all that had previously been spoken; and yet the word generation is as confidently asserted to include only the men of that age.

Whitby is a powerful reasoner; and when he proceeds from *correct premises*, the author of this Treatise is not anxious to stand in the way of his logic, for there is usually an overwhelming power in it. But when, by an erroneous theory, he is led to reason from incorrect premises, Whitby, like Samson from Delilah's lap, rises up shorn of his locks.

The author was not aware, when he adopted his present views, (which was about ten years ago,) that any leading divines had been led to the same conclusions respecting the use of the word *γενεά*. So far as he has power to recollect how he obtained his impressions, it was rather from a consideration of the nature and necessities of the case, than from any critical examination of the word in question. It is with great pleasure that he finds that others, more wise, more learned, more good, have also come to the same conclusions; and, apparently, from the same independent, personal research; and from the same consideration of the nature and circumstances of the case. Among this number it is pleasing to reckon Dr. ADAM CLARKE. This truly learned divine, like many others, was occasionally led into glaring errors, *by trusting to the researches and opinions of others*, as has been previously shown in respect to several matters pertaining to the Jewish war, and the progress of the primitive Christian church. Those matters he had not thoroughly examined himself: he trusted to the report of others, and was lamentably, yet undeniably deceived. *General history* was not his proper sphere of labor and research. His special endowment was for the investiga-

tion and elucidation of *Oriental customs and literature*. In *that* department he scarcely had a peer. In *that* department, in the nature of the case, he must have excelled in his knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures were written; and he seems, indeed, to have had an almost intuitive perception of the use and proprieties of the ancient languages. He not only understood the *languages* scientifically, but he seems to have been perfectly familiar with the *idioms*, and, of course, the *uses* of the various forms of speech which it became his peculiar province to examine.

As might be expected, then, though unfortunately embarrassed by an erroneous theory which, by the way, he adopted from others; and misinformed in respect to some important historical matters, which he had, perhaps, neither time nor taste to examine; yet, after all, he was too thoroughly and independently skilled in his own peculiar department as an antiquarian in ancient languages and customs, to be led into an important error in the nature and use of so common and plain a word as *γενεά*. He well understood its derivation, its composition, and its classic and Scripture use. His opinion in this matter should not be hastily thrown aside.

In giving his opinion of this term, however, which he does frequently and confidently, he was obliged to *differ* from those whom he usually (some would say blindly) followed. See his note on the passage last under notice.

Matt. xxiii., 33: “*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, &c.*” “What a terrible stroke—Ye are serpents, and the offspring of serpents. This refers to verse 31. They confessed that they were the children of those who murdered the prophets; and they are now going to murder Christ and his followers, to show that they have not *degenerated*—an accursed *seed*, of an accursed *breed*.” Verse 36: “*Shall come upon this generation.*” *Ἐπὶ τὴν γενεάν τοῦτον*, upon this race of men, viz: the Jews. This phrase often occurs in this sense in the evangelists.” Matt. xi., 16: “*Wherunto shall I liken this generation?*” That is, the Jewish people—*Ἐπὶ τὴν γενεάν τοῦτον*, this race? and so the word *γενεά* is often to be understood in the evangelists.” Matt. xii. 39: “*An evil an adulterous generation.*” Or *race*

of people; for so γενεα should be translated here, and in most other places in the gospels: for our Lord, in general, uses it to point out the *Jewish people*. This translation is a key to unlock some very obscure passages in the evangelists." "Our Lord terms the Jews an adulterous race." Luke xi. 29: "*This is an evil generation.*] Or, *This is a wicked race of men.* See on Matt. xii. 38-42. Matt. xxiv. 34: "*This generation shall not pass.*] Ε γενεά αὐτῶν, *this race*; i. e., the Jews shall not cease from being a *distinct people*, till all the counsels of God relative to *them* and the Gentiles be fulfilled. Some translate η γενεα αυτων, *this generation*, meaning the persons who were then living, that they should not die before these signs, &c., took place. But though this was true, as to the calamities that fell upon the Jews, at the destruction of their government, temple, &c.; yet as our Lord mentions Jerusalem's continuing to be under the power of the Gentiles, till the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, i. e., till all the nations of the world should receive the gospel of Christ, after which the Jews themselves should be converted unto God, Rom. xi. 25, &c. I think it more proper not to restrain its meaning to the few years which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem; but to understand it of the care taken by Divine Providence to preserve them as a *distinct people*, and yet to keep them out of their own land, and from their temple service." Thus far Dr. Clarke.

In the generally excellent work of Rev. JOSEPH TOWERS, LL. D., entitled "Illustrations of Prophecy," to which reference has been had previously, we find the following observations on the text under notice: * "This clause of the prediction has, I conceive, not merely been generally misapprehended, but moreover falsely translated; and this is the opinion of men, who hold the first rank in Scriptural criticism, namely, of MEDE,† and WOLFIUS, and Dr. SYKES. To the destruction of Jerusalem a Mr. HAYNE had applied this part of our Lord's prophecy. Hear a part of Mr. MEDE's reply: 'I an-

* First American ed. 1808, 2d. vol. on p. 176.

† This Mr. Mede was called the most learned man of his age.

swer, first, while you endeavor in this manner to establish a ground for the first coming of Christ, you bereave the church of those principal passages of the Scripture, whereon she hath always grounded her faith of the *second coming*.* Secondly, you ground all this upon the *ambiguity* of the word *generation*, whereas, *γενεα* signifies not only *ætas*, but *gens*, *natio* *progenies*; and so ought to be here taken, viz: *the nation of the Jews should not perish, till all these things were fulfilled*. For so signifies *παρῆλθῆ* in the Hebrew notion, as you may see even in the verse following. CURYSDOSTOM among the ancients, and FLACIUS ILLYRICUS (a man well skilled in the style of Scripture,) among the moderns, and those who follow them, might have admonished others to take the word *γενεα* in this acceptation, rather than by turning it *ætas*, or *seculum*, to put this prophecy in little ease, and *the whole harmony of Scripture out of frame, by I know not what confused interpretation.*† “I only add,” continues Dr. TOWERS, “that Dr. SYKES declares himself the more confirmed in this translation ‘from the remarkable, and indeed, unparalleled, *preservation* of the Jews in the midst of hatred and continued persecutions.’ The meaning then is, the Jewish nation shall assuredly subsist as a distinct people, till *all* that has been previously mentioned shall have been *fulfilled*,” &c. In a *note*, Dr. Towers adds, “Indeed, by the fathers in general, who must be admitted to have been competent judges of the meaning of the word, *γενεα* was not understood as signifying the generation then living. Some persons, however, there were, who held this opinion; but, says MALDONATUS, ORIGEN entitles them *simplices*.”

It is not a little remarkable, after the use which Newton, Whitby, Wesley, Watson, Burkitt, and others, have made of

* How true! And by this we also learn what had always been the general understanding of this part of the prophecy. The principal effort of this Treatise is to correct a prevalent, dangerous, and *modern error*, and bring back the church to its ANCIENT FAITH.

† So it must ever be, whenever any but the legitimate construction is put upon the word in question. As Mr. Mede observes, *it puts the whole harmony of Scripture out of frame*, to translate the term *γενεα* in this place so as to be limited to that particular age.

the word *generation*, how little authority they can bring even from the *English* definition of the term.

WALKER's large Dictionary gives *seven* definitions of the word, but *two* of which, (and these are the last mentioned,) even *favor* the use to which this Treatise objects; and these *two* definitions are neither of them *decisive*. WEBSTER's Quarto Dictionary gives *seven* different classes of definitions; and but *one* of them favors the use of the word here objected to. Out of *thirteen* or *fourteen* different definitions, but *two* *favor* the application of the term to those living at the same time, and but *one* is really *decisive*. For a further dissertation on the word $\gamma\epsilon\nu\sigma\alpha$, the reader will please consult Note Q, in the Appendix.*

The word *generation*, then, so far from embarrassing this method of expounding the Lord's prophecy, is, in fact, a most important auxiliary in harmonizing and elucidating some of the parts which have been deemed most obscure. The predicted gathering of the elect, and the long continued desolation, but finally implied restoration, of Jerusalem, and the astonishing preservation of that most unfortunate and yet fortunate people, all derive light from the prophecy of our Lord, that "this $\gamma\epsilon\nu\sigma\alpha$ " — this *race* — of people shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.

Verse 35. HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY; BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY.

This verse and the preceding, together with the 19th verse of Matt., are remarkable for their exact similarity in all three of the records. This may be accounted for in part by the remarkableness of the predictions, and by their being so well adapted to affect the heart. And they have an important use in the discourse, by dividing it into several distinct portions, so that it is the more easy to arrange the many subjects treated of into chronological order.

As yet we have not found a single instance of metaphorical language in the prophecy; all has been simple, literal prose. Neither do we find any occasion to resort to the common meth-

* See Note Q, in the Appendix.

od of metaphorizing this verse in order to explain it. That there shall be a change of the present earth and heavens, is as distinctly taught in both the Old Testament and the New, as that God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. The evident reason for the introduction of the subject in this connection, was, to confirm the wonderful prediction that Christ had just uttered. After describing the astonishing events which he had already predicted, respecting the overthrow and captivity of the Jews, and their dispersion into all nations, while their temple and city were in utter desolation, and under the foot of the Gentiles; after describing the wonders in the heavens, on the earth, and in the sea; after describing his own advent with his angels, coming in the clouds of the heavens; after predicting the final assembling of all the elect,—and then affirming that that conquered, captivated, dispersed, down-trodden people should survive the whole, it needed some strong affirmation to assure their still feeble faith. This assurance was given in the words of the text: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. His words would prove more reliable than the foundations of the earth, or the pillars of heaven. Thus far everything has transpired just as he has predicted: the words which are yet unfulfilled shall not fail to be accomplished. Let the infidel tremble; let the Christian—let the son of Jacob—rejoice.

Verse 36. BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR KNOWETH NO MAN, NO, NOT THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, [*Mark*: NEITHER THE SON,] BUT MY FATHER ONLY.

The difficulty of ascertaining the time when the great day of the Lord would come, would even prevent the angels from knowing it for a time at least; although they will not probably continue in ignorance of it until the moment of their coming with the Lord; they will undoubtedly receive such intimations and instructions as will guard them against surprise when the command is given for all the heavenly host to accompany their Lord in his judgment visit to the earth. But at the time when the Saviour gave this prophecy, not only were the angels in ignorance of the time, but even he himself—the Son did not know it.

The two-fold nature of Christ is very frequently brought to view in the Scriptures; he was "God manifest *in* the flesh." His words and actions were God manifest *through* the flesh. And all, of necessity, were modified *by* the flesh. Sometimes he appears only as a *man*, professing to be subject to, inferior to, and dependent upon, the Father, by whom he was commissioned, sent, instructed, supported, guided. The proper *humanity* of Christ is as important for the world as the proper *divinity* of Christ. As man — real man — the Son could do nothing of himself; the Father that dwelt in him did the works. As man, he was not informed of the time of his own second advent; for, for some reason which we may not be able to discover, the Father exercised the control over the times and seasons. Our Saviour sufficiently indicated this, when he replied to the inquiries of the apostles, if he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power:" Acts i. 7.

Wesley's note on the verse before us is sufficiently plain: "*Neither the Son* — not as man: as man he was no more omniscient than omnipresent. But as God, he knows all the circumstances of it."

[*Luke*: AND TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES,] [*Mark*: WATCH AND PRAY, FOR YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE TIME IS.]

It cannot be denied, that in a multitude of places, the judgment advent of the Lord is so represented in the Scriptures, that the duty of watching and living in readiness for it, is everywhere commanded or encouraged. So evidently did St. Paul speak of it as a subject of expectation and present concern, that the Thessalonians needed to be cautioned against expecting it until after certain other events had occurred. There are very many references to the coming of the day of God, which seem to have been calculated to impress the mind that it might come upon them unawares, at almost any moment. Hence, the Saviour's exhortation to take heed, to watch, and to pray, because they did not know when the time would be. From this we learn three things:

(1.) Character of the *event*. It will a matter of solemn and decisive influence upon all. The guilty are to look for it with fearful apprehension; the righteous with joyful anticipation. It will be something besides the gradual, peaceful, and finally universal extension of Christianity abroad in the earth. This would indeed be a subject of gladness to the Christian; but why the *uncertainty of the time of its occurrence* should be a reason for all generations of Christians to live in watchfulness and prayer, is beyond the power of any man to explain. And if this is what is meant by the coming of the Lord, who can tell why it should be a subject of fearful apprehension to the wicked? No, the character of the event is far otherwise: it is of such a nature, that if we be found off our guard, or not watching for our Lord, he will come upon us unawares, and appoint our portion with hypocrites and unbelievers.

(2.) We learn likewise the character of the *coming*: It will not be a gradual passing away of night, and the slow dawning of millennial day. It will be *sudden*, and to many unlooked for, and unprepared for. Hence, the necessity of unceasing watchfulness, because we know not when the time is. And the coming will be so sudden, that there will be no opportunity to *prepare* for it after the event begins. So that we should live in constant readiness for it.

(3.) Finally, we learn the utter absurdity of the supposition, that the Lord is not to come until after a thousand years of uninterrupted righteousness and peace. For with what propriety could Christ and the apostles so constantly refer to this judgment-coming, as a reason for unceasing watchfulness, lest it overtake them unprepared? With what propriety could they knowingly and intentionally produce the abiding and operative impression, that the day of the Lord might come at any time; and thus keep the church in all ages in a degree of expectation of it, if they knew that it would not, and could not come at all, until there had first been a millennium of universal peace?

Christ and the apostles certainly must have known whether the judgment-advent was pre-millennial or not. And if, as is generally *now* supposed, the second coming is to be *after* the

millennium, how they could with any degree of propriety speak of it as if it were liable to come at *anytime* during all the ages of the gospel dispensation, so that it would be the duty of all to be watching for the coming of the Lord, and watching and praying to be kept in readiness for that day;—how they could by parables, admonitions, warnings, and encouragements, designedly influence the church to be impressed with the conviction that the day of the Lord might come upon them even during the present life in a world of sin, is more than any man can explain so as to satisfy a rational mind.

It is just as certain as language can make it, that the coming of that day is *always* represented in a way that is calculated to leave the impression on the mind, that it *may* come *now*. And it is *never* described in a way that is calculated to produce the impression, that it will be preceded by a millennium of peace; or, in a way that is calculated to produce the impression, that all who live *previously* to the millennium, or *during* the millennium, need not be watching and preparing for it.

How can those who believe that the second advent will be post-millennial explain these things, so as to leave to the Lord and his apostles an appearance of common honesty? It has never yet been done. Can the man be found to undertake it? The theory maintained in this Treatise is wholly free from this embarrassment.

(1.) It represents Christ not as addressing himself exclusively to either the Jews or the Christians of *that age*, any more than he did to the apostles, in giving the original commission to disciple the nations. He addressed the Jews as a *γενεά*, and the Christians as a *γενεά*, that would continue to the end of the world. And when he exhorted them to watch and pray, in view of the *uncertainty of the time*, he intended that the exhortations should be appropriate while the world continued; as he himself distinctly proclaimed, “What I say unto *you*, I say unto *all*, watch.”

(2.) Christ himself, and the prophets and apostles, always represented that the day of the Lord would come *suddenly*, and, to the world in general, *unexpectedly*. It was not to be

preceded by such alarms and tokens as would call the world's attention to it, and arouse the careless. It was not to be ushered in by a thousand years of universal peace, at the close of which they might begin to expect the judgment. It was predicted to come upon a wicked world as a thief in the night; as travail upon a woman with child; as the flood upon the old world; as the fiery deluge upon Sodom.

(3.) Christ has distinctly affirmed that it will come "*immediately after the tribulation of those days,*" which was to be limited by the times of the Gentiles. But when the chain of special favor to the Gentiles shall reach its last unseen link of extension, God has not seen fit to reveal, and man has no power to discover. But, without any extraordinary event to mark its termination; the limit being not a limit of *occurrences*, but a *fullness of times*; then, "the set time to favor Zion" having come; the days of Israel's desolation ended; then, "*immediately after,*" shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall withhold her light, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

Thus will the day of the Lord—including the events that precede and attend his coming—be sudden, unexpected, and terrible to those who are not living in readiness for it. It appears—not only from the fact that the gathering of the elect will follow this coming—but from several other portions of the Scripture, that only a part—perhaps but a small part of the Jews, will be gathered in Palestine previous to the Lord's coming; and—excepting the gathering of their enemies to prevent their settlement—there does not appear to be any especial event pointed out in Scripture as a sign that the Lord is about to come. And this gathering of the nations will be so much like other similar invasions, and have so little apparent connections with the second advent of Christ, that even when it is seen, probably not one in a hundred will be ready to believe it is to be the last great event before the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars. They will treat it just as you, reader, may be even at this moment treating this reference to the subject—with scoffing or indif-

ference, as the ravings of a maniac, or the babblings of a fool. And so the day of the Lord will come as a snare upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth.

(‡.) When to all this is added, that the Father has never seen fit to reveal how long the time of favor shall be extended to the Gentiles — whether it shall be for a still longer period, or a short one; and also that the Scriptures nowhere certify that the gospel shall conquer the world previous to the coming of the Lord; but that the times of the Gentiles may close with as little warning as the cup of iniquity was filled by the Jews, previously to their doom being fixed by the invasion of the Romans; — when we keep in mind that the end of the world is to come while the wheat and the tares are growing together in the field, and God has never yet informed us of the times and seasons so that we may calculate when he shall say to the angels, Thrust in the sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe; — when we consider — just as Christ says — that we can know neither the day nor the hour when he shall come, we cannot fail to see the reasonableness of continual watching throughout all the successive ages of Christian times. And there was a particular reason why we should be continually admonished, which cannot apply² to the theory of the post-millennial advent, which professes that hundreds, and perhaps thousands of years, *must* intervene before the judgment-coming; for the true theory professes no such thing. And the only event which is given to indicate the nearness of the day, may transpire as unexpectedly and suddenly as similar events in almost all ages of the world. But it is no where taught in the Scriptures that *none* shall see evidences of his coming, when the day draws near. Those who are searching the Scriptures — (but, alas! they are few — very few) — to know what the Lord has given as an indication of his near approach, will, of course, not fail to see the fig-tree putteth forth leaves, to indicate that summer is nigh. And perhaps this very beginning on the part of the Jews to establish themselves, and this very token of the ending of the times of the Gentiles, will be the first among the preceding signs. And when it is

followed by the gathering of the nations against them, we shall know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

[*Luke*: LEST AT ANY TIME YOUR HEARTS BE OVERCHARGED WITH SURFEITING AND DRUNKENNESS, AND CARES OF THIS LIFE, AND SO THAT DAY COME UPON YOU UNAWARES.]

Gluttony has a debasing, stupifying effect, rendering the person gross, heavy, sensual. Such a one is almost totally incapacitated for refined, elevating, spiritual enjoyments and contemplations. His anxieties and affections have almost exclusive reference to the things that are of the earth, earthy. *This* world is his possession; this world his home, his hope. The glutton cannot be expected to look away from the things that are seen and temporal, and desire with spiritual longings the things which are unseen and eternal. His carefulness will not be to stand with his loins girt about with righteousness, waiting for the return of his Lord; his principal solicitude will be, What shall I eat? what shall I drink? Gluttony, with its two results, grossness and heaviness, will be the horse-leech in his soul, with its two daughters, crying to this world, Give, Give. Such a one will be earthly minded, sensual, loving this present evil world, and in no proper sense living a life of self-denial, and crucifixion of the flesh with its lusts. He is neither *now* ready to see his Lord, nor *getting* ready; nor will he be in a suitable frame to receive *admonition* from the comparatively unimportant, and apparently irrelevant events that to the *believing*, and the *watchful*, will indicate the sudden approach of the day, as the fig-leaf indicates that summer is nigh.

Reveling at his feast, like Belshazzar, or lazily dozing and dreaming away the heaviness of a recent overcharge of surfeiting, the sluggard, with his eyes half opened, and almost unimpressible to anything but the savory indications of another feast, will cry, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." Thus, eating, and drinking, in the *intense* import of the terms; or, drowsing between the successive festivals; or, throwing off with unspiritual hilarity his exuberance of fat, he will be in

any but the proper frame of sobriety and watchfulness in the expectation of his Lord.

“*And drunkenness*” is, if possible, still worse than the former. No drunkard hath eternal life abiding in him, for he is a self-murderer; and he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Reeling, or raving, blaspheming, or sleeping, under the effects of his self-murdering potions; or, linked in the entangling chain-work of bacchanalian association and revelry; or, hardened and maddened against God and goodness, how can he be either *looking* for the Lord, or *watching* the slight premonitions of his sudden coming? And yet all Christians—Christians in all ages—are liable to be overcome with these easily besetting, these carnally pleasing, these, alas! too common, too fashionable, and yet ruinous, customs of civilized as well as barbarous societies.

“*And cares of this life.*” Oh, how many DEMASES there are in the church, even, who turn away from the faith of the gospel, and make a god of this world! Taking thought for the morrow,* and having but little heed for the kingdom of God, but anxiously inquiring, What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed, they cannot *find time* to attend to the things of the kingdom; † and, alas! alas! the prophecies of our Lord and his servants have been so generally, and so (to many) *hopelessly* confused and confounded, that the *man of this world*, whether in the church, or out of it, *despairs* of ever being able to comprehend what he thinks perhaps might have been originally intended in some measure to instruct and admonish the common mind in respect to these *now* inexplicable teachings of what appears to him to be the most inexplicable of books. Excusing himself, then, from want of *capacity* to digest the milk of the word, his business and ambitious leadings are all earthward; and with perpetual lookings and bendings downward, he has hardly strength or inclination to look heavenward. Even when these signs “begin to come to pass,” he will be hardly

* The word *thought* formerly meant about what is now expressed by the word *anxiety*.

† See Matt. vi. 31-34.

able to lift up his head, and look up, in expectation that his redemption is drawing nigh.

Perhaps he has not even a distinct impression, or any well digested conviction, with respect to the fact or nature of the great day of the Lord. Perhaps he is still looking for an universal spread of purity and peace before the Lord's coming; and *cannot*, of course, be impressed with the necessity of living in readiness to meet his Master at his coming to reckon with his servants. So he suffers himself to be overcharged with the cares of this life; the *thorns* spring up and choke the good seed, and it becomes unfruitful. He, too, with the drunkard and the glutton, will be unready for the return of his Lord; "*and so that day will come upon him unawares.*"

[*Luke*: FOR AS A SNARE SHALL IT COME UPON ALL THEM THAT DWELL UPON THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH.]

It (the day) shall come upon the inhabitants of the earth everywhere *suddenly*, and *unexpectedly*, as a *snare* is sprung suddenly and unexpectedly upon the unsuspecting game that the hunter thus successfully entraps. *Infidels* will not expect it, for they *deny* the prophecy. *Universalists* will not expect it, for they *misinterpret* the prophecy. *Heathen* will not expect it, for they do not *know* the prophecy. *Romanists* will not expect it, for they will be still looking for the *downfall* of *Protestantism*, by *gradual conquest*. *Protestants* will not generally expect it, for they will be looking for the *destruction* of *Antichrist*, not by a *personal*, but by a *spiritual* coming, to destroy the Man of Sin, not by *judgment fires*, but by *gospel light*.

And so, after all the Lord has said, either by a downright infidelity, or by a ruinous delusion; either by not knowing the word of prophecy, or by misunderstanding it; either by gluttony, or drunkenness, or by both together; either by earthly carefulness, or covetousness, or by both together; in some way, by some effectual means of the prince of the power of the air, the ruler of the darkness of this world, the prophecies will be so unknown, so disbelieved, so misinter-

preted or misapplied, that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, *as a snare upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth.* The Lord have mercy upon an infidel or heathen world! The Lord have mercy upon a worldly or slumbering church!*

CHAPTER XVIII.

Principal subject—PREPARATION TO MEET THE SON OF MAN AT HIS COMING.

Ultimate Reason—The World before the Flood—Application—A time of general Separation—Illustrations—Two Men in the Field—Two Women at the Mill—Renewed Admonition—Illustration of the Unguarded House—Application—Illustration of the Master on a Journey—Duties of the Servants—The Porter—Application—A Model Servant—The Unanswered Question—The Happy Servant—The Servant Exalted—The Evil Servant—His Belief and Conduct—The Reason—Application—The Unexpected Return—Reason—Result—Importance of Right Views—The Terrible Doom—The Cause—The Contrast—Renewed Admonition—The Final Charge—The 25th Chap. of Matthew—Its relation to the 24th—Design of the Parable of the Ten Virgins—Parable of the Talents—Why the *Description* of the Judgment was deferred to the close of the Discourse—Conclusion.

[*Luke*: WATCH YE, THEREFORE, AND PRAY ALWAYS, THAT YE MAY BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS THAT SHALL COME TO PASS, AND TO STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN.]

THE Lord had previously admonished his disciples to the same import. But having for a moment left the thread of his exhortation, for the purpose of adding a fact that was well calculated to deepen the impression which he desired to produce, he now resumes his exhortation to *watchfulness* and *prayer*. But at this point he assigns the ultimate object of

* See Note R., in the Appendix.

faithfulness: that we may be accounted worthy to escape the predicted evils, and to stand before the Son of man. Here several things should impress us:

1. That *watchfulness* and *prayer* are indispensable to a full preparation for the day of the Lord. A spirit of devotion and sobriety, carried into appropriate practice, is the great essential in our present duty. And this should be secured in view of the fact, that we are all hastening to meet the day of the Lord Jesus.

2. It is only in this way that we can *escape the calamities* which, at the coming of Christ, shall be visited upon the unprepared. What these will be, the Scriptures have sufficiently revealed. The previous predictions of Christ, and the parables following, set forth these calamities in a manner which would almost shake the world, if they had not been so generally *Jerusalemized* away, that they are read with little or no impression that they are intended for *us*, as well as for the ancients; that *our* destiny is to be thus affected and determined. Who can calculate the tremendous consequences of stripping this portion of the divine word of all its *direct*, *literal*, and *intended* bearing upon the millions who are hastening to meet the great day, with almost no conception of its nature and reality?

3. It is by obedience to these directions that we may expect, through grace, to *stand before the Son of man*. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." They shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day."* This will be the portion of the wicked; and they will not "love his appearing." But the righteous shall "stand in the day of Judgment:" they shall receive "a crown of righteousness" at "that day." 2 Tim. iv. 8. Then the pious dead "shall behold his face in righteousness:" they "shall be satisfied when" they "awake in his likeness." For

* 2 Thess. i. 9, 10, leaving out the parenthesis.

in his presence is fullness of joy ; and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. “ Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, *be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace*, without spot and blameless.” It is esteemed a great privilege to stand before kings ; but it will be a still greater to “ stand before the Son of man.” For when he cometh, he will come as “ King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

Verse 37. BUT AS THE DAYS OF NOE WERE, SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE. 38. FOR AS IN THOSE DAYS THAT WERE BEFORE THE FLOOD, THEY WERE EATING AND DRINKING, MARRYING AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE, UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOE ENTERED INTO THE ARK ; 39. AND KNEW NOT UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME AND TOOK THEM ALL AWAY ; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.

Terrible history ! Terrible prediction ! But the *prophecy* will prove to be as true as the history. The world had been duly warned of the threatened deluge ; but they heeded it not. They continued to live as they had lived ; contracting marriages, celebrating marriages, giving and enjoying festivities, *until the day that Noe entered into the ark*. These things are not mentioned by the Saviour, on account of their being necessarily wrong ; but to show how little the doomed world heeded the warnings of “ the preacher of righteousness,” or anticipated so sad, so sudden and terrible a catastrophe as was long impending over them. The reason was, they *knew not* what was about to burst upon them, and forever terminate their plans and pleasures. The treasured up wrath that was to drown a teeming world gave no outward indications of either its nearness or severity. For aught that appears to the contrary, the sun that morning rose as smilingly, the winds breathed as refreshingly, the waters flowed as peacefully, the birds sung as cheerily, the dance led forth as merrily, as ever since the birth-day of sin. There were happy bridegrooms and brides ; there were proud fathers and mothers ; there were rejoicing sisters and brothers ; there were admiring lovers ; there were jealous rivals ; there were lords in state, and servants in waiting ; there were rich, counting over their treasures ; there were thieves, intent on robbing ; there were lecherous, in search of victims. In a word, a world in wick-

edness ; warned, but heedless ; doomed, but reckless ; rushing on to meet its ruin.

So shall also the coming of the Son of man be. No alarming premonitions will arouse the worldly church, or the wicked world. The day of God will come upon the unexpected world, as a snare upon the unwary game, that knows not its danger until it is too late to escape.

Therefore the wisdom of living always in readiness to meet the Lord, lest that day overtake us as a thief ; “ *Lest, coming suddenly, he find us sleeping.*” “ Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope unto the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. i. 13.

Verse 40. THEN SHALL TWO BE IN THE FIELD; THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT. 41. TWO WOMEN SHALL BE GRINDING AT THE MILL; THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT.

It is utterly impossible for any man to show a single fact, or a single reason, for applying this to the Jewish war. Neither the connections of the passage, nor its teachings ; neither the Jewish historian, nor the circumstances of the case, can be legitimately used for that purpose. Besides, this is not intended for a few instances, merely ; but such will be the *general result*. It will be a time of general separation between the most intimate associates, who are of different characters. Lodging in the same bed, or working at the same mill, will not prevent the final separation of the good from the bad.

The good fishes and the bad fishes, the wheat and the tares, shall be separated at the end of the world, when the Son of man shall come with all his holy angels. (Matt. xiii.) In the Roman war, where two were thus associated, one indeed might *escape*, and the other be *taken*. But, certainly, in such a war as that, they would not *take* one, and *leave* another.

But when the Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, he will *separate* the evil from the good, as a shepherd *divideth his sheep from the goats*. No difficulty can impede the work of severing the wicked from among the just ; for

the eye of Omniscience cannot be deceived by any outward show or pretence.

Verse 42. WATCH, THEREFORE, FOR YE KNOW NOT WHAT HOUR YOUR LORD DOTH COME.

The evident design of all this part of the Lord's discourse, is to incite his people to be *always in readiness for the coming of the great day*. Hence, in various ways, he labors to deepen the impression he would make, returning always, after every illustration, or additional prediction, to the same leading theme of *watchfulness*, that we may be in *readiness*. Is this the present impression of the church? Is this its present position? If the Lord should come *suddenly*, as a thief in the night, would he find us prepared for it?

Verse 43. BUT KNOW THIS, THAT IF THE GOOD MAN OF THE HOUSE HAD KNOWN IN WHAT WATCH THE THIEF WOULD COME, HE WOULD HAVE WATCHED, AND WOULD NOT HAVE SUFFERED HIS HOUSE TO BE BROKEN UP.

But, alas! instead of being *always* guarded, and always watchful, in an hour when he was not *expecting* it, the thief came upon him, and his house was broken up. He was ruined because he was off his guard. The very *uncertainty* of the time of the thief's coming should have kept him in *constant readiness*.

Verse 44. THEREFORE, BE YE ALSO READY, FOR IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT, THE SON OF MAN COMETH.

Do as the poor man, after he is robbed, is convinced he *should* have done. Let the *uncertainty* of my coming serve to keep you in *constant readiness*.

[*Mark:* FOR THE SON OF MAN IS AS A MAN TAKING A FAR JOURNEY, WHO LEFT HIS HOUSE, AND GAVE AUTHORITY TO HIS SERVANTS, AND TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK, AND COMMANDED THE PORTER TO WATCH.]

For a season the Lord intends to be absent from the world: he leaves his church, but he leaves it in the hands of his servants. Each one has his appropriate authority, place, and work. The porter has charge of the gate; the steward has charge of the provisions and treasures; others have authority

and work in some other department. All are under obligation; all are responsible; all are expected to be faithful. But the porter receives a special command to watch. The Master intends to *return*; but *when*, he does not see fit to reveal. Perhaps he does not at that time *know*. But return he will, at the appropriate time. Therefore let the porter keep a constant watch, that he may be prepared to receive him at any moment, either by day, or by night.

Verse 45. WHO THEN IS A FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT, WHOM HIS LORD HATH MADE RULER OVER HIS HOUSEHOLD, TO GIVE THEM MEAT IN DUE SEASON?

Let each ask himself. Who has anything to do in the government of the church, or in the duty of feeding it with appropriate food, at appropriate seasons? Certainly the *minister* must apply this to himself. He is the *bishop* to *govern*; and the *shepherd* to *feed*. Is he then a *faithful* and *wise* servant? Is he *faithful*? Does he conscientiously act in view of all his responsibilities? Does he keep in lively remembrance that his Lord will not only return; but that he may return at the moment when he is least expected? Is he *faithful* in instructing, admonishing, encouraging? Does he act as in the sight of his absent Master? Is he a *wise* servant? Does he understand his duty? Does he know how to perform it? Does he know *when* and *how* to give *food* to the household under his stewardship? Does he inform himself of the *nature* and *design* of his Master's *departure* and *return*? Does he act *wisely* in his wish and labor to secure his Master's commendation?

These are questions for each one to answer for himself. The Lord does not answer them; he simply proposes them. How stands the matter, reader? These are things to be duly considered.

Verse 46. BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT WHOM HIS LORD, WHEN HE COMETH, SHALL FIND SO DOING.

Yea, blessed indeed; for his Lord cometh quickly, and his reward is with him. To be found of him in peace at his coming, will insure everlasting happiness. Faithfulness and hap-

piness will be as inseparably connected, as negligence and wretchedness. When the Master returneth may he find us so doing!

Verse 47. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT HE SHALL MAKE HIM RULER OVER ALL HIS GOODS.

Those who *improve* their talents shall have additional ones given them, when the time of reckoning comes. Those who *suffer* with Christ shall finally *reign* with him. Those who are faithful in *few* things shall be made ruler over *many* things. The Master intends fully to reward his faithful servants; and if he exalts them to palaces and thrones, he has a right to do so; for he has a right to do what he pleases with his own. Be encouraged, then, ye *faithful* and *wise* servants, for the Master will soon return, and *bless* you in your labors to please him.

Verse 48. BUT AND IF THAT EVIL SERVANT SHALL SAY IN HIS HEART, MY LORD DELAYETH HIS COMING; 49. AND SHALL BEGIN TO SMITE HIS FELLOW-SERVANTS, AND TO EAT AND DRINK WITH THE DRUNKEN.

No one will be as likely to say *openly*, My Lord delayeth his coming; the evil servant will say it *in his heart*. Learn, hence, a distinguishing trait in the character of an *evil* servant: there is so little evidence that the Lord will delay his coming; or, rather, as there is *no* evidence, he will not choose to say so *openly*, lest he be reprov'd. But still he is an unbeliever in the *nearness of the time*:* he says, in his heart, My Lord *delayeth his coming*. Learn, also, that it will not be *infidels*, only, who will be taken unawares: this evil servant did not *scoff*, and say, Where is the *promise* of his coming?

He was a *believer*, perhaps a *firm* believer, in his lord's return. He did not, in respect to the great *fact* of his lord's coming, differ essentially from the *good* servants: he disagreed with them only on *one point*: the *good* servant said — said *openly* — My lord is *coming*, is coming *soon*: he *may* come

* Our Lord evidently has reference in this part of his discourse to the state of things that will immediately precede his advent. See verses 37-39.

immediately. The evil servant said, said in *his heart*, My lord *delayeth* his coming.

Learn, also, the *natural tendency* of this saying in one's heart, My Lord *delayeth* his coming. (1.) *He will begin to smite his fellow servants.* He will be apt to become a *tyrant* in his Master's house. He will be likely to *have ill feelings* towards his brethren, and he will be apt to *act them out*; he will *smite his fellow servants*.*

Our Lord must have *meant* something in all this; and he undoubtedly meant to describe the facts and tendencies that will characterise the times which immediately precede his advent. Would there be so much discord and bitterness among brethren? Would there be so much impatience of contradiction, and so much disposition to personal revenge, if we believed the Judge was at the door, to punish and to reward? How appropriate the apostle's advice! "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." 1 Cor. 4, 5. Would there be so much *oppression*, either in, or out of the church; in either established or dissenting churches, if, *conceptually*, we beheld the Lord at hand?

There is a great deal implied in the evil servant's *smiting* his fellow servants, under the impression that his lord *delayed* his return.

Another tendency of this conviction is, (2.) *luxury* and *dissipation*. He will be likely to *eat and drink with the drunken*. All the designed tendencies of the *uncertainty* of his Lord's return, are *lost* upon this evil servant; and, self-persuaded that his Master is not at hand; saying it to *himself*, as he practices his wickedness, he gives himself up to feasting and carousal. Had he supposed his Master was at hand, he would have acted very differently; but, under the influence of his belief, he conducts as he is represented. Would there be as much *luxury* in the church? Would there

*The reader must judge for himself whether the inferences are warranted by the Lord's illustration. There is no design to be unjust towards any one.

be as much *dissipation* and *levity*? Would it be so hard to collect a few shillings from our fashionable or covetous Christians, for the purpose of doing a little more, or a great deal more good,* if all men were under the influence of the conviction, My Master, to whom I am accountable, is at hand?

Verse 50. THE LORD OF THAT SERVANT SHALL COME IN A DAY WHEN HE LOOKETH NOT FOR HIM, AND IN AN HOUR THAT HE IS NOT AWARE OF.

Here we have still further light with respect both to the *nature* and *manner* of the second advent: it will not be a gradual diffusion of gospel light and happiness; it will be a sudden and — to persons of the character here described — an unexpected and terrible coming. The evil servant will be among those who shall “wail because of him,” when they behold him coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. There is a peculiar significance and importance in St. Paul’s words, (1Ieb. ix. 28,) “And unto them that *look* for him, shall he appear the *second time*, without sin [sin-offering] unto *salvation*.” This evil servant — representing a class — a large class — of professors — was not *looking* for the return of his master; so that he came to him very unexpectedly, not to *save* him, it seems, but to *destroy*. The coming of his master was not to this servant a matter of hope, but of *surprise*, and *confusion*. He was not *looking* for him: he was saying to the very *last moment*, My lord delayeth his coming.

Now *true believers* are represented as being of a very different character, with respect both to their conduct and faith. And the difference of their *conduct* arises from the difference of their *faith*. Hence St. Paul speaks of believers in general, (Titus ii. 12, 13,) “Denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; *looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”†

Learn from the subject, as now presented, that it is not a

* See Note S, in the Appendix.

† The appearing of God and Christ in connection is represented in the vision of Daniel, vii. 9–14.

matter of insignificance how we *believe* respecting the time and manner of the Lord's coming.

Verse 51. AND SHALL CUT HIM ASUNDER, AND APPOINT HIM HIS PORTION WITH THE HYPOCRITES : THERE SHALL BE WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.

Here is the sad result of impropriety of *conduct* from impropriety of *belief*. Had this man *believed* right, there is reason to suppose he would have *acted* right. But, alas, the *coming* in which he professed to *believe*, but for which he was not *looking*, was to him a coming of wrath and ruin. He is to be "cut asunder" — terribly destroyed by a punishment of unsurpassed severity: limb cut from limb; head cut from body; body cut in two. And then — after being cut asunder — his portion is to be with the *hypocrites*: with those who *pretended* to believe, and to be, what they did not believe, nor become. This illustrates the Lord's teaching elsewhere. Luke xii. 4, 5: "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

That state of punishment will be a state of consciousness and great anguish: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Anything but happiness is expressed in this terrible description. Whatever it may indicate, it is certainly something to be earnestly deprecated and avoided. This, it should be remembered, will take place at the return of the servant's master. And in very many places in the Scriptures, the second coming of the Lord is thus represented as a time of great calamity to those who are not found prepared. It will be the time of "gathering out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;" that they may be cast "into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." See Matt. xiii. 36-43.

The same period is alluded to in Luke xiii. 28. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the

kingdom of God, and you yourselves *thrust out*. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”

From the whole representation thus far, learn the evil tendency, and — if yielded to — the evil consequences, of saying in the heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.

[*Mark*: WATCH YE, THEREFORE, FOR YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE COMETH, AT EVEN, OR AT MIDNIGHT, OR AT THE COCK-CROWING, OR IN THE MORNING. LEST COMING SUDDENLY, HE FIND YOU SLEEPING.]

The relevancy and importance of this admonition, are too evident to need extended remarks. The *uncertainty* of the Lord's return, and the *suddenness* of it, are here assigned as the reasons for constant watching and preparation.

[*Mark*: AND WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU, I, SAY UNTO ALL, WATCH.]

Here is the single exhortation, for the illustration and enforcement of which, the previous parable was used. From the certainty of the Lord's second coming, from its connection with the decisions of final destiny, from the suddenness of the coming, from the uncertainty with respect to the time, there arises the great leading duty of *watching*.

And this is a *general* duty: it belongs to all people, and to all times: “What I say unto *you*, I say unto ALL, WATCH.” “Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!”

An impression appears to have obtained, that the Lord's discourse ended with the twenty-fourth chapter. But it is evident that what is recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter was spoken at the same time. The reader need not be reminded, perhaps, that no importance whatever should be attached to the division of the discourse into chapters, for this is wholly a human and a modern work: originally the whole discourse stood just as it would now stand, if it was all included in a single chapter.

The first word, THEN, of the twenty-fifth chapter shows this connection quite apparently. But the whole reliance,

however; is not placed in the initiatory word; it is evident from the whole chapter that it was spoken at the same time as the former.

The parable of the wise and the foolish virgins was designed more particularly to *apply* the illustrations and admonitions which had been already given to the coming of the Lord. This not only appears from the *nature* and *connection* of the parable, but from the *conclusion* of it, verse 13: "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

In this parable, as one principal truth, we learn that *a part* (in the parable it is *one-half*) *of those who are professedly waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom, will, after all, be found unprepared to meet him; and will not be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb.* See Rev. xix. 7-9. In the parable of the servants and the talents we have the same general truth illustrated, in connection with the final result of faithfulness and unfaithfulness, at the time of the Lord's return from his journey into the "far country." The faithful is then made "ruler over many things;" he then enters "into the joy of" his Lord. The unfaithful, who, at his Lord's "coming," (verse 27,) could not render a good account of his conduct, is then cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

From verse 31 to the end of the chapter, we have the closing up of the whole discourse, where our Lord takes occasion to explain still further the nature and results of his coming. It will be the time of general judgment to the nations then occupying the earth; and the time of admitting the saints into the heavenly kingdom. Verse 34. Christ will then appear in his character as *King* (verse 34) to judge, (32) to punish, and reward (40, 46.)

In the former part of the discourse, where his endeavor was to proceed through from beginning to end, with strict reference to the chronological order, it was not deemed expedient to interrupt the prophetic narrative by the details of the judgment. So, not to leave so important a matter out of the discourse, and, also, to identify the time and the event so that

the readers of the Old Testament prophecies might not be at a loss to understand the matter, he here dwells more particularly on the judgment which shall take place at his coming, and the eternal destinies which shall be decided. In this manner, the Lord clearly identifies his second advent with the coming and judgment predicted by Daniel, Zachariah, Joel, Isaiah, &c. These prophecies have already been sufficiently explained in former chapters of this Exposition. And the reader will perceive that the theory of interpretation adopted in this work, besides being a rigidly literal and easily understood theory, not only harmonizes all the different parts of the Lord's discourse at this time, but many of the parables and predictions which he delivered at other times. And, besides, it harmonizes the prophecies in other parts of the Old and New Testaments, which, in many instances, have bewildered expositors, and been regarded as being wholly inexplicable to the common reader.

Without trying to reconcile the learned and excellent Dr. CLARKE with himself, the author takes the liberty of closing this Exposition by quoting the Doctor's very judicious and impressive observations on the parable of the servants whom the master left in the care of his house, when he journeyed into "a far country." See Mark xiii. 34-36, and Matt. xxiv. 45-51.

"Our Lord shows us in this parable, 1. That himself, *ascended to heaven*, is the man *gone from home*. 2. That *believers* collectively are his *family*. 3. That *his servants* are those who are employed in the work of faith and labor of love. 4. That the *porter* represents the *ministers* of the gospel, who should continually watch for the safety and welfare of the whole flock. 5. That every one has *his own work*,—that which belongs to *himself*, and to none other; and for the accomplishment of which, he receives sufficient strength from his Lord. 6. That these *servants* and *porters* shall give an account to their Lord, how they have exercised themselves in their respective departments. 7. And that as the Master of the family will certainly come to require this account at a *time* when men are *not aware*, therefore they should be always

watchful and *faithful*. And, 8. That this is a duty incumbent on *every soul* of man: *What I say unto you, I say unto ALL, WATCH!* If after all these warnings, the followers of God be found *careless*, their misery and condemnation must be great."

APPENDIX I.

CONTAINING THE PRINCIPAL NOTES REFERRED TO IN THE
EXPOSITION.

NOTE A. (Page 31.)

THIS Harmony was prepared, and submitted to the inspection of several persons, several months previously to the publication of the excellent "HARMONY AND EXPOSITION" of Mr. JAMES STRONG, A. M. The fact is mentioned here for the purpose of noting the singular coincidence of two writers, entirely unknown to each other, being at the same time engaged in preparing an original Harmony on substantially the same principle. The works do not wholly agree in the arrangement of the verses of the portion treated in this book; nor are they similar in the method of exhibiting the references to other parts of the Scriptures. But in the plan of combining the several records, so as to present at one view all that the different evangelists have recorded on each distinct subject, the reader will find a substantial agreement.

NOTE B. (Page 82.)

Since writing this part of the Exposition, the following proof of what was merely supposed from the words of Christ, has come to view. It refers directly to the coming of Impostors *in the name of Christ*. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist., B. 3, c. 26.* "Menander, who succeeded Simon Magus, exhibited himself in his conduct an instrument of diabolical wickedness, not inferior to the former. He also was a Samaritan; and having made no less progress in his imposture than his master, reveled in still more arrogant pretensions to miracles; saying that he was in truth the Saviour once sent from the invisible worlds for the salvation of men." The historian adds, "This account may be easily confirmed from Irenius."

NOTE C. (Page 159.)

St. Peter, speaking of these very characters that endeavored to corrupt the church, says, (2 Pet. ii. 18,) "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."

NOTE D. (Page 235.)

Since the foregoing was written, the author has providentially met with an old Treatise on Prophecy, by Rev. JOSEPH TOWERS, LL. D., which very unex-

pectedly sustains the view of the subject maintained in this Treatise. And, what is not a little remarkable, Dr. Towers, to some extent, adopts the very system of interpretation which this Treatise opposes.

Referring to the passage under notice, he says, (*vol. 2, p. 40.*) "But I shall be asked, does this most illustrious of the prophets himself *specify* any time; and, if specified, does it correspond with what has before been gathered from Daniel and from John? I answer, that it perfectly does. *The sun shall be darkened*, says our Lord, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*. Now what are those days, and when do they terminate? The incomparable Mr. MEDE, (I use the epithet of Bishops HURD and HALIFAX,) in speaking of the Jews and of this passage, says, 'This great tribulation, such as never nation suffered, is not to be confined to their calamity at the destruction of Jerusalem, but extends to the whole time of their captivity and dispersion from that time unto this present not yet ended.' To the same purpose speaks that eminent Dutch divine, EPISCOPUS, in his commentary on Matthew; and in like manner Archbishop TILLOTSON has observed, that the prophecy of Jesus respecting the sufferings of his countrymen, '*comprehends from the destruction of Jerusalem all the time of the captivity of the Jews among the Gentiles, which we see is not yet expired; and that when it is said, the sun shall be darkened, &c., after the tribulation of those days, the meaning is, this shall happen 'when God hath made an end of punishing the nation of the Jews.'*" "It has also been thought," continues Dr. TOWER, "that these words relate not to the descendents of Abraham alone. The expression, 'the tribulation of those days,' says MATTHEW HENRY, 'includes not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but all the other tribulation which the Church must pass through; and thus it is to be extended as well to the Christians as to the Jews. That it is to be applied to the sufferings of the Christian Church, was the decided opinion of VITRINGA. Such likewise was the sentiment of THEOPHYLACT, and of CHRYSOSTOM." "From the 21st chapter of Luke we learn," continues Dr. TOWER, "that 'the tribulation of those days' has a very extensive meaning; and that it especially signifies the treading down of Jerusalem and Judea by the Gentiles, which shall not terminate till the times of the Gentiles are accomplished; for such is the import of his words." "From a comparison of these two passages in Matthew and in Luke," repeats Dr. TOWER, "it appears evident, that 'the tribulation of those days' mentioned by the former of these apostolic writers, reaches through the whole period during which Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." A note in the volume from which the foregoing extracts have been taken, reads thus—"Some interpreters," says CALVIN, "rashly understand 'the tribulation of those days' as relating to the destruction of Jerusalem alone."

NOTE E. (Page 246.)

Mr. LOWTH, in treating of the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekial, says, "The prophecy contained in this and the following chapter, concerning Israel's victory over Gog and Magog, without question relates to the latter ages of the world, when the whole house of Israel shall return into their own land."

Dr. TOWER remarks, referring to the "incomparable MEDE," "That the Gog and Magog of the *Apocalypse* cannot be understood of the Gog and Magog of

Ezekiel, this sagacious commentator has remarked; and I regard his observation as indubitable.”

NOTE F. (Page .)

“*The sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear,*” &c. Many of Israel’s enemies will doubtless invade Palestine from the *sea*. Hostile fleets will swarm with the invading armies. The judgments that convulse the earth and heavens will dreadfully affect the sea: it will be roused into terrible commotion, and its waves roar with horrid tumult. The invaders, terrified and distressed upon the land, will naturally turn to the sea, to fly from the terrors on shore. But they cannot escape by the sea: the divine fury is as visible there as in the shaking heavens. Truly will they be in “perplexity,” with their “hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.”

NOTE G. (Page 278.)

To those who have not personally examined the subject, this may seem to conflict with the Scriptures; for, certainly, there is much said in the Scriptures, respecting the doings of Christ, which does not appear to be a work of grace. He is spoken of as *ruling with a rod of iron*, and *dashing in pieces as a potter’s vessel*; as *taking vengeance* on his enemies; as being *angry* with the nations, while they call for the mountains to hide them from the *wrath of the Lamb*. These portions of the Scriptures appear to have led even our orthodox commentators into the inconsistent method of interpreting Christ’s prophecy in the way herein objected to. And it is truly surprising that divines so able as Newton, Watson, Lightfoot, Clarke, Benson, Barnes, &c., &c., should have failed to perceive that such passages of Scripture applied to the doings of Christ, in the gospel dispensation, are not only diametrically opposed to the essential character of the Mediatorial office, but are not in any sense warranted by the language of the Scriptures.

It will be found that such language, when applied to Christ in the Bible, is *prophetic*: revealing—not what he is *now doing*—but what he *will do*. And the *context* of such passages will sufficiently show that the fulfillment of these prophecies belongs to the succeeding dispensation, which will be ushered in by the Second Advent. Take, for example, the passage in Rev. ii. 27. “And he shall rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; *even as I received of my Father.*” This text, let it be observed, is addressed by Christ to his servants who prove faithful unto the end; and it promises them a part with him in the government of the world—even in the judgment and violent destruction of the nations, when they shall be broken to shivers as an earthen vessel. This doctrine is distinctly taught in other places: e. g., 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters.” In relation to the *time when this shall be fulfilled*, it is always spoken of as yet to come; and is usually—if not always—identified with the period of the Second Advent. The passage already quoted from Revelation shows this: “But that which ye have

already, *hold fast* TILL I COME. And he that *overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end*, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron," &c. Now, no one, having this thought about him, will contend that this has been, or will be, fulfilled in the gospel dispensation. The very same rule of the saints is clearly predicted, both in relation to the *fact* and the *time*, in Dan., 7th chapter. In the vision therein related, we are expressly informed that it reached forward to the judgment: Verse 9. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit. . . . 10. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: *the judgment was set, and the books were opened.* 13. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the *Son of man came with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed."

In the interpretation of the vision which Daniel obtained, he was informed, verse 18, "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." It is at this time, doubtless, when "the saints of the Most High shall *take* the kingdom," that the prediction in Revelation, and the declaration of Paul in Corinthians shall be fulfilled. Daniel goes on to tell the *exact time when the event shall be accomplished*: Verse 21. "I beheld, and the same horn *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them*: 22. UNTIL THE ANCIENT OF DAYS CAME, AND JUDGMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH; AND THE TIME CAME THAT THE SAINTS POSSESSED THE KINGDOM." A still further interpretation of the matter informed the prophet, that, verse 25, "He [the little horn] shall speak against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. 26. BUT THE JUDGMENT SHALL SIT, AND THEY SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS DOMINION, TO CONSUME AND TO DESTROY IT UNTO THE END. 27. *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*" This sufficiently indicates the *time* when the afore quoted predictions of the saints, with Christ, judging the world, and ruling with a rod of iron.

The second Psalm is of the same nature, and appears to relate to the very same *event* and *time*: The Father, speaking to the Son, says, verse 8, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." It is evident, however, from the context, as well as the text itself, that it is yet future: the time has not yet come for him to *receive* the inheritance, to treat it in this violent manner; and the time has not yet come for him to deal with the nations in wrath. Hence—during the time of grace—the rebellious kings and judges of the earth are exhorted to (verse 12,) "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye

perish from the way, [as before described,] when his wrath is kindled but a little."

Rev. xii. 5, contains another prediction, of the same nature, which the context shows will not be fulfilled until after the expiration of the "thousand, two hundred, and three score days." Rev. xix. 15, is another example, which the connections clearly show is not to be fulfilled until the destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet at the great battle of Gog and Magog. Then appears upon the scene "THE WORD OF GOD," as "KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS;" verse 14: "And the armies in heaven followed him upon white horses,* clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, † that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Rev. xi. 18, speaks also in another form of the same time of wrath; but the connections show that it does not belong to the mediatorial dispensation: verse 15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. 16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou has taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst DESTROY them which destroyed the earth." Rev. vi. 16, also speaks of the wrath of Christ; but it does not belong to the dispensation of mediation; it will occur at the very same time that Christ predicted his own coming, in the 30th verse of the chapter treated in this Exposition: viz, just after the shaking of the heavens. Verse 12: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: Verse 13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14. And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out their places. 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man ‡ hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: 16. And said to the mountains and rocks, § Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the *wrath of the Lamb*: 17. FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; and who shall be able to stand?"

This is the time that the *sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven, and*

* They were so represented in the vision.

† So it was represented in the vision.

‡ This particularizes what Christ generalized by the expression, "all tribes of the earth shall mourn."

§ They would be among the rocks, dens, and mountains of Palestine — See chap. ix., from section 17, and onward, of this Exposition.

all the tribes of the earth shall mourn AS THEY SEE HIM COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY. They will know that the day of salvation is past: he does not appear as the *Mediator* to *intercede* for them; he comes to *judge* and *punish*. Then — and not before — can it be truly said, “THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME.” Now, as God had *saved* men, by Christ Jesus; so, now, “*God shall judge the world in righteousness*, BY THAT MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED.” Acts xvii. 31.

Now, the day of mediation ended, comes the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds. Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil: *of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile*. “IN THE DAY WHEN GOD SHALL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN, BY JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL!” See Romans, chapter ii.

Christ is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high, appearing in the presence of God as our interceding High Priest, ever living to make intercession for us. There he will remain, *in the same mediatorial office, until the finishing up of the mediatorial dispensation*; for the heavens must receive him UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS, SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN. Acts iii. 21.

When the mediatorial dispensation and work are completed, and the Son gives back the mediatorial kingdom to God the Father, having completed his mediation; then, the dispensation of grace being finished, and the judgment day having come, — then, 2 Thess. i. 7; “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, 8. In flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10. WHEN HE SHALL COME TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, AND TO BE ADMIRER IN ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE IN THAT DAY.” Thus it is that in all the places in the Scripture, where wrath, vengeance, and destructive judgments, are attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is always in connection with the judgment dispensation, and not during the mediatorial. The heavens must receive him — as the High Priest within the veil, before the mercy-seat — *until those times (plural) of restitution which the prophets have predicted*; such as David and Daniel had foretold, as we have already noticed. Then comes the restitution, or regeneration, of this world, when God shall make all things new. Until then, the office of the Son of God is such, that it is palpably inconsistent to attribute to him the vengeance and desolation that destroyed the Jewish people. But, when these times of restitution arrive, then will arrive the time when Christ shall judge the world, ruling the wicked with a rod of iron, and the saints shall rule with him. Then will come the time when the wicked shall be destroyed, and the righteous Judge shall give the crown to all them that love his appearing. To this day the apostles were directed to look for their reward,* as Christ himself has taught; Matt. xix 27: “Then answered Peter, † and said unto him,

* Rev. xi. 18, and many other passages in other portions of the Bible.

† Read the context from verse 23.

Behold, we have left all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

How plainly the Bible identifies the time when Christ shall begin to judge the world, and to destroy the wicked! How plainly does it teach that this belongs to another dispensation! What must we think of the doctrine that Christ judges with destructive vengeance *now*?

NOTE II. (Page 293.)

To the objection, that no sign in the heavens could be seen, at the same time, by "all the tribes of the earth," it may be replied: True, perhaps, if the tribes are all scattered abroad in every part of the earth, as at the present time. But what if "all the tribes of the earth," in the scriptural use of that expression, should be assembled in some particular region of the earth? By the scriptural use of the expression, and others implying about the same thing, we do not usually understand every individual of all the tribes: but we regard them as general expressions, denoting a very great multitude; and, in cases like the one in the text, a very great variety.

Now, it is worthy of especial notice, that the Scriptures have in several places represented that at the very time which, in this Treatise, it is maintained that this prediction will be fulfilled, there will a gathering of all nations which, of course, must include "all tribes," for nation is the more extensive term. In the representation of the mighty gathering of Gog and Magog, the idea is conveyed throughout that it is to be a general assembly of the nations of the earth. See below, Rev. xx. 8. Hence, when the Lord obtains the victory over them, "he will be known in the sight of *many nations*." Ezek. xxxviii. 23. The same expression is elsewhere used in relation to the same gathering. So in Rev. xvi. 14, in the great gathering in the place called Armageddon, *all the world* is represented as being assembled: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Rev. xx. 8: "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." In Zech. xiv., we have the same thing revealed; Verse 1. Behold, *the day of the Lord cometh*, — and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2. *For I will gather ALL NATIONS against Jerusalem to battle.* . . . 3. Then the LORD shall go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. . . . 5. *And the LORD MY GOD SHALL COME, AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE.*" (See also *Jude*, verse 14, as identifying the *time*.) Zech. xii. 9: "And it shall come to pass *in that day*, that I will seek to *destroy* ALL THE NATIONS THAT COME AGAINST JERUSALEM." Verse 3: "And *in that day* will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for *all people*: all that burden themselves with it shall he cut in pieces, *THOUGH ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH BE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST IT.*" This is precisely the idea taught in Joel iii., which has been *proved* to refer to the very time the Lord is now speaking of. Verse 1: "For

behold, IN THOSE DAYS, AND AT THAT TIME, WHEN I SHALL BRING AGAIN THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH AND JERUSALEM,* 2. I will also GATHER ALL NATIONS, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people," &c. Verse 14: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. 15. The sun shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." These many (and these are not all) examples of the scriptural use of the term "all tribes of the earth," or of other terms conveying the same idea, prove two very important things: First, that at some future time there will be a "gathering" of "all the heathen," "all the nations," "all the world," "the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth," &c.;—And, secondly, that this will occur at precisely the time, as taught in this Treatise, of which the Lord was speaking in this part of his prophecy.

What becomes of the objection, then, that "all the tribes of the earth,"—as the Scriptures use the term, or its equivalents in respect to this very occurrence—cannot witness the sign in the heavens, at the same moment of time?

There is another thought: who knows but this luminous sign may be *electrical* in its nature, and, of consequence, instantaneous in its passage from place to place? Is not this more than intimated by our Saviour himself?

"For as the LIGHTNING cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE."

But whether the objection is answered or not, there is an answer that *must* suffice: Christ has distinctly affirmed that "all the tribes of the earth" shall witness his coming. Any objection to the *expression* is an objection to the *fact* it declares. Let us be careful that we do not cavil at the words of Infinite Wisdom.

NOTE I. (Page 298.)

As the last three chapters of Zechariah have been designated as describing clearly the times of this great mourning, and identifying it with the final conflict and deliverance of Israel, it may be necessary to say a few words by way of explaining such portions of the chapters designated as do not so clearly refer to that time. Chap. xiii. 7-9 is clearly a reference to the betrayal and death of Christ, *suggested* as the *explanation* of the previous references to their looking upon him whom they had *pieced*, and the reference to the *wounds in the hands*, which betoken the fact of his having been nailed to the cross. This suggested explanation of terms that were used in reference to the final mourning, it will be observed, is followed by a brief, comprehensive statement of the calamities of that people down to the time of which he was then formally discussing: to the time when—after all their wickedness and wretchedness—they should call on the name of the Lord, and God would hear them, and would say to them, "It is my people;" and they should say, "The Lord is my God."

Then chap. xiv. 1, comes in with the more particular description of the day and occasion: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2. For *I will gather ALL NATIONS against Jerusa-*

* That is, when he brings back the captivos.

lem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." This evidently alludes to the *first stages* of the great conflict, *before the Deliverer comes*. At first the multitude of enemies will prevail, and the Jews will despair of deliverance. This will make their salvation by divine interposition more conspicuous and remarkable, as God hath usually ordered it in his merciful interpositions. Then, as the next verse shows, will be the time for the Lord to come for the salvation of his people. Verse 3: "THEN SHALL THE LORD GO FORTH, AND FIGHT AGAINST THESE NATIONS, *as when he fought in the day of battle*. 4. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,* and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. 5. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; AND THE LORD MY GOD SHALL COME, AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE." Then follows — to the end of the book — a description of the permanent, (verse 11) salvation of Israel, and the holiness (verse 20) which shall forever characterize them as they dwell in their own land, their enemies being either destroyed (verses 12–15) or converted, (verses 16–19.) Those who venture to interpret this as anything that has yet occurred, and those who explain it away to mean almost anything that may be guessed at or fancied, in order to avoid the literal understanding of it, assume a responsibility which they may hereafter regret.

NOTE J. (Page 304.)

The *return* to the subject of his *coming* was evidently designed by our Lord for the purpose of *describing the event more fully*, and especially to speak of it *in connection with the judgment* which should follow; for he is to "judge the quick and the dead at *his appearing* and his *kingdom*." 2 Tim. iv. 1.

The plan of his discourse appears to have been formed to *answer the inquiries which occasioned it*. But these inquiries do not seem to have had any particular reference to the judgment which should immediately follow, or attend, his coming. After going through the prophetic history, in exact chronological order, and bringing the subject down to the *sign of his coming and of the end of the world*, he saw proper then to speak of gathering together his elect; and then to *suspend* the regular order of the discourse, for the purpose of giving appropriate *admonitions* and *illustrations*, having special respect to the necessity of being always prepared for his coming. These occupy the concluding part of the 24th chapter, and the whole of the 25th, down to the 30th verse. In suspending the regular prophetic narrative, he left some things unsaid, and some things unexplained. In the 31st verse of the 25th chapter

*How particular the prediction! Who will venture to explain it all away by metaphorical interpretations?

he resumes the subject of his advent, to say what he did not say before, (though it was of necessity implied,) that the ANGELS *would come with him*. This was of necessity implied in the 31st verse of the 24th chapter, where he speaks of *sending his angels* to gather together his elect. With this further statement by himself, his great discourse is made to harmonize with his own declarations at other times, and with the predictions of the prophets that were before him. But the same prophets who had spoken of the coming of the angels with him, and of the elect being gathered, had also spoken of the gathering together of "all nations," for the purpose of being judged and destroyed. This Christ had not previously mentioned in this discourse; and he resumes the general subject for the evident purpose of *finishing* what he knew was left unfinished, by leaving the thread of the discourse in order to give the appropriate admonitions and illustrations. In this way, in connection with practical instructions, he made his prophecy to correspond with the predictions which refer to the same event in the Scriptures which he was accustomed to read. It may have occurred to the reader, however, to notice the entire omission of any direct reference to the *kingdom* which the prophets have spoken of in connection with the coming of the Lord with his holy angels. Well, now, this very omission of *direct* reference to the kingdom is, in fact, a strong confirmation that he was speaking of the same time and events. And this will appear from the manner in which he *does* refer to the kingdom, as a matter *well understood*, and needing no direct statement. Let the reader now turn to the closing up of the discourse, in chap. xxv. 31. This verse speaks of his *coming in glory, with all his holy angels with him*, and corresponds with the description of his coming in Dan. vii. 13: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the SON OF MAN *came with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, [described verses 9, 10,] and they brought him near before him."

Now, observe, he did not come as a *king*: he came as the *Son of man*. And they brought him near before the Ancient of days, for the purpose, as it appears from what followed, of *inaugurating him in the kingdom*; which was done in the presence, and by the ministry of, the innumerable angels, as appears from the context. Now, notice what follows, as the result and proof of this inauguration: Verse 14: "*And there was GIVEN him DOMINION, and GLORY, and a KINGDOM, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an EVERLASTING dominion, WHICH SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, and his KINGDOM, that [kingdom] which shall not be destroyed.*" Now it is *certain* that this does not relate to his *mediatorial* kingdom, for two reasons: 1. The *context* shows that the whole transaction is *future*, and relates to the *judgment*. 2. All will agree that the *mediatorial* kingdom will *pass away*: that it will last only during the *present dispensation of grace*.

We have, then, this remarkable fact, that the vision of Daniel (chapter vii.) relates to the INAUGURATION OF THE LORD JESUS INTO HIS EVERLASTING KINGDOM! And we have also another fact,—that he first came, as the *Son of man*, in the clouds of heaven, to the Ancient of days, and was *then* with great solemnity and glory, (verses 9, 10,) formally inducted into office as *King of the dominion then given to him*. Consequently, *after that, his revelation to the world would*

be in his *kingly office and glory*. Let the reader now particularly notice how perfectly our Lord's discourse conforms to this order, and proceeds upon the supposition that the principal facts would be understood without a direct statement of them.

First. (Chap. xxiv. 30.) *The sign of the SON OF MAN would appear in heaven.* The first appearance would not be as the *Son of God*, in divine majesty and glory; but in some way denoting his human nature and relationship, as the *Son of man*. This could not probably imply much *power and glory*.

But this part of the scene should be viewed by "all the tribes of the earth," and they would witness, with grief and terror, the solemn inauguration of the Son of man into his *kingly office and glory*. Then they would *mourn*, for they would at once understand the hopelessness of their condition. The next scene would be the *coming* of the Son of man, *as King*, in the *glory of his Father*, and of the *holy angels*, by virtue of his *kingly office*.

Notice, also, how this is *implied* in the closing part of his discourse: not a word has been mentioned about his *kingly office*; but when the time comes to speak of it, in the regular order of the prophecy, then it is mentioned, as a matter of course,—as a thing understood, though not before referred to!

Chap. xxv. 31: "When the *Son of man shall come IN HIS GLORY*, [which was given to him, Dan. vii. 14,] and *all the holy angels WITH HIM,* THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*: [his glorious throne.] 32. Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another." This refers to the *judgment* which he now performs. Verse 34: "*Then shall the KING say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

Now, here are two things very remarkable: 1. The introduction of the title *King*, and the reference to the *kingdom*, as matters of course, without any previous reference to them, excepting the prefatory remark in the parable of the virgins. 2. It is remarkable that just in this connection, *subsequent to the judgment*, or separation, of the good and the bad, the "blessed of the Father" are invited to "INHERIT THE KINGDOM." But this perfectly agrees with the order of events in Daniel's vision; for his vision continued, (verse 22,) "Until the Ancient of days came, † and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the SAINTS POSSESSED THE KINGDOM!"

Daniel also refers to the same thing in another connection: Verse 26: "*But the judgment shall sit*, and they shall take away his ‡ dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 27. *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH.*"

The correspondency of Daniel's prophecy and our Lord's might be shown still further; but sufficient has been said to guide the Bible student in his further researches. It only remains, touching this point, to show briefly how our Lord has illustrated his own prophecy, by the parables recorded in the

* They first appeared with the Ancient of days. Dan. vii. 10.

† Referred to again, but the inaugural scene omitted, as having been sufficiently described previously.

‡ The little Horn.

13th chapter of Matthew. What we are now called to read *forms no part of the parables*, however, *but is his own statement of the application and meaning of the parables*. Here are no figures; no parables to explain parables; but a *literal application of figurative illustrations*. They inquired for his meaning in the parable of the tares, verse 36. What follows is his explanation. Verse 37: "And he answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. 38. The field is the world; the good seed are the *children of the kingdom*; but the tares are the children of the wicked one. 39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil; *the harvest is the end of the world*; and the reapers are the *angels*. 40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; *so shall it be in the end of this world*. 41. *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom* all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, 42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*." It remained peculiarly the kingdom of the *Father* until this time, when it was *given* to the *Son*, and this harmonized the expressions, in their application to that time of transfer, "*his kingdom*," i. e. *Christ's*, (verse 41,) and their *Father's* kingdom, (ver. 43.)

Taking all the Scriptures in connection, it throws light on the somewhat obscure references to the coming of *God the Father*, and the coming of *Christ the Son*. The vision of Daniel shows how to understand both expressions: they appear to relate in part to the inauguration.

NOTE K. (Page 338.)

"*The last trump.*" This appears to be directly referred to in Rev. x. 5 "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, 6. And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, .

. . . THAT THERE SHOULD BE TIME NO LONGER. 7. *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.*"

Then we have the sounding by the angel specifically referred to: Chap. xi. 15. "And the SEVENTH ANGEL SOUNDED; and there were *great voices in heaven*, saying, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever*. 18. *And the nations were angry,* and thy wrath is come, AND THE TIME OF THE DEAD, THAT THEY SHOULD BE JUDGED, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth.*"† Here, in the 6th verse of the former quotation, we have the oath, "*that there shall be time no longer.*" Time is now filled up; there is nothing more to be added; it is "THE FULLNESS OF TIMES." In the next verse, we have the declaration that *when the SEVENTH ANGEL BEGINS TO SOUND, THE MYSTERY OF GOD SHOULD BE FINISHED as he hath declared it unto his servants the prophets.*‡

* The nations were not all converted, then, it seems.

† Read this in connection with the 2d Psalm.

‡ We are then to examine what the prophets have said about this *mystery of God*. And we shall find it is all complete at the very period now under notice.

When the seventh angel sounded, the great voices in heaven said, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. *But the nations were angry.* It is certain, then, that by the kingdoms of this world becoming Christ's, it is NOT MEANT THAT THE NATIONS WERE CONVERTED; else, why should they be *angry*? And, as the quotation shows, this took place in connection with "the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and of giving reward to the saints, and of destroying them that destroyed the earth. And yet all this is connected with the second advent of Christ, as we learn from I Cor. xv. And this *finishing up the MYSTERY of God, as foretold by the prophets, at the FULLNESS OF THE TIMES,* is plainly alluded to by St. Paul, (Eph. i. 9.) "Having made known unto us the MYSTERY OF HIS WILL, 10. That in the DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES, HE MIGHT GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN, AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH, IN HIM."*

We see how the whole matter is identified not only with the *time* of gathering together all that are in Christ, in heaven and in earth, but also to the *fact* of their gathering, and of *raising the dead to give reward to the saints,* at the time of *destroying the wicked*; all of which occurs at the period when the *kingdoms of the world come into the hands of Christ.* This *fills up the time,* and *finishes the mystery of God which has been foretold by the prophets.* And it is all connected with the *second coming of Christ.* How appropriate, with this understanding, is the declaration of Peter, (Acts iii. 21,) "*Whom [Christ] the heavens must receive, UNTIL THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS WHICH GOD HATH SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS, SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN.*"

NOTE L. (Page 339.)

The order of these occurrences appears to be this: 1. The Ancient of Days,* with all the holy angels, and the saints, appear visibly in the clouds of heaven, shining with the effulgence of their own glory, after the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars. 2. Christ, as the Son of man, is brought before him, and solemnly inaugurated into his everlasting kingdom, which then passes formally into his hands. Dan. vii. 14. 3. Then Christ, with all the angels, and the souls of the saints, descends toward the earth, with a great shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God sounding. 4. Christ, for a time remains in the clouds, sends the saints down to the earth, probably, under the guidance of the angels, to the various places where their bodies are sleeping, and then the word that wakes the dead and changes the living, is sounded, which in an atom of time effects the resurrection and the transfiguration. 5. Then all are caught up into the clouds together, by the ministry of the angels, to meet the Lord in the air. 6. There they remain while the renovating fire is purging the earth, and destroying the wicked. 7. Then the heavens and the earth are immediately restored to their original condition. 8. Christ reigns as king in the new heavens and earth, and the saints reign with him.

In this way they enter the everlasting kingdom. How long a time, as we

* Read the connections, particularly as far as to the 14th verse.

† See Dan. vii.

reckon time, these events will occupy in transpiring, we cannot ascertain, for God has not revealed it. It would seem, from some portions of the Scripture, that the earth is not to be burnt up, or annihilated, but only renovated; as the flood did not annihilate the earth, but only, produced great physical changes.

NOTE M. (Page 349.)

In Jer. xxiii. 16, this same title is applied to JERUSALEM. But this did not render it any the less appropriate for the Messiah; for the Jews were accustomed to incorporate the names of the Lord with the names of persons and places, as solemn religious memorials of divine interpositions. And they thus employed such titles for the very reason that they were the proper names of the Divine Being.

In Exod. xvii. 15, we read, "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-NISSI," or "THE LORD MY BANNER,"—alluding to the victory over Amalek, which had been obtained through the signal interposition of Jehovah. We read, in Jud. vi. 24, "Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it JEHOVAH-SHALEM," or "THE LORD SEND PEACE."

Gen. xxii. 14, "And Abraham called the name of that place JEHOVAH-JIREH," or "THE LORD WILL PROVIDE,"—in view of the divine interposition in providing a lamb for the sacrifice.

Finally, not to multiply examples, in Ezek. xlvi. 35, where the prophet speaks of the period which we are now considering, we read, (referring to Jerusalem,) "It was round about eighteen thousand measures; and the name of the city from that day shall be, JEHOVAH-SHAMMAI," "THE LORD IS THERE."

There will be both eustom and propriety in applying the divine name to Jerusalem, when it shall be built up to be "thrown down no more forever." In that day, in view of the Messiah having redeemed them from all iniquity, and made the city truly and permanently holy, it will be both scriptural and appropriate to call the name of the place "JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." For JEHOVAH MESSIAH, the RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, will then be "RAISED UP UNTO DAVID;" and, as "KING," "shall reign and prosper, executing judgment and righteousness in the earth."

NOTE N. (Pages 357, 362.)

Some are ready to cavil and object, whenever the future residence of the redeemed from the earth is represented as a literal, material place; not remembering, it would seem, that this is the usual representation of the place in the Scriptures. And they appear to forget, too, that man, in his original glory, walking and conversing with his Creator, was a being with a body as well as a soul; that he rejoiced in communion with the Lord, in the literal Eden where he was originally placed, and from which, after he sinned, he was driven. What do we sinners want more than original immortality and glory, with uninterrupted, and everlasting enjoyment of God's presence and favor?

If, by the resurrection, all the effects of sin are perfectly and perpetually removed, and our bodies, like our Lord's, shall be glorious and incorruptible,

shall we complain and cevil because there is nothing better? Do we demand a *premium* for having sinned? Do we require to be *better* conditioned than if we had never transgressed? Where has God promised to make sinners better and happier than man would have been if sin had not been committed?

If man was originally perfectly holy, perfectly happy, free from all disease and disquietude, and blessed with familiar communion with his Maker; why should we feel such a shrinking from the idea of having a *local habitation*, adapted to the *spiritualized*, yet — of necessity — still *material* body, with which all will be furnished in the resurrection state? The *new heavens* and the *new earth* will undoubtedly be indescribably and inconceivably beautiful and glorious; but they will be *earth* and *heaven* still.

The reader is earnestly advised to do himself the favor to read DR. CHALMERS' Sermon on the New Heavens and the New Earth. As all may not have at hand the Sermon referred to, it may be expedient to give some portions of it, that the reader may be informed of the Doctor's view of this subject:

"It were venturing on the region of conjecture to affirm, whether, if Adam had not fallen, the earth that we now tread upon, would have been the everlasting abode of him and his posterity. But certain it is, that man, at the first, had for his place this world, and, at the same time, for his privilege, an unclouded fellowship with God, and, for his prospect, an immortality, which death was neither to intercept nor put an end to. He was terrestrial in respect of condition, and yet celestial in respect both of character and enjoyment. His eye looked outwardly on a landscape of earth, while his heart breathed upwardly in the love of heaven. And though he trode the solid platform of our world, and was compassed about with its horizon — still was he within the circle of God's favored creation, and took his place among the freemen and the denizens of the great spiritual commonwealth. This may serve to rectify an imagination, of which we think that all must be conscious — as if the grossness of materialism was only for those who had degenerated into the grossness of sin; and that, when a spiritualizing process had purged away all our corruption, then, by the stepping stones of a death and resurrection, we should be borne away to some ethereal region, where sense, and body, and all in the shape either of audible sound, or of tangible substance, were unknown. And hence that strangeness of impression which is felt by you, should the supposition be offered, that in the place of eternal blessedness there will be ground to walk upon; or scenes of luxuriance to delight the corporeal senses; or the kindly intercourse of friends talking familiarly, and by articulate converse together; or, in short, anything that has the least resemblance to a local territory, filled with various accommodations, and peopled over its whole extent by creatures formed like ourselves — having bodies such as we now wear; and faculties of perception, and thought, and mutual communication, such as we now exercise. The common imagination that we have of paradise on the other side of death,* is, that of a lofty, aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing — where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an ex-

* Chalmers is certainly speaking of the resurrection state, as the previous paragraphs show.

pression of strength, and life, and coloring, to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element that is meagre, and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to mortals here below — where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes that have no power of allurements, and certain unearthly ecstasies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathize. The holders of this imagination forget, all the while, that really there is no essential connection between materialism and sin — that the world which we now inhabit, had all the amplitude and solidity of its present materialism, before sin entered into it — that God so far, on that account, from looking slightly upon it, after it had received the last touch of his creating hand, reviewed the earth, and the waters, and the firmament, and all the green herbage, with the living creatures, and the man whom he had raised in dominion over them, and he saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was all very good. They forget that on the birth of materialism, when it stood out in the freshness of those glories which the great Architect of Nature had impressed upon it, that then “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” They forget the appeals that are made everywhere in the Bible to this material workmanship — and how, from the face of these visible heavens, and the garniture of this earth that we tread upon, the greatness and the goodness of God are reflected on the view of his worshipers. No, my brethren, the object of the administration we sit under, is to extirpate sin, but it is not to sweep away materialism.”

He also argues the question from the fact of the resurrection of the body. Some entertaining the notion that a material heaven and earth and a material body will be rather degrading to the immortal being, he thus continues his eloquent discourse: “But, as a proof of some metaphysical delusion upon this subject, the product, perhaps, of a wrong, though fashionable philosophy, it would appear, that to embody the spirit is not the stepping stone to its degradation, but to its preferment. The last day will be a day of triumph to the righteous — because the day of reëtrance of the spirit to its much-loved abode, where its faculties, so far from being shut up in captivity, will find their free and kindred development in such material organs as are suited to them. The fact of the resurrection proves, that, with man at least, the state of disembodied spirit is a state of unnatural violence — and that the resurrection of his body is an essential step to the highest perfection of which he is susceptible. And it is indeed an homage to that materialism, which many are for expunging from the future state of the universe altogether — that ere the immortal soul of man has reached the ultimate glory and blessedness which are designed for it, it must return and knock at that very grave where lie the mouldered remains of the body which it wore, and there inquisition must be made for the flesh, and the sinews, and the bones, which the power of corruption has perhaps for centuries before, assimilated to the earth, that is around them — and there the minute atoms must be reassembled into a structure that bears upon it the form and the lineaments, and the general aspect of a man.”

This renewed and immortal man, composed of a spiritual and a material na-

ture united, must now have an appropriate residence. Chalmers shall speak again: "And we do hail the information of our text, that after the dissolution of its present framework, it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure, and of its unbounded variety — that in addition to OUR DIRECT AND PERSONAL VIEW OF THE DEITY, WHEN HE COMES DOWN TO TABERNACLE WITH MEN, we shall also have the reflection of him in a lovely mirror of his own workmanship, and *instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and mystery*, so remote from human experience, as to be beyond all comprehension, *we shall walk forever in a land replenished with those sensible delights, and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will lie most profusely scattered over the 'new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.'*"

But will not this be Mahometanism?

"But though a paradise of sense, it will not be a paradise of sensuality. Though not so unlike the present world as many apprehend it, there will be one point of total dissimilarity betwixt them. It is *not the entire substitution of spirit for matter*, that will distinguish the future economy from the present. *But it will be the entire substitution of righteousness for sin. It is this which signalizes the Christian from the Mahometan paradise* — not that sense, and substance, and splendid imagery, and the glories of a visible creation seen with bodily eyes, are excluded from it — but that all which is vile in principle, or voluptuous in impurity, will be utterly excluded from it. There will be a firm earth, as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it, as we have at present: and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterized. There will be both heavens and earth, it would appear, in the next great administration — and with this speciality to mark it from the present one, that it will be a heaven and an earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!"

This long extract will be welcomed in this connection, not only for the beauty and eloquence of its composition, but for its perfect relevancy to the subject in hand. This is the way to interpret Scripture; not according to the fancies of men, but according to the teachings of Inspiration. This discourse of Chalmers is eminently valuable, as well for the correctness of its philosophy, as for the evident scripturalness of its divinity.

NOTE O. (Page 366.)

The theory of interpretation adopted in this Treatise is the only theory that harmonizes the chronology of the events which are described in the various portions of the Bible. For example — the coming of our Lord — the BRANCH — the ENSIGN — the SHEPHERD — the KING — the DAVID — the PRINCE, of the ancient prophecies; and the SETTING UP OF HIS EVERLASTING KINGDOM OVER THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, when the heathen are given to him for his inheritance, to rule with a rod of iron, to dash in pieces as a potter's vessel; the gathering together of his elect — of all his elect — to enjoy his presence and glory; the creation of the new heavens and the new earth; the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the coming down of the new Jerusalem from God out of heaven; and the tabernacling of the Lord for ever in the midst of his people; — all these events are to be accomplished in connection, or at the same gene-

ral period. Now it requires but a little comparing together of Scripture with Scripture to determine this. We have seen, (1.) that the *resurrection of Israel* and their *final universal gathering together* are to occur in connection. (See Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12, 13, and 21, 22, 25.) We have seen (2.) how this is to transpire in connection with the *reign of Messiah*, as the promised DAVID, in his *everlasting kingdom*. (25, 26.) We have seen (3.) how this is connected with the *placing of the sanctuary* in their midst for evermore. (26.) And (4.) how this is connected with his *tabernacle, or dwelling*, being with them forever. (27.)—Now, to compare with other prophecies, a little, turn to Rev. iii. 7. Here Messiah speaks as opening his kingdom and shutting it; he has “*the key of David*.” And he evidently promises to the faithful something more than merely present spiritual or temporal rewards; those who endure to the end are to inherit the kingdom of their Lord. (Matt. xxv. 34.) This is the time that they are to be crowned. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) Verse 11 refers to his coming [with the key of David—v. 7] to crown the faithful. Verse 12 speaks, firstly, of the *temple, or sanctuary*, that is to be in their midst for evermore; and, secondly, of the *New Jerusalem which is to come down out of heaven from God*.

Now, in Rev. xxi., we have the connections of these events more clearly exhibited. Verse 1 brings to view the *new heavens and the new earth*. Verse 2 brings to view the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; which is still further described in verses 10–21, and shown to be the *church of Christ*. (Verse 9.) By the church coming *down out of heaven*, at this time, can be meant nothing less or more than the coming of *all the saints with Christ* when he comes, “and the dead in Christ shall rise first;” or, as it is expressed in 1 Cor. xv. 23, “They that are Christ’s [shall be raised] at his coming.” Their souls, which have—since death—been with God in heaven, shall then come with Christ, and be again connected with their bodies in the resurrection state. In verse 3, we have the tabernacle of God with men, where God is to dwell with them, and they are to be his people, and he is to be their God. Compare this with Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27, 28.

The everlasting residence of God’s people is represented as a kingdom, a city, and a paradise. Rev. xxi. leaves us in no doubt of the fact that the church in the resurrection state is alluded to. (See verses 4, 5.) Yet, compare verses 24, 25, 26, 27, with Isa. lx. 3, 5, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22; and Rev. xxii. 5. And this is to be connected with his *coming*: Rev. xxi. 3, and xx. 3, 4, 7, 12, 20; and with the *the new heavens and the new earth*: Isa. lxi. 17–25, and lxvi. 15–24.

Yet it was evidently this very state of things which Peter (2 Pet. iii. 10–14,) had in view when he said, (verse 13,) “Nevertheless, we, according to my promise, look for *new heavens* and a *new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*.” Now, *where did Peter find the promise to God’s people*—himself and the rest—of a new heaven and earth? It could be no where else but Isa. li. 16, and lxv. 17, and lxvi. 22. Yet in all these places it is so directly and undeniably connected with the conversion and restoration of Israel, and the renewing of their father-land, that it ought not to be considered of doubtful application.

NOTE P. (Page 386.)

It is, or ought to be, generally known that the doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ on the earth, ushered in by his second advent, and the resurrection of the saints, was generally believed by the primitive Christians who lived just after the apostolic age. The successors of the apostles, and those who had the best opportunities for becoming acquainted with their views, appear to have understood the book of Revelation as teaching this doctrine. And so evidently to the primitive church did the Revelation favor this doctrine; so accustomed were they to appeal to this book to sustain their views on this subject, that the first serious attempt to disprove the genuineness of the book, was for the reason that it so evidently taught the millennial doctrine, as held by the Christian Fathers, that if the book was acknowledged to be the writing of St. John, the opposers of the millennium could not maintain their ground in the controversy; so they endeavored to bring discredit upon this portion of the Scriptures. It is important to recollect, however, that this did not occur until some time in the *third century*. Up to that period the book of Revelation appears to have been generally, perhaps universally, received by the church as the production of St. John; and they also seem to have understood it to teach the millennial reign of Christ.

In "HORNE'S INTRODUCTION," we find this truth distinctly stated; though Mr. Horne himself seems not to have favored the ancient millennial doctrines. Speaking of the book of Revelation, he says, "It is a remarkable circumstance that the authenticity of this book was very generally, if not universally, acknowledged *during the first two centuries*, and yet in the *third century it began to be questioned*. This seems to have been occasioned by *some absurd notions* respecting the millennium, which a few well meaning but fanciful expositors grounded on this book: which notions their opponents injudiciously and presumptuously endeavored to discredit, by denying the authenticity of the book itself."

Now it seems exceedingly improbable that a serious attempt should have been made to bring discredit upon a portion of the Scriptures, which had not been questioned during the first two centuries, merely because "a few well meaning but fanciful expositors" had used it to sustain their fanciful views. In such a case it is likely that a much easier, and a much safer method would have been pursued by the opposers of the millennial views. They would have opposed *the many* to the "few" expositors; and the *solid, rational* ones to the "fanciful." It appears very certain that the millennial doctrine was too successfully defended by this book; and the advocates of the doctrine were too numerous, and—with the aid of Revelation—too potent for their opponents; and hence the endeavor to deprive them of a source of arguments which could not be successfully answered.

But who were these "few well meaning but fanciful expositors" that could not be overcome in argument, without first depriving them of a portion of the word of God? They were, in some instances, the most immediate, and the most eminent, of the successors of the apostles in the government and instruction of the church. They were, in their day, as the Paleys, Baxters, Wesleys, Edwards, Halls, Chalmers, &c., of recent times.

Mr. Barnes does not favor the primitive millennial doctrine; but, with his usual candor, he admits that "The opinion here adverted to was held substantially by Papias, Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Tertullian, and others among the Christian Fathers." But who was IRENEUS? He was born about fifty years after St. John wrote his Revelation; and in A. D. 178 he was Bishop of Lyons, in France. He must have been conversant with those who had been acquainted with St. John. Indeed, we are distinctly informed that he was "*one of POLYCARP's disciples.*" HE WAS INSTRUCTED IN RELIGION BY ONE OF THE MOST HOLY AND EMINENT OF THOSE WHO WERE THEMSELVES PERSONALLY TAUGHT BY ST. JOHN! And who was PAPIAS? Ireneus informs us that PAPIAS was "*a disciple of St. John, and a companion of POLYCARP!*" He was also a *bishop*. The disciple of St. John could not have been ignorant of his master's views on so important a matter as the millennial reign of Christ. Papias himself explains how he became informed of the teachings of the holy apostles. He says, "But I shall not regret to subjoin to my interpretations, also for your benefit, whatsoever I have at any time accurately ascertained and treasured up in my memory, as I have received it from the elders, and have recorded it in order to give additional confirmation to the truth, by my testimony. For I have never, like many, delighted to hear those that tell many things, but those that teach the truth, neither those that record foreign precepts, but those that are given from the Lord, to our faith, and that come from the truth itself. But if I met any one who had been a follower of the elders anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the declaration of the elders. What was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip. What by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord; for I do not think that I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those that are still surviving." *Euseb. Eccl. Hist., B. 3, c. 39.*

And who was JUSTIN MARTYR? He flourished about fifty years after the death of St. John; and was undoubtedly acquainted with those who had conversed with John, and heard him preach. He was one of the ablest and most voluminous writers of the primitive church. Eusebius speaks of him in this manner, "This Justin has left us many monuments of a mind well stored with learning, and devoted to sacred things, replete with matter profitable in every respect." And who was TERTULLIAN? Born A. D. 160, associating with those who had been permitted to hear the immediate successors of the apostles, educated in the true Christian doctrine, and finally becoming one of the great champions of Christianity, he was qualified to judge correctly in the important controversies about the Christian faith.

And all these, it is admitted, — PAPIAS, JUSTIN MARTYR, IRENEUS, and TERTULLIAN, were advocates for the millennial doctrine, as then held by the church generally. Situated as they were, could they have been mistaken in so important a matter as the pre-millennial advent of Christ, and the resurrection of the saints?

But what specifically were the views of these eminent and unimpeachable Fathers of the primitive church? "The opinion of the Christian Fathers," says Mr. Barnes, "with which the modern 'Literalists,' as they are called, substantially coincide, is thus stated by Mr. Elliott: 'This resurrection is to

be literally that of departed saints and martyrs, then at length resuscitated in the body from death and the grave, its *time* to synchronise with, or follow instantly after, the destruction of the beast Antichrist, on Christ's personal second advent; the *binding* of Satan to be an absolute restriction of the power of hell from tempting, deceiving, or injuring mankind, throughout a literal period of a thousand years, thence calculated; the *government of the earth* during the continuance to be administered by Christ and the risen saints—the latter being now *ισαγγελοι*—in nature like angels; and under it, all false religion having been put down, the Jews and saved remnant of the Gentiles been converted to Christ, the earth renovated by the fire of Antichrist's destruction, and Jerusalem made the universal capital, there will be a realization on earth of the blessedness depicted in the Old Testament prophecies, as well perhaps of that to which is associated with the new Jerusalem in the visions of the Apocalypse—until at length this millennium having ended, and Satan gone forth to deceive the nations, the final consummation will follow; the new-raised enemies of the saints, Gog and Magog, be destroyed by fire from heaven: and then the general resurrection and judgment take place, the devil and his servants be cast into the lake of fire, and the millennial reign of the saints extend itself into one of eternal duration." See *Barnes on Revelation*.

Whitby has made a strong effort to prove that the primitive Christians during the first three centuries were not all believers in the millennial doctrine. And he has certainly shown that the doctrine had its disbelievers and opposers from the very first. But does this prove that the millenarian doctrine was not the true and generally received doctrine of the primitive church? Suppose there were unbelievers and opposers:—what doctrine of the Christian church, peculiar to Christianity, has ever yet attained to *universal* acceptance? Even during the lifetime of Paul there were some who opposed the doctrine of the *resurrection*, and overthrew the faith of some. Is it therefore doubtful whether the apostles taught the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? Some disbelieved in the *divinity* of Christ, and some disbelieved in his *humanity*; but are we willing to acknowledge that either of these doctrines is of doubtful origin? Some denied justification by faith; and some at first taught the necessity of circumcision; but do we hesitate to speak decidedly with respect to what was, and what was not, the true orthodox view of the general church? It is easy to perceive from Whitby's own statements in the case, that the disbelievers in the millenarian doctrine were merely the *exceptions* to the general rule. He concludes thus:

"Here, then, we may evidently discern three sorts of men: 1. The *heretics*, denying the resurrection of the flesh, and the millennium. 2. The *exactly orthodox*, asserting both the resurrection and the kingdom of Christ upon earth. 3. The *believers who consented with the just*, and yet endeavored to *allegorize*, and turn into *metaphor* all those Scriptures he had produced for a proper reign of Christ, and who had sentiments rather agreeing with those heretics who denied, than those *exactly orthodox* who maintained, this reign of Christ on earth."

Just so: Whitby merits our gratitude for this honest conclusion. The **HERETICS**, who denied the *resurrection of the flesh*, would of course deny the *mil-*

lennium; for the millennium implied the resurrection of the dead. But shall we reject a doctrine because the *heretics* denied it in order to maintain their *heresy*? The *heretics* were not the church, any more than a *parasite plant* is the *tree* which it disfigures. As to the rest, they were of two classes: 1. "THE EXACTLY ORTHODOX, asserting both the *resurrection* and the *kingdom of Christ upon earth*. 2. The *believers who consented with THE JUST*, and yet endeavored to ALLEGORIZE and turn into METAPHOR all those Scriptures he had produced for a proper reign of Christ, and who had *sentiments rather AGREEING WITH THE HERETICS, who denied*, than those EXACTLY ORTHODOX *who maintained*, this reign of Christ on the earth." Precisely; and we have the same state of things now: there are (1.) the *open heretics* who oppose the sentiments of the (2.) *exactly orthodox*, who constitute the great body of the general church. Then we have a class of (3.) "believers" who "consent with the just," in relation to the genuineness of the Scriptures, and the authority of their revelations; but, alas for them, by *allegorizing* and *metaphorizing* all such portions of the Bible as, understood literally, would overthrow their erroneous doctrines, they hold "*sentiments rather agreeing with those HERETICS*" than with those "EXACTLY ORTHODOX!" "There is no new thing under the sun." Just as it is *now*, so it appears to have been at *first*: there were the *open heretics*, radically *opposed* to the *orthodox*, and answering to our *open infidels*. And there were the *professed believers*, consenting with the *orthodox* in the main, but by a system of allegorical and metaphorical interpretation of the Scriptures, they maintained sentiments more in agreement with the *heretics* than with the *orthodox* portion of the church; thus perfectly corresponding to our modern *Universalists*, and some other *professed "believers,"* but, in truth, *unbelievers* in the true doctrines of the church!

Now, to close this unpleasant review, let it be recollected, (1.) By what portion of the primitive church the millenarian doctrines were held; and, (2.) By what methods of interpretation the disbelieving "believers" maintained their disbelief to the orthodox teachings of the church; and, finally, To what result their allegorical expositions of the Scriptures led them. One word further—To which of the three divisions will the opposers of the primitive millenarian doctrine be likely to be attached?

NOTE Q. (Page 397.)

Relative to the word γενεά, rendered *generation*, it may be expedient to say a little more than was appropriate in the Exposition.

One of our most experienced and able linguists has kindly furnished the following observations. "Γενεά is derived from an old verb γένω, from which is derived the later form γίγνομαι, which means, primarily, *to come into existence*, not to exist *originally*, which is expressed by ἔμει. These two verbs you will observe in John i. 1, and i. 3, where you will notice the distinction. In Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, which is now regarded as of the best authority, we have the following definitions: 1. Primary meaning, *birth*. II. *Race, descent*. This is the most common sense in Homer and the early writers. It often means, in Homer, *noble birth*. III. A *race*, a generation, of which, according to Herodotus, there are three in a century; means, sometimes, also,

the times. IV. *Offspring, descent.* This meaning is not found in Homer, but is a post-Homeric sense. This word is nearly allied to the neuter noun γένος, both being derived from the same verb, only from different roots of it. In addition to the above definitions, the meaning *a people, a nation*, is added. Sometimes it denotes also *sex*, and *kind, genus*. Plato calls the elements of nature τὰ γένη. My old Schrevelius, the father of Greek lexicons, defines the word in question, *genus, progenies, familia, natio, species*, and adds, Hinc apud Gramm. Anglice *gender*. My other *English* lexicons do not differ essentially from Liddell and Scott."

It will be evident to all that the primary signification, *to come into existence*, gives character to all the secondary and accommodated uses of the word. The leading definitions, *family, race, descent, progeny, genus*, sufficiently develop the governing idea of the word. There may, indeed, be *three generations in a century*; but the idea of *generation* does not so much respect the *duration* of the people's existence, as the *fact and origin* of it.

It is barely possible that the word in question was used by our Saviour to mean "*the persons then living*;" but all the *probabilities* are against it. In the foregoing critical observations on the word, it will be perceived that all the definitions that are relevant to the case, are favorable to the conclusions adopted in this Exposition, and *unfavorable* to the use of the term which is herein objected to.

A personal examination of a multitude of Lexicons has fully satisfied the author that the proper rendering of the word is not given by those who teach that it means "the persons living at the same time." A generation of men may indeed be living at the same time; but that is not the reason why they should be called a generation; for the word has particular respect to their *origin and kind*. In *Syriac* the word that corresponds to generation in the Lord's prophecy, is thus defined: "Generatio, tribus, familia." * Ref. Matt. xi. 16, Acts xxvi. 7, and iii. 25. In *German* the corresponding word is defined; "Genus, kind, species, race, generation, origin, sex, stock, extraction, family, lineage, house, blood, birth, descent." † The corresponding word in *French* is defined, "Generation, propagation, production, progeny, descent." In *Spanish* the corresponding word is defined, "Generation, the act of begetting, or producing, ‡ (2.) progeny, race, (3.) a single succession, (4.) a nation, an age."

These definitions have been procured through the kindness of a master of many tongues. By the *corresponding word* is meant the word used in the London Polyglott Bible where the text under notice is found in a variety of languages. The careful reader must have been struck with the almost utter absence of anything in these various definitions favorable to the use of the word opposed in this Treatise. And if anything more is needed to complete these strictures, it may be derived from even the appropriate *English* use of

* Not one of these favors the use of the word which this Treatise opposes.

† Fifteen definitions, and none of them favorable to the rendering of the word here objected to.

‡ This is undoubtedly the meaning of the word generation in the several languages above noticed: "the act of begetting, or producing."

the word in question. WEBSTER gives *seven classifications* of definitions, and but *one* is favorable to the use of the word objected to; and out of *thirteen definitions* there is but *one* favorable to that use of the word! And it is a little remarkable that this one definition is sustained by an example that proves more against it than for it!

As to the *Scripture use* of the word in question, it is safe to credit the testimony of such men as ADAM CLARKE, and the others referred to in the comment on the verse under notice. There are a few places where the term seems to be applied to the persons living at the same time; but the far greater number certainly use the term in strict conformity with its leading, primary meanings. And in many places the word is employed in a manner that renders it perfectly impossible to define it in accordance with the notion of Bishop Newton, and others of the same school.

To assume, then, that the word in question, in Matt. xxiv. 34, means the *persons then living*, and *not* the *Jews as a race, progeny, or kind of people*, is to assume what not only is *without* proof from the etymology and use of the word, but *against* proof, since it is at variance with the derivation and common use of the word by not only the Scriptures, but by standard authorities in various nations and ages.

And what shall be said of the practice of making that assumed, unusual, and almost unexampled, use of the word a criterion to test the truthfulness of the interpretation of some of the most important predictions in the Bible? That definition and use of the word has introduced more confusion and injurious error into our modern Commentaries, than any one can possibly realize who has not personally and patiently investigated this matter.

This Exposition has no occasion to use the word in any but its primary and common Bible use; yet how easy and how natural the exposition of the text.

NOTE R. (Page 407.)

It is now quite common to apply all this, and especially the text under comment, to the coming of the Romans and the fatal war. *All the face of the whole earth is made to mean the whole land of Judea!* The suddenness and unexpectedness of the *snare* is applied to the (supposed) suddenness and unexpectedness of the war. The admonitions to watchfulness and preparation are, of course, made to harmonize with the rest. As much—too much perhaps—has already been said on this subject, in the Exposition, it is only necessary to add, in this connection, that the whole system of figurative interpretation of this part of the prophecy, is founded on a radical misconception of the facts in the case. In no sense whatever was the coming of the Romans, or the beginning of the war, either sudden, or unexpected. This whole matter is made sufficiently evident in Appendix No. 2.

NOTE S. (Page 415.)

But will not this doctrine injure the great benevolent enterprises of the age? If the world is not to be converted before the coming of Christ, why, then send out *missionaries*, and endeavor to do an impossible thing?

Are you, then, laboring to save souls, not from a conviction of their *intrinsic value*, but from an expectation, or an ambition, to *save all*? If you cannot save *every one*, will you withhold your endeavors to save *any one*? And do you make your plans, your hopes, and your ambition, the criterion of Scripture exegesis? What you conceive will favor your plans and hopes,—that is truth; but what seems to be unfavorable,—that is error! Does not this amount practically to the papal infallibility which forms the foundation rock of Romanism? Is it not virtually pronouncing, *ex cathedra*, what is orthodox, and what is heresy?

Is it nothing that the Lord has *nowhere revealed* that the world shall be converted previously to the judgment-coming of Christ? Is it nothing that the Bible *everywhere* represents that the world will be found in wickedness when the Lord shall return? Is it nothing that a principal and primary work to be accomplished at the second advent, will be the destruction of the *tares* from among the *wheat*? That he will be revealed in flaming fire, with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not the Lord, nor obey the Gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction? Is it nothing that the Little Horn, the False Prophet, the Man of Sin, the Anti-Christ, are represented as surviving and operating against God and the Church, until the Lord comes to judgment? Is it nothing that a large proportion of our Saviour's parables and predictions unmistakably show that, when he comes, it will be as when the deluge rushed upon the old world, or as when the flames fell upon wicked Sodom? Must all this, and innumerable other instances of the same import, amount to nothing—absolutely to nothing—with you? Are your hopes so ardent, your ambition so settled, and your zeal so excited, that you cannot pause a moment to examine the groundwork of your confidence?

What is the real principle that governs you in your endeavors to save the world? Is it the intrinsic value of each immortal spirit? Is it from obedience to the command, "Oceupy till I come?" Is it from an overflowing benevolence, or deep religious sense of obligation? Or—let us be candid—is it from *hope of success*—of *success on a great scale*?

If we can save *many, most, or all*, then we will put forth our best endeavors. But if the time is short, and but comparatively few can be saved, then we will slacken our efforts! Is this your plea? See there! That ship is on fire! A thousand human beings are in danger! See! The flames are all around them! They are perishing every moment! A score have perished since we first beheld them! An hundred will die before we can man a boat; another hundred before we can reach the wreck! See them, surrounded with flames, or struggling in the fire-lit billows! Hurry, hurry, time is precious: all will soon be over: they perish every moment: in a little all will be lost! Of a thousand you cannot hope now to save a tenth: hurry, hurry! What! doing nothing? Will you not save *some* of them? O, what is the use of trying? By the time we could save fifty or a hundred they will all be lost, as you say; nearly all are perished already. Since there is no prospect of saving *the whole*, what is the encouragement to save only a part? The whole, or none, is my motto. The reader will easily make the application.

But who will *contribute* to the Missionary cause, if the pre-millennial advent doctrine prevails? Who will contribute? Do you think the "*evil servant*" will, who saith in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming? If, as Christ represents the case, the tendency of such a view is, to smite the fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, will he give largely, regularly, and from principle? What is the chief impediment to the world's conversion? What is it that locks up the hearts and hands of the wealthy, and would-be-wealthy, Christians? Is it not the seemingly irresponsible extravagance, lust, and worldly ambition of the present age? Does it not result principally from a losing sight of the *fact*, as well as the *nature*, of the Lord's coming? Is there not, also, a general impression that there is no need of *haste* in the matter? That the world's conversion is pre-determined, and will somehow be effected, before the day of salvation passes? How should we all feel, if we were *deeply impressed with the reality of the Lord's judgment-coming*, and with the *certainty that it may be immediately*? Would there be as much vanity, and dissipation, to consume not only our wealth, but our religion too? Would the general cry be, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed? Would there be so much laying up treasure on earth, and so little thought of the inheritance in heaven? What is the principal difficulty in the way of the largest liberality? Does it need to be answered? Let works of the character of this Treatise be generally prevalent; and let the leading influences of the church encourage the conviction, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, and therefore may be at hand; and let there be a modification of the principle by which we contribute, and by which we labor, so as to harmonize with the Scripture doctrine; and would not the gold of the church be converted?

The infidelity of the world, and the worldliness of the church, could not withstand the general, the encouraged, the thorough, practical conviction, that the day of the Lord will come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. The author is impressed that some essential defect in doctrine, in respect to the closing up of the gospel dispensation; or some practical disbelief of the teachings of Inspiration, in respect to the world's destiny, is the chief difficulty in the way of the wider spread of the Christian religion abroad, and the more general observance of its higher claims at home. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," was the complaint in ancient times; and, to some extent, it might be made at the present. But the knowledge, undoubtedly, was the knowledge of God in respect to his purposes.

APPENDIX II.

A SYNOPSIS OF JOSEPHUS' HISTORY OF THE JEWISH WAR.

PART I.—Period — *From the time Judea became a Roman Province to the flight of Cestius Gallus*

1. Judea became subject to the Romans about 63 B. C., when Pompey took Jerusalem, and laid the country under tribute. But still, until the time of Christ, the Jews were governed by men of their own nation.

2. Herod the Great was reigning in Judea at the time of our Saviour's birth; but he died in less than two years after. By will, Herod divided his dominions among his three sons, Archelaus, Philip, and Antipas. Archelaus was appointed to succeed him in the kingdom proper, with the title of king; Philip was made Tetrarch of the provinces of Batanea, Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, and Paneas; Antipas was made Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.

3. As Herod had appointed the Roman Emperor the administrator of his will, it was necessary that the document should be carried to Rome. The emperor confirmed the will, with the exception that Archelaus should be entitled Ethnarch instead of king. Archelaus reigned with much difficulty and ill success for about nine years, when the emperor banished him from the country.

4. It was at this time that Judea was made a Roman *province*, and annexed to the prefecture of Syria. It was about A. D. 11 or 12: some authorities place it earlier. The province also included Samaria. The *provincial* capital was *Cesarea*. The capital of the Syrian presidency was Antioch.

5. Having given this condensed summary of the governmental changes through which the country passed, up to the time when Judea became a province, it will be proper to go back a little, in order to show why Archelaus was deposed and his ethnarchy made a province. While he was absent on his journey to Rome, a sedition broke out among the Jews, occasioned by their opposition to Sabinus, the commander of the Roman forces at Jerusalem. He was besieged in the city by the Jews, and terrible conflicts resulted.

6. At the same time there were conflicts and seditions in various parts of the country. A battle took place in the southern portion between two thousand of king Herod's old soldiers and those belonging to the later king's party. At this time also occurred the sedition of Judas the Galilean. And there was likewise a revolution attempted by Anthrongeus, who aspired to be a king. In view of these turbulent proceedings, Josephus observes, that "they filled all Judea with a piratic war."

7. Sabinus still being besieged in Jerusalem by the Jews, repeatedly sent letters to Varus, the governor of Syria, imploring his aid. Varus then took two legions and four troops of horse, and hurried up to Jerusalem. As usual, he passed up the coast by Berytus and Ptolemais. At Berytus he received an addition to his army of 1500 men; at Ptolemais also he received other reinforcements from auxiliaries, together with an army from the king of Arabia.

8. From Ptolemais he dispatched Caius with a part of the army into Galilee, who took and burnt the city of Sepphoris. Varus continued his march to Jerusalem, going up through Samaria, by the city of Sebaste. The map will show that his course thus far was nearly south. He passed on by the villages of Arus, Sampho, and Emmaus, which were all destroyed. Thus he came to Jerusalem.

9. This was the first invasion of Judea by the Roman armies, after the country became a Roman province. It occurred however several years too early to be reckoned among those invasions which affect the Exposition of the Lord's prophetic discourse. The history is taken up at this early period, (about A. D. 10,) for the purpose of keeping before us the whole history of that turbulent period which resulted in the overthrow of the Jewish nation.

10. Varus having come into Jerusalem, the multitude of the Jews having cleared themselves of blame in the revolt, and the seditious having generally delivered themselves up before coming into conflict with Varus, the difficulty was soon settled, although 2000 of the seditious were crucified. Varus left one legion in the city as a garrison, and returned to Antioch.

11. Archelaus, it must be remembered, was not at this time settled in his government, though according to the will of Herod, he claimed to be king. But the Jews made many grievous complaints to the emperor against him, and requested to be placed under Roman governors. The emperor then divided the dominions of Herod the Great into three parts, giving to Archelaus one half, with the title of Ethnarch, and the rest to the other two sons of Herod, namely, Philip and Antipas, with the title of Tetrarchs. Archelaus' ethnarchy included Judea proper, and Samaria. Philip's tetrarchy included Batanea, Gaulonitis, Trachonitis, and Paneas. The tetrarchy of Antipas comprised Galilee and Perea.

12. After a turbulent and unsuccessful administration of nine years, Archelaus was complained of by the Jews so bitterly, that the emperor deposed him from his government, and banished him to Vienne in Gaul. His ethnarchy was now made a regular *province*, and was governed by officers sent from Rome. The first governor was Coponius. He continued to govern the province about three years, when he was succeeded by Marcus Ambivius. The latter was soon followed by Annius Rufus; and he by Valerius Gratus; and he, about A. D. 25, by Pontius Pilate.

13. After this, Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, was appointed king over the two tetrarchies; Philip having deceased, and Antipas having been banished. So the Jewish dominions became divided now into one province, under Pontius Pilate, and one kingdom, under Agrippa.

14. Previous to this time, Pilate had raised a dreadful commotion among

the Jews, by placing the Roman ensigns in Jerusalem. He was, however, soon induced to take them away. But now Caius, the emperor, affecting divine honors, desired to have his statue placed in the temple. This he knew would be an outrage to the feelings of the Jews. So he sent Petronius with an army, with instructions to place the image in the temple, if he had to do it by force.

15. Petronius took the usual route into Judea, passing up through Antioch, and coming into the province from the north along the coast to Ptolemais. This second invasion did not, however, occasion any war; for the Jews persuaded Petronius to disobey his instructions; and the statue was not carried into the city.

16. About A. D. 41, Claudius being emperor, Agrippa was made king over all the country over which Herod had reigned. So the Jewish provinces became united into one kingdom again. Agrippa immediately began to build and strengthen the walls about Jerusalem. The walls he built were those which were standing at the time the city underwent its last siege. The king did not live to finish the walls, but after reigning three years, died, leaving one son still very young, having the same name as his father. It was this Agrippa who made the famous speech to dissuade the Jews from going to war with the Romans.

17. The Jewish kingdom was once more formed into provinces, and governed by Roman officers. The first was Cuspius Fadus: the next was Tiberius Alexander. Under these two governors the province of Judea appears to have been kept in peace.

18. But under Cumanus, the next governor, the Jewish troubles begun afresh. At the feast of the Passover the governor placed, as was usually done, a cohort of soldiers upon the cloisters of the temple, to keep order among the innumerable multitudes which on such occasions came together. And at that time one of the soldiers wantonly and wickedly exposed his naked person in an obscene manner before the whole multitude in the temple.

19 This, as might have been expected, and as was probably designed, had the effect to arouse the whole multitude to madness; and the more inconsiderate of the people at once made an attack upon the guard, with such weapons as they could obtain. The guard being reinforced, drove the Jews out of the temple. In a variety of ways 10,000 of the Jews were destroyed at that time. This turned the great festival into a season of mourning to the whole nation; for very many families in different parts of the country were in some way connected with 10,000 that were killed.

20. There was another difficulty that grew out of a robbery committed upon a servant in the employment of the emperor. And still another trouble was occasioned by the destruction of one of the holy books by a Roman soldier. And another difficulty resulted in consequence of the murder of a Galilean, who, with many others, was passing through Samaria to attend a festival at Jerusalem.

21. The governor having refused to attend to the matters at that time, the excited multitude hurried down from Jerusalem to Samaria, and killed a multitude of every age and sex, and burnt the villages of the Samaritans. At

this, the governor came with a troop of horsemen from Cesarea, and seized upon and destroyed a great number of the Jews. And the rulers of the Jews, being sensible of what would result from such seditions, went down from Jerusalem clothed with sackcloth, and with ashes on their heads, intreating their inconsiderate brethren "to have compassion on their country and temple, their wives and children, and not bring the utmost dangers of destruction upon them," by provoking "the Romans to come against Jerusalem."

22. These troubles were not settled until the president of Syria interposed, and punished some on both sides. And complaints being made to the emperor against the governor Cumanus, he was removed, and Felix appointed in his place. This was about A. D. 53. Felix was governor over Galilee, Samaria, Perea, and the greater part of Judea.

23. Agrippa had now several provinces added to his dominion, on account of his great popularity at Rome. He continued to reign during the war, and is frequently mentioned in the history. He was very influential, not only at Rome, but in the Jewish provinces.

24. About these times the Jews were afflicted with many grievous internal commotions. The robbers in Jerusalem, and the false prophets and the seditions there, as well as in other places, kept the country in a continual ferment, killing, robbing, and burning in all parts of the land. Felix and his army had continual employment to preserve the nation from utter ruin. And in Cesarea the Jews and Syrians were in perpetual conflict about their respective rights in the city.

25. Felix being now removed, A. D. 61, Festus was appointed in his stead. But soon after, he was succeeded by Albinus. Festus appears to have been a wise and good governor; but his successor, Albinus, like Nero, who appointed him, was an abominable character. Under his tyranny the Jews suffered perpetual and almost incredible hardships. "At this time," says Josephus, "were the seeds sown that brought the city to destruction."

26. What has been said thus far does not directly affect the question under consideration. But it was deemed advisable to begin with the provincial history of these affairs, that we might have the whole matter to some extent spread before us. From the point now attained, however, the history will have an evident bearing upon the question at issue. The closest scrutiny of the reader is invited to what shall follow; for it is certain that it only needs a common understanding of the facts in the case, to convince the candid that the usual impression respecting the matter at issue, is utterly erroneous. Let the reader proceed no farther without having before him a *good map of Palestine*. The design of the present effort is to *demonstrate*, absolutely to *demonstrate*, the *entire fabulousness* of the popular and almost universally received opinions respecting this subject.

27. Albinus was succeeded by Florus, about A. D. 63. Florus proved to be a more wicked and impolitic governor than the former. Such a monster was he, that Josephus, (who wrote under the Roman eye,) after giving a dreadful character to the former, yet observes, "Although such was the character of Albinus, yet did Florus, who succeeded him, demonstrate him to have been a most excellent person upon the comparison."

28. This governor countenanced the most atrocious villainies, practicing open robbery of persons and cities, and encouraging others to do the same, provided they gave to him a share of the spoil. Yet such were his subtilty and power, that no one dared to complain of him to the higher authorities. Perhaps no people were situated more disagreeably, in this respect, than the Jews; and certainly no people were less disposed to bear it. The more considerate of the Jews not only grieved on account of their present calamities, but on account of the perceived certainty of an open rupture with the imperial power, which they well knew was able to overwhelm them.

29. It was sufficiently evident that the governor desired and determined to provoke the nation to an open sedition against the Roman government. This was perceived by Bernice, the sister of King Agrippa, who was a friend to the Jews: and she personally besought Florus to spare the Jews. She even condescended to stand barefoot before the governor's tribunal, and intercede for the nation that was so abused and so exasperated. But, honorable as were herself and her relations, such was the governor's rage, that Bernice had difficulty in saving her own life by flight.

30. The men of power among the Jews, knowing very well the fatal result that would follow from war with Rome, "were affrighted, together with the high priests, and rent their garments, and fell down before each of them, [the seditious,] and besought them to leave off, and not provoke Florus to some incurable procedure, besides what they had already suffered." They prevailed with the multitude, and tranquility resulted. But "Florus was troubled that the disturbances were over, and endeavored to kindle that flame again."

31. His next attempt to provoke the Jews into war was so likely to succeed, that, as the historian says, "At this time it was that every priest, and every servant of God, brought out the holy vessels, and the ornamental garments wherein they used to minister about sacred things. The harpers also, and the singers of hymns, came out with their instruments of music, and fell down before the multitude, [who were going to resist the Romans,] and begged of them that they would preserve those holy ornaments to them, and not provoke the Romans to carry off those sacred treasures. You might also see then the high priests themselves with dust sprinkled in great plenty upon their heads, with bosoms deprived of any covering but what was rent; these besought every one of the eminent men by name, and the multitude in common, that they would not for a small offence betray their country to those that were desirous to have it laid waste."

32. A horrible tumult soon resulted, which was designed and effected by Florus and his soldiers, in order to drive the Jews into desperation and sedition. This tumult did not result from any improper action on the part of the Jews; all that they did was to make a complaint against the governor, when they saw that his soldiers would not return their civil salutation. The governor and his soldiers had fixed upon this as a signal to fall upon the Jews and kill them.

33. "However, Florus contrived another way to oblige the Jews to begin the war, and sent to Cestius, [the President of Syria,] and accused the Jews falsely of revolting from the Roman government, and imputed the beginning

of the former fight to them, and pretended that they had been the authors of that disturbance, wherein they were only the sufferers." The governors of Jerusalem also wrote to Cestius complaining of Florus, and Bernice did so likewise. Whereupon, Cestius thought proper to send one of his tribunes up to Jerusalem to inquire into the matter.

34. The tribune, at Jamnia, had a consultation with King Agrippa, who was returning from Alexandria. The principal men of the Jews, also, met him at the same time, and besought Agrippa to aid them in their extremity. The multitude also came down from Jerusalem, together with the widows of those who had been killed; and, with loud lamentations and complaints, besought the king to assist them. After inspecting their affairs, and commending them for their fidelity to the Romans, the tribune returned to Cestius.

35. King Agrippa perceiving that the Jews were on the point of breaking out into open rebellion against the Roman government, addressed the Jews with a long, eloquent, and powerful speech, the design of which was to dissuade them from going to war with Rome, and to induce them to submit quietly to their fate. He did succeed in moving them to pay to the emperor the tribute which was due him, and also to restore the communication between the citadel and the temple, which, in some of the recent conflicts, had been destroyed by the Jews themselves, by burning a part of the cloister of the temple. He also exhorted them to obey their governor. But at this the multitude were so enraged, that they made an assault upon the king, and caused him to be put out of the city. So he returned to his own dominions, and left the Jews to their fate.

36. At this time some of the more turbulent of the Jews assaulted and took the fortress of Masada, and killed the Roman garrison. At the same time the officiating priests were persuaded to reject the sacrifice of the emperor, which it had been customary to offer. "This," says Josephus, "was the true beginning of our war with the Romans." The more prudent part of the Jews did everything they could to prevent the war; but the rest were fully determined upon rebellion. The dispute among them on this point ripened into civil war, and they fought with one another seven days. This was about A. D. 64.

37. Things continued to grow worse and worse. The seditious among the Jews, and the robbers who abounded in the city, banded together and got possession of the temple. They also burnt the palace of the high priest, the palaces of Bernice and King Agrippa, and the place where the public records were kept. They then made an assault upon the citadel and took it, and killed the Roman garrison. They then assaulted and besieged the soldiers which Agrippa had sent to assist those Jews who were opposed to the war.

38. During these occurrences, one of the leading robbers led a party out to the fortress of Masada, and broke open Herod's armory, and supplied the destitute with arms. The war continued to rage, and the rest of the Roman soldiers were besieged. Upon the promise of having their lives spared, they were induced to surrender; but as soon as the Jews got them into their power they murdered the whole of them, in direct violation of the terms of capit-

ulation. This filled the more considerate Jews with alarm and grief. They knew what would evitably result; and they "made public lamentations, when they saw that such occasions were afforded for a war as were incurable."

39. At precisely the same hour that the Jews at Jerusalem murdered the Roman garrison, the people in Cesarea fell upon the Jews and killed 20,000 of them; and many that fled were overtaken, captured, and chained in the galleys. At this massaere, the whole Jewish nation were enraged, and terribly revenged themselves upon their enemies. "They divided themselves into several parties, and laid waste the villages of the Syrians, and their neighboring cities, Philadelphia and Sebonitis, and Gerasa, and Pella, and Seythopolis; and after them Gadara, and Hippos. And falling upon Gaulonitis, some cities they destroyed there; and some they set on fire; and then went into Kedusa, belonging to the Tyrians, and to Ptolemais, and to Gaba, and to Cesarea. Nor was Sebaste, or Ascalon able to oppose the violenee with which they were attacked."

40. "And when they had burnt these to the ground, they entirely demolished Anthedon and Gaza. Many also of the villages that were about every one of these cities were plundered; and an immense slaughter was made of the men who were caught in them." "The Syrians were even with the Jews in the multitude of the men whom they slew." And the war raged furiously in every part of the land. Thus the great, and — to the Jews — fatal, war was fully begun; for those whom the Jews destroyed were subjects of the empire. But all this took place before any of the great Roman armies were brought into the country.

41. The Jews in Alexandria in Egypt were also destroyed about this time. And in their destruction we, for the first time during the war, hear of a regular Roman army being sent to destroy them. There were two legions stationed in Alexandria, and to these were added 5,000 others who happened to come in from Lybia. This army fell upon the Jews in Alexandria and destroyed 50,000 of them, not sparing either age or sex. This may be regarded as the first flight of the Roman eagle, hastening to his prey; it was not at Jerusalem, nor in Judea; but in Alexandria in Egypt. Neither was it from east to west that the Romans marched; but those who came to assist in the massacre, came from west to east; from Lybia to Alexandria.

42. And now Cestius, the President of Syria, who had a general supervision of the Jewish provinces, deemed it expedient to be doing something to put down the general revolt. His movements constituted the *second* flight of the Roman eagle during this war, but the *first* flight against Judea and its capital. We will now notice particularly the march and conquest of this *first invasion* during the war in question.

43. Cestius took out of Antioch one legion entire, together with 2,000 from each of the others, and six cohorts of footmen, and four troops of horse. In addition to these, King Antiochus sent 2,000 horsemen, and 3,000 footmen, with 3,000 archers; and King Agrippa sent 3,000 footmen, and 1,000 horsemen; and King Sohemus followed with about 3,000 footmen and archers, and 1,000 horsemen. And thus he marched from Antioch up along the coast in a

southerly direction to Ptolemais; and other auxiliaries came to him from the free cities as he was on his march. This was in A. D. 66.

44. We now find him at *Ptolemais*, in the *north-western* portion of the Jewish country. To this rendezvous he came from the *north*. From this position he began his further marches, and extended his conquests. It will be seen at a glance, that his future operations *must be*—not from *east to west*—but, in relation to *these* points, in a precisely *opposite* direction. The history will show us his subsequent marches and conquests.

45. From Ptolemais, going *south-east*, he went and destroyed the city of *Zebulon*. Then he overran all that part of the country, destroying the villages all around, and returned to *Ptolemais*. Thus the invasion was from the *north*; the first march to battle was *south-east*; and the conquests began in the *north-western* section of the provinces. Every one can see the *total* erroneusness of the usual representation of this matter.

46. From *Ptolemais*, again, he departed, and went *south* to *Cesarea*. From thence he sent a part of his army still further *south* to *Joppa*. This city the army took by surprise, and burnt, killing 8,400 of the Jews. A part of the army was also sent into the "*toparchy of Narbatene, adjoining Cesarea*, who destroyed the country, and slew a great multitude of its people; they also plundered what they had, and burnt their villages." Another part of the army was sent to *Sepphoris*, the capital of Galilee, where they were received with acclamations by the people, and the city was saved. A portion of the people, however, fled to the mountains in the middle of Galilee, but were pursued and destroyed. That portion of the army then returned to *Cesarea*.

47. Thus have we seen another of the expeditions of the army, after it had begun its conquests. It was three-fold in its nature; but in no instance whatever, was there a march to a battle or to a siege from *east to west*; but in *every* instance it was in other directions. And this second stage of the *conquests*, so far from its being in the *east*, that it might extend *westward*, was *confined to the western* section of the country; and in every instance, so far as *east* and *west* were concerned, it was directly opposite to the course affirmed by the commentators.

48. Now "Cestius moved with his whole army to *Antipatris*." In this movement he went a little *east of south*. From this place he sent a part of the army to fight against some Jews who had gotten together in the tower of *Aphék*. This was on the river Kishon, directly *north* of Antipatris. But the Jews were dispersed before coming to a battle; and the Romans burnt their camp, and the villages that were about it. This took place in the northern section of the provinces, and a little further *east* from the coast than appears to have been visited previously; for the conquest progressed *southerly* and *easterly*.

49. The next general march was to *Lydda*, *south* of Antipatris. But Cestius found the city empty, for the people had gone up to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles. A few were destroyed, the city burnt, and the army went on toward the capital. "Ascending by *Bothoren*, they pitched their camp at a certain place called *Gubao*, fifty furlongs distant from Jerusalem."

50. This being the first approach to Jerusalem by this great army, it is important to notice that it was by no means *sudden* or *unexpected*. The Jews knew that Cestius was conquering his way gradually up the coast, and easterly toward the heart of the country,—not in the direction the commentators say,—but as nearly *opposite* as the nature of the country permitted. Thus far we have tracked the *approach to the country*, the *invasion* of it, the *portions first conquered*, the *general and divisional marches*, the *final approach to Jerusalem*, and we find *nothing*, absolutely nothing, either in unexpectedness, suddenness, or direction of approach and conquest, that in the least favors the popular fancy of the commentators; but, on the other hand, we do find everything as nearly opposite to the usual representation as the nature of the case admitted.

51. The army was now encamped a few miles to the *north-west* of Jerusalem, preparing to march against the city. The Jews in great numbers were assembled at the feast of tabernacles. But, seeing the war approaching to their metropolis, they abandoned their feasting, took to their arms, and sallied forth to attack the Romans in their encampment. This they did so effectually, that they endangered the whole army; and after killing 515 of the Romans, and losing 22 of their own number, they returned to the city, and prepared for the coming of the Roman army. Cestius continued at Gabao three days after the battle: and the Jews improved the time by seizing upon the elevated parts of the city, and placing guards at the gates; “and appeared openly resolved not to rest, when once the Romans should begin to march.”

52. The Jews were so thoroughly apprized of the coming of the Romans, and had made such preparations to resist them, not only in Jerusalem, but in the mountainous regions around, that King Agrippa began to be alarmed lest the Romans should meet with ill success; and the Jews who seemed to control the affairs in the city, were determined to resist the invaders. The statement of Josephus is: “And now when Agrippa observed that even the affairs of the *Romans* were likely to be in danger, while such an immense multitude of their enemies [the enemies of the Romans] had seized upon the mountains round about, he determined to try what the Jews would agree to by words, as thinking he should cause the sober part of them to separate themselves from the opposite party.” So he sent to the Jews two men with whom the Jews were on terms of acquaintance, to make propositions of reconciliation to the Romans. But the seditious Jews immediately fell upon the ambassadors and killed one before he had said a word, and wounded the other so that he was only saved by flight. The other party among the Jews, however, were angry at this conduct of the seditious, and they immediately came to blows among themselves.

53. “But now Cestius, observing that the disturbances that were begun among the Jews, afforded him a proper opportunity to attack them, took his whole army along with him, and put the Jews to flight, and pursued them to Jerusalem. He then pitched his camp upon the elevation called *Scopus*, which was distant seven furlongs from the city; yet did not he assault them in *three days time*, out of expectation that those within might, perhaps, yield a little.”

54. Here we may pause again, and inquire how the popular view of the commentators agrees with the facts thus far. The camp of the Romans is now less than a mile *north* of the city. Did they approach "*from east to west?*" By no means: it was from *north* to *south*; and when they deviated from a due southerly direction, they invariably inclined from *west* to *east*. So much for this point: now for the other: Was their coming *unlooked* for and *sudden*, like the lightning flashing from one end of the heavens to the other? He who can show any—the least—foundation for such a comparison, must be equal to any undertaking, however difficult. We behold the army approaching from a position 300 miles to the north, moving so slowly as to permit all the footmen and cumbersome military machines to keep in company: halting regularly along the coast and among the mountains; pausing to receive and arrange the constantly arriving auxiliaries; and finally establishing a general rendezvous in the *north-western* section of the invaded territory; from thence going out to destroy and pillage, and returning again; then slowly and regularly approaching the capital, pausing to conquer as they advance: finally approaching and encamping a few miles distant, *and there being themselves first attacked by the Jerusalem Jews; tarrying several days*, and then advancing to their besieging encampment, seven furlongs north of the city; and there continuing in plain sight of all the people until the *fourth day*; then, in cool blood, putting the vast army into regular battle array, and marching deliberately into the unfortified suburbs of the city, burning a part, and then coming into the upper portion, and deliberately pitching his camp. He who can see in all of this anything to compare with the instantaneous flash of the lightning, filling a whole hemisphere in a moment of time, must be more quick to discover analogies than the common sort of people.

55. As remarked previously, on the fourth day of encamping on Mount Seopus, Cestius brought his army into the undefended suburbs of the city, and set them on fire. He then marched into the upper city, and pitched his camp, as it would appear, outside of the walls, opposite to the royal palace. He had not yet got into the city proper, where the palace, temple, and citadel were. And Josephus thinks he might at that time have gotten within the walls, if he had attempted it by force. But on account of many of his officers having been corrupted by Florus, he was diverted from beginning his attack on the walls, and deferred it from day to day, while the moderate party among the Jews were contriving and negotiating to get Cestius into the city without coming to battle. Josephus says, "Whence it was that he *de layed the matter so long*, that the seditious perceived the treachery" of the other party, and began an attack upon them, which appears to have been the signal for the Romans themselves to begin their assault upon the walls. Was there anything like the rapid *lightning* in all this? If there was, then what ordinary military movement may not be compared to the electric blaze?

56. "Thus did the Romans make their attack against the wall for five days, but to no purpose." Then he changed his plan, and, selecting his choice men, attempted to break into the *temple* at the northern quarter of it; but the Jews beat them off from the cloisters, and repulsed them several times when they were gotten near to the wall. The Romans persevered, however, until

they had undermined the wall, and got all things ready for setting fire to the gate of the temple.

57. "And now it was that a horrible fear seized upon the seditious, inso-much that many of them ran out of the city, as though it were to be taken immediately; but the people [of the other party] upon this took courage, and where the wicked part of the city gave ground, thither did they come, in order to set open the gates, and to admit Cestius as their benefactor, who, had he but continued the siege a little longer, had certainly taken the city; but it was, I suppose, owing to the aversion God had already at the city and the sanctuary, that he was hindered from putting an end to the war that very day. It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and by despairing of any expectation of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city, without any reason in the world."

58. "But when the robbers perceived this unexpected retreat of his, they resumed their courage, and ran after the hinder parts of his army, and destroyed a considerable number both of their horsemen and footmen." It appears now to have been evening. The army remained during the night in their entrenchments, and the next day they began their retreat. The retreat was soon changed into a flight; and the Jewish warriors, hanging upon the flanks and rear of the army, did them immense injury. The Romans finally succeeded in reaching their former camp at Gabao, and continued there two days in great alarm and distress. But as the Jews were continually increasing in all parts round about the Romans, Cestius perceived that he must fly from the country as soon as possible. So he commanded them to destroy and cast away everything that might hinder their flight, excepting their darts and machines, which they retained for their own use.

59. Then the second retreat began, chased and harrassed by the Jews, until it became a disorderly, ruinous flight, and nothing but the coming of night saved the army from entire destruction. Cestius now despairing of any other method of getting away, selected four hundred of his most courageous men, and stationed them at the strongest of their fortifications, telling them to erect their ensigns in the morning, and make the Jews believe that the whole army was there. Then, under cover of the darkness of the night, with all possible silence and haste, the rest of the army fled for their lives, leaving the 400 to perish.

60. When the Jews perceived in the morning that the greater part of the army was gone, they first slew the 400 that remained, and continued the pursuit, without overtaking them, as far as Antipatris. The Romans left their engines, and other instruments of war all along the way; and thus succeeded in saving the most of their lives. But 5,300 footmen, and 380 horsemen perished. After spoiling the dead, and gathering up what the Romans had thrown away in their flight, the Jews, having lost but few of their men, returned running and singing to the city. Thus ended the first invasion and siege.

SYNOPSIS CONTINUED.

PART II. — Period — *From the Flight of Cestius to the final Siege of Jerusalem by Titus.*

1. AFTER his disastrous defeat and flight, "Cestius sent Saul and his friends, at their own desire, to Achaia, to Nero, to inform him of the great distress they were in, and to lay the blame of their kindling the war upon Florus, as hoping to alleviate his own danger, by provoking his indignation against Florus."

2. In the meantime, the people of Damascus, when they were informed of the destruction of the Romans, set about the slaughter of those Jews that were among them." They had already shut up the Jews in a place from which they could neither escape nor defend themselves; and in one hour the people of Damascus fell upon them and cut the throats of 10,000 of them.

3. The Jews at Jerusalem *expected the Romans to return again, and made all possible preparation to repel them. The second Roman invasion was neither unlooked for, nor unprepared for.* The first effort of the Jews was to become united among themselves. So they overbore by violence such as would still favor the Romans, and others they persuaded by entreaties to join in the rebellion, until, as it would appear, they were wholly united in their purpose of resisting the Roman power. They then got together in great numbers in the temple, *and made their preparations for the expected war.*

4. They first chose "a great many generals" for the command of their forces. Then they appointed governors to take charge of all things in the city, "*with a particular charge to repair the walls of the city;*" for the war was *not* unexpected. Then they appointed generals for all other portions of the country. Two were appointed for Idumea, and the governor of that section was instructed to obey them. Another general was sent to command at Jericho; another to Perea; another to the toparchy of Thamna; another had charge of the toparchies of Gofnitica and Aerabatene; and JOSEPHUS, the author of the history, was appointed general of both the Galilee and the strong city of Gamala.

5. "So every one of the other commanders administered the affairs of his portion with what alacrity and prudence they were masters of." Every one seemed intent on doing his best to prepare for the expected contest. Josephus immediately went to his post in Galilee, took measures to secure the confidence and cooperation of the people, chose a great number of the most prudent and eminent among them to aid him in municipal and judicial affairs, and, as a prudent and enterprising governor, took every practicable measure to secure the peace, union, and efficiency of the people.

6. Having done this, to quote his own words, he "betook himself to make provision for their safety against external violence; *and as he knew the Romans*

would fall upon Galilee," he went busily to work to fortify the country; he built walls about the principal cities in upper and lower Galilee; and about some of the cities in Gaulanitis; besides fortifying some of the caves and other strong places of natural defence. Everywhere throughout the country the people were by many thousands at work preparing for the next invasion, by strengthening their places of dwelling and retreat.

7. Nor was this all: Josephus "also got together an army out of Galilee of more than a hundred thousand young men, all of which he armed with the old weapons which he had collected together and prepared for them. And when he considered that the Roman power became invincible, chiefly by their readiness in obeying orders, and the constant exercise of their arms, he despaired of teaching these his men the use of their arms which was to be obtained by experience; but observing that their readiness in obeying orders was owing to the multitude of their officers, he made his partitions in his army more after the Roman manner, and appointed a great many subalterns. He also distributed the soldiers into various classes, whom he put under captains of tens, and captains of hundreds, and then captains of thousands; and, besides these, he had commanders of larger bodies of men. He also taught them to give the signals one to another, and to call and recall the soldiers by the trumpets; how to expand the wings of an army, and make them wheel about; and when one wing hath had success, to turn again and assist those that were hard set, and to join in the defence of what had most suffered. He also continually instructed them in what concerned the courage of the soul, and the hardness of the body; and, above all, he exercised them for war, by declaring to them distinctly the good order of the Romans, and that they were to fight with men who by the strength of their bodies, and courage of their souls, had conquered in a manner the whole habitable earth."

8. This long extract has been selected as a good specimen of the manner in which the Jews prepared themselves for the anticipated invasion. Out of the 100,000, Josephus chose for active service 60,000 footmen, and a body of horsemen, besides 4,500 mercenaries, and a body guard of 600. The rest of the soldiers were employed in the cities, doing appropriate work, or in procuring provisions for those in actual service.

9. In Jerusalem, too, the same warlike preparations were going on. "They betook themselves to make preparations for the war with the Romans." "The high priest Ananus, and as many of the men of power as were not in the interest of the Romans, both repaired the walls, and made a great many warlike instruments, insomuch that in all parts of the city darts and all sorts of armor were upon the anvil." These preparations for war were a great grief to the more prudent part of the people, for they knew that the Romans would come again, and they expected nothing else but the overthrow and desolation of the city. In the face of all the commentators previously quoted, the writer here boldly affirms, that the coming of the Romans was *not*, as the lightning, either *sudden*, *unprepared for*, or *unexpected*.

10. When the emperor Nero heard of the state of things in Judea he was greatly troubled, and scarcely knew what to do. He finally determined to send the veteran and successful general Vespasian into Judea, with such for-

ces and provisions for "so mighty a war," as would be likely to insure success. Vespasian had succeeded in re-subjecting the Germans and Britons, and Nero did not misjudge in supposing him equal to the task of re-subjecting the Jews. The emperor, Vespasian, and Titus all appear to have been at this time in Achaia.

11. From this point both Vespasian and Titus started for Judea: Titus was sent across the sea to Alexandria, "to bring back with him from thence the 5th and the 10th legions;" but Vespasian himself went by land into Syria. His course was first around the Egean sea, then across the Hellespont into Asia, then through Asia Minor, around the northeast corner of the Mediterranean; thus coming by land into Syria, and halted at Antioch, 300 miles north of Jerusalem. Here he found King Agrippa with his forces waiting for him; and here he gathered together the Roman soldiers, with a considerable number of auxiliaries from the neighboring kings. This being the second invading army, we will from this point mark their advances and conquests, with the assertions of the commentators before us.

12. "And now Vespasian took along with him his army from Antioch, . . . and marched to Ptolemais." Thus we perceive that he came to the Jewish country—not from *east to west*—but up the coast from *north to south*. He is now ready to begin his conquests—not in the *east*, as the commentators say, but in the *north-west*. Here the citizens of Sepphoris, the largest city in Galilee, met him in peace, and received a Roman garrison to protect them from the Jews who were determined on the war. Soon after this, Josephus made an attempt to get the city back into the hands of the Jews, but did not succeed. "By this means he provoked the Romans to treat the country according to the law of war;" and they overran the country about, "so that Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood." Here in the *north*, beginning from the *west*, began this campaign of conquests.

13. While Vespasian continued his headquarters at Ptolemais on the coast, Titus arrived from Alexandria in Egypt, bringing with him the 5th and 10th legions for which he had been sent, and the two armies were then united into one. Eighteen cohorts followed these legions; some came also from Cesarea; some from Syria; some came from the Kings Antiochus, Agrippa, and Sohemus; and 6,000 came from the King of Arabia. "The whole army, including the auxiliaries sent by the kings, as well horsemen as footmen, when all were united together, amounted to 60,000, besides the servants, who as they followed in vast numbers, so because they had been trained up in war with the rest, ought not to be distinguished from the fighting men."

14. Here, then, is the grand army, concentrated on the coast, in the *north-west* quarter of the Jewish territories. The larger portion of them came into the country from the *north*; two legions came from the *south-west*, and not one, so far as the history shows, from the *east*; for the Arabians who are spoken of, and the other auxiliaries, joined Vespasian at Antioch, as will appear from B. 3. c. 1, sec. 3, compared with c. 2, sec. 4, and c. 4, sec. 2.

15. The next expedition was against Jotapata, in the north part of Galilee. Only a part of the army was employed in this enterprise, and were led on by Placidus. He failed in his attempt, and retired. Vespasian then led his army

into Galilee, the Jews everywhere flying before him into the cities which had not yet surrendered. First he went to *Gadara*, and destroyed it, and all the towns about it. This *Gadara* was not the *Gadara* on the east of Jordan; we have an account of the subjection of that city in B. 4, c. 7, s. 3. There was another *Gadara* south of *Cesarea*, near the coast, as may be seen by consulting Smiley's "Scripture Geography," and also the *map* in Watson's Dictionary. But this *Gadara* appears to have been as much too far *south*, as the former was to the *east*, to have agreed with the present position and operations of the army, which was at this time in the region of *Jotapata*. The city in question was probably *Gabara*, which was not far from *Jotapata*, and in the region first invaded by the army at this time.

16. *Vespasian* then led the whole army against *Jotapata*, into which, after a few days, *Josephus* himself entered to aid in defending the place. This town was nearly impregnable, and withstood the whole force of the Romans for *seven weeks*. The city was then taken, and the inhabitants found in it destroyed. *Josephus* himself was taken prisoner at this time, and was kept with the Roman army during the war. During the siege of this city, a party was sent against the adjacent city of *Japha*, which was destroyed, with all its inhabitants. At the same time another party was sent against a multitude that had gotten together on *Mount Gerizim*, in *Samaria*.

17. *Vespasian* and the army then returned to *Ptolemais*. From thence they went up the coast *south* to *Cesarea*, where two legions were left for *winter quarters*. Two legions were also sent to winter in *Sythopolis*, in the south-eastern part of *Galilee*. About this time a party was sent up the coast as far as *Joppa*, which the Jews had repaired, and undertook to defend against the Romans. The city was again taken, and the surrounding region laid waste.

18. *Vespasian* then took that portion of the army which had not already gone into winter quarters, and went to *Cesarea Philippi*, on the head waters of the *Jordan*, it being the capital of *King Agrippa's* dominions. There he was feasted by *Agrippa*, and his army refreshed for *twenty days*. Hearing then that *Tiberias* and *Tarrichea*, (both situated on the western coast of the sea of *Galilee*, and both belonging to *Agrippa's* kingdom,) had revolted, he undertook an expedition against them on *Agrippa's* account. So *Titus* was sent to *Cesarea* on the *Mediterranean*, to bring the two legions from thence to *Sythopolis*, which was "in the neighborhood of *Tiberias*," to which place *Vespasian* himself also came, and waited for *Titus*. With three legions he then marched towards *Tiberias*, and pitched his camp thirty furlongs off, at a place called *Sennabris*.

19. After an act of treachery on the part of some of the *Tiberians*, the city was finally surrendered peaceably to the Romans, and the inhabitants spared. *Tarrichea* resisted the Romans; but was at last taken, after a long and terrible struggle both on the land and on the lake. 6,500 were slain during the battles; 1,200 were killed after the city was taken; 6,000 young men were sent to *Nero*, to be used in digging through the *Corinthian isthmus*; 30,000 others were sold as slaves, besides some who were given to *King Agrippa*.

20. The next expedition was against *Gamala*, east of the *Jordan*, which seems to have been the first time any conquests were attempted east of the river.

But all the places in *Galilee*, excepting *Gischala*, and a fortification upon Mount Tabor, had already been subdued, or surrendered; and the plan of Vespasian was to subdue all the north parts of the Jewish country, before going south towards Jerusalem. Therefore, having subjected all the *north-west*, he crosses the Jordan to subdue the *north-east*. During the siege of Gamala a troop of *six hundred horsemen* were sent to destroy those that had seized upon Mount Tabor. If this party of horsemen went to Tabor from Gamala, as it seems likely, then it must be admitted that in *one* instance, a party of *six hundred* marched from *east to west* in going from the siege of *Gamala* to destroy a company upon Mount *Tabor*. This instance is distinctly noticed and admitted, that the *full benefit* of it may be applied to the defence of the several commentators who have found it so important to apply the illustration of the flashing lightning to the march and conquests of the Romans. Perhaps our Saviour, overlooking all the general marches, and sweeping conquests of the main army, had this expedition of Placidus's 600 horsemen so distinctly in view, as to make it the general characteristic of the whole war during the three general invasions!

21. After a long and bloody siege, Gamala was finally taken; and the whole population perished, either by the Romans, or by self-destruction. This happened on the 23d day of *Tisri*, answering to the latter part of our September, or the first part of October. Soon after this, *Gischala*, the last unsubdued place in *Galilee*, was surrendered to the Romans; "And thus was all *Galilee* taken, but this not until after it had cost the Romans much pains before it could be taken by them."

22. About this time occurred some of the most terrible commotions among the Jews in Jerusalem, in consequence of the rival leaders, and conflicting parties. The Jews at Jerusalem, and in some other places in the country, seem to have suffered about as much from dissensions among themselves, as they did from the efforts of the Romans. This state of their affairs was known everywhere, for as many as could fled from the capital, and carried the news of the dreadful commotions among the desperate Jews.

23. "And now all the rest of the commanders of the Romans deemed this sedition among enemies to be of great advantage to them, and were very earnest to march to the city; and they urged Vespasian, as their lord and general in all cases, to make haste;" but Vespasian would not comply with their counsel, and purposely delay his march upon Jerusalem, for reasons which satisfied his army that he was wise in refusing their advice.

24. Many of those that fled from Jerusalem also urged Vespasian to proceed at once to that city, and, by taking the place himself, prevent the total destruction of the people from conflicts among themselves. "Vespasian did, indeed, already pity the calamities these men were in, and arose, in appearance, as though he were going to besiege Jerusalem, but in reality to deliver them from a [worse] siege they were already under. However, he was obliged to overthrow what remained elsewhere, and to leave nothing out of Jerusalem behind him that might interrupt him in that siege."

25. The next general movement of the army was south to *Gadara*, the metropolis of *Perea*. This was on the 4th day of *Adar*, answering to our Feb-

ruary and March; and it was nearly *five months* after the taking of *Gamala*. So slowly did the war proceed, and so resolutely did the Roman general govern his operations by the counsels of prudence which often restrained the rage and zeal of his army.

26. Gadara was surrendered to Vespasian without resistance, and many of those who were anxious to continue the war fled from the place. To destroy these, the general sent Placidus with 500 horse and 3,000 foot, while the rest of the army returned to Cesarea. Placidus continued in Perea, on the east of Jordan, conquering his way up *southward*, until all east of Jordan as far south as the Dead Sea, was subdued. In a word, the Romans had now conquered *two portions* of the Jewish provinces, — *Galilee*, in the *north-west*, and *Perea*, in the *north-east*. The commencement and progress of the conquests are as distinctly discoverable as the route of the invasion. They *begun* the conquests on the *west* side of the *northern* portion of the country. The general direction of the conquest of this portion was from *west to east*, precisely *opposite* to the direction so much insisted upon by many of the commentators. The general direction of the conquest of the next portion was from *north to south*, — from *Gamala*, on the sea of Galilee, to the Dead Sea.

27. While Vespasian was refreshing his army at Cesarea, he heard of the commotions of the Roman empire in other places, and of the revolt from Nero. This excited him to go on more briskly with the war, that he might finish his work in the eastern parts of the empire, and be ready to act elsewhere. But as the winter still hindered him from going into the field, he began to repair and garrison the places which had been conquered, and in the beginning of the spring he resumed his conquests.

28. His first march was from Cesarea *south* to *Antipatris*. There he tarried two days, and on the third day proceeded onward toward Jerusalem, destroying the country as he advanced. Laying waste the toparchy of *Thamnus*, he passed on to *Lydda* and to *Jamnia*. He has now conquered his way up the *western* border of the country, from *north* to *south*, and is now at *Jamnia*, on the coast *west* of Jerusalem. From this place he went directly toward *Jerusalem*, and about *half-way* to the city, and stopped at *Emmaus*. [See Robinson's Map.] This last march was from *west* to *east*, bearing a little to the *south*. Here he seized upon the passages leading to the capital, fortified his camp, left the fifth legion for a garrison, and marched to the toparchy of *Bethlephon*. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the precise location of this toparchy. It is quite certain, however, that it was on the route of Vespasian's progress from *Emmaus* up *southerly* into *Idumea*. This will be evident from the next sentence that follows the mention of this toparchy: "He then destroyed that place and the neighboring places by fire, and fortified at proper places the strongholds all about *Idumea*."

29. He then seized upon two villages that "were in the very midst of *Idumea*," and slew above 10,000, carried into captivity above 1,000, and drove the rest of the multitude away. Leaving there "no small part of his own forces," who overran and laid waste the whole mountainous country, he returned with the rest of his army to *Emmaus*; and from thence he passed down through *Samaria*, and pitched his camp near *Sychem*. The next day he went

to *Jericho*. In this march he went *south east*, and we now find him *nearly east* of Jerusalem.

30. This was on the 3d day of *Sivan*, answering to our May and June. Thus two or three months had been occupied in the campaign of conquest on the *west* and *south* of Jerusalem. At Jericho Vespasian was joined by the forces that had subdued Perea, and the army was once more ready to begin another campaign. The country all "round about Jerusalem," as Josephus says, had been fortified; and now Vespasian erected and garrisoned citadels in Jericho, and Adida, and sent a body of horse and foot against *Gerasa*, which was situated to the *north-east* across the Jordan. That city and the neighboring villages were all destroyed, and the detachment returned.

31. Josephus informs us of the state of the conquests at this juncture: "And now the war having gone through all the mountainous country, and all the plain country also, those that were at Jerusalem were deprived of the liberty of going out of the city: for as to such as had a mind to desert, they were watched by the zealots; and as to such as were not yet on the side of the Romans, their army kept them in, by encompassing the city round about on all sides." It is evident, however, that this does not mean that the city was besieged, but that the whole surrounding country was in the hands of the Romans, and that access to the city, and escape from it, were not possible, except by the permission of the Romans.

32. Instead of marching against the metropolis at this time, Vespasian went back to *Cesarea*, for the purpose, it would seem, of getting all his available forces together, and preparing them for the siege of Jerusalem. Then he heard of the death of Nero, and of the commotions in various parts of the empire. "Wherefore Vespasian put off at first his expedition against Jerusalem, and stood waiting whither the empire would be transferred after the death of Nero." The remainder of the summer and the autumn were spent in this suspense and delay. In the *winter* King Agrippa and Titus started for Rome to confer with the new emperor. But while they were sailing along by the coasts of Achaia, they heard of the emperor's death; and although King Agrippa thought best to proceed to Rome, Titus was induced to return to Vespasian at *Cesarea*.

33. "And now they were both in suspense about the public affairs, the Roman empire being then in a fluctuating condition, and did not go on with their expedition against the Jews, but thought that to make an attack upon foreigners was now unseasonable, on account of the solicitude they were in for their own country." Thus was the siege of Jerusalem delayed for a long time; while the invaders are concentrated in *Cesarea*, waiting for orders from the emperor.

34. The first movement of the army in the next campaign, was on the 5th day of *Sivan*, just *one year* from the time Vespasian came to *Cesarea* to prepare to go against Jerusalem. And now, after this year's delay, Vespasian "marched against those places of *Judea* which were not yet overthrown." This was the march that was intended to lead to Jerusalem. We can plainly perceive the direction of the route: it was from *Cesarea* on the coast to the "*mountainous country*," where they "took those two toparchies that were

called the *Gophnitick* and *Acrabattene*." *Acrabi*, which gave name to one toparchy, was in the southern part of Samaria, a little east of *north* of Jerusalem; Gophna, which gave name to the other toparchy, was directly *north* of Jerusalem. Coming from Cesarea to these places, the army went in a *southerly* course, bearing to the *east*.

35. The next movements were to take and garrison *Bethel* and *Ephraim*, two small cities in the vicinity of Gophna, and of course directly *north* of Jerusalem. And from this point, Vespasian "*rode as far as Jerusalem*, in which march he took many prisoners and many captives." The approach to the city, then, was from the *north*. At this time, one of the commanders was dispatched with a body of horse and foot to lay waste the part of the country that was called *Upper Idumea*. This appears to have been the hill country *south* of Jerusalem. In this expedition, *Hebron* was taken and destroyed. And now "all the places were taken, excepting *Herodium*, and *Masada*, and *Macherus*, which were in the possession of the robbers." Thus those very places which the Romans had *not* conquered were *cast*, or *easterly*, from Jerusalem, as may be seen by the maps. So much for the *direction* of this "lightning!"

36. Nothing was done to subdue the metropolis at this time. It would seem as if Providence had determined to warn the people, and to show them their danger, time after time, and year after year, before inflicting the final blow. For now, after subduing the neighboring country, and marching to see the city, Vespasian led his armies once more back again to Cesarea. So much for the *suddenness* and *unexpectedness* of this "lightning!" If the matter were not too serious, it would be a beautiful subject for derision or jest.

37. Now the news came of another overturn of the imperial power, and that *Vitellius* was emperor. This exciting the indignation of Vespasian and the army, it was determined by the soldiers in Judea that Vespasian should be emperor himself. So they made the proclamation, and the general was induced to accept the title. The thoughts of Vespasian and the army were now for a time withdrawn from the Jewish war, and engaged with the affairs of the government of the empire. And at this time Vespasian removed to the city of *Berytus*, north of the Jewish provinces. After remaining for a time there, he removed to *Antioch*, the capital of Syria. It was now the "*middle of winter*," but little had been done in the Jewish war during the previous campaign; and, indeed, comparatively little had been done for a year and a half. Thus ended the second invasion of the Jewish territories during this war; and Jerusalem was yet unconquered; and, except the abortive attempt of *Cestius*, the city had been unvisited by any direct infliction from the Roman power.

38. *We are now to consider the third and final invasion of the Romans.* The next spring, in the year of our Lord 70, after the imperial government had become somewhat settled, "Vespasian turned his thoughts to what remained unsubdued in Judea." He was then at *Alexandria* in Egypt. Finding it expedient to go to Italy himself, he left the finishing of the war to his son *Titus*. Josephus has left us sufficient information of the marches and operations of this last invasion. We can do no better than to quote his very particular account of the approach of the army.

39. Starting from Alexandria in Egypt, a little south of *west* from Jerusalem, we thus trace their progress: Vespasian "sent his son Titus, with a select part of his army, to destroy Jerusalem. So Titus marched on foot as far as Nicopolis, which is distant twenty furlongs from Alexandria: there he put his army on board some long ships, and sailed upon the river along the Mendesian Nomus, as far as the city Thnuis: there he got out of the ships, and went on foot and lodged all night at a small city called Tanis. His second station was Heracleopolis, and his third, Pelusim. He then refreshed his army at that place for two days, and on the third, passed over the mouths of the Nile at Pelusim. He then proceeded one station over the desert, and pitched his camp at the temple of the Casian Jupiter, and on the next at Ostracene. This station had no water, but the people of the country make use of water brought from other places. After this he rested at Rhinocolura, and from thence he went to *Raphia*, which was his fourth station. This city is the beginning of Syria."

40. The army has now reached the border of the Jewish country. By what course did they come? Was it "from *east* to *west*," as so many have supposed? No; but as nearly *opposite* to that course as the situation of the country permitted. We will now follow their marches in the Jewish territories. "For his fifth station, he pitched his camp at *Gaza*: after which he came to *Ascalon*, and thence to *Jamnia*, and after that to *Joppa*, and from *Joppa* to *CESAREA*, having taken a resolution to gather all his other forces together at that place." They approached the country at its *south-west* border, and first marched *north-east*, then nearly due *north*, to reach the place of general rendezvous, to prepare for the siege of Jerusalem.

41. From *Cesarea*, then, on the *western* border of the country, and a little west of *north* of Jerusalem, the army is concentrated for its march upon the metropolis. Their approach to the city will not be exactly as one excellent divine has it, who only a little improved upon the fashion of saying that the route of the Romans was indicated by the lightning flashing from *east* to *west*:—"By the sudden and general meeting of the Roman armies in march, from the *east* to the *west*, all hastening from the *Mediterranean* coasts on the *EAST* (!) toward *Jerusalem* on the *west*!"!

42. Titus, when he had gotten together part of his forces about him, and had ordered the rest to meet him at Jerusalem, marched out of *Cesarea*. He had with him those *three legions* that had accompanied his father when he laid Judea waste, together with that twelfth legion which had been formerly beaten with Cestius." In approaching Jerusalem, it was judged expedient not to go up all in a body, but to take the three principal routes from *Cesarea* to Jerusalem. Titus, with the main body of the army, went up through *Samaria* to *Gophna*, where there was already a Roman garrison. After making a little detour to the *east*, in order to reach the main road through *Samaria*, the course of Titus in approaching the metropolis was from *north* to *south*. Reaching *Gophna*, directly *north* of the city, he halted for one night; then he came to *Gibeah* of *Saul*, three or four miles *north* of Jerusalem, and made his encampment.

43. The tenth legion he directed to go up through *Jericho*. Now it is cer-

tain that Jericho was only a little north of *east* of Jerusalem. In going from *Jericho* to *Jerusalem*, it is admitted distinctly that this part of the army approached the capital from the *east*. And, as in the case of the *six hundred* under Placidus, so in the case of these *six thousand*, the full benefit of this admission is offered to those whose whole force of exegesis of an important passage depends on the assumption that the Romans "invaded" and "conquered" from *east* to *west*.

44. But there are several things to be considered in connection with this approach of the tenth legion.

(1.) It was neither an *invasion* nor a progressive conquest; they were already in the country, and the whole territory through which they marched had already been conquered.

(2.) The starting point in this very march was *west* of *north* of Jerusalem; and it was only by making a *detour to an eastern road*, leading from north to south, that they happened to *finish* the march by going about *half as far* from *east* to *west*, as they had previously gone from *west* to *east*; so that, in fact, taking the whole march together, they went twice as far from *west* to *east*, as they did from *east* to *west*.

(3.) This, after all, was not the Roman armies, nor the Roman army: it was only a *part*, and comparatively a *small* part. If the commentators had only *this legion* in view, and had notified us of the fact, it would have saved the world some trouble and some injury. But what kind of justice or sense is there in seizing upon the *exception* to a general truth, and making it the criterion of that truth? If this method of reasoning should be generally adopted, we should have to bid farewell to all sense, and to all certainty. The reader will forgive this extended notice of what, it might be supposed, no man would be likely to consider worthy of notice, for the attention of the writer has been gravely called to this eastern detour in the march of this legion, as a confirmation of the justness of the comparison of the march of the Roman army to the lightning shining from east to west!

(4.) Finally, it would seem as if Providence had so directed, that any importance being attached to the march of this legion should be completely negated, by the fact, that the 5th legion was directed to go up to Jerusalem by *Emmaus*. Now, by consulting almost any map, particularly *Robinson's*, it will be found that *Emmaus* is the same *distance* and *direction westerly* from Jerusalem, that Jericho is *easterly*. Consequently, the legion coming through *Emmaus* approached Jerusalem just as much from *west* to *east*, as the legion coming through Jericho approached from *east* to *west*. And if any importance is to be attached to a slight *detour* in the march of a small part of an army in a course almost *due south*, then we will offset the *Jericho* detour by the detour of *Emmaus*.

45. The Jewish people knew, of course, the whole history and progress of the war, and were not unapprised of this renewed invasion, and approach to their metropolis. There is nothing in the whole history, which, properly understood, goes to show that they were taken by surprise, or that the Romans were more than usually rapid and sudden in their conquests and marches. The appearance of the Roman army before their walls was what they

had long expected and fully prepared for. It is proper to say, that the principal encampment of the army was on Mount *Scopus*, on the north side of the city, and that the northern part of the city was the first assaulted and the first destroyed. And the progress of conquest *in the city* was either from *north to south*, or from *west to east*.

46. Candor requires the admission, that there is one paragraph in the history which may seem to show that the approach of the Romans at this time was sudden and unlooked for. It is in B. 5, c. 2, s. 4: "Now, when hitherto the several parties in the city had been dashing one against another perpetually, this foreign war, now suddenly come upon them after a violent manner, put the first stop to their contentions one against another; and as the seditious now saw with astonishment the Romans pitching three several camps, they began to think of an awkward sort of concord, and said one to another, "What do we here, and what do we mean, when we suffer three fortified walls to be built to coop us in," &c., &c.

47. To interpret this as if the Jews did not expect the Romans to come into the country, or to attack Jerusalem, would be doing violence to the whole tenor of the history. The allusions to their expectation of the Romans, and to their determinations and preparations to resist them, abound in every part of the history. To suppose that there was any uncommon haste, or anything out of the usual course, in the approach of the Romans at this time, would be supposing what has no countenance whatever from the history. The passage should be understood with reference to two prominent facts with which it is connected:

(1.) For several years they had seen the war rage all around them, but it had not before approached their walls. Many times when they had every ordinary indication that the siege would soon be attempted, they were disappointed, and suffered to go on unmolested. In this case, however, the war had really come to their very gates: after so long looking for it, and after so many unrealized alarms, which tended rather to make them disregard alarms, the enemies were actually in their vicinity; they were rearing their encampments within sight of their walls.

(2.) Another thing to be considered is this: during these approaches, alarms and delays, the city was terribly afflicted by dissensions among the different parties within: So full of jealousy and hatred were they, that, at times, the contending partizans seemed almost to forget that they were environed about by prowling armies and fortified garrisons. And when, after so much expectation and surprise, the seditious contenders within the city beheld their worst fears realized by the actual presence and warlike array of their enemies, there was, with "the seditious," a degree of surprise and astonishment.

48. Viewing the passage, as it should be viewed, as being in harmony with the remaining portions of the history, the most that can be made of this paragraph, is, that "the seditious" portion of the city were so occupied, at this time, with their intense mutual hatred and jealousies, that, though long looked for, and prepared for, yet the investing of the city at this time was comparatively sudden, and to those whose whole attention had been occupied with their own internal commotions, when they beheld the realization of what

had an hundred times been predicted by their more prudent brethren, they saw the warlike array "with astonishment."

49. But what is there in all this, even admitting all that the words can properly import, that can, by any appropriate use of language, justify a reference to the lightning flashing in a moment over the whole heavens, as an illustration of the invasion, conquest, and desolation of the Romans during this war? The inevitable impression that such a comparison is designed to make, is, that the Romans burst into the country unexpectedly, and swept over it with a destructive rapidity that knew no parallel, and could be likened to nothing better than the instantaneous, unlooked for, unprepared for electric blaze that scorches and withers with no premonishing indications. This is the popular creed, as the reader has already discovered by the numerous quotations from standard authorities.

50. But, reader, supposing you to have carefully read either this abridgement, or the original work, what have you found to justify the popular illustration of the lightning? What have you found, which you are willing specifically to mention, that can, by any justifiable license, be compared to the flashing lightning? In relation to the *direction* of the lightning from *east* to *west*, and to its application to the approach and conquests of the Romans, *you have seen, for yourself positively and undeniably, that the whole is a mere fiction, without a single appropriate instance to justify it, and with the entire history of the war proving it to be without the slightest foundation.*

51. And with regard to the *suddenness*, the *rapidity*, and *unexpectedness* of the invasion and conquests, as compared to the electric flash filling the hemisphere in a moment, what have you found that ever could have suggested, or ever can justify, such an illustration? Was the war unexpected? The history has many distinct affirmations that the war was expected, yea, even sought for and provoked by a large proportion of the Jews — and that the more prudent among them, both rulers and people, were perpetually advising, warning, and struggling against it. Nothing can be told more clearly than this. And it will not fail in its application to the final siege of the metropolis, notwithstanding the comparative suddenness of the siege, and the surprise of the seditious. For their very surprise, *under the circumstances of the case*, could have resulted only from long expectation and suspense unrealized, until they had, for a time, apparently lost sight of the facts in the case, and almost ceased to expect what they had so long waited for without having their fears realized.

52. And in regard to the *rapidity* of conquest, — what was there to justify its comparison to the lightning's flash? Was it more rapid than the Roman conquests in general? Would not many of Bonaparte's campaigns equal this both in extent and rapidity? Would not the late war with Mexico afford an instance just as worthy of such a comparison? And yet where is the sane historian that would venture to make a comparison like the one in question, in reference to these modern conquests? The appeal is, of course, made to those who have investigated, to some extent, the matter in question. Has there not been a gross misunderstanding of this whole matter? Has there not been an indulgence of fancy that is really out of place? And have not

many been satisfied with mere assertion, without asking for the facts to prove them?

53. There is one question more, for the asking of which, the writer begs pardon of those to whom it does not apply: the question is propounded with no little mortification and pain: it is this—Are we not compelled to believe that there are some who are so unwilling to be convinced that our great men have fallen into a mistake on this subject, that no strength of argument is sufficient to make an impression upon their minds? The writer has had painful experience on this point, and has not written this section without occasion. And this is one of the sources of regret which the mistake in this matter has occasioned. The writer has no disposition to diminish the respect and confidence which it is natural for the people generally to feel for men of great learning: he moves in this matter with reluctance, and after several years of hesitation. He is duly apprised of the unpopularity—not to say, jeopardy—of arraying himself against the popular exegesis of an important passage, and bringing his own opinion into conflict with the opinions of so many men of titles and learning. But, after all, this is not properly a matter of *opinion*: it is, in reality, a matter of *fact*, to be decided by available *evidences*. And this, as the reader has perceived, is the precise nature of this effort; it is to show what the facts in the case were. If it were an array of name against name, or opinion against opinion, this Treatise would never have been sent forth to the world. But it is, as the case shows for itself, an array of *facts* against *assertions*. And, what is a little remarkable, the facts themselves are derived from the same source that is so confidently appealed to, to sustain the assertions.

54. Once more: The inquiry will undoubtedly be made, were not these facts as accessible to the authors who are said to have misunderstood them, as they are to the writer of this Treatise; and were they not as capable—yea, infinitely more so—of understanding them? Most certainly. How, then, is the matter to be explained? Well, although this does not properly belong to the writer, yet it will not be inappropriate for him to offer one or two suggestions by way of explaining the mystery. The probability with most of the authors in question, and the certainty with respect to some of them, will lead us to conclude, that the subject before us was never investigated by them personally. Bishop Pearce wrote a Dissertation on the Destruction of Jerusalem, which was published, it appears, near the latter part of the last century. This work the writer has earnestly, but vainly, tried to procure. The Bishop introduced an observation, stating that “the Romans *entered into Judea on the east side* of it, and *carried on their conquests westward*, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army would take, was intended in the comparison of the lightning coming out of the east, and shining even unto the west.” Bishop Pearce professed to derive the proof of this remarkable assertion from Josephus. Well, now, Josephus is admitted by all to be good authority in this matter, and the learned prelate is admitted to have been competent to understand him.

55. But, however unaccountable it may appear, the *FACT* is, *the Bishop did NOT understand Josephus: this we have DEMONSTRATED from the history itself: the*

Romans did not enter into Judæa on the east side of it; they did not carry on their conquests westward. But the Bishop said they did; and he was deemed too good authority to be mistaken in so *plain* a matter; and from him the fiction has come down to us through almost the entire generation of commentators that have flourished since that time. Bishop *Newton* adopted this observation of Bishop *Pearce*, and brought it into his *Dissertation on the Prophecies*; and, confiding in the ability and faithfulness of his predecessors, did not deem it necessary to undertake the labor of a personal examination. And, as would appear from the evidences in the case, all, or most, of the subsequent writers, having access to *Newton* on the *Prophecies*, have, without personal investigation, adopted the ingenious fiction; and so it has become immutably incorporated with our best standards of Bible exegesis. Even now, as the reception of this *Treatise* will demonstrate, people are disposed to adopt *implicitly*, and without personal investigation, almost anything that our *great men* are induced to affirm; for, as it will be generally, and is generally said, can it be possible that such men as *Newton*, *Clarke*, *Watson*, &c., &c., could be mistaken in so *plain* a matter? We have only to suppose that Bishop *Newton* had the same feeling in respect to his illustrious predecessors, that we perceive all subsequent writers have had for *Newton* himself, and the explanation of the mystery is easy, as it relates to writers subsequent to *Newton*.

56. How Bishop *Pearce* fell into so palpable a mistake, the writer does not undertake to say; for, as he has not succeeded in procuring the book, he cannot tell how the unfortunate circumstance occurred. It is *probable*, however, that the good prelate, writing at that moment rather carelessly, *mistook the points on the map, and transposed the east and west.* This we *know* was done even by *Richard Watson*, as may be seen by his note on *Matt. xxiv. 27.* And, inasmuch as such a man as *Richard Watson* could make such a mistake, why not *Bishop Pearce*?

57. The subject cannot fail to suggest some rather humiliating reflections on the custom of our commentators in copying one from another, instead of going to the original sources of truth. The writer cannot express his own views on this subject, better than to adopt the language of a noble writer in the *Meth. Quar. Review*, for 1849, p. 187. The writer alluded to, however, refers to an entirely different subject. Speaking of the difficulties that were in the way of investigation, he says, — “But a more formidable one is to be found in the fact, that commentators have continued, age after age, servilely to copy each other’s expositions, with scarcely a single deviation from the beaten track.”

58. Finally, the subject of this investigation must be admitted to deserve the attention of the profoundest intellects; for the improper exegesis of the 27th verse of the 24th chapter of *Matt.*, cannot fail to work immense injury to biblical knowledge. So long as that verse is allowed to be explained away from its literal and legitimate meaning, by this popular use of an absolutely groundless fiction, so long distrust of the literal teachings of the Bible, and resort to probable and improbable fancies, will weaken and destroy the force of those tremendous truths which were designed to intimidate the audacious, and warn the unwary. If this effort shall succeed in arousing the attention

of the church to this matter, however much the writer may suffer by his pioneer publication, he will be grateful for the opportunity that permits him to call attention to this matter. And, especially, as the proper investigation of this subject will be likely to lead on to a great reform in the manner of making and using exegetical publications.

NOTE.—As this was not designed for a *general* Abridgment of the History, but only a limited one for a particular purpose, it is not necessary to extend it any further. It should always be read in connection with the comment on Matt. xxiv. 27.

Particular information respecting many other things which happened during the war, may be found in several of the first chapters of the Exposition, where such information was deemed appropriate.

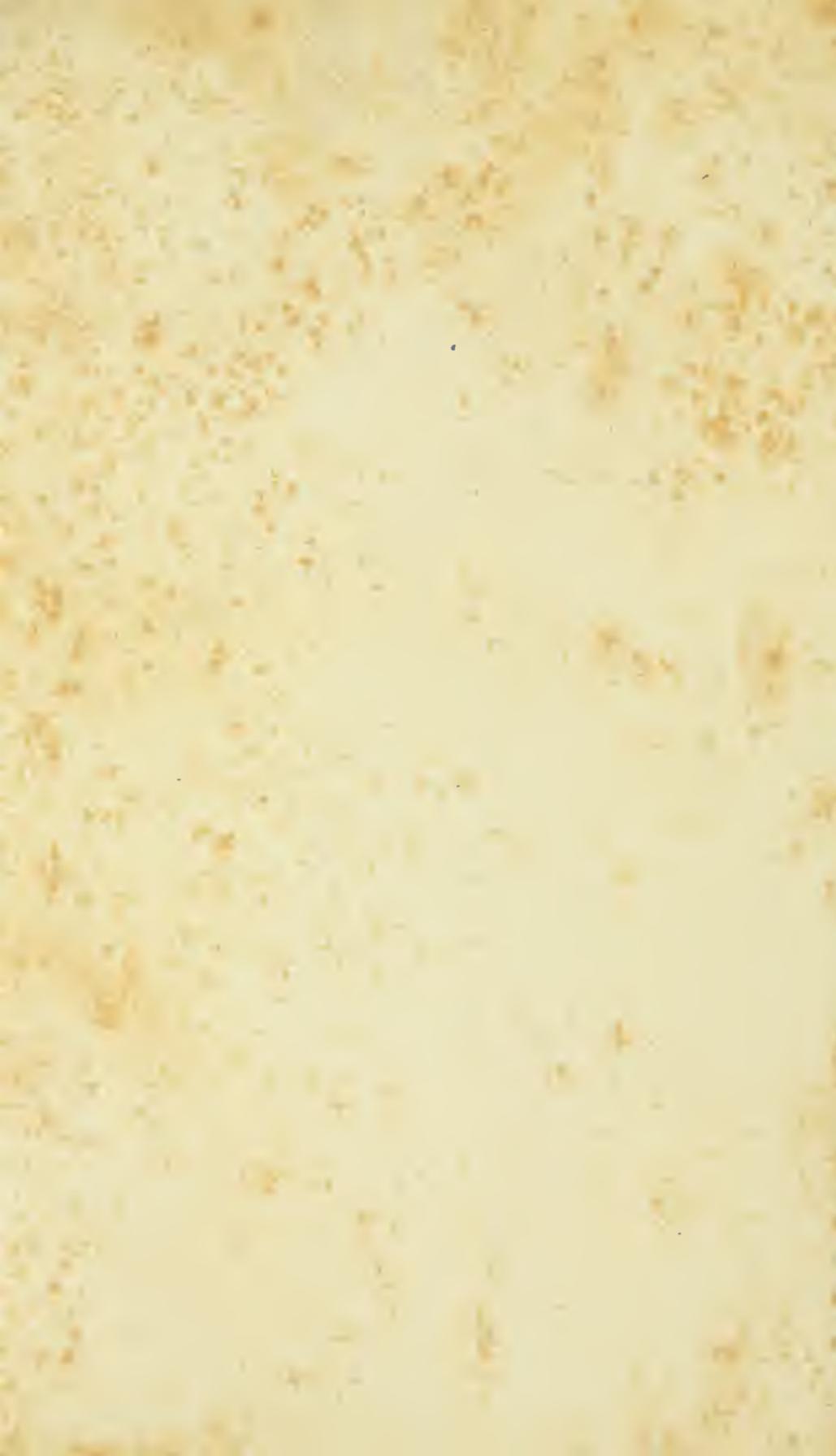
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