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THE PROPHETS OF THE RESTORATION,

OR,

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH,
AND MALACHI:

A New Translation, with Notes.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

A FEW words of explanation may not be improper in presenting this work to the public, for the sake of those who are willing to read a Preface.

The title, and some of the most valuable thoughts of the Introduction, were suggested to me by one whose aid I acknowledge with a gratitude that extends backward to the time when I had the rare privilege of listening to words of instruction both from his lips, and from those of his honored father, whose memory is cherished by all his pupils with the fondness of a child's affection for a beloved parent. I refer to the Rev. J. A. Alexander, D.D., to whom the church may hereafter be as largely indebted in the department of ecclesiastical history, if his life be spared, as it is now in that of exegesis.

I have in each successive revision of my studies used honestly every aid within my reach ; and although, in the absorbing cares and duties of a large pastoral charge, I have not been able to bestow as much care on minute points as I might have done otherwise, I have endeavored to give every matter that had any important bear-

ing on the meaning of the text a full and impartial consideration, and aimed to set forth simply and clearly the mind of the Spirit.

I have given first my own translation, which is presented, like that of Newcome, Henderson, Calvin, and others, in a metrical form, according to the parallelisms. In the Exposition, I have repeated this translation in the notes, that it might be more readily compared with the English version that is given at the top of the page. I have as much as possible avoided the introduction of Hebrew words into the notes, but it could not be avoided at times without an awkward, if not unintelligible, periphrasis. I have endeavored to avoid all unnecessary expansion of such points as are purely homiletic and practical, whilst I have endeavored to suggest them in a way that may readily be followed out by those who desire to pursue these themes at greater length. My object has been to furnish such an exposition of the meaning of the text as would be intelligible to any thinking layman who wished to understand the Scriptures thoroughly, and also to aid my brethren in the ministry, whose circumstances or studies had not led them to any special investigation of these portions of God's Word. If I have not fully succeeded in combining these two things, those who understand most of this subject will best understand the difficulty of the task. But I can say in all sincerity, as the good Bishop Horne did, in sending forth his Commentary on the Psalms, that the work has been its own reward,

and that if any one shall experience half the pleasure in reading it that I did in writing it, my labor has not been misapplied. But I send it forth with the hope that God may bless this feeble effort to turn attention to His Holy Word, and induce other and abler hands to engage in the same blessed and self-rewarding employment. And if a Dedication were in good taste in such a work, I would respectfully and humbly dedicate it to that body of men, who are doing more for the world, and for whom the world is doing less in return, than any other class of workers in society—*my Brethren in the Christian Ministry.*

RICHMOND, VA., Jan. 1, 1856.

INTRODUCTION.

THE title "Prophets of the Restoration," requires for its full comprehension the presentation of some thoughts concerning the nature of prophecy, the position of the prophetic office in the Old Testament economy, and the organic connection between prophecy and history in the development of the great work of redemption. This discussion is the more necessary, because of the narrow view that is commonly taken of the whole subject of prophecy. The general notion of prophecy is simply, that it is the prediction of future events ; and the prophet is regarded as merely the predictor, whose words are left on record as a proof of the divine origin of the Bible plan of salvation. These are, however, but narrow views of the prophetic function, and views which must often materially affect the attempt to expound the prophetic writings. This is especially true of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, in whom the distinctive character of the prophetic office is very clearly marked, and to understand whose writings it is absolutely necessary to comprehend the relation of the prophetic office to the Old Testament history.

§ 1. THE NATURE OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT.

We must distinguish at the outset between the prophetic gift and the prophetic office. The prophetic gift was that Divine influence which qualified a man to become a prophet. This gift was bestowed long before the prophetic office was instituted in the Church. The prophetic office was that particular mode of exercising this gift which was connected with the Hebrew commonwealth, after its form had been established by Moses. The prophetic gift was one of the earliest bestowals of God after the fall. Enoch is recorded to have been a prophet, Jude 17 ; Abraham is called a prophet, Gen. 20 : 7 ; the patriarchs are called prophets, Ps. 105 : 15 ; and the prophecies of Jacob, Balaam and Moses are recorded in the book of Genesis. The prophetic office was instituted under the Mosaic economy, but even then the prophetic gift was not always connected with the prophetic office. Thus Daniel was largely endowed with the prophetic gift but was never called to the prophetic office, because he lived in exile, and could not therefore exercise this office. Hence his works were placed by the Jews not among the prophets, but in the third division among the Hagiographa. David also possessed the prophetic gift, and is called a prophet, Matt. 13 : 35, 27 : 35, but he never exercised the prophetic office, and hence his prophetic writings are also placed among the Hagiographa. The prophetic office ceased

with the coming of Christ and the termination of the Old Testament economy, but the prophetic gift continued among the charisms of the New Testament Church, at least as long as any miraculous gifts were enjoyed. Hence it is important for us to discriminate at the outset between the wide prophetic gift which was enjoyed during the Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian dispensations, and the prophetic office which was limited to the Mosaic, and even then to but a portion of those who enjoyed the prophetic gift.

What, then, is the nature of this prophetic gift? Or in the widest sense, what is a prophet? We derive the word prophet directly from the Greek *προφήτης*. This is a derivative from the verb *πρόφημι*, which properly means to speak for another, *i. e.* in his place, the *προ* being here originally a particle of place and not of time. This was most clearly the meaning of the Hebrew *נָבִיא*, a prophet. It is derived from *נָבַח*, to boil up or gush out like a fountain, and hence to pour forth a stream of words. That its primary meaning was simply one who spoke for another as his mouth-piece or interpreter, is clear from Ex. 7 : 1, where God declares to Moses, “ See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” Here it is obvious that a prophet means simply one who speaks for another, whether his words relate to past, present or future events, to facts, doctrines or promises. The prophetic gift was, therefore, something bestowed by God on any one, by virtue of which he was qualified and authorized

to speak authoritatively for him. There is another term applied to prophets more anciently, which indicates the manner in which this qualification was usually received. It is the term רָאָה, or *seer*, which implies that the substance of the prophetic message was usually presented in the form of a vision, or trance, whether the body was sleeping, waking, or in some intermediate condition. Hence Balaam speaks of himself (Numb. 24 : 3) as the man whose eyes were opened, *i. e.* who was enabled to perceive these prophetic visions. But as the word רָאָה is not confined to the act of seeing, but is applied to mental impressions made in other ways, as *e. g.* by the sense of hearing (Gen. 2 : 19, 42 : 1 ; Ex. 20 : 19, &c.), the sense of taste (Gen. 3 : 6), the sense of touch (Isa. 44 : 16), and also other more purely mental sources (Ecc. 1 : 16, &c.), we must not restrict the mode of receiving the prophetic gift to purely visual impressions, or visions properly so called. The main idea contained in the word is, that the communication was something presented to the seer *ab extra*, and not something which he originated in his own mind. According to 1 Sam. 9 : 9, this term describing the mental state of the prophet, was gradually supplanted by the other term which indicated his authority, as one speaking in the place of God.

Combining the facts suggested by these two terms, we reach a sufficiently distinct notion of the prophetic gift. It was a direct communication of God to the soul, either by visual, audible, or purely mental impressions,

authorizing and requiring the person thus acted upon to speak authoritatively, in the name of God, the things thus communicated. What was the exact mental condition of the prophet, it is useless for us to inquire. To say that it was always an ecstasy, with some modern writers, is to say more than the facts warrant, and to suggest a want of the controlling power of the will, which we know from the case of Jonah, and the New Testament prophets (1 Cor. 14:32), did not exist. It is useless for us to speculate on this point, for in this as in the ordinary operations of the Spirit, "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." It is sufficient for us to know that to be a seer or prophet, it was needful to be inspired of God; and that the message should be reliably authoritative, this inspiration must be plenary, and sufficient, extending to the words of the message in such a manner as to secure the faithful and accurate statement of the will of God. Sometimes a vision was presented, sometimes words were heard, sometimes mental impressions were made, and sometimes the impulse was to acts rather than words, and to a course of conduct rather than a single specific act. All these modes of receiving the prophetic gift we shall find illustrated in the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

In Rev. 19:10, we have the remarkable declaration that "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy;" and in 1 Pet. 1:12, we have the inspiring

agent of the prophets called the "Spirit of Christ." Combining the teaching of these two passages, we have the great fact developed, that the prophetic gift was Christ speaking by the agency of the Holy Ghost upon the minds of the prophets, and declaring God's will to men. Christ was the only prophet, as he is the only priest, and the prophetic gift is simply that portion of his great work as Revealer, which he, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, grants to those whom he selects as his instruments.

§ 2. THE NATURE OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE, AND ITS RELATION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

The history of the Church is the history of God's revelations of himself to man. In the proper sense of prophecy then, as an utterance of God through man, it has obviously an organic connection with history. It is indeed a necessary function of history to secure its proper interpretation. Prophecy, in some form, must coexist with all history, that God's will may be known and performed by man. Hence we find it existing in some form in every stage of the history of Redemption. There are three great divisions of this history that are obvious on its surface, in which we will find the form of God's revelation of himself to vary with each successive stage. These divisions are the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations, or developments of the covenant of grace. Each of these is characterized by

a distinct and different mode of God's manifestation, or, in other words, by a distinct form and relation of the prophetic gift. The Patriarchal dispensation may be characterized as *theophanic*, i. e. God revealed himself immediately, by visible appearances, or *theophanies*; the Mosaic as *theopneustic*, i. e. God revealed himself mediately, by inspired men (*θεόπνευστοι*); and the Christian as *theologic*, i. e. God reveals himself permanently, by inspired writings (*θεοῦ λόγια*, 1 Pet. 4 : 11). As the dispensations overlap and make the transition gradually from one to the other, so also do these characteristics. But the several dispensations have obviously these characteristics, and hence a form of the prophetic gift peculiar to each.

The Patriarchal dispensation was *theophanic*, i. e. was characterized by direct appearances of God, (*theophanies*,) either in bodily form or by immediate visions. It is a striking fact that we find no miracles wrought by men in the Patriarchal era. All the miracles are wrought by God, directly, without any human intervention, and the communications made by God were made by direct utterance, usually. This fact is a remarkable proof of the divine character of the history. All other primeval histories are full of wonders, but they are mostly wonders wrought by *men*, such as we find belonging to a later age. It is in the Old Testament history alone that we find the primitive age purely *theophanic*, an attribute which we would infer, beforehand, it ought to possess, as the infantile period of the race.

Hence the absurdity of classing the Old Testament history of the patriarchs with the mythical history of other nations, when a difference so striking exists, and a difference which dates the origin of this mythical literature in the second great era, that in which God wrought through the instrumentality of inspired men. The *theophanic* character of the Patriarchal dispensation would make the prophetic gift of rarer occurrence than in the second era, because God would usually speak directly to those whom he would address, and not use the intervention of prophetic men. Hence we do not find the name prophet occurring in the whole history of the patriarchal dispensation, except in a single case, Gen. 20 : 7, which is only an apparent exception. It is used again in the passage already quoted from, Ex. 7 : 1, where it is employed in its primitive sense, of an interlocutor, or interpreter. We do not find the word used in the sense of a speaker *for* God, until after the commencement of the Mosaic dispensation. Hence the form of the bestowal of the prophetic gift under the Patriarchal dispensation corresponded with the *theophanic* character of that dispensation, was rarely bestowed, and then by direct vision, and was never attached to a prophetic office.

The character of the Mosaic dispensation was *theopneustic*, i. e. a revelation of God by *inspired men*. Here we first find God begin to withdraw himself from direct communication with man, and manifest himself through living human instrumentalities. He now works mira-

cles, not so much by direct exertions of power as through the agency of Moses, Joshua, and other inspired men. He speaks not directly, but at the request of the people themselves, through the lips of Moses and his successors. A theocracy is erected, of which men are to be the administrators, and hence there is needed a new form of the prophetic gift. It must now be embodied in *inspired men (theopneustic)*, who shall speak and act for God. Hence the prophetic *gift* is connected with the prophetic *office*, which is created as a necessary adjunct to the Theocracy. Hence, also, the majority of these prophets are not *writing* prophets, but *acting* prophets. The writing prophets belong to the later ages of this dispensation when it was preparing to pass into the third great form of development. The earlier prophets were mainly and characteristically *prophets of action*. Moses was a *legislative* prophet ; Joshua, the Judges and Samuel, *executive* or ruling prophets ; David and Solomon, *devotional* prophets, whilst the other prophets of the first half of the Mosaic dispensation were mainly prophets of action. It was not until about one-half of this dispensation had passed that the prophets began to write their prophecies, and thus prepare the way for the third great form of the covenant of grace—and, even then, the first duty of the prophet was not so much to write as to speak and act. His writing was a secondary duty having reference, as we are expressly told in the New Testament, not to their own age, but to the age that should follow

them, "unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported to you." 1 Pet. 1 : 12. Hence, even in the writing prophets, we see the great characteristic of the Mosaic dispensation, that it was *theopneustic*, i. e. a revelation of God by *inspired men*.

The Christian dispensation, however, is *theologic*, i. e. a revelation of God by *inspired* or *divine writings*. *λόγια Θεοῦ*, 1 Pet. 4 : 11. This is expressly asserted by the apostle Peter to be the great characteristic of the New Testament dispensation, 2 Pet. 1 : 16–21. He states that whilst in "the old time" or former age, "holy men of God *spoke* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," it is the peculiarity of our time that we have "a more sure *word* of prophecy" to which we must take heed, and not look for such appearances of God as were granted in former times. Hence the will of God is made known in the Christian dispensation, not by direct appearances (*theophanies*), not by inspired men, but by divine writings, or the living *word*, that liveth and abideth forever. It is in this form that prophecy meets us now, not the prophetic *gift*, nor the prophetic *office*, but the prophetic *word*, that is as a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts. See, also, 1 Pet. 1 : 23, 4 : 11 ; 2 Pet. 3 : 2, 16, &c., where this peculiar feature of the Christian dispensation is set forth. This characteristic of the Christian dispensation furnishes a complete reply to the cavil of the new Infidel school

that is rising, about Bibliolatry. The fact which they charge on the Christian world is the very fact that ought to characterize it in view of this feature of the dispensation. To leave the word and fall back on the revelations of the Spirit, supposed to be granted to inspired men, would be to reproduce the essential characteristic of the Mosaic dispensation. Hence this pretended advance of Infidelity in putting the Spirit above the letter, as they term it, or the inspired man above the inspired word, if such man-inspiration were conceded, would be a retrogression rather than a progression. The present form of prophetic utterance is the only one that can be really universal, and therefore the only one adapted to the final form of the covenant of grace. The next great form shall be the completion of the great circle, the return of the *theophanic* development, when the pure in heart shall *see God*, and the ransomed race after its weary pilgrimage from the presence of God granted in the Paradise on Earth shall be admitted to that presence of God that is formed in the Paradise in Heaven.

The prophetic *office* belongs to the Mosaic dispensation, in virtue of the existence of the Theocracy. Let us trace its development, and briefly examine its historical relations.

The promise of such an office seems to be made in Deut. 18 : 15-22 : "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him ye shall hearken.

According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of assembly, Saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God. . . . And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously."

This passage would perhaps universally have been referred to the prophetic order, had it not been for the use made of it in the New Testament by the apostle Peter, Acts 3 : 22. God promises them what they asked at Horeb, and that was not the Messiah, in his entire character, but some men who should stand between them and God, as interpreters of his will. Such men were the prophets. The tests given in regard to the words of the prophets are tests that do not apply to Christ at all, but do apply to the prophetic order. The greater part of the passage cannot possibly be restricted to Christ, but most obviously refers to the prophetic order. It is, therefore, wrong to restrict the 15th and 18th verses, unless we are compelled to do so

by the authority of the New Testament, or the terms of the texts themselves. The terms of the texts do not require this restriction, for the promise of "a prophet" does not restrict us to a single individual. It may be as readily the promise of an office or an order, as of an individual. And, indeed, when we afterwards see a test to discriminate between different individuals under this general promise, we see that the term must be taken in this sense. Nor are we constrained to adopt this restricted signification by the use of the passage in the speech of Peter. Christ was the great, and in its higher sense, the only true prophet. All the prophets are but types of him, the great prophet, as were also all the priests types of him, the great priest. Hence this promise received its highest fulfilment only in him, who was the head of the prophetic order. Every prophet who arose after Moses was a forerunner of Christ, and fulfilled this promise in part, but its perfect fulfilment was only reached in him who alone declares the Father to the world, in the highest and fullest sense. This principle of interpretation must frequently be applied to other Messianic prophecies, and is fully applicable here. Hence, whilst it is a prediction of Christ, the great Prophet, it is also a prediction of that order of men who would be raised up to declare God's will, and who would herald the approach of him, who, coming from the bosom of the Father, was to declare him to the world.

The prophetic office was created as a necessary ad-

junct to the Theocracy. It was to be the direct representative of God in carrying forward the Theocratic administration, in preserving the original Mosaic institutes in their purity, and in preparing the people for the work assigned to them as a chosen seed, from which was to spring the Messiah. Hence we find the development of the office to vary with the development of the Theocracy.

There are two great epochs that divide the history of the prophetic office into three eras. The *first* era ends with the age of Samuel, in which we find the office but rarely filled, because of the purely theocratic character of this period. God ruled the people without the intervention of a hereditary executive, and hence there was but little need for a succession of prophets. But with the age of Samuel a *second* era begins which extends to the age of Uzziah, about B. C. 800. This is the era of the prophets of action. Samuel united in his own person the three great elements of the theocracy, being a judge, a priest and a prophet. It is true that he was not a hereditary priest, but he performed sacerdotal functions in virtue of his extraordinary call. It was in his age that the executive power became eliminated and vested in a king, by the demand of the people. The creation of the regal office made it necessary to embody more formally the prophetic office, that the one might act as a balance to the other. Hence the age of the kings is the age of the prophets. But the prophets of this era were mainly busy with the present.

and hence they left but few writings behind them. Toward the close of this era, the devotional form of prophecy, including the Messianic element, began to appear in David and Solomon, to prepare the way for the era that was to follow. The *third* era began about the age of Uzziah, B. C. 800, and was the era of written prophecy. Then the prophets began to turn away from the present and look more to the future, and the Messianic element began to grow more distinct and pervading. This era from B. C. 800 to B. C. 400, contains most of our written prophecies, and is to us the flowering age of prophecy, the period when it put forth the richest and choicest bloom. These three eras, then, stand in a relation of obviously progressive development. We also see reproduced in these three eras the grand characteristics of the three dispensations already noticed. The first era is *theophanic*, marked by appearances of God ; the second *theopneustic*, marked by inspired men ; and the third *theologic*, marked by inspired writings. Thus the prophetic office beautifully unfolds itself in the very phases that we find the prophetic gift to assume in the largest form of its development, just as we see the great organic laws of the world reappear in smaller departments, the law of the tree developing itself in miniature forms in the structure and growth of the leaf, the curve of the planet's orbit reappearing in the line traced by the projected cannon-ball, or the pebble.

It is with the second and third of these eras that we

have mainly to do in tracing the development of the prophetic office. Samuel is the great head of the prophetic order, and doubtless enacted rules regarding it that gave it a permanent form. It is in his time that we first find "schools of the prophets." The meaning and necessity of these schools can only be perceived by rightly understanding the prophetic office. Had the prophet been a mere foreteller of future events, such schools would have been useless and unmeaning. But he was much more than this. He was God's representative in maintaining the purity of the Mosaic institutions, and hence must study these institutions carefully. It was to afford an opportunity for such study that these schools were formed. The prophet must use all possible means of human culture if he would receive the divine gift in the plenary form. From those who were trained at these schools, God usually selected such as were to be sent on special prophetic errands. But that he did not confine himself to them is proved by the case of Amos, who informs us that he had no connection with these normal institutes for training prophets, Amos 7:14, and the case of Elisha, who was called directly from the plough, 1 Kings 19:19. The humblest man might be endued with the prophetic office, and hence it acted as a standing check on the aristocratic tendencies of a hereditary royalty, and a powerful stimulus to the people to seek the spiritual qualifications needful for so august a calling. Toward the close of this era we find the appearance of a prophetic literature in the Messianic

Psalms. These Psalms, indeed, contain the germs of all that follows. They prepared the way for the era that was to succeed, and form the transition between the prophets of *action*, and the prophets of *word*, the men who were busy only with the present, and the men who looked out from the present into the glorious future. The second era, then, was the era in which the prophetic office was fully developed, as a potential element of the Theocracy. The schools of the prophets at Bethel, Gilgal, Ramah and Jericho, all within a short distance of each other, and in the tribe of Benjamin, trained a set of men who were prepared to be called forth by God at the proper time to do a prophet's work.

The *third* era, from Uzziah to the time of Malachi, is the era of written prophecy, and presents several marked divisions, in each of which we find a group of prophets. In this era the grand division is made by the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. We have resulting from this division three classes of prophets: (1). *Prophets of the Ten Tribes*; (2). *Prophets of the Gentiles*; and (3). *Prophets of Judah*.

(1). *Prophets of the Ten Tribes*. These are *Hosea* and *Amos*, who although a resident of Judah was called to prophesy in Israel. We find but few of the writing prophets belonging to Israel, for they naturally clustered around the seat of the Theocracy in Judah. Most of the Ten Tribe prophets were prophets of action.

(2). *Prophets of the Gentiles*. These were *Jonah*, *Na-*

hum, and *Obadiah*, whose prophecies were directed towards the Gentiles rather than the Jews, and who are therefore the witnesses for God's universal government, as well as for his Theocratical authority. Jonah and Nahum directed their prophecies against Nineveh, and probably stand at the beginning and close of an era in the Ninevite history. Obadiah directs his prophecy mainly against Edom, and hence may be classed with the prophets of the Gentiles.

(3). *Prophets of Judah*. These constitute the most important division of the writing prophets, and are found in distinct groups, each marked by a distinct tone and style. They differ from the other two classes in having a wider scope, and often a more joyful tone. The prophets of Israel, and of the Gentiles, dealt mainly in rebuke, and awful warning, those of Judah in visions of hope, and future glory. The pillar of fire that lighted up the future still hung above the ark and the tabernacle in the holy city.

This portion of the history of the kingdom of Judah has five distinct periods, each of which has its own peculiar prophecies. We have (1). *The Culminating period*. It is true that the kingdom of Judah never reached the same height of splendid prosperity after the dissolution of the Union, that it did before under David and Solomon. But the century between Uzziah and Hezekiah, about B. C. 800—B. C. 700, was, compared with the centuries preceding and following it, a century of prosperity, and the highest prosperity ever reached

by the kingdom of Judah. The prophets of this period are *Isaiah*, *Joel*, and *Micah*. Their tone is more cheering than that of the later prophets. The light of the future seems to rest on their pages, and they are all characteristically Messianic. (2). *The Declining period*. This extends from Manassah to Zedekiah, a little more than a century. To this period belong *Zephaniah* and *Habakkuk*, on whose pages there rest the shadows of the setting sun. (3). *The Captivity*. To this mournful era belongs the mournful prophet, *Jeremiah*. (4). *The Exile*. To this period, when nothing was left but hope of the future, belong the prophets of the future, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*. (5). *The Restoration*. To this period belong the three last recipients of the prophetic gift during the Old Testament dispensation, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*.

It will be found on a close examination that the tone and contents of each prophet are determined by his historical position, and that it is impossible to understand the general drift of the prophecy without considering the period of its utterance. This is especially true of the prophets of the Restoration. The design of the Captivity was to destroy the idolatrous proclivities of the Jewish people, and thus to restore the Theocratic spirit, that acknowledges God as the only ruler, and to reinstate the Mosaic institutions. But whilst these institutions were to be restored, it was only to be for a time, and in a form that would prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Hence the mission of these prophets

of the Restoration was peculiar, and required a peculiar tone. They had to sift the people in order to extract the better elements contained in them, to arouse the theocratic spirit, to incite to the work before them, and to correct evils that were peculiar to that period. The historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah are the necessary counterparts of the prophecies of the Restoration, and they shed mutual light on each other. The specific facts and features of this period will appear more fully in the details of the exposition. It will, however, be seen very clearly from this brief investigation, that the title "Prophets of the Restoration," is not an arbitrary one, but one created by their historical position, and that the connection thus intimated between the history and the prophecy of the Restoration is not peculiar to that period, but belongs to the entire development of the prophetic office.

§ 3. THE HISTORIC FEATURES OF THE RESTORATION.

It is necessary before proceeding to the exposition, to notice some of the historic features of the Restoration era, in order to have a clearer notion of the three prophets belonging to it. This era extends through a number of years, and we find two of the prophets at the beginning of it, and the third at the close, the tone of whose prophecies vary with their historical position. The exile was not one great deportation of the people

into captivity, but a series of removals that extended through a number of years. So was it, also, in the restoration. The successive removals of the people extend through nearly a century and a half, and their successive returns through nearly a century. Hence we must distinguish between the different remigrations of the exiles, in order to understand the difference between the tone of Haggai and Zechariah, in the early part of this period, and Malachi at its close. A brief glance at these successive periods, will prepare us for the prophecies.

The first return took place in the first year of Cyrus, B. C. 536, and corresponded with the first deportation of Judah, under Nebuchadnezzar. This consisted of 42,360 persons (Ezra 2 : 64), under the leadership of Sheshbazzar, or Zerubbabel, and Joshua. They built an altar, and laid the foundations of the temple. They were soon arrested in their work by the malicious representations of the Samaritans, and it lay untouched for sixteen years. At the expiration of this time, the death of Smerdis gave an opportunity for the renewal of the work, about seventy years after the destruction of the first temple. Then Haggai and Zechariah came forth, the first to incite to the immediate work of building the temple, and thus restoring the Mosaic institutions, the second, not only to aid in this work, but also to unfold the great future of the Theocracy, as her motive to labor in the present.

The features of this period were such as would naturally grow out of the circumstances of the people. For

more than half a century they had been in exile, where the Mosaic ritual could not be observed. This generated in the minds of the younger portion of the people an indifference to this ritual that was anti-Theocratic in its spirit and tendency, and needed correction. They had also been so long in the habit of gazing on the gorgeous palaces and temples of Babylon, and the glittering pomp of the Chaldean worship, that they were disposed to undervalue the humbler externalities that belonged to their religious institutions at that time. It was needful to correct this feeling by unfolding to them the true glory of these Theocratic institutions, which is done partly by Haggai, but mainly by Zechariah.

We have but little knowledge of the internal history of the people after this period, for nearly a century, and can only infer it from the facts which we find existing at the next great epoch of the Restoration. This was the return of Ezra, B. C. 458, nearly eighty years after the first expedition under Zerubbabel. Thirteen years after the coming of Ezra, B. C. 445, Nehemiah came to aid Ezra in the work of reformation. It was at this period that Malachi arose to second these efforts, more than three-fourths of a century after Haggai and Zechariah. His work was different from theirs. It was the work of a Reformer. During the long interval from the completion of the temple, poverty had pressed many of the people so that their estates were mortgaged to the rich. Discouragement had led them into a complaining and sceptical spirit in regard to the

service of God. They had therefore grossly neglected the temple worship, and intermarried extensively with the heathen, to the insult and wrong of their Jewish wives, as well as in disobedience to God. Everything, civil and religious, was in a state of disorganization and depression. Hence the people needed rebuke, instruction, and excitement to duty, all of which were furnished by Malachi. Nehemiah took hold of the civil abuses, reformed them, and rebuilt the city wall, thus infusing a more courageous spirit into the people. Ezra reformed the ecclesiastical abuses, established synagogues and houses of prayer, where regular instruction in the law could be received; restored the observance of the Sabbath and the Passover; gave dignity and influence to the priesthood, and generated a reverence for the written law that at last became a superstition. It was to aid in this work of Reformation that Malachi prophesied. And the thoroughness with which the work was done is seen in the subsequent history of the people. We find a total change in many respects. Before the captivity they were continually sliding into idolatry, afterwards they hated it with a fanatical hatred. Before, they hankered after kingly rule, afterwards, they became, contrary to the usual course of history, submissive to priestly authority. Before, they neglected the written Word, afterwards, they regarded it with a superstitious reverence that was well nigh idolatrous. Before, they were continually forming alliances with foreign nations, afterwards, they regarded

all other nation with a contemptuous abhorrence. Before, they were eminently an agricultural people, afterwards, they became what they still are, a trading people. In a word, before, they seemed to be like fused metal, ever ready to run into any mould presented to them, afterwards, they present a firm, hard, unchanging form of character, which indurated into bigotry and fanaticism.

It will thus be seen that the Restoration period of Jewish history is one of great importance, in its influence on later events. It developed the national character more than any previous period since the restoration from Egypt. Indeed, it seems to have obliterated the distinction between Judah and Israel, for the ten tribes now disappear from history. It would seem probable that they became gradually blended with the Theocracy, until all distinction was lost. In the New Testament (James 1 : 1, Acts 24 : 7), we meet the *twelve* tribes as distinct from the heathen, and find no trace of the former division. It is probable that this re-union was gradually brought about by the growing Theocratic spirit that was generated after the time of Malachi, and which naturally drew all the Jewish people, without distinction, around the seat of the Theocracy, and the great metropolis of the true religion. The tendency to this fusion of the divided elements into their original unity may be traced not obscurely in Malachi, whose prophecy, although uttered to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, is called the word of the LORD to *Israel*. Mal. 1 : 1.

This brief glance at the historic features of the Restoration will completely justify the selection of the prophets belonging to it, for distinct consideration. It is a period pregnant with the elements of future changes, many of which may still be traced in the Jewish character. At the commencement of the period we see Haggai and Zechariah, the Restoring prophets, whose work was to rear the Mosaic institutions from the ashes of the exile, and set them again in operation after the seventy years Sabbath. At the close, we find Malachi, the Reforming prophet, correcting the abuses, the scepticism, and the discouragement which eighty years of depression had generated, and endeavoring to breathe a more vigorous life into the sickly institutions of the Theocracy. How this work was done, will appear more fully when we come to the exposition, but that it was done vigorously and successfully, all subsequent history testifies. These brief hints, which might greatly be enlarged, will serve to explain and to vindicate the phrase, "Prophets of the Restoration."

§ 4. LITERATURE OF HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, AND MALACHI.

A full discussion of the bibliography of these books will not be expected in such a work as this, but a few hints may be useful to those who desire to extend their studies beyond the more ordinary aids.

Among the older aids in the study of these books an

important place must be assigned to the early versions. The Septuagint will be found to throw valuable light on some portions, whilst in others the translators have been evidently misled. The Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Prophets, is useful in verifying the Masoretic text, and establishing its general accuracy. The Talmud is useful mainly for the same purpose, and has been explored by Dr. Gill and some others, with occasional good effect, especially in showing the opinions of the Jews on particular texts before their controversies with the Christians forced them to other interpretations. The Vulgate will also be found useful in ascertaining the meaning of doubtful words. Other ancient versions have been found of but little utility in elucidating points of difficulty.

The Jewish interpreters, such as Abarbanel, Kimchi, Jarchi, Manasseh ben Israel, Abenezra, &c.; have been used a good deal by some writers, but rather for polemical than exegetical purposes.

Among the Christian fathers, Jerome among the Latins, and Theodoret and Cyril among the Greeks, are the most important. Jerome's knowledge of the Hebrew makes some of his remarks of considerable value, especially in matters of geography and archæology. Of Cyril, Hengstenberg remarks, that "among a crowd of allegorical interpretations are found many fine remarks."

Among the Reformers, Luther (Wittemburg, 1528) and Melancthon (1553) wrote on Zechariah, but not

much that was of value. The first expositor of real value was Calvin. His commentaries on the Minor Prophets were delivered in the form of expository lectures in a daily exercise, and extend through one hundred and eighty-two lectures, which were delivered extempore, and taken down as they were spoken. There is probably nothing that he has left behind him which gives a more distinct notion of the man and the times than these lectures. That a congregation could be formed who would take so deep an interest in such expositions admits us to the heart of the Reformation, and lays bare to us the secret of its life, which was, a living grasp of the Word of God. The style of these lectures, the allusions to passing events, and the occasional abrupt ending of a lecture with the remark, "we stop here until to-morrow," gives a life-like vividness, and actual presence to these daily exercises, that invest them with unusual interest. Each lecture also ends with a prayer, and these prayers for condensed energy and fervor, grasp of thought, and concentration of the whole spirit of the preceding lecture into devotional forms, are even more remarkable than the lectures themselves. The prodigious intellect of that remarkable man is felt in these prayers more intensely by a careful reader than in almost anything else he has left behind him. But the lectures are very remarkable productions. Calvin had probably one of the finest exegetical minds that God has ever granted to his Church in modern times. He had a direct looking into the

heart of the passage, a fine sympathy with the mind of the writer, a freedom from all that is fanciful and foolish, and a justness of thinking that leads him almost instinctively to the correct view of the passage. To some, this may seem to be extravagant laudation, but not to those who have carefully studied his commentaries. Their great merits have extorted tributes of the highest character from those whom nothing could move to give such tributes but the most unquestioned excellence. One of the most remarkable of these is from the pen of the man whose name has been embalmed in theological antagonism to his, the celebrated, acute, and learned Arminius. He says, "Next to the reading of Scripture, which I strongly recommend, I advise you to read the commentaries of Calvin, on whom I bestow higher eulogies than Helmichius did, for I consider that he is *incomparable* in interpreting Scripture, and that his Commentaries are of more value than all that the library of the Fathers transmits to us; so that I concede to him even a spirit of prophecy superior to that of most, yea, of all others." The learned Scaliger said "that no commentator had better hit the sense of the prophets than Calvin;" and Bishop Horseley, who was not warped by hyper-Calvinism, says, "I hold the memory of Calvin in high estimation, his works have a place in my library, and in the study of the Holy Scriptures he is one of the Commentators whom I most frequently consult." Other testimonies to the same effect might be cited from Poole, Rosenmüller, J. J. Cony-

beare, and others. Those who wish to see a full discussion of his critical abilities will find it in Tholuck's Essay on "The merits of Calvin as an interpreter of the Holy Scriptures," translated for the Biblical Repository for 1832, p. 54. He sums up his merits under the heads of (1) Doctrinal impartiality ; (2) Exegetical tact ; (3) Various learning ; and (4) Deep Christian piety. All these characteristics will be found in his lectures on the Minor Prophets. It is true that immense advances have been made in some departments of critical investigation since the time of Calvin, but it is surprising how little change is needful in his philological views. As far, however, as this deficiency exists, it is made up in the English translation of Calvin's works, issued by the Calvin Translation Society, by the valuable labors of the learned editor, Rev. John Owen. He has given in foot-notes the results of the latest criticism, with some important suggestions of his own. But the diffuseness that, even in such an intellect as that of Calvin, is incident to expository lectures delivered extempore, and taken down from the lips ; the fact that they cannot be obtained apart from all his works ; and the high price at which they must necessarily be furnished, prevent them from being such a work on these prophets as the necessities of the Church demand.

Next to Calvin in merit, and almost in date, is the *Biblia Hebraica* of J. H. Michaelis, the notes on Zechariah in which are by C. B. Michaelis. The Commentary on Zechariah is a work of great judgment and learning,

and like the other parts of the same work, is very rich in parallel passages. But it is so condensed in its style, and printed in such very small and indistinct type, as greatly to diminish its value. As a work for occasional consultation its worth may be estimated from the fact that Rosenmüller has transcribed almost literally, without any acknowledgment, most of the notes on Zechariah, except where they embodied Trinitarian and evangelical opinions. But it lacks that depth and sweep of exegetical vision that is so noticeable in the eagle gaze of Calvin.

Cocceius (*Comm. Proph. Minores, Opp. t. 3*) is often referred to by Michaelis, though his fanciful judgment, and erroneous theories of interpretation, greatly diminish the value of his labors. His antipode, Grotius, is often referred to still, in some points of criticism. Vitringa began a Commentary on Zechariah, but was only able to write his Prolegomena, notes on the first two chapters, and the vision of the golden candlestick, when God called him to his rest. Had he been allowed to finish this work, it would doubtless have taken rank with his valuable commentary on Isaiah. Venema also published expository lectures on Zechariah, now rare, and but little quoted. Mark on the Minor Prophets (*Amsterdam, 1696—1701, 4 vols. 4to*), is pronounced by Hengstenberg to be the most important work still, on these prophets, in furnishing a complete exegetical apparatus, and a collection of the opinions of previous interpreters. He says, also, that it is diffuse, tedious,

and tame. In the massive accumulations of the *Critici Sacri* (Amsterdam, 1698, 12 vols. fol.); and its abridgment, *Poole's Synopsis* (London, 1669—1674, 5 vols. folio), will also be found enumerated the labors of the most eminent critics of previous times. *Calmet* (Paris, 1719—1726, 9 vols. folio); *Houbigant* (Frankfort on Main, 1777, 2 vols. quarto), and *Dathe* (Halle, 1773—1789, 6 vols. 8vo), are still referred to with interest by some modern expositors.

Among the more recent critics belonging to a later period of Hebrew philology, is *Rosenmüller*, whose "*Scholia in V. T. Compend.*" contains much that is valuable on questions of grammar, but is, as to all spirituality, a dry and fleshless skeleton. A dreary rationalist, who disbelieved in the possibility of prophecy in its strict and plenary sense, he is like a blind man writing a critique on the Parthenon. Of the same general character is the *Grammatico-Critical Commentary* of *Maurer*, (Leipsic, 1835—1847, 4 vols. 8vo.) This furnishes the latest researches of German philology, and discusses the views of *Hitzig*, *Gesenius*, *Ewald*, and others, often with great acuteness and force. *Ackermann* on the *Minor Prophets*, (Vienna, 1830, 8vo,) although written by a Roman Catholic, who avows in his preface that he has presented nothing contrary to the opinions of the Holy Mother Church, is a work of some value. Whilst it is impossible for any expositor to examine with an untrammelled mind the words of scripture, who believes in a foregone and authoritative expo-

sition of the Church, still his Commentary is valuable in its copious quotations from the older interpreters, and its illustration of the Hebrew forms from cognate dialects. But beyond all comparison, the most valuable German interpreter on these prophets of our day is Hengstenberg, who in his *Christology of the Old Testament*, has given a most thorough and elaborate exposition of the greater part of Zechariah and Malachi, and chap. 2 : 6-9 of Haggai. He combines the German philological depth, with the evangelical views of truth, so as to make him one of the great champions of orthodoxy against rationalism. Whatever may be his possible aberrations in the future, the Church owes him a debt of lasting gratitude for the service he has already done. But his work is too diffuse, and too much overloaded with details, to be generally interesting or useful. The general staple of his exposition must be admitted by every one who holds evangelical views, although there are a number of minor points in which there will be found room for diversity of opinion.

Among the English Commentators on these prophets separately, one of the earliest was Dr. Blayney, whose translation of Zechariah with notes (London, 1797, 4to), took for a long time a high rank as a work of learning. Newcome, on the Minor Prophets (Ponte fract, 1809, 8vo), is a work of considerable merit, but the notes are very meagre in many cases, and the 8vo edition very badly printed. The most valuable, by far, of the English expositors, is Dr. Henderson, whose truly learned

and able work will be found frequently referred to in the following pages. Dr. H. is a sound and thorough Hebrew scholar, and has spared no pains to ascertain the true text, and the true meaning of the text thus ascertained. His notes are mainly philological, but occasionally expand into a rich view of thought and feeling. His theory of interpretation is the same that underlies his Commentary on Isaiah, which will be found discussed with characteristic ability and learning by Dr. J. A. Alexander, in his Commentary on the Later Prophecies of Isaiah. It will be found in the following pages, that many of his views are liable to serious objection, but as a whole, his Commentary is the best that England has ever furnished on these prophets. But it is unsuited for popular use, and will be found often too meagre on points of great interest, whilst it is diffuse on questions of minute criticism.

It is not necessary to dwell on the ordinary Commentaries in popular use, as they are sufficiently well known. Lowth is learned, but unsatisfactory, Henry is always rich in spiritual unction, Scott in strong common sense and sterling piety, Clarke in somewhat undigested learning; but whilst each possesses its own peculiar excellence, none of them go thoroughly into the real difficulties of the text, as their object was to furnish purely a popular exposition.

Among other works of various shades of value that have not been named, are, Koester, whose *Meletemata Critica* (Gottingen, 1818, 8vo), contains an elaborate

discussion of the authenticity of the latter part of Zechariah ; Stonard on Zechariah (London, 1824, 8vo) ; Kimchi on Zechariah, translated by Dr. McCaul, the eminent Rabbinical scholar (London, 1837, 8vo) ; Stock on Malachi (London, 1641, fol.), greatly esteemed in its day ; Selater on Malachi (London, 1650, 4to), delivered in expository lectures ; Van Til on Malachi (Lug. Bat., 1701, 4to) ; Venema on Malachi (Leovard, 1759, 4to.) ; Bahrtdt on Malachi (Leipsic, 1768, 4to) ; and others whose names need not be recorded to swell this list.

It will be seen from this enumeration, that whilst much has been written on these prophets in quantity, the value of the exposition is not in the direct ratio of the quantity, and that there is still room for a commentary that shall present fairly the results of the latest criticism, that shall vindicate where it is susceptible of such vindication, the general belief of the Church, and evolve somewhat more distinctly the practical bearings of these prophecies, than is done in the critical commentaries. Whether this is successfully accomplished in the work now offered, the readers must judge. If it is not, it may stimulate some abler hand to the work, and thus accomplish the end at which it aims.

H A G G A I .

NEW TRANSLATION.

PROPHECY I.—*Summons to Labor.*

- 1 : 1. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, was the word of Jehovah in the hand of Haggai the prophet, to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, prefect of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Jozedek the high priest, saying :
2. Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying :
‘This people ! they say the time has not come.
The time for the house of Jehovah to be built.’
3. And the word of Jehovah was in the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying :
4. ‘Is it the time for you, *you!* to dwell in covered houses,
And this house to lie desolate ?’
5. And now, saith Jehovah of hosts :
‘Direct your hearts to your ways.
6. Ye have sown much and been bringing in but little ;
Ye have been eating, but not to being satisfied ;
Ye have been drinking, but not to being filled ;
Ye have been putting on clothes, but not to being warmed ;
And he who gathers wages, gathers wages into a purse
with holes.’
7. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts :
‘Direct your hearts to your ways.
8. Go up to the mountain,
And bring timber, and build the house,
And I will delight in it,
And I will be honored, saith Jehovah.’

9. 'Ye looked for much, and behold (it came) to little,
And ye brought it home, and I blew upon it,
Wherefore?' saith Jehovah of hosts,
'Because of my house which is desolate,
And ye are running every man to his own house,
10. Whereupon the heavens above you refrain from dew,
And the earth refrained its increase.
11. And I called for drought
Upon the earth and upon the mountains,
And upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil.
And upon whatever the earth brings forth,
And upon man and upon beast,
And upon every work of the hands.'
12. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son
Jozedek the high priest, and all the remainder of the peo-
ple, obeyed the voice of Jehovah their God, and the words
of Haggai the prophet, because Jehovah their God had sent
13. him, and the people feared before the face of Jehovah. And
Haggai the messenger of Jehovah, spake in the message
of Jehovah to the people, saying, 'I am with you, saith
14. Jehovah.' And Jehovah aroused the spirit of Zerubbabel
the son of Shealtiel, prefect of Judah, and the spirit of
Joshua the son of Jozedek, the high priest, and the spirit
of all the remainder of the people, and they came and did
15. work in the house of Jehovah of hosts their God; on
the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second
year of Darius the king.

PROPHECY II.—*Encouragement to Labor.*

- 2 : 1. In the seventh (*month*), on the twenty-first day of the
2. month, was the word of Jehovah in the hand of Haggai
the prophet, saying, 'Speak, I pray you, to Zerubbabel
the son of Shealtiel, prefect of Judah, and to Joshua the
3. son of Jozedek, the high priest, and to the remainder of
the people, saying,
Who is remaining among you,
Who saw this house in its former splendor?
And what do you see it now?

- Is not such (*a house*) as nothing in your eyes ?
4. And now be strong, O Zernbbabel, saith Jehovah,
And be strong, O Joshua, son of Jozedek, the high priest,
And be strong, all ye people of the land, saith Jehovah,
And work, for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts.
 5. (*This is*) the word that I covenanted with you,
In your coming forth out of Egypt,
And my spirit remains among you, fear not !
 6. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
It is yet only a little while and I will be shaking
The heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.
 7. And I am about to shake all the nations,
And the beauty of all the nations shall come,
And I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts,
 8. Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold, saith Jehovah of
hosts.
 9. Great shall be the glory of this latter house,
Above the former (*house*), saith Jehovah of hosts.
And in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts.

PROPHECY III.—*Instruction and Encouragement.*

- 2 : 10. On the twenty-fourth (*day*) of the ninth (*month*), in the
second year of Darius, was the word of Jehovah in the
11. hand of Haggai the prophet, saying : thus saith Jehovah
12. of hosts, ‘ask, I pray you, the priests concerning the
law, saying, If a man carry holy flesh in the skirt of his
garment, and touches with his skirt bread, or pottage, or
13. wine, or oil, or any food, shall it be holy ? And the priests
answered and said “No !” And Haggai said, if one
polluted by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be
(*thereby*) polluted ? And the priests answered and said,
“it shall be polluted.”’
14. And Haggai answered and said,
‘Thus is this nation,
And thus is this people before me, saith Jehovah,
And thus is every work of their hand,
And whatever they offer them is polluted.
15. And now, I pray you, lay it to heart from this day and
backward,

- Before the placing of stone upon stone, in the temple of Jehovah.
16. From the times when one came to a pile of twenty (*measures*)
 And there were ten :
 (*Or*) came to a wine-vat to draw fifty (*measures from*) the press,
 And there were twenty.
17. I smote you with blight, and with withering, and with hail.
 Even all the works of your hands,
 And ye (*turned*) not to me, saith Jehovah.
18. Lay it to heart, I pray you, from this day and upwards,
 From the twenty-fourth day of the ninth (*month*)
 To the day in which the temple was founded,
 Lay it to heart.
19. Is the crop yet in the granary ?
 The vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate and the olive have not borne ;
 From this day I will bless.'
-

PROPHECY IV.—*The Safety of God's People amidst the coming commotions.*

- 2 : 20. And the word of Jehovah was again to Haggai on the twenty-fourth (*day*) of the ninth (*month*), saying :
21. Speak to Zerubbabel, prefect of Judah, saying,
 'I (*will soon be*) shaking the heavens and the earth,
22. And I will overturn the throne of kingdoms ;
 And I will destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations ;
 And I will overturn the chariot and the riders in it ;
 And there shall fall the horses and their riders ;
 A man by the sword of his brother.
23. In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
 I will take thee, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant.
 saith Jehovah,
 And I will make thee as a signet,
 For thee have I chosen, saith Jehovah of hosts.

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI.

HAGGAI is the first of the trio of prophets that appeared after the Babylonish captivity. Most of the prophets had been raised up before the exile. A few, such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Habakkuk and Obadiah, flourished near or during the captivity, but it was left to Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, to close up the solemn utterances of inspiration to the ancient Church, and give us the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. This rearward position in the prophetic ranks, invests these prophets with peculiar interest, and leads us to listen to their words with peculiar attention. The last words of any one are usually listened to with deep interest, but the last words of God to the Church before the Incarnation, ought surely have a peculiar interest to that Church in every period of its subsequent history. And yet, for some reasons, the interest that really belongs to them has not attracted to them the amount of study and attention that we would have anticipated. It is to aid in awakening, if possible, some fresh interest in these parting words of the spirit of prophecy, that we invite attention to an effort to unfold some of their meaning.

Of Haggai personally we know but little. The name

means literally, *my feast*, and throws no light on his personal history, unless we suppose with Cocceius, that it was given in anticipation of the speedy return of the people from their long exile. The Jews have, as usual, a number of fabulous traditions concerning him, that he was an eminent scholar, an assessor in the great synagogue under Ezra that restored the temple worship, and settled the canon of the Old Testament, &c. ; but the tradition that has received the most credence is that recorded by Epiphanius, that he was born in Babylon during the captivity, and came to Jerusalem when Cyrus (B. C. 536) permitted a portion of the Jews to return under Zerubbabel, 2 Chron. 36 : 23 ; Ezra 1 : 1 ; 2 : 1. The same writer also states that he was buried at Jerusalem among the priests, from which it is affirmed that he was of the family of Aaron. There is, however, no certain knowledge of any of these facts. We know only that he was a servant of God, and more than this is not needful to us, or it would have been revealed.

The prophecy itself, however, compared with the historical books, furnishes us sufficient data for its interpretation.

Sixteen years before the first public appearance of the prophet, the earliest movement toward a return to Palestine was made among the exiles in Babylon. Cyrus in the first year of his exile, B. C. 536, issued an edict summoning the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple ; Ezra 1 : 1. Accordingly a number of the

children of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, went up to the city of their fathers under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and ecclesiastical heads of the people. The work of rebuilding the temple was begun in the second year after their arrival, when the foundations were laid amidst the shoutings of the young men and the tears of the old ; Ezra 3 : 10—13. The work had proceeded but a little distance when the Samaritans began to interfere, and their offers of assistance being declined, they began to throw obstacles in the way and seek to arrest the work. During the life of Cyrus these efforts were unavailing, for his noble heart never swerved in its affection for the people whose sacred writings contained so wonderful a prediction of him ; Isa. 44 : 28 ; 45 : 1, &c. But as his days were cut short on the field of battle, these efforts were renewed under his successor, Cambyses (called Ahasuerus in Ezra 4 : 6), and obtained a suspension of the work. On the ascension of Smerdis the Magian, (called Artaxerxes in Ezra 4 : 7—23,) it was an easy task to obtain from so suspicious a usurper an edict prohibiting the further prosecution of the work of rebuilding the temple and city. Thus the work lay for nearly fourteen years.

Meanwhile, the first zeal of the people had grown cold. They found the land impoverished by the exile, and the task of rebuilding the temple, for which they had mainly returned, suddenly arrested by the schemings of their enemies. Discouragement and suspicion

began to creep over their hearts. Scepticism gradually grew up in their minds, and as a matter of course, worldliness and avarice soon became the predominant traits of their character. Having no heart for the work of God, they easily interpreted the obstacles in their way as so many divine intimations that they were not to engage in it, and turned to the greedy advancement of their own private affairs. Such was their condition at the death of Smerdis, and the ascension to the throne of Darius Hystaspis, B. .c 520. As the force of the prohibitory decree of Smerdis ceased with his death, an effort was instantly made by Haggai, Zerubbabel and Joshua to induce the Jews to resume the building of the temple. Opposition to this effort, by their old enemies, brought forth a decree from Darius, in the second year of his reign, formally re-affirming the original edict of Cyrus, and commanding the energetic prosecution of the work, which was accordingly done, and the temple completed and dedicated in the sixth year of Darius, B. c. 516.

It was to urge the people to this work that Haggai came forward as a prophet of God, and co-operated with Zerubbabel, the civil leader, Joshua, the ecclesiastical, and Zechariah, his fellow-prophet, who came forward, two months after him, to engage in the same great work.

The prophecies of Haggai are dated with an unusual accuracy. The first was delivered on the first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius, B. c.

520, and the last, the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, thus extending through a period of not quite four months. Jerome, in his preface to this book, notes the fact that the prophet was cotemporary with Tarquin the Proud, the seventh and last king of Rome.

The book contains four distinct prophecies. I. (Ch. 1) was delivered on the first day of the sixth month, and reproved the people for their apathy in allowing the temple to lie in ruins. This call to duty was effectual, for, in twenty-four days afterwards, we find the people commencing the work of rebuilding under Zerubbabel. II. (Ch. 2 : 1—9) was delivered on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, and designed to correct the feelings of depreciation and discouragement that some of the people had in comparing the humble structure then going up with the magnificent fane of Solomon. As Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had predicted for the second temple a greater glory than the first, some were doubting whether it was not wrong to proceed with a house that was so much inferior. To remove this reason or pretext, whichever it might be, he showed them wherein this greater glory would consist. III. (Ch. 2 : 10—19) was delivered on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, and removes an error under which they had been laboring in regard to the efficacy of outward observances, and promises them a blessing if they engage heartily in the work of rebuilding the temple. IV. (Ch. 2 : 20—23) was delivered on the same day with the preceding, and

addressed to Zerubbabel, as the representative of the theocratic people.

The style of Haggai is adapted to the nature of his various messages. When he exhorts, it is with pathos and sometimes with tenderness ; when he reproves, it is with burning severity ; and when he looks forward to the magnificent future, he kindles into a poetic fervor. An intensely theocratic spirit seems to have glowed within him ; a spirit which combining all that is purest of patriotism, and all that is most powerful of piety, produced an earnestness of character as deep as could be developed in our nature before the coming of " God manifest in the flesh."

ANALYSIS.

PROPHECY I.—CHAPTER I.

The Summons to Labor.

I. The date of the prophecy, and the parties concerned in its utterance and reception, (v. 1.)

II. The cavil of the people in justification of their neglect of the temple, *viz.*: that the time had not come to engage in a work requiring so large an outlay of time and money, (v. 2.)

III. The emptiness of this cavil. If they had really been too poor to build the temple, they would also have been too poor to build such costly houses for themselves, (v. 3.)

IV. The call to a retrospection of their conduct, and the results of that conduct, as a reason for changing it, and engaging in the work of building the temple.

(1.) Their neglect of God's work had issued in evil to themselves, (v. 6.)

(2.) Engaging in it would delight and honor God, (v. 7, 8.)

(3.) Persisting in their neglect of it, the past would re-appear in the future, and the curse of God rest upon all their possessions, (v. 9—11.)

V. The penitence of the people for their past neglect, and their determination to repair it by instantly beginning to prepare for building, (v. 12.)

VI. The gracious assurance of God that he was with them now in their returning obedience, (v. 13.)

VII. The actual resumption of the work by the people, after making the necessary preparation of materials, &c., three weeks after the first call of the prophet, (v. 13, 14.)

COMMENTARY.

CHAPTER I.

In the second year of Darius the day of the month, came [the word king, in the sixth month, in the first of the Lord by Haggai the prophet

1 : 1.—“In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, was the word of Jehovah in the hand of Haggai, the prophet, to Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, prefect of Judah, and to Joshua, son of Jozedek, the high priest, saying :”—

THE prophecy is dated from the reign of Darius the king of Persia, because the overthrow of the Babylonish empire, by Cyrus, had made the Medo-Persian power predominant, and as the Jews had no king of their own to date from, they used the chronological notation of the power under which they were then in subjection. The Darius here spoken of is generally agreed by scholars to have been Darius Hystaspis. Darius being a common name to the rulers of Persia, as Pharaoh was to those of Egypt, and Cæsar to those of Rome, other kings have been suggested as the one here alluded to, but the overwhelming preponderance of authority is on the side of the opinion above stated. The month here named is not the month of the king's reign, as might be supposed from the adoption of that date, but the month

unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, son of Josedech, the high priest, saying—
governor of Judah, and to Joshua the

of the Hebrew year. We have retained the name Jehovah, instead of rendering it LORD, because the sacred writers make a marked distinction between this name of God and every other, and a distinction that ought not to be concealed in the translation. It is his covenant title, embodying in its structure the unchangeableness of his existence as the guarantee of his faithfulness to his people. See Exodus 6 : 3.—“In the hand” is a Hebraism for “by,” which we have retained as marking the purely ministerial character of the prophet in delivering the message given to him. It appears in the New Testament in Acts 7 : 35 ; Gal. 3 : 19. Zerubbabel in Ezra 1 : 8 ; 5 : 14, &c., is called Sheshbazzar, as appears from Ezra 5 : 16, where the same work is referred to Sheshbazzar that in chap. 3 : 8 is ascribed to Zerubbabel. Sheshbazzar was probably his Chaldean name, just as Daniel was called Belteshazzar, (Dan. 1 : 7.) The etymology of his Hebrew name is probably “One born in Babylon.” He is called here and elsewhere the son of Shealtiel, but from 1 Chron. 3 : 18, 19, it appears that he was the son of Pediah, and that Shealtiel (or Salathiel, as he is there called) was his uncle. The probability is, that owing to the death of his father, or for some other reason, he was adopted by his uncle, and commonly known in after life by the name of his adopted, rather than of his natural, father. Hence he is reckoned in the genealogies of the New Testament as the son of

2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, not come, The time that the LORD's saying, This people say, The time is house should be built.

Salathiel or Shealtiel, (Matt. 1 : 12 ; Luke 3 : 27.) The LXX, instead of "the prefect of Judah," have "of the tribe of Judah," not only here, but where the same phrase occurs in v. 14, and 2 : 22. Joshua (Heb. Jehoshua) is called Jeshua in Ezra 2 : 2, &c. ; and Jozedek, is called Jehozadak in 1 Chron. 6 : 15, (5 : 41,) where it appears that he was one of those carried into exile by Nebuchadnezzar. The two leaders of the people are addressed as the organs and representatives of the people themselves.

V. 2. "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying : 'This people! they say, the time has not come, the time for the house of Jehovah to be built.'"

The name "Jehovah of hosts" indicates universal dominion of God, over all ranks of being in heaven and earth. There is something contemptuous in the abrupt expression, "this people!" The demonstrative pronoun here seems to have the force of the Greek *οὗτος* and the Latin *iste*, as it has in Ex. 32 : 1, &c., and gives a most emphatic exordium to the indignant reproof that was about to follow. There is a grammatical difficulty here in the construction of the verb "come," which is an infinitive. It may be taken here as the emphatic infinitive, with the finite form omitted, as we have in the infinitives of v. 6. The general sense is plain. It is the plea of the people for neglecting the temple, because this work of rebuilding had been arrested. But this

3 Then came the word of the LORD in your ceiled houses, and this house
by Haggai the prophet, saying, *lie waste?*

4 *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell*

plea was indefensible. The edict of Smerdis had not formally prohibited the erection of the temple, but only of the walls of the city. (Ezra 4 : 12—21.) It is true that the temple was a part of the wall ; and on this pretext the enemies of the Jews had arrested the work ; but it was a perversion of the terms of the edict, which forbade fortifications and not buildings for sacred purposes. But as these enemies had the power, they used it to accomplish their own ends, and as the zeal of the people began to cool there was no persevering disposition to resist this interpretation of the edict. But after the death of Smerdis, the edict ceased to be binding, and it was the duty of the people to begin the work that had been so long suspended. It would seem that the propriety of doing so had been mooted, but the people, who had grown cold in the service of God, were disposed to put it off to a more convenient season. And as is usual in such cases they sought to bolster up this suggestion of avarice and unbelief by magnifying the difficulties in the way. As this work was a very great one, requiring large means, and they were comparatively poor, they pretended that then was not the time to begin such a work ; they must wait until their ability to do it properly was increased. They could thus veil their apathy in the service of God under the pretext of great respect for the work to which they were summoned, and

5 Now therefore, thus saith the LORD
of hosts; Consider your ways.

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in
little; ye eat, but ye have not enough;

so establish, for a time, a sort of truce between conscience and covetousness. But this truce was soon broken, and this veil torn off by the unsparing hands of the stern prophet.

V. 3, 4. "And the word of Jehovah was in the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying: 'Is it the time for you, *you!* to dwell in covered houses, and this house to lie desolate?'"

This is the answer to the plea that it was not the time to begin God's house, because they were so poor. If they were too poor to build God's house, they were too poor to build their own. But as they had not been prevented by this plea from building for themselves, it was no justification of their refusal to build for God. Hence the prophet sweeps away this pretext with an indignant outburst of vehement interrogation. "If it is not the time for God's work to be done, is it the time for yours? If you are so poor as to be unable to build his house, are you not too poor to build your own? Does not your lavish expenditure on your own dwellings brand this pretext with hypocrisy and falsehood?" The repetition of "*you,*" is taken vocatively in our English version. The LXX and Vulgate do not notice it. We have taken it simply as an emphatic repetition of the pronoun, which is the common significance of this grammatical form. (See Nordheimer, § 865, 3, a, for other examples of this construction.) The repetition is simply designed to make more emphatic the antithesis between the people

ye drink, but ye are not filled with warm ; and he that earneth wages earn-
 drink ; ye clothe you, but there is none eth wages to *put it* into a bag with holes.

and God ; and, therefore, more atrocious the preference that they gave to themselves, and also to express something of indignant scorn. We have rendered כִּסְפוֹתָיִם, *covered*, rather than *ceiled*, because it seems to refer to different kinds of ornamental and useful work about a house on the walls as well as on the roof, making it not only comfortable but also elegant, and placing these stately mansions in disgraceful contrast with the unroofed, unwalled foundations of that house that ought to have been the noblest in the city. The LXX has it "*vaulted-roofed*," the Vulgate "*panel-ceiled*," and the Chaldee, "covered with cedar boards." Henderson translates it "wainscoted." The general idea is that of a house covered in, and finished in an elegant manner, with covered wainscots, walls and ceilings.

V. 5, 6. "And now, saith Jehovah of hosts, 'Direct your hearts to your ways: ye have sown much, and been bringing in but little; ye have been eating, but not to being satisfied; ye have been drinking, but not to being filled; ye have been putting on clothes, but not to being warmed; and he who gathers wages, gathers wages into a purse with holes.'"

"To direct the heart," is to ponder earnestly. The general meaning of the passage is, "examine and see whether you have gained any thing by trying to overreach God, in this way. Have you not lost? You have labored, but with little result; your food and drink have not been sufficient to satisfy hunger and thirst; your clothes not sufficient to warm you ;

7 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts; wood, and build the house; and I will
Consider your ways. take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring

and your wages consumed so rapidly for the necessaries of life, that in the words of the proverb, they have been put in a purse with holes." The verbs here used are infinitives, and have a finite form of the verb understood. The use of the infinitive indicates that the action had been going on for some time. (Nordheimer, § 1020, 1, a.) The finite verb is omitted in Ezek. 1 : 14, where the idea of continuance also is conveyed. The general idea is that a careful examination of the past would show, that instead of cheating God, they had only been cheating themselves.

V. 7, 8. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, 'Direct your hearts to your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring timber, and build the house, and I will be honored, saith Jehovah.' "

Some think the mountain here meant was Moriah, but this would be an unusual mode of expressing it, and moreover the reason given is inconsistent with this view; there was no timber growing on Moriah. Most interpreters understand by the mountain, Lebanon, from which the cedar for the first temple was brought, and indeed the cedar for this temple. But it seems unnecessary to restrict the phrase to one mountain, any more than to restrict the material they were to collect to the one kind mentioned, *i. e.* timber. As it was a general command to collect material of all kinds, so "to go to the mountain" seems rather to be an indefinite

9 Ye looked for much, and lo, *it* the Lord of hosts. Because of mine
came to little; and when ye brought *it* house that *is* waste, and ye run every
 home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith man unto his own house.

phrase, like “going to the forest;” meaning not any particular mountain, but any mountain where timber was to be obtained, and is probably a collective singular, referring to mountains indefinitely. It is very likely that after the seventy years’ captivity the mountains would be covered with a very dense growth of trees, making it easy to obtain wood for building purposes. “It” refers to the temple, and not to the act of obedience in building it. That is referred to partly in the words “(thus acting), I will be honored,” *i. e.* my name glorified. The prophet thus sets forth the duty of obedience, and the results of that obedience as motives to it, *viz.*: that thereby God would be pleased, and his great name glorified; the highest motives that can actuate a pious heart. He then suggests additional motives from the results of disobedience, in the next verse.

V. 9. “Ye looked for much, and behold (*it came*) to little, and ye brought it home, and I blew upon it. Wherefore?” saith Jehovah of hosts. “Because of my house which is desolate, and ye are running every man to his own house.”

The verb נִצַּף with לְ means properly to turn toward anything for the purpose of looking at it, and the infinitive is here used for the same reason that it is used in v. 6 (which see), to indicate a continued action. (For the syntax of the preposition “לְ” see Nordheimer, § 1042, II. 2.) The same idiom appears in the New Testament in the phrase “to one flesh” (Matt. 19:5;

10 Therefore, the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and

upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

Eph. 5 : 31). It designates that into which any thing is converted. To blow on a thing, is to scatter it and carry it away. To run to their own houses, is an idiomatic expression for devoting attention to them. The same idiom appears in Prov. 1 : 16 ; Ps. 119 : 32. Indeed, we have it substantially in our own language, when we speak of people running after any person or thing. The general meaning is, that their previous adversity was the result of their neglect of God's work, and if they would avoid the adversity, they must cease to be guilty of the neglect. This was then an additional motive to enforce the summons to labor.

V. 10. " ' Wherefore the heavens above you refrained from dew, and the earth refrained its increase.' "

By a bold personification, the heavens and the earth are here represented as refusing to grant their grateful gifts to a people so forgetful of the hand that made them both. It is as if they, all inanimate as they are, were more mindful of Jehovah than his own favored people.

V. 11. " ' And I called for drought upon the earth, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon whatever the earth brings forth, and upon man and upon beast, and upon every work of the hands.' "

This verse enumerates, in detail, the curse that is mentioned in v. 10, and brings to view the hand of God above and behind the material agents. The blind idola-

12 ¶ Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their

try of nature that now prevails, and the worship of laws, that has so much supplanted the worship of the law-giver, was wholly unknown to the sacred writers. Behind the mighty organism they recognized the mightier hand that created and wields it at his will. And the poetry of the thought, in verse 10, is retained, whilst its piety is exalted. God is represented as calling for these material agencies, and they as running swiftly to do his bidding, and writing in withered fields and blackened forests those words of warning that were uttered before by the mouth of his prophets. There is also a fine and striking contrast between the prompt and perfect obedience of these material agencies, and the sloth and disobedience of those into whom God had breathed a living soul. There is an alliteration in the original that we cannot transfer. The crime of the people was that they left the house of God desolate (תִּרְקַה), their punishment was that their land was left to drought (תִּרְקַה).

V. 12. "Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedek, the high priest, and all the remainder of the people, obeyed the voice of Jehovah their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, because Jehovah their God had sent him; and the people feared before the face of Jehovah."

This verse describes the good effect that this solemn call to duty produced. They recognized the voice of God in Haggai, listened to him as a messenger from Him,

God had sent him, and the people did messenger, in the LORD's message unfear before the LORD. to the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD.

13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's

and moved by a holy fear, immediately resumed the long suspended work of the temple. "The remainder of the people" was not, as it would at first sight seem, the remainder of the people after Zerubbabel and Joshua were enumerated, but a general title for the whole colony. (See Zech. 8 : 6.)

V. 13. "And Haggai the messenger of Jehovah, spake in the message of Jehovah to the people, saying, 'I am with you, saith Jehovah.'"

"In the message of Jehovah," means in his official capacity as a messenger or ambassador of Jehovah, with the authority of him in whose name he spake. There is something very beautiful in the sudden change of tone manifest in the message of God. The people had not yet begun to work, but as soon as they showed a disposition to do so, the stern and reproving tone of God is changed for one of the most exquisite tenderness. It is as if he hastened to forget their former unfaithfulness, and to assure them that, in spite of it all, he was not only willing to be with them, but actually *was* with them as soon as their hearts turned towards him. This presence of God is regarded rightly as being the highest blessing that could be bestowed on them, and the surest guarantee of success. They had the same jealous enemies yet around them that had arrested the work before, but God assures them that now he was with

14 And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came

them, and nothing should be allowed again to hinder the work.

V. 14, 15. "And Jehovah aroused the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, prefect of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedek, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remainder of the people, and they came and did work in the house of Jehovah of hosts their God: in the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king."

It will be seen, by comparing this date with that of v. 1, that, three weeks after the first summons to work, the people were actually engaged on the walls of the temple. This interval was probably spent in collecting materials, clearing away rubbish, and preparing for the vigorous prosecution of the work. The LXX, Vulgate, and other authorities, connect v. 15 with ch. 2, but with obvious impropriety. It is plainly designed to give the date of the beginning of the building, and to show the prompt obedience that the people gave to the summons of the prophet.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Men are always prone to put religion off with scraps and leavings, and serve God with what costs them nothing. In the outward things of religion they are much more disposed to work for themselves than for God; and if they have time that cannot be otherwise used, or funds that are not very current, to give them to the treasury of the Lord, and if any larger ex-

and did work in the house of the Lord the sixth month, in the second year of
of hosts, their God, Darius the king.

15 In the four and twentieth day of

penditure of either is urged, to plead that "the time has not come" to do this work. In the inward things of religion the same spirit is shown. The young, the middle aged and the old, all alike procrastinate the great work, on the plea that "the time is not come," the convenient season that, like the horizon, recedes as we advance, (v. 2.)

(2.) Our expenditures on ourselves, whilst we pretend to have nothing for God, will bear emphatic and fearful testimony against us. The carved ceilings and costly ornaments will have a tongue in the day of judgment, (v. 4.)

(3.) No man ever gains anything by trying to cheat God. He makes a fool's bargain, bartering a real good for a perishing bauble, and losing at last even what he gained, (v. 6.)

(4.) A careful pondering of God's dealings with us, will often indicate to us God's will regarding us. The events of life are the hieroglyphics in which God records his feelings toward us, the key to which is found in the Bible, (v. 6.)

(5.) Obedience to God is an advancement of his glory, (v. 8.)

(6.) Disobedience to God will often, even in this life, issue in disappointment and disaster, (v. 9, 10.)

(7.) God has not abandoned the universe to the

sightless action of general laws, but is so related to that universe as to be able to direct its laws to the fulfilment of his purposes, whether in rewarding the good, punishing the evil, or answering prayer, without deranging or destroying the normal action of those laws themselves. (v. 11.)

(8.) True religion manifests itself in fearing the Lord and in obeying the voice of his servant, (v. 12.)

(9.) The presence of God with a man is the best blessing he can receive, for it includes everything else, (v. 13.)

(10.) God is waiting to be gracious, and will meet the returning wanderer, even before his hand has begun the actual work of his service, (v. 13.)

(11.) Every good impulse, or reviving of religion in the hearts of men, is produced by the direct power of God, through the Holy Spirit, (v. 14.)

(12.) Obedience to the commands of God will always end in a blessing, whilst disobedience will always end in a curse, if not in time, surely in eternity.

PROPHECY II.—CHAPTER II : 1—9.

Encouragement to Labor.

ANALYSIS.

I. Date of the prophecy, and persons addressed, (v. 1, 2.)

II. Discouragement of some because of the inferiority of this temple to that of Solomon, (v. 3.)

III. Encouragement to persevere in spite of this outward inferiority, because (1) God was with them (v. 4) ; (2) his covenant was yet in full force ; (3) his Spirit was still with them (v. 5) ; (4) this house was to have a higher honor than its predecessor in being connected with the magnificent unfoldings of the kingdom of Messiah, the coming of which was to be attended with great convulsions (v. 6) ; but the result of which should be the homage of the heathen, and a richer adornment than gold and silver, (which God could easily give it, did he think it needful, since it all belongs to him, v. 8 ;) a glory above the glitter of all external splendor, even a glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men (v. 9). Hence, as the glory of the dispensation with which this temple was to be connected was not a mere material splendor, but a far higher and nobler majesty, the absence of this material splendor now, should not discourage them in the work of building.

CHAPTER II.

1 In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

3 Who *is* left among you that saw

Ch. 2 : 1—3.—“In the seventh (*month*), in the twenty-first day of the month, was the word of Jehovah in the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying : Speak, I pray you, to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, prefect of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jozedek, the high priest, and to the remainder of the people, saying, who is remaining among you who saw this house in its former splendor? And what do you see it now? Is not such (*a house*) as nothing in your eyes?”

THE Jews were accustomed to say that there were five things in the first temple that were wanting in the second : (1) the sacred fire ; (2) the shekinah ; (3) the ark and cherubim ; (4) the urim and thummim ; (5) the spirit of prophecy. Besides these things, it was greatly inferior in external splendor. Hence when the old men, who had seen that imperial structure in all its magnificence, saw the humble building that was to take its place, they wept at the mournful contrast, and the foundations of the new temple were greeted with mingled sounds of joy and sorrow, (Ezra 3:12, 13.) These old men, with the natural despondency of the

this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest;

laudatores temporis acti, would suggest their doubts and fears to the younger and more ardent spirits that were engaged in the work. They would say, “Did not Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel declare that the new temple would surpass the old in glory? But is it not evidently inferior to it? What does this mean? Ought we thus to contradict the words of the prophets? May not we for our sins be forbidden to build this temple, as David was to build the preceding one? May not this want of means to equal the first temple be an intimation from God that we ought to wait for a worthier generation to engage in this work?” Such queries, suggested by the aged, whose counsels were always respected by the young, and whose inability to labor left them leisure for such mournful musings, were well calculated to weaken and dishearten the laborers. Hence, about a month after the work was begun, the prophet found it was necessary to counteract this discouraging feeling, and show the people wherein the true glory of this temple was to consist. Hence he comes forward to meet this feeling, often silently entertained where it was not openly expressed, and, as in the first prophecy, he begins by announcing to them their thoughts and words, which he meant to correct.

V. 4, 5. “And now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jozedek, the high priest, and be strong all ye people of the land, saith Jehovah, and work; for I

and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work : for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts :

nanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not.

5 According to the word that I cove-

am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts. (*This is*) the word that I covenanted with you in your coming forth out of Egypt, and my Spirit remains among you ; fear not."

These verses contain the call to persevering energy in working for God, and the reasons for it : (1) the covenant that God had made with them, in the past, and (2) the abiding of His Spirit with them in the present. As this covenant had never been repealed, to despair of God's blessing when obeying his command, was to give God the lie. And as this Spirit was the source of all strength, its continued abiding among them was a certain pledge of success. V. 5 presents some grammatical difficulty in determining the exact construction of "the word." The most probable opinion is that כִּי here is used as designating the object of the verb covenant (Heb. *cūt.*), and that the whole verse is an expansion of the phrase, "I am with you." (See Nordheimer, § 676 ; § 831, 5, a.) "I am with you, for I promised to be with you at the exodus from Egypt, (Ex. 19 : 5, 6 ; 34 : 10, 11,) and that promise has never been broken, even in your times of adversity, for my Spirit is still with you." Cocceius finds in this verse, the Trinity ; the Father speaking of the Word and the Spirit ; but there is no reason for believing that "the word," here means anything more than the covenant formula by which God declared the Jews to be his own peculiar people.

6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts : will shake the heavens and the earth, Yet once, it is a little while, and I and the sea and the dry land ;

V. 6. "For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, it is yet only a little while, and I will be shaking the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land."

The first question, as to this verse, is the meaning of "yet only a little while." The difficulty has been caused by the translation of כִּי־אַחַד as "once," and the use of it in Heb. 12:26 ; "Now this word 'yet once more,' as if it referred to a single shaking, and laid stress on the fact that it was to be but *once*. That this is not the meaning of the passage in Hebrews, we will presently show, and that it is not the necessary force of the terms here, is also true. כִּי־אַחַד here qualifies "little," in a most natural and obvious manner. "It is yet *one* little," *i. e.* but a single brief space of time, or as we have rendered it "only a little," in which כִּי־אַחַד refers not to one act, as compared with previous acts, but to one brief period, as compared with many periods, or a protracted period of time. It, therefore, predicts not a single act that was soon to be done, but a series of acts that was soon to begin, *viz.*: the shakings of the nations. This, also, retains the normal significance of the participle מְרַעֵשׂ , which properly means not one shaking, but a continuance of shakings. (See Nordheimer, § 1033; 2, a: § 1034, 1, 3, a.)

But what are these shakings? They have generally been referred to the establishment of the New Testament dispensation, from the text in Hebrews. This

7 And I will shake all nations, and I will fill this house with glory, the Desire of all nations shall come: saith the LORD of hosts.

interpretation we cannot receive because, (1) the designation of the interval before their commencement as “yet only a little while,” leads us to look for a nearer future than five hundred years; (2) the force of the Hiphil participle here is properly to denote a continuance of shakings for an indefinite time; (3) the same phrase in v. 22, 23 obviously refers to something outside of the Messianic kingdom, and not inside of it, as we shall there see; (4) the usual meaning of this symbolical act is that of a visitation of vengeance on the enemies of God, and not an unfolding of his dispensations of mercy (see Isa. 13 : 13 ; Ps. 60 : 4, &c., &c.); and (5) the future establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom would not be as directly comforting to them as the nearer and more closely connected event to which the prophet alluded. This event was a speedy shaking of the social and political systems that were around and above them, before and beneath which they were in such dread as to hesitate about going forward in their work. That this fact would be an encouragement to them is obvious. They trembled before the consolidated power of Persia, and the craft of Samaria that might bring that power upon them again in restraint, if not in vengeance. The prophet assures them that they need not tremble, for in a little time, this stupendous fabric would totter, and others be thrown up in its place. These, also, would tremble before new convulsions, and

be shaken down in the mighty birth-throes of the future. Persia would fall before Greece ; the four Alexandrian dynasties fall before each other and before Rome ; Rome herself before other powers ; and thus the scaffoldings of the spiritual temple would be cast down as soon as their purposes were accomplished. Now, as these powers were so soon to be prostrated, the people of God need not fear before their enemies, that were so soon to fall before them. This lays bare to us, then, the key to all history. God will allow men to rear the loftiest fabrics, as individuals and as nations, but he will shake them down, that they may then seek for some immovable basis on which to rest.

This is the meaning of Heb. 12 : 26. The writer had been exhorting them to listen to the voice of Christ. This he enforces by comparing the fate of those who refused to obey under the Old Testament with that of the disobedient under the New. Then (at the establishment of the Sinaitic dispensation) only the earth was shaken to introduce it, but now heaven and earth, all things, are to be shaken. Everything that rests not on the rock, Christ Jesus, shall be overturned and swept away. This, he adds (v. 27), is the meaning of this prophecy, "yet once more," &c. It signifies the removal of these shaken things, as mere created things, in order that men may be induced to run to the uncreated and immovable foundation that rests on a rock. And this it becomes them to do speedily, for our God is a consuming fire, and will destroy all that is not found

buildded on this immovable foundation. Hence this passage is in exact harmony with the one before us. They both declare that God will unsettle and shake every earthly thing, private and public, that rests not on Himself, and is not identified with his kingdom on earth. Now, as the temple was the seat of this earthly kingdom of God, in spite of all its outward meanness, it would stand unharmed, when all these proud dynasties had been swept away, and hence those engaged in its erection need not falter in their work. The force, then, of this declaration, for the purposes of the prophet, is very obvious, and confirms it as the true interpretation.

V. 7. "And I am about to shake all the nations, and the beauty of all the nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts."

This verse declares the result of the shaking of the nations, and thus indicates the reason for doing it. The phrase *הַקָּדֶשׁ כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם* is rendered in our version "the desire of all nations," and is referred usually to Christ. This translation has been caused by that of the Vulgate, which renders it *desideratus cunctis gentibus*, and has become so canonized, in the language of the Church, that it will not be laid aside without some repugnance. But there are very serious objections to it: (1) *הַקָּדֶשׁ* does not mean the thing desired, so much as the quality making it desirable, *i. e.* beauty. (2) The verb "come" is plural here, and can only be properly construed with a noun in the singular, when it is a noun of multitude. If *הַקָּדֶשׁ* refers to the person of the Messiah, this con-

struction becomes inexplicable. (3) Christ, in point of fact, is not the desire of all nations, but rather their aversion. He is "a root out of a dry ground," having "no beauty that we should desire him," (Isa. 53 : 2.) Nor is it true that he was expected by all nations, even if the word could bear the meaning of expectation, which is not the fact. (4) The next verse will not cohere with this one, if we refer it to the person of Christ. If this verse predicts the coming of the riches and glory of the nations to the church, the fact that all these belong to God, as stated in v. 8, is an obvious reason for this prediction, and for expecting its fulfilment. But if this is a prediction of the coming of Christ, the next verse seems to have no relation to it. (5) The LXX, and the older versions, know nothing of this interpretation. The LXX renders it "the choice things of all nations," and the Syriac, "every most desirable thing of all nations," with which agree Calvin, Kimchi, Drusus, Vitranga and others. Hence we take the phrase as referring to the good things of the nations, all that was excellent among them, with especial reference to their wealth, and as predicting the same thing that is predicted in Isa. 60 : 5, (marg. trans.) "the wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee ;" also, v. 11 ; 61 : 6, &c. In these passages, as in this verse, it is predicted that the heathen would come with all their choicest gifts to the theocracy, or visible kingdom of God, of which the temple was then the seat. This prediction was not fulfilled until they were brought into that visible king-

dom, but since that time they have been bringing their gifts continually. It is the gifts, the gold and the toil of Gentiles, that are now advancing that kingdom of God, which, although now extended far beyond Jerusalem, yet at the time of this prophecy had its visible seat and symbol in the temple. Hence, the whole history of Christianity is but one magnificent fulfilment of this prophecy. The temple is here identified with the theocracy, as its visible symbol, and the future glory of the one linked with the present existence of the other. Hence the phrase, "I will fill this house with glory," is to be explained in connection with the preceding clause. The glory was not the coming of Christ to that temple simply, but the coming of the "beauty of the heathen," the conversion of the Gentiles to the kingdom of God, with the necessary results of that conversion. The temple is considered, not as a mere building, but as the visible seat of the kingdom of God in its second great form, which was to be that of the Messiah. God declares that to this new form of the kingdom he will bring the best of all nations, and will give it a glory such as never belonged to the gorgeous ritual that was kept up in the temple of Solomon. This thought is beautifully elaborated by Paul in 2 Cor. 3 : 6—18, which is almost a comment on this passage. To confine these predictions to the mere walls of the temple, is to cling to the mere letter, and overlook the spirit. The temple was only valuable as the seat of God's kingdom on earth, and the new temple as the place from which the new

8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

form of that kingdom should go forth on its glorious mission of conquest. Hence it was the highest encouragement that could be given them to labor on these walls, that thus they were laboring in the advancement of the kingdom of the Messiah, which one day would gather in all the choicest things of the nations of the earth. This passage, therefore, is precisely similar to such passages as Zech. 7:9—17; 8:9, 20, 22, &c., where the temple is taken in like manner as the symbol of God's kingdom on earth, just as Christ, looking at it from another point, regarded it as a symbol of his body, when he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again."

Whilst, therefore, we cannot refer this verse to the person of the Messiah, we do not reject its Messianic reference. It refers to Christ in a far wider and richer sense than the mere literal appearance of his person in the literal temple. To confine it to these literalities is to cling to the letter, and neglect the spirit. Hence, we adopt the conclusion of Calvin, "the more simple meaning is that which I first stated—that the nations would come, bringing with them all their riches, that they might offer themselves and all their possessions as a sacrifice to God." He mentions the interpretation that confines the prediction to the person of Christ, and prefers the other, as simpler and really more deeply significant.

V. 8. "Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold, saith Jehovah of hosts."

As gold and silver were to the Jews, with their Old

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

Testament forms of thought, the representations of God's blessing, God promised to bestow them upon this temple when the beauty of the heathen was brought in. This was simply a symbolical promise to bless his visible kingdom with the choicest things, because those things were his. It is therefore a reason for expecting them in future, and not a reason for withholding them in the present, as it is generally taken. They were, however, not the mere metals, but all the most precious things, the gold, silver, and precious stones of which Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 3 : 12.

V. 9. "Great shall be the glory of this latter house above the former (*house*,) saith Jehovah of hosts ; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts."

The glory referred to in this verse was explained above under v. 7. The pre-eminent glory of the second temple was, that it was to be the starting point for the New Testament form of the kingdom of God. The personal appearance of Christ was a part of that glory, but only a part, for it stretches over the entire unfolding of his glorious kingdom. "In this place will I give peace," is that promise of peace connected with the Messiah's kingdom which is elsewhere proclaimed by the prophets. (See Isa. 9 : 7 ; 66 : 12 ; Ps. 72 : 17 ; Luke 2 : 14, &c.) The seminal germ of this peace, is the peace that exists in every believing heart, being justified by faith ; and when all hearts on earth are thus

justified, there will be peace on earth and good will to men. The beginning of this blessed peace was from Jerusalem, and from that kingdom of God whose visible seat and symbol was the temple. For a beautiful unfolding of the greater glory of this latter form of the kingdom of God, see Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Men are prone to be deluded by externals, and to suppose that the absence of outward splendor is indicative of the absence of God's blessing, forgetting that God often chooses the weak things of the earth to confound the mighty, that no flesh may glory in his presence, (v. 3.)

(2.) The presence of God with his people is sufficient ground for encouragement to work in his service, whatever be the external difficulties, and sufficient comfort in distress how great soever be the calamity, (v. 4.)

(3.) The covenant of God, and the Spirit of God, are the great grounds of hope to his people, in engaging in his service, and the promises made to the fathers may be plead by the children, (v. 5.)

(4.) The kingdoms of the world are but the scaffold-
ing for God's spiritual temple, to be thrown down when their purpose is accomplished, (v. 6.)

(5.) The uncertainty and transitoriness of all that is earthly, should lead men to seek repose in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, (v. 7.)

(6.) The various changes of life in both individuals

and nations, are designed to lead them to bring their choicest offerings and dedicate them to God, (v. 7.)

(7.) The glory of the New Testament dispensation is the conversion of the Heathen, (v. 7.)

(8.) The comparative poverty of the Church is not because God cannot bestow riches upon her, but because there are better blessings than wealth, that are often incompatible with its possession, (v. 8.)

(9.) The New Testament in all its outward lowliness has a glory in its possession of a completed salvation through the atoning work of a crucified Saviour, far above all the outward magnificence of the Mosaic dispensation, (v. 9.)

(10.) The kingdom of Christ makes peace between God and man, and in its ultimate results will make peace between man and man, and destroy all that produces discord and confusion, war and bloodshed on the earth, (v. 9.)

PROPHECY III.—CHAPTER II : 10—19.

Instruction and Encouragement.

ANALYSIS.

I. The date of the prophecy, (v. 10.)

II. An appeal to the priests, as the authorized expounders of the law, to pronounce upon two general principles, embodied in particular examples.

(1.) A sanctified garment could not confer sanctity on an un-sanctified thing by contact with it, (v. 11, 12.) (2.) A polluted thing, however, could confer its pollution by such contact, (v. 13.) In other words, a sanctified thing cannot confer purity on a pol-

10 ¶ In the four and twentieth *day* Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, of the ninth *month*, in the second year saying, of Darius, came the word of the LORD 12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt by Haggai the prophet, saying, of his garment, and with his skirt do

11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or

luted thing, whilst the polluted thing could defile that which was sanctified.

III. The application of these principles to the people. They, with unsanctified hands, because, hands that neglected the temple, had offered sacrifices to God, thinking that the sacrifice would sanctify them, which it could not by case 1st, whilst, by case 2d, they polluted the sacrifice, so as to make it powerless to avert the wrath of God, (v. 14.)

IV. But, as their conduct was now changed, and they had returned to obedience, their pollution had ceased, and from the very time that the work was begun God would bless them ; a fact that they might rely upon, even though there was then no visible sign of it, owing to the season of the year ; for, if they were faithful to God, he would be faithful to them, (v. 15—19.)

V. 10, 11. “ In the twenty-fourth (*day*) of the ninth (*month*.) in the second year of Darius, was the word of Jehovah in the hand of Haggai the prophet, saying, thus saith Jehovah of hosts, ask I pray you the priests concerning the law, saying.”

THIS prophecy was nearly two months after the preceding one, being the month Chisleu, or the moon of November, December. The priests were the authorized expounders of the law, (Lev. 10 : 11 ; Ezek. 44 : 23.)

The error of the Jews always had been, ascribing an inherent efficacy to ordinances, like the *opus operatum* doctrine of Popery. They thought that the sacrifices they offered to God ought to have protected them before, and as they did not, they feared lest, even if they continued to work on the temple, they might have no efficacy now. The prophet designed to correct this

oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is*

error, and, by showing the true reason for the failure of these ordinances to accomplish what their performers wished heretofore, to enable them to guard against such a failure hereafter.

V. 12. "If a man carry holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and touch with his skirt bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food, shall it be holy? And the priest answered and said, 'No.'"

"Holy flesh," was the flesh of a sacrifice. This answer was correct, for although the garment was made holy by the offering, it had no power to transmit that sacredness any further. The principle is, that a holy ordinance or form, (holy, because it envelops divine things, as a garment wraps the flesh of a sacrifice,) cannot hallow an unsanctified person or thing, by any inherent or *opus operatum* efficacy of its own.

V. 13. "And Haggai said, if one polluted by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be (*thereby*) polluted? And the priests answered and said, 'It shall be polluted.'"

This answer also was correct, (see Num. 19 : 22.) In other words, a polluted person could confer his pollution on a holy thing, while a holy thing could not transmit its sacredness to a polluted person. Some translate פִּגְמוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ "polluted in soul," but improperly, for the pollution was of the body, not of the soul, being ceremonial, and פִּגְמוֹת, even without the preposition, means a corpse, (Lev. 22 : 4.)

every work of their hands: and that which they offer there *is* unclean. a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD:

15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before 16 Since those *days* were, when *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*,

V. 14. "And Haggai answered and said, thus is this nation, and thus is this people before me, saith Jehovah, and thus is every work of their hands, and whatever they offer there is polluted."

The prophet now applies these principles. The people thought that their outward observances ought so to have hallowed them as to secure the protection and blessing of God. He replies, no; for by case 1st, they have no such power; for, on the contrary, by case 2d, you polluted them, having become unholy by your neglect of the theocratic work of building the temple. Hence God cursed you because of your disobedience, in spite of your offerings "*there*," (i. e. at the altar,) and he will do so again, if that disobedience is renewed.

V. 15. "And now I pray you, lay it to heart, from this day and backward, before the placing of stone upon stone, on the temple of Jehovah."

The Hebrew idiom, "place your heart," is very nearly analogous with our idiom, "lay to heart," both meaning an earnest, careful pondering. The meaning is, "call to mind your adverse condition before you began to obey the word of God, and look at the result of your neglect. You regarded them as mere blind misfortunes, or as proofs that God was indifferent to his people and his promise, (see Malachi,) whereas they prove the very contrary. God was simply punishing you for your sin."

V. 16. "From the times when one came to a pile of twenty

there were *but* ten : when *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty. with mildew and with hail in all the labors of your hands ; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith the LORD.

17 I smote you with blasting and 18 Consider now from this day and

(*measures*), and there were ten, (*or*) came to a wine-vat to draw out fifty (*measures from*) the press, and there were twenty.”

The disappointments of the husbandmen at that time are illustrated by the two staples of the land, wheat and wine, in both of which the ultimate yield was only about half as much as might have been expected. The word “press,” פִּירָה seems not to be in place here. We would have expected “vat” from the word “draw out.” Hence some have taken it to mean a measure. The LXX render it “measure,” and the Vulgate “a flagon.” The word only occurs in one other passage, (Isa. 63 : 3,) where it evidently means a wine-press, as its etymology indicates, פִּיר, meaning to break or crush. Hence, as we have no evidence of any such measure as a purah among the Hebrews, we have retained its ascertained meaning in the other passage. The vat was probably considered only a part of the press.

V. 17. “I smote you with blight, and with withering, and with hail, even all the works of your hands, and ye (*turned*) not to me, saith Jehovah.”

“Blight” here means the blasting caused by a hot wind from the desert, and “withering” the yellow appearance that sickly grain presents, when smitten with disease. These external afflictions were not considered as calls of God to repentance, until they were explained by the prophet.

upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month, even* from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider *it*.

19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea,

as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless *you*.

V. 18, 19. "Lay it to heart, I pray you, from this day and upwards, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth (*month*) to the day in which the temple was founded, lay it to heart: Is the crop yet in the granary? The vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, and the olive have not yet borne; from this day I will bless."

The interval is here specified which he wishes them to study, viz.: from that day, backward to the time when the first work was done in the second year of Cyrus, Ezra 3:10, &c. We have rendered לְיָמָיו "to," (see Ex. 9:18; Deut. 4:32; 2 Sam. 7:11.)— לְיָמָיו , which usually means seed, also means the crop from which the seed is taken. (See Job 39:12, (15); Isa. 23:3.) The meaning of this allusion is, there is no present sign of the bestowal of these blessings, it being the month of October or November; the harvest had not yet been gathered in, the fruit-trees had not yet borne, so that this prediction could not be founded on any appearances of abundance. Indeed, appearances were all in the other direction. Yet in spite of all this, God would bless them in their obedience, and they might trust him.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Ritualism is the natural religion of the unsanctified heart, and the same tendencies to it that have created Popery in the New Testament ages, existed also in the Old, (v. 11—13.)

(2.) Pollution is much more readily given and taken than purity. One drop of filth will defile a vase of water, many drops of water will not purify a vase of filth. “Evil communications corrupt good manners,” (v. 11—13.)

(3.) No tithings of mint, anise, and cummin, will compensate for neglecting the weightier matters of the law. Obedience is better than sacrifice. A pure hand is necessary to a pure offering, (v. 14.)

(4.) Men are prone to assign any other cause for their sufferings than their sins, yet this is usually the true cause, (v. 15.)

(5.) Disappointment of our hopes on earth should make us lift our eyes to heaven to learn the reason, (v. 16.)

(6.) Affliction will harden the heart if it is not referred to God as its author, (v. 17.)

(7.) Pondering the past is often the best way of providing for the future, (v. 18.)

(8.) We may and ought to trust God's promise to bless us, even though we may see no visible appearance of its fulfilment. “The vision will surely come and not tarry,” (v. 19:)

20 ¶ And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month, saying, 21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth ;

PROPHECY IV.—CHAPTER II : 20—28.

The Safety of God's People amidst the Coming Commotions.

ANALYSIS.

- I. The date, the same day with the preceding prophecy, (v. 20.)
- II. Zerubbabel addressed as the representative of the theocratic people, or the visible kingdom of God, (v. 21.)
- III. Fearful political convulsions, with bloodshed, (v. 22.)
- IV. The safety of the chosen people who were represented by Zerubbabel, (v. 23.)

V. 20, 21. "And the word of Jehovah was again to Haggai, in the twenty-fourth (*day*) of the ninth (*month*), saying : Speak to Zerubbabel, prefect of Judah, saying, I (*will soon be*) shaking the heavens and the earth."

DURING the interval that had elapsed since the prediction of great political convulsions, in v. 6—9, some fears had arisen in the minds of the people. They feared that so feeble a nation as Israel would be crushed amid the dashing and grinding of these floating and agitated masses against each other. They might think that religion would still exist, as it had, to some extent, in Babylon, but they feared that all their political and national integrity would be destroyed. It was to assure them that these fears were groundless that the prophet

22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen ; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them ; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

now comes forward. Hence he addresses Zerubbabel alone, and not Joshua, he being the civil leader, and, therefore, the representative of the people in their civil capacity. Some consider Zerubbabel here as a type of Christ, but this is only true in a secondary sense. The theocratic people were, in a certain sense, a type of Christ, and Zerubbabel was the representative of that people. To suppose it merely a prediction of the Messiah, under the name of Zerubbabel, would be greatly to narrow its significance and cut off the link of consolation that was necessary to adapt it to the time when it was uttered. It involves Christ, but in a far wider sense than simply his person.

V. 22. "And I will overturn the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the power of the kingdoms of the heathen, and I will overturn the chariot and the riders in it, and then shall fall the horses and their riders, a man by the sword of his brother."

This verse explains, in detail, these predicted shakings, showing that they mean violent, and even bloody overturnings of the political organizations of the earth. The chariot is the war chariot. What these convulsions were, we have shown in considering v. 6—9, which see.

V. 23. "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, I will take thee, Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, my servant, saith Jehovah, I will make thee as a signet, for thee have I chosen, saith Jehovah of hosts."

"In that day" is in the time of these convulsions. A

23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet : for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

signet ring was guarded with special care by the ancients, for it was the legal representative of the man himself. The prediction was, that amidst all these shakings, the theocratic people would be safe, because they were chosen by God to evolve his great purposes of mercy to the world. Such was the fact, until Shiloh came. And even since, they have been kept intact among all the changes, as if reserved for some great destiny in the future, when they shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles. Hence, this prophecy was an assurance to the Jewish people, that they need not dread the extinction of their national life, amidst the storms that were soon to rage over the earth. Like the mysterious bush of Horeb, the theocratic people would live on amidst the most consuming agencies, unconsumed and unconsumable, for they would be guarded by the eternal purpose of God.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Great political convulsions may be expected in the future, as well as the past, because the same reason exists for them ; the ungodly nature of existing political forms, (v. 21.)

(2.) Wars, revolutions and tumults of nations, are all working out God's designs of mercy to the world, by means of his Church, (v. 22.)

(3.) Amidst all the convulsions of human history, the

people of God are safe, the gates of hell can never prevail against the Church. The past in this respect is prophet of the future, (v. 23.)

(4.) The best protection for any nation, the surest guarantee for its political existence, is a living, working Church in its midst ; for as long as the stream of national life carries the vessel in which Christ is carried, that stream shall flow on in safety. Sodom shall stand as long as a righteous Lot is found in it, (v. 23.)

The general drift of this prophecy, and the particular mission of the prophet, may now be clearly perceived. His specific work was to urge the rebuilding of the temple. This work was important, because the temple was the seat of the Theocracy, and the Theocracy was the existing form of the great work of redemption. To erect that, and thus prepare for the reinauguration of the temple-worship, was the great work of the Church of the Restoration. To urge them to this work, the prophet tears away their subterfuges and excuses ; shows them how they had already suffered by its neglect ; develops to them the real greatness of the work, in spite of its outward littleness, as a necessary link in the great purposes of Redemption ; and guarantees the safety of the Theocratic people amidst all the convulsions that were to come on the earth. All these predictions have been fulfilled to the letter, proving that Haggai was what he claimed to be, a true prophet of Jehovah.

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Z E C H A R I A H .

Z E C H A R I A H.

TRANSLATION.

PART I.—INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I : 1—6.

- 1: 1. In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, the Prophet, saying,
 2. 'Angry hath Jehovah been toward your fathers with (*great*) anger.
 3. Therefore say thou unto them,
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
Return ye unto me,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts,
And I will return unto you,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
 4. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried saying,
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts ;
Return, I beseech you, from your evil ways,
And from your evil doings ;
But they did not hear, they did not attend unto me,
Saith Jehovah.
 5. Your fathers, where are they ?
And the prophets, do they live forever ?
 6. But my words, and my statutes,
Which I commanded my servants, the prophets,
Have they not overtaken your fathers ?
And they returned and said ; (*after this,*)
Like as Jehovah of Hosts hath thought to do unto us,
According to our ways and according to our doings,
So hath he done unto us.'

PART II.—THE VISIONS.

CHAPTER I: 7—CHAPTER 6.

VISION I. Ch. 1: 7—17.—*The man among the myrtles.*

- 1: 7. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Sebat, (*February,*) in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying: I saw that night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtles in the valley, and behind him there were red, bay and white horses. And I said, 'My lord, what are these?' And the angel that talked with me, said unto me, 'I will show thee what they are.' And the man that stood among the myrtles answered and said, 'These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk throughout the earth.' And they answered the angel of Jehovah that stood among the myrtles, 'We have walked throughout the earth, and behold all the earth dwells and is at rest.' Then the angel of Jehovah answered and said, 'Oh Jehovah of Hosts! How long wilt thou not pity Jerusalem And the cities of Judah, Against which thou hast been angry these seventy years?'
13. And Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me good words and consoling words.
14. And the angel that talked with me said unto me, Cry, saying, 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with great jealousy.
15. And I am inflamed with great anger against the secure nations, For I was but a little angry, (*against Jerusalem and Zion,*) But they aggravated the affliction.
16. Therefore thus saith Jehovah, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, My house (*temple*) shall be built in it, Saith Jehovah of Hosts. And a (*measuring*) line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

17. Cry also, saying,
 Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 My cities shall also be extended by prosperity,
 And Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion,
 And shall yet choose Jerusalem.'

VISION II. Ch. 1: 18—21.—*The four horns and four artificers.*

18. And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.
 19. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, 'What are these?' And he answered me, 'These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.'
 20, 21. And Jehovah showed me four artificers. And I said, 'What do these come to do?' And he replied, saying, 'These are the horns that have scattered Judah, so that a man could not lift up his head; but those are come to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations which lifted up the horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.'

VISION III. Ch. 2.—*The man with the measuring line.*

- 2 : 1. And I lifted up mine eyes, and looked and behold a man,
 2. and in his hand a measuring line. And I said, 'Where art thou going?' And he said unto me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth, and what is its length.'
 3. And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth,
 4. and another angel came out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man (*Zechariah*), saying, Jerusalem shall inhabit villages,
 For the multitude of men and cattle in her midst.
 5. And I will be to her, saith Jehovah,
 A wall of fire around,
 And for a glory will I be in her midst.
 6. Ho! Ho! fly then from the north country, saith Jehovah,
 For as the four winds of heaven have I scattered you, saith Jehovah.
 7. O Zion! deliver thyself,
 Thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.
 8. For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts:
 After the glory hath he sent me
 To the nations that spoiled you,

- For he that toucheth you,
Toucheth the pupil of his own eye.
9. For, behold, I will shake my hand (*first*) over them,
And they shall be a spoil to their own servants;
And ye shall acknowledge
That Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me.
10. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion,
For behold I come;
And I will dwell in thy midst,
Saith Jehovah.
11. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day,
And shall be to me for a people,
And I will dwell in the midst of them,
And thou shalt know
That Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.
12. And Jehovah shall inherit Judah,
His portion, in a land of holiness,
And shall choose again Jerusalem.
13. Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah,
Because he is arisen from the habitation of his holiness.'

VISION IV. Ch. 3.—*Joshua the High Priest before the angel of JEHOVAH.*

- 3 : 1. And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before
the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right
2. hand to accuse him. And Jehovah said to Satan,
'Jehovah rebuke thee O Satan!
Jehovah rebuke thee! he that chooses Jerusalem!
Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?'
3. And Joshua was clothed in filthy garments and stood be-
4. fore the angel. And he answered and spake to those who
stood before him, saying, 'Take the filthy garments away
from him;' and he said to him (*Joshua*), 'Behold I take
away from thee thy sins, and they shall clothe thee with
5. festal garments.' Then I said, 'Let them place a clean
tiara upon his head;' and they placed a clean tiara upon
his head, and they put garments upon him, and the angel
6. of Jehovah was (*still*) standing (*there*). And the angel
of Jehovah answered to Joshua, saying,
7. 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
If thou wilt walk in my ways,

And if thou wilt keep my laws,
 Thou shalt judge my house,
 And also keep my courts,
 And I will give thee guides among these that are standing
 here.

8. Hear, I beseech thee O Joshua, the high priest,
 Thou and thy colleagues who sit before thee,
 For men of omen are they;
 For behold I bring my servant, BRANCH.
9. For behold the stone which I have laid before Joshua,
 Upon this one stone shall there be seven eyes,
 Behold, carving I will carve it,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 And I will remove the sin of the land in one day.
10. In that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 Ye shall call every man to his neighbor,
 Under the vine and under the fig-tree.'

VISION V. Ch. 4.—*The golden candlestick, and the two olive trees.*

- 4 : 1. And the angel who spoke with me returned, and awaked me
2. as a man who is awaked from his sleep; and he said unto me, what seest thou? And I said, I have looked and behold a candlestick all of gold, and a bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps upon it, and seven tubes to each
3. lamp on the top of it: and two olive trees, one on the right
4. hand of the bowl, and one on the left hand. And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, 'What are these, my lord?'
5. Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, 'Dost thou not know what these are?' And I said, no, my lord.
6. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying,
 Not by might, and not by power,
 But by my spirit,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
7. Who art thou, thou great mountain before Zerubbabel?
 Be a plain! He shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings,
 Grace! Grace unto it.

8. And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying,
 9. The hands of Zerubbabel have founded this house,
 And his hands shall finish it,
 And thou shalt know
 That Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto you.
10. For who will despise the day of small things?
 For they shall rejoice and see
 The plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel,
 These seven eyes of Jehovah,
 They run to and fro in the whole earth.
11. And I answered and said unto him, What are these two
 olive trees on the right hand of the candlestick, and on
 12. the left? And I answered again and said unto him,
 What are the two olive branches which through the tubes
 13. of gold pour out the golden oil from themselves? And
 he answered unto me, saying, Knowest thou not what
 14. these are? And I said, no, my lord. These are the two
 sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

VISION VI. Ch. 5: 1—14.—*The flying roll.*

- 5 : 1. Then I turned and raised my eyes, and looked, and behold
 2. a flying roll. And he (*the interpreting angel*) said unto me,
 'What dost thou see?' And I said, 'I see a flying roll,
 3. in length twenty cubits, and in breadth ten cubits.' Then
 he said unto me,
 'This is the curse that goes forth before the face of the
 whole land,
 For every thief shall be cut off according to this side,
 And every perjurer shall be cut off according to that side.
4. I have caused it to go forth, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 And it shall go into the house of the thief,
 And into the house of him that swears falsely by my name,
 And it shall dwell in the midst of it,
 And it consumes their house, and its wood and its stone.'

VISION VII. Ch. 5: 5—11.—*The woman in the Ephah.*

5. Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said
 unto me, 'Lift up, I pray thee, thine eyes, and see

6. what this is that goeth forth.' And I said, 'What is this?' And he said, 'This is the ephah which goeth forth,' and he said, 'This is their appearance in all the land.' And behold a talent of lead was lifted up. But this is a woman that is sitting in the midst of the ephah.
7. And he said, 'This is wickedness.' And he thrust her down into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the stone of lead upon its mouth. And I raised my eyes and saw, and behold two women came out, and the wind in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they raised the ephah between earth and heaven.
8. And I said to the angel that talked with me, 'Where do these carry the ephah?' And he said unto me, 'To build for it a house in the land of Shinar: and it (*the house*) shall be settled and fixed on its own base.'

VISION VIII. Ch. 6: 1—8.—*The four chariots.*

- 6 : 1. And I turned and lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold four chariots came out from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and the fourth chariot piebald and fleet (*or strong*) horses. And I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, 'What are these, my lord?' And the angel answered and said unto me, 'These are the four winds of the heavens, going forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth. That which has the black horses goes forth to the north country, and the white go forth following them; and the piebald go forth to the south country.' And the fleet went forth, and they desired to go that they might walk through the earth; and he said, 'Go walk through the earth,' and they walked through the earth. And he cried to me, and spake to me saying, 'Behold these that go forth into the land of the north have quieted my spirit in the land of the north.'

VISION IX. Ch. 6 : 9—15.—*The crown on Joshua's head.*

- 9, 10. And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying : 'Take of (*them of*) the captivity of Heldai, of Tobijah, of Jedaiah,

- and go thou in that day, and go to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who (*all*) have come from Babylon:
11. and take thou silver and gold, and make crowns, and place them on the head of Joshua the son of Jozedek,
12. the high priest. And speak to him saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts : Behold a man whose name is BRANCH, From his place shall he grow up, And he shall build the temple of Jehovah.
13. And he shall build the temple of Jehovah, And he shall bear majesty, And he sits and reigns upon his throne, And is a priest upon his throne, And the council of peace shall be between them both.'
14. And the crowns shall be to Helem and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial
15. in the temple of Jehovah. And the far-off shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah, and ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto you, and it shall be thus (*to you*) if ye will listen to the voice of Jehovah your God.

PART III.—DIDACTIC.

CHAPTERS 7, 8.

The Query.

- 7 : 1. And it was so in the fourth year of Darius the king, that the word of Jehovah was to Zechariah in the fourth (day)
2. of the ninth month, in Chisleu. And Bethel sent Sherezzer and Regem Melech, and their men, to pray before the face of Jehovah ; and to speak to the priests which were in the house of Jehovah of Hosts, and to the prophets, saying : ' Ought I to weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done for so many years ?'

The Reproof.

4. Then was the word of Jehovah of Hosts to me, saying :
5. 'Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests,
saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and
seventh month, these seventy years, did ye fast unto me ?
6. unto me ? And when ye ate, and when ye drank, was it
not to yourselves that ye were eating, and to yourselves
that ye were drinking ?
7. Are not these the words which Jehovah eried by the hand
of the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited
and in peace, and also her cities round about her, and
when the south and the plain was inhabited.'
8. And the word of Jehovah was to Zechariah saying :
9. 'Thus spake Jehovah of Hosts saying :
Judge the judgment of truth,
And work kindness and compassion,
Every man toward his neighbor :
10. And the widow, and the fatherless,
The stranger and the poor, do not oppress,
And do not devise evil in your hearts,
Any man against his neighbor.
11. But they (*your fathers*) refused to hear,
And presented a refractory shoulder (*one that refused to wear
the yoke*),
And made heavy their ears against hearing :
12. And their heart they made an adamant
Against hearing the law,
And the words which Jehovah of Hosts did send in his
spirit
By the hand of the former prophets,
Wherefore there was great wrath from Jehovah of Hosts.
13. And it came to pass,
That as He cried and they did not hear,
So they cry and I hear not,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
14. And I scattered them to all nations whom they knew not,
And the land was desolate after them,
So that none went out or came in,
And they made the land of desire to be desolate.'

Promises.

- S : 1. 'And the word of Jehovah of Hosts was to me saying,
2. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
I was jealous toward Zion with great jealousy,
And with great fury was I jealous toward her.
3. Thus saith Jehovah, I have returned to Zion,
And I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,
And Jerusalem shall be called "city of the truth,"
And the mountain of Jehovah, "mountain of holiness."
4. 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
There shall yet sit old men and old women,
In the streets of Jerusalem,
And the man whose staff is in his hand for multitude of
days.
5. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls,
Playing in the streets of it.'
6. 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
If it is wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of this people
in these days,
Is it also wonderful in my eyes,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts ?'
7. 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
Behold, I am he saving my people,
From the land of the east, and from the land of the setting
sun.
8. And I will lead them, (*viz. from these lands to Jerusalem,*)
And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,
And they shall be my people,
And I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.'
9. 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
Strengthen your hands, ye that in these days hear these
words
By the mouth of the (*same*) prophets who (*were*) in that day,
When the house of Jehovah of Hosts was founded,
That the temple might be built.
10. For before these days there was no hire of a man,
And hire of a beast, there was also none.
And to him going out and coming in, (*the traveller,*)
There was no peace from the enemy,
And I stirred up all men, every man against his neighbor.

11. But now, not as in the former days, (*will*) I (*be*)
To the remnant of this people,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
12. For the seed shall be safe, (*Heb. of peace,*)
The vine shall give her fruit,
And the earth shall give her produce,
And the heavens shall give their dew,
And I will cause the remnant of this people
To inherit all these things.
13. And it shall be, that as ye have been a curse among the
nations,
Oh house of Judah, and house of Israel,
So I will save you, and ye shall be a blessing :
Fear not, (*therefore,*) strengthen your hands.'
14. ' For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
As I determined to punish you (*the house of Israel*)
When your fathers provoked me,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts,
And I repented not,
15. So, on the contrary, I have determined, in these days,
To do good to Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah,
Fear not.
16. These are the words which ye must do, (*obey,*)
Speak the truth, every man to his neighbor ;
Truth and the judgment of peace judge in your gates ;
17. Devise not evil in your hearts,
Each man against his neighbor,
And an oath of falsehood do not love,
For all these are the things which I hate,
Saith Jehovah.'

The Reply.

18. And the word of Jehovah of Hosts was to me, saying,
19. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
' The fast of the fourth (*month*), and the fast of the fifth,
And the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth,
Shall be to the house of Judah for joy and gladness,
And for festal observances,
Therefore love the truth and peace.'

Promises to the Church.

20. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
 'It shall yet be that peoples shall come,
 And the inhabitants of many cities.
21. And they shall go, the inhabitants of one (*city*) to another,
 Saying, 'Let us go to pray before Jehovah
 And to seek Jehovah of Hosts.'
 'I will go also.'
22. And they shall come, many peoples and many nations,
 To seek Jehovah of Hosts in Jerusalem,
 And to pray before Jehovah.
23. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,
 In those days (*it shall be*) that they shall seize (*viz.:*)
 Ten men from all the tongues of the nations,
 They shall seize the skirt of a man (*that is*) a Jew,
 Saying, 'We will go with you,
 For we have heard that God is with you.'

 PART IV.—PROPHETIC.

CHAPTERS 9—14.

I. *The Syrian Conquests of Alexander.*

Ch. 9 : 1—8.

1. *A Burden.*
 The word of Jehovah on the land of Hadrach,
 And Damascus shall be its rest,
 For to Jehovah is the sight of man,
 And all the tribes of Israel.
2. Also Hamath shall border on it,
 Tyre and Sidon because it is very wise.
3. And Tyre has built for herself a strong hold,
 And has heaped up silver as dust,
 And gold as the mire of the streets.
4. Behold the Lord will dispossess her,
 And will cast into the sea her bulwark,
 And she shall be consumed with fire.

5. Ashkelon shall see it and fear,
Gaza (*shall see it*) and tremble greatly,
And Ekron, for her reliance is disgraced,
And a King shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.
6. An alien shall dwell in Ashdod,
And I will destroy the pride of the Philistines.
7. And I will remove his blood from his mouth,
And his abominations from between his teeth,
And he that remains, even he, shall be for our God,
And he shall be as a prince in Judah,
And Ekron as the Jebusite.
8. And I will encamp around my house because of the army,
Because of the passer by, and because of the returner,
And the exactor shall no more pass through them,
For now I see with mine eyes.

II. *The lowly King Messiah.*

Ch. 9 : 9, 10.

9. Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion,
Shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem,
Behold ! thy King cometh unto thee,
Just, and endowed with salvation, is he,
Lowly and riding upon an ass,
And upon a foal, the son of she-asses.
10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem,
And the bow of war shall be cut off,
And he shall speak peace to the nations,
And his dominion (*be*) from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.

III. *The Maccabean Deliverance.*

Ch. 9 : 11—17.

11. Also thou—in the blood of thy covenant
I have sent forth thy prisoners,
From the pit, and there is no water in it.

12. Return to the strong hold, O prisoners of hope !
Even to-day (*am I*) declaring, I will render double to you.
13. For I have bent to me Judah,
The bow have I filled with Ephraim,
And I have raised up thy sons, O Zion !
Against thy sons, O Javan !
And have made thee as the sword of a mighty man.
14. And over them Jehovah will appear,
And his arrow goes forth like lightning,
And the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet,
And he goes forth in the storms of the south.
15. Jehovah of hosts will protect them,
And they eat, and they trample under foot the sling-stones,
And they drink, and make a noise as from wine,
And they are full as the altar-bowls,
And as the corners of the altar.
16. And Jehovah their God will save them in that day,
As a flock (*will he save*) his people,
For as gems of a diadem are they lifted up in his land.
17. For how great is his goodness !
And how great his beauty !
Corn makes the young men to grow,
And new wine the maidens.

IV. *Prayer and Promise.*

Ch. 10 : 1—5.

1. Ask of Jehovah rain,
In the time of the latter rain ;
Jehovah shall (*then*) cause lightnings,
And shall give abundant rain,
To every man grass in his field.
2. For the teraphim speak nothingness ;
And the soothsayers see falsehood ;
And the dreams speak vanity ;
They comfort falsely ;
Wherefore they wander as a flock,
They are troubled because there is no shepherd.
3. Against the shepherds my anger is kindled,
And the he-goats will I punish,

For Jehovah of Hosts visits his flock, the house of Judah,
And makes them like a caparisoned horse in war,

4. From him (*is*) the corner-stone, and from him the pin,
From him the bow of battle,
From him comes forth every ruler together.
5. And they shall be as heroes,
Trampling on the mire of the streets in war,
And they fight, for Jehovah is with them,
And the riders on horses are put to shame.

V. *The Restoration of the Jews.*

Ch. 10 : 6—12.

6. And I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph,
And I will again cause them to dwell,
For I have compassion upon them ;
And they shall be as though I had not cast them out,
For I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them.
7. And Ephraim shall be as a mighty man,
Their heart shall rejoice as (*with*) wine,
And their sons shall see and rejoice,
Their heart shall rejoice in Jehovah.
8. I will hiss to them and collect them,
For I have redeemed them,
And they shall be many as they were before.
9. And I will sow them among the peoples,
And in distant lands they shall remember me,
And with their children they shall live and return.
10. And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt,
And from Assyria will I gather them,
And to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them,
And there shall not be room to contain them.
11. And he passes through the sea, the affliction,
And he smites in the sea the waves,
And all the deeps of the river are put to shame,
And the pride of Assyria is overthrown,
And the rod of Egypt shall give way.

12. And I will strengthen them in Jehovah,
And in his name shall they walk,
Saith Jehovah.

VI. *The Mission of Messiah.*

CHAP. 11.

(1.) *The storm preceding the coming of Christ.*

Ch. 11 : 1—3.

1. Open, O Lebanon, thy gates,
And let the fire consume thy cedars.
2. Howl, O cypress, for the cedar falls,
For the lofty are laid waste,
Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan,
For the thick forest falls.
3. A voice of howling of the shepherds !
For their glory is laid waste :
A voice of roaring of the lions !
For the pride of Jordan is laid waste.

(2.) *Christ assuming the pastoral care of the Theocratic people.*

V. 4—14.

4. Thus saith Jehovah my God,
'Feed the flock of slaughter.
5. Whose buyers slaughter them,
And do not become guilty :
And whose sellers say,
Blessed be Jehovah, for I am enriched,
And their shepherds spare them not.
6. For I will no longer spare the dwellers in this land,
Saith Jehovah,
And behold ! I will give up each man
To the hand of his neighbor,
And to the hand of his king,
And they lay waste the land,
And I will not deliver out of their hand.'
7. So I fed the flock of slaughter,
In order that (*I might preserve*) the humble of the flock,

- And I took to myself two staves,
 The one I called Favor,
 The other I called Union,
 And I fed the flock.
8. And I destroyed three shepherds in one month,
 And my soul was grieved with them,
 And their soul abhorred me.
9. Then I said, I will not feed you,
 The dying, let them die,
 The cut off, let them be cut off,
 The remaining, let them consume each the flesh of the other.
10. And I took my staff Favor and brake it ;
 To abolish my covenant that I had made with all nations.
11. And it (*the covenant*) was abolished in that day,
 And thus they knew (*viz.*)
 The humble of the flock who clung to me,
 That this is the word of Jehovah.
12. Then I said to them,
 If it seem good in your eyes, give me my reward,
 And if not, withhold it.
 And they weighed my reward, thirty pieces of silver !
13. And Jehovah said to me,
 Cast it to the potter,
 This magnificent price at which I was valued of them,
 And I took the thirty pieces of silver,
 And I cast it down in the house of Jehovah,
 (*To be given thence*) to the potter.
14. And I broke my second staff Union,
 To destroy the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

(3.) *The curse of evil rulers after the rejection of Christ.*

Ch. 11 : 15—17.

15. And Jehovah said to me,
 ‘ Again, take to thee the implements of a foolish shepherd.
16. For behold ! I raise up a shepherd in the land.
 The perishing will he not visit,
 The straying will he not seek out,
 The wounded will he not heal,
 The feeble will he not nourish,

- And the flesh of the fat ones will he eat
 And their hoofs will he break off.
17. Wo to the worthless shepherd, forsaking the flock !
 A sword upon his arm !
 And upon his right eye !
 His arm shall surely be withered,
 And his right eye shall surely be blind.'

VII. *Future blessings to Judah.*

Ch. 12 : 1—9.

1. *A Burden.*
 'The word of Jehovah upon Israel,
 Saith Jehovah, who stretches the Heavens,
 And establishes the earth,
 And forms the spirit of man within him.
2. Behold ! I make Jerusalem a threshold of shaking
 To all nations round about,
 And also upon Judah shall it be,
 In the siege against Jerusalem.
3. And it shall be in that day,
 I will make Jerusalem a stone of burden to all the nations.
 All who lift it up shall surely gash themselves,
 And there shall be gathered against her all people of the
 earth.
4. In that day, saith Jehovah,
 I will smite every horse with affright,
 And his rider with madness,
 And upon the house of Judah will I open my eyes,
 And every horse of the nations will I smite with blindness.
5. And the princes of Judah say in their hearts,
 My strength (*is*) the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
 In Jehovah of Hosts, their God.
6. In that day I will make the princes of Judah
 As a pan of fire among faggots,
 And as a torch of fire in a sheaf,
 And they shall consume on the right hand and on the left
 All the nations round about,
 And Jerusalem shall yet sit in her own place in Jerusa-
 lem.

7. And Jehovah shall help the tents of Judah first,
That the glory of the house of David,
And the glory of the inhabitant of Jerusalem,
May not be magnified over Judah.
8. In that day Jehovah will protect the dweller in Jerusalem,
And the feeble among them in that day shall be as David,
And the house of David as God,
As the angel of Jehovah before them.
9. And it shall be in that day
I will seek to destroy all nations
Who come up against Jerusalem.'

VIII. *Future repentance and blessing to Jerusalem.*

Ch. 12 : 10—14.

10. And I pour out upon the house of David,
And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
A spirit of grace and of supplication,
And they look upon me, whom they pierced,
And they lament for him, as the lamenting of an only child,
And they mourn for him, as the mourning of a first-born.
11. And in that day the mourning shall be great in Jerusalem,
As the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the vale of Megiddo.
12. And the land mourns, family by 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,
13. The family of the house of Levi apart and their wives apart,
The family of the house of Shimei apart and their wives
apart,
14. All the remaining families,
Family by family apart, and their wives apart.

IX. *Fruits of penitence.*

Ch. 13 : 1—6.

1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened,
To the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
For sin, and for uncleanness.

2. And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts,
I will cut off the names of the idols from the land,
And they shall not be remembered any more ;
And also the prophets, and the spirit of uncleanness
Will I remove from the land.
3. And it happens, if a man still prophesy,
His father and his mother who begat him say unto him,
'Thou shalt not live,
Because thou hast spoken falsehood in the name of Jehovah,'
And his father and his mother who begat him,
Pierce him through in his prophesying.
4. And it happens in that day, the prophets are ashamed
From their vision in their prophesying,
And they shall no longer put on the mantle of hair to deceive.
5. And he says, 'I am not a prophet, I am a husbandman,
For a man has sold me from the time of my youth.'
6. And he (*the former*) says unto him,
'What then are these wounds between thy hands ?'
And he replies : '*(they are the wounds)*
Which I received in the house of my lovers.'

X. *The sword awaking against the shepherd.*

Ch. 13 : 7—9.

7. O sword ! awake against my shepherd,
Against a man, my nearest kin,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
Smite the shepherd,
And the sheep shall be scattered,
And I will bring back my hand upon the little ones.
8. And it shall be in all the land, saith Jehovah,
Two portions shall be cut off and die,
And the third portion shall remain in it.
9. And I bring the third part into the fire
And purify them as silver is purified,
And try them as gold is tried.
They shall call upon my name,
And I will hear them,
I will say they are my people,
And they shall say, Jehovah is my God.

XI. *Future glories of the Church.*

CHAP. 14.

1. Behold a day comes to Jehovah.
And thy spoil is divided in the midst of thee.
2. And I collect all the nations against Jerusalem to battle,
And the city is taken, and the houses plundered,
And the women dishonored,
And half the city go forth into captivity,
And the remnant of the city shall not be cut off from the
city.
3. And Jehovah goes forth and fights against those heathen,
As in the day of his conflict, in the day of battle.
4. And his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives,
Which is before Jerusalem on the east,
And the mount of Olives is split in the midst
From east to west, a great valley
And half the mountain recedes to the north, and half to the
south.
5. And ye flee into my mountain valley,
For the mountain valley will extend to Azal,
And ye shall flee, as ye fled before the earthquake,
In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah,
And there comes Jehovah my God, all holy ones with thee.
6. And it shall be in that day,
It shall not be light, precious things are obscured.
7. And it shall be one day, it shall be known to Jehovah,
Not day, and not night,
And it shall be that in the evening time it shall be light.
8. And it shall be in that day,
Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem,
Their half to the eastern sea,
And their half to the western sea,
In summer and winter it shall be.
9. And Jehovah shall be king over the whole land,
In that day Jehovah shall be one, and his name one.
10. All the land shall be changed,
As the plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem,
And she shall be exalted and sit in her place,

- From the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate,
 To the gate of the corner,
 And from the tower of Hananeel to the king's wine presses.
11. And they dwell in her,
 And there shall be no more curse,
 And Jerusalem sits in security.
12. And this shall be the plague, with which Jehovah shall
 plague
 All nations which warred against Jerusalem,
 His flesh shall rot, and he standing on his feet,
 And his eyes shall rot in their sockets,
 And their tongue shall rot in their mouth.
13. And it shall be in that day,
 There shall be among them a great confusion from Jehovah,
 And they shall seize each man the hand of his neighbor,
 And his hand shall rise against the hand of his neighbor.
14. And Judah also shall fight in Jerusalem,
 And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered ;
 Gold, and silver, and garments in great abundance.
15. And so shall be the plague of the horse, the mule, the camel,
 and the ass,
 Which shall be in these camps, as this plague.
16. And it shall be that the remnant of all the nations,
 •Who came up against Jerusalem,
 Shall go up from year to year, (*to Jerusalem,*)
 To worship the king, Jehovah of Hosts,
 And to keep the feast of tabernacles.
17. And it shall be that whoever of the tribes of the earth,
 Will not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, Jehovah
 of Hosts,
 Upon them there shall be no rain.
18. And if the family of Egypt will not go forth, and come up,
 And there shall not be upon them (*therefore any rain,*)
 There shall be the plague with which Jehovah shall plague
 the nations,
 That do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles.
19. And this will be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all nations,
 That come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

20. In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses
"SACRED TO JEHOVAH."
And the vessels in the house of Jehovah shall be,
As the sacrificial bowls upon the altar.
21. And every vessel in Jerusalem and Judah shall be,
SACRED TO JEHOVAH OF HOSTS.
And all the sacrificers shall come, and take from them and
offer in them,
And there shall be no more a Canaanite
In the house of Jehovah of Hosts, in that day.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH.

THE name Zechariah (*remembrance of Jehovah, or one whom Jehovah remembers*) was common among the Jews, as appears from the fact that four others besides the prophet are mentioned in the Old Testament. Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he was a priest as well as a prophet. In the prophecy he is called the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo ; whilst in Ezra 5 : 1, 6 : 14, he is simply called the son of Iddo. From this fact it has been inferred that he was not the grandson of Iddo, but his son, and that Iddo and Barachiah are names for the same person. But the fact probably is, that his father died when he was very young, and therefore in the priestly genealogy he was reckoned as the son of his grandfather, a reckoning which the flexibility of all terms of relationship among the Jews made not uncommon.

Of his personal history we know but little, except that he entered early on the discharge of his prophetic duties, (ch. 2 : 4.) Some have supposed that our Lord referred to him in Matt. 23 : 35, when he speaks of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, who perished between the porch and the altar. But there is no evidence whatever that this prophet thus died. There is a Zechariah,

who died in this way, mentioned in 2 Chron. 24 : 21, to whom it is much more probable that the allusion is made. He was, it is true, the son of Jehoiada, but, aside from the fact that double names are mentioned in the same way elsewhere, as in the case of Hobab, the more familiar name Barachiah might readily creep into the text from the margin to take the place of the less familiar Jehoiada, or to define the name Zechariah, that was perhaps left without any patronymic. The reason for referring to him is found in the arrangement of the Hebrew Old Testament, by which 2 Chronicles is the last book in the volume, thus making Zechariah the last martyr of whom they would read, as Abel was the first.

His family seems to have returned from Babylon with the first expedition in the reign of Cyrus, and as this was eighteen years before the date of the prophecy, in which he is expressly called a young man, he must have been very young at the time of his return. He had seen the arresting of the erection of the temple by the successful machinations of the Samaritans in the Persian Court, and the depressed tone of the national character during the time that followed this arrest. He had witnessed the growth of that selfish greed for their own individual interests, and their neglect of the interests of religion, that was so mournful a characteristic of this period. He had also seen the creeping feebleness with which the work of rebuilding the temple was undertaken and prosecuted, when the edict of permission was again

issued, by Darius Hystaspis. Now, as the temple was to them the grand symbol of revealed religion, indifference to it was an undoubted symptom of backsliding and spiritual declension. It was therefore necessary that they should be stirred up to the discharge of their duty as to the temple, and awakened to a proper estimate of that great plan of mercy to the world, of which the temple and the theocracy were but symbols, in order that their zeal might have at once a right motive and a right direction. Hence Haggai was first raised up to rouse them to activity in building the temple, and two months later Zechariah followed to take up the same theme and unfold it yet more richly to the minds of the people, by connecting the poor and passing present, with the magnificent and enduring future. The scope of the prophecy then is to produce a genuine revival of religion among the people, and thus encourage them in the right way to engage in the rebuilding of the temple.

The date of the prophecy is recorded very accurately, and is identical with that of Haggai, the second year of Darius Hystaspis, B. C. 520.

In regard to the literary characteristics of the prophecy, Henderson remarks:—"In point of style, our prophet varies, according to the nature of his subjects, and the manner in which they were presented to his mind. He now expresses himself in simple, conversational prose, now in poetry. At one time he abounds in the language of symbols; at another, in that of direct prophetic announcement. His symbols are, for

the most part, enigmatical, and require the explanations which accompany them. His prose resembles most that of Ezekiel ; it is diffuse, uniform, and repetitious. His prophetic poetry possesses much of the elevation and dignity to be found in the earlier prophets, with whose writings he appears to have been familiar ; only his rhythmus is sometimes harsh and unequal, while his parallelisms are destitute of that symmetry and finish which form some of the principal beauties of Hebrew poetry."

The prophecy consists of four parts : I. *Introductory*, ch. 1 : 1—6 ; II. *Symbolical*, ch. 1 : 7 to the end of ch. 6, containing nine visions ; III. *Didactic*, chs. 7 and 8 ; and, IV. *Prophetic*, ch. 9 to the end.

PART I.—INTRODUCTORY.—CH. 1 : 1—6.

ANALYSIS.

I. The warning from the example of their fathers, who were disobedient to the word of the Lord, and therefore punished, (v. 1, 2.)

II. The exhortation to avoid their sins, (v. 3, 4.)

III. The fate of their fathers pressed as a reason for listening to his message, which he was then about to deliver, (v. 5, 6.)

COMMENTARY.

CHAPTER I.

1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

2 The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers.

3 Therefore, say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts,

1 : 1—6.—“In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah, son of Barachiah, son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, Angry hath Jehovah been toward your fathers with (*great*) anger. Therefore say thou unto them, thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Return ye unto me, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried, saying : Thus saith Jehovah of hosts ; return, I beseech you, from your evil ways, and from your evil doings ; but they did not hear, they did not attend unto me, saith Jehovah. Your fathers, where are they ? And the prophets, do they live forever ? But my words, and my statutes, which I commanded my servants, the prophets, have they not overtaken your fathers ? And they returned and said ; (*after this,*) like as Jehovah of hosts hath thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he done unto us.”

THE general meaning of this exordium is, God fulfilled all his threatenings to your fathers ; therefore beware, lest, by disobeying my voice, as they did that of

and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts;

4 Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom ye have said, Turn ye now from your evil ways, and

the earlier prophets, you suffer as did your fathers. It was, therefore, a most suitable introduction to the discharge of his prophetic functions.

The reference of the prophet is to the threatening of conquest and captivity to their fathers, and to the fulfilment of that threatening that was then before their eyes. And how complete was that fulfilment! The land that once flowed with milk and honey was now lying in widowed desolation and barrenness. The hills on whose green terraces once hung the climbing vine and the generous olive, were now bare and rugged. The cities and villages once echoing to the busy hum of a happy people, were now in ruins, and all over their once beautiful land had God written Ichabod. Thus far the meaning is plain.

The only difficulty is in the logical coherence of v. 5, with what precedes it. It seems to place the fathers who sinned and the prophets who obeyed on the same footing, as sharing the same fate. Hence some have suppose the reference was to false prophets, a supposition that completely dislocates the whole passage and overlooks the current of thought.

The object of the exordium is to show the unchanging permanence of God's word, by contrasting it with the transitory nature of their fathers and the prophets, and it may thus be set forth more fully.

from your evil doings ; but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

5 Your fathers, where *are* they ? and the prophets, do they live for ever ?

6 But my words and my statutes,

Let the fate of your fathers be a warning to you that you avoid the disobedience to the word of Jehovah, which brought upon them evils so desolating. For where are they now ? Once they ruled and worshipped here as do you. The song of the Levite rang through the arches of the temple, the smoke of the victim ascended from its altars, their banners waved over these hills, and their armies struck terror into the hearts of their enemies. But where are they now ? Some lie in slaughtered heaps, when the banner of Judah was trampled in the dust, and her bravest sons cut down like grass before the mower's scythe, by the fierce cohorts of the Assyrian. Some lie buried in the ruins of the holy city, which they sought to defend from the spoiler. Some are sleeping by the flashing waters of the Euphrates, far from the graves of their fathers, after weeping out a weary life beneath the willows that bend in the land of the stranger. Whilst some in the feebleness of tottering age have returned to lay their bones in the soil that is hallowed by the memories and hopes of Israel.

And why has this been their mournful history ? Because they refused to listen to the warnings of the prophets. Hence even the prophets themselves were taken away. They warned, and wept, and prayed, but met only with stoning, reviling and hate. They toiled on to stay the coming judgments, but when their efforts were disregarded by the people, God in mercy took

which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers: and they returned and said, Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

them away from the evil to come. Then the last barrier was removed and the torrent of wrath came dire and pitiless in its rush of fury, and swept them away in its flood. Now as your fathers and the prophets alike have passed away, according to my word; as neither the wickedness of the one, nor the piety of the other, could arrest my threatened judgments, beware lest a like evil come upon you, that your prophets being disregarded, be also withdrawn, and the judgments you are daring come upon you for your disobedience.

This appropriate introduction was probably followed with exhortations to build the temple and restore the worship of God, that are not recorded, as their interest was local and temporary, for its date is three months anterior to the next portion of the prophecy, and we cannot suppose all that time to have elapsed without any prophetic teachings of the people. That there were such instructions, and that they were obeyed by the people, would seem probable from the consolatory character of the next divine utterance that is recorded by the prophet in these visions.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Whilst God is love, and whilst the preachers of the gospel must preach this glorious truth, they must not conceal the fact that God is a consuming fire, and angry with the wicked every day. It is a sign of a

7 ¶ Upon the four and twentieth day unto Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, of the eleventh month, which is the the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, month Sebat, in the second year of 8 I saw by night, and behold a man Darius, came the word of the LORD riding upon a red horse, and he stood

sickly piety when men are willing to hear nothing of the wrath of God against sin, (v. 1, 2.)

(2.) If men expect God to return to them in prosperity, they must return to him in penitence. The flower averted from the sun must turn toward it, to catch its genial smile, (v. 3.)

(3.) What we have to do for God in life should be done quickly, for life is rapidly passing; to evil and good there comes alike the swift shadows of the sunset, (v. 5.)

(4.) What a man sows he shall also reap, and the seedings of life on earth shall be harvested in heaven or in hell, (v. 6.)

PART II.—THE VISIONS.

CH. 1 : 7 TO END OF CH. 6.

VISION I.—CHAPTER 1 : 7—17.

The Man among the Myrtles.

ANALYSIS.

I. The vision of a rider among the myrtles, surrounded with other riders, who bring him reports of the state of the earth, (v. 7—13.)

II. Explanation of this vision to the comfort of the Jewish people, and their encouragement in the work of rebuilding the city and temple, (v. 14—17.)

V. 7—17. “On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Sebat (*February*), in the second year of Darius, came the word of JEHOVAH to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying: I saw

among the myrtle trees that *were* in these? And the angel that talked with the bottom; and behind him *were there* me said unto me, I will show thee red horses, speckled and white. what these *be*.

9 Then said I, O my lord, what *are*

that night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtles in the valley, and behind him there were red, bay and white horses. And I said, 'My lord, what are these?' And the angel that talked with me, said unto me, 'I will show thee what they are.' And the man that stood among the myrtles answered and said, 'These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk throughout the earth.' And they answered the angel of Jehovah that stood among the myrtles, 'We have walked throughout the earth, and behold all the earth dwells and is at rest.' Then the angel of Jehovah answered and said, 'Oh Jehovah of Hosts! how long wilt thou not pity Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which thou hast been angry these seventy years?' And Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me good words and consoling words. And the angel that talked with me said unto me, Cry, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with great jealousy. And I am inflamed with great anger against the secure nations. For I was but a little angry, (*against Jerusalem and Zion*), but they aggravated the affliction. Therefore thus saith Jehovah, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, my house (*temple*) shall be built in it, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and a (*measuring*) line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry also, saying, thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, My cities shall also be extended by prosperity, and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."

THE object of this vision, or waking trance, is to comfort the disheartened people in their labor, by showing them the fact that God was with them, although they were very lowly and despised. This is done by exhibiting a symbolical picture of the theocratic people, which is explained to the prophet by an interpreting angel, who is not to be confounded with the angel of Jehovah, the central figure of the group.

10 And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These *are they* whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

11 And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

He sees a grove of myrtles, a beautiful shrub, with glossy, dark green leaves, and white, star-like clusters of fragrant flowers, whose leaves exhaled their richest odor only when bruised. This was a symbol of the theocracy, the Jewish Church and nation. The Church is not a cedar, in its queenly pride, or an oak in its giant strength, but a lowly myrtle, humble, unpretending, and exhaling its sweetest graces when bruised by the weight of affliction. Such was the existing state of the theocracy, and hence the despondency of the people, who thought that so lowly a thing must be wholly overshadowed and destroyed by the proud and godless powers of the world.

But in the midst of these myrtles he sees a man on a red horse, whom we afterwards discover to be the angel of Jehovah, that divine person whom we trace all along the history of the Old Testament, in every manifestation of God to man, in visible form, until in the New Testament we find him manifest in the flesh. It is the second person of the mysterious Trinity, the great Head of the Church. The fact is thus symbolized that he is in the midst of the Church, unseen, and hence though seemingly so feeble and lowly, she has this inhabitation as her glory and defence. The celerity and strength of every agency connected with the Church, is set forth by

12 ¶ Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

the horses, the red color of which signified the fervor of at once the zeal and the wrath of these agencies, as at once sanguine and sanguinary; the white color, their triumphant strength, being the symbol of victory, and the bay, a combination of the two colors, showing the connection between these things in the arrangements made by God for the good of his Church. The surrounding angels on horses set forth the fact that God has provided every species of agency for the supply and defence of his Church, making the very powers of the world work to the promotion of her interests.

The attendant angels are sent to spy out the condition of the whole earth, and bring back the report (v. 11) that all nations were in peace and prosperity. But Judea was lying in desolation, Jerusalem in ruins, and the temple but partially rebuilt. Here was a state of facts that seemed to contradict the promises of God to his people, and the threatenings of God to his enemies, and hence that tended to depress the one with doubt and inflate the other with pride. It was then time for God to work, and hence the divine angel begins (v. 12) to intercede for his people. Here, then, was an additional fact of great comfort. Not only does Christ dwell in the midst of his people, and watch over all that affects their condition, but he intercedes for them, and his intercession is never in vain. This appears from v. 13, where in answer to these intercessions God speaks

13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with* good words and comfortable words.

me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.

14 So the angel that communed with

comforting words to the angel, who was commissioned to speak to the prophet. These words are there recorded by the prophet in verses 14—17, and constitute the poetic exposition of the vision, in effect as follows :

Jerusalem and Zion are laid waste it is true, but not in anger, so much as in chastising love. God still loves them, and is jealous of any estrangement of their affections from him, and when estranged he chastises them to bring them back. This was his object in using the heathen as instruments of chastisement, but the spirit in which they executed this office has provoked his wrath. He designed only to inflict a slight chastisement, but they rioted in the sufferings of his people with wanton cruelty. They mocked their sorrows and taunted them with their abandonment. Hence God will punish these heathen, and will bestow mercy on his people, cause the temple to be built, the city to be enlarged, and prosperity to return to the land.

These predictions were not merely promises of temporal prosperity, such as the theocratic people received in the times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Maccabees; but of that better prosperity which took place when the spiritual temple was laid on the chief corner stone, and its stately proportions, all garnished with prophets, apostles and martyrs, went slowly up, preparing for its culmination in the New Jerusalem that shall descend from

15 And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are* at ease : for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.

16 Therefore thus saith the LORD ; I

am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: mine house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.

17 Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the

heaven as a bride prepared for her husband. Literally they were fulfilled, but they have a wider fulfilment yet in progress. The threatenings against God's enemies have been fulfilled in like manner. It seemed as vain a fulmination of displeasure for an obscure Jew, amid the ruins of Jerusalem, to predict calamity to magnificent Babylon, as for some humble preacher in our mountains to utter threats against London or Paris. Yet this Jew uttered the word of Jehovah, and the elements of ruin, in their remotest lurking-places, heard the summons, and came up each on its mission of destruction. And now, all that remains of Babylon is a heap of desolation, whilst the Church is lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes to fill the whole earth. Hence, all that this vision predicted has thus far been fulfilled, a guarantee of a yet ampler fulfilment in the future.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

As the Jewish people are usually regarded by the prophet in their theocratic character, as the form in which the Church then existed, the general doctrines of these visions are applicable to the Church in every form in which she exists. Some of these doctrines as set forth in this vision are,—

(1.) The Church is externally an humble and lowly thing, neglected, often despised by the gay and wicked

LORD of hosts ; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad ; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

world, a grove of myrtles, rather than the cedars of Lebanon, (v. 8.)

(2.) She has, however, an unseen glory that the world knows not of ; for Christ dwells in her midst, full of love, invested with all power, sending his angel messengers to do his work, and preparing everything for her final triumph, (v. 8, 9.)

(3.) The hour of darkest desolation to the Church, and of haughtiest triumph to her enemies, is often the very hour when God begins his work of judgment on the one, and returning mercy on the other, (v. 11.)

(4.) Christ intercedes for his people, when they need it most, and his intercession is always prevalent, (v. 12, 13.)

(5.) God will have all our hearts, for he is jealous of sharing his glory with another, (v. 14.)

(6.) God often uses instruments to chastise his people, which, when he has done with them, he breaks and casts into the fire, (v. 15.)

(7.) The Church of God shall yet triumph over every obstacle, and vanquish every foe, (v. 16.)

(8.) The promises and threatenings of God, though slow, are sure. They have eternity for the range of their fulfilment, (v. 17.)

(9.) The head of the Church is at once human and divine. He is called here "a man," v. 8, and the "Angel of Jehovah," v. 12. But the Angel of Jehovah is a Divine person, as appears from comparing Gen.

18 ¶ Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.

19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? and

he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

16 : 7 with v. 13 ; Gen. 22 : 11 with v. 12, &c. Even Gesenius admits this, and the Babylonish Talmud declares that “this man is no other than the Holy One.” But if divine and human, he must be God and man in one person.

VISION II.

CHAPTER 1: 18—21.—*The four horns and four artificers.*

ANALYSIS.

I. Four horns appear, symbolizing the various enemies of God's people, (v. 18, 19.)

II. Four artificers appear, symbolizing the fact that God had provided a deliverance for every variety of threatening, (v. 20, 21.)

V. 18—21. “And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, ‘What are these?’ And he answered me, ‘These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.’ And Jehovah showed me four artificers. And I said, ‘What do these come to do?’ And he replied, saying, ‘These are the horns that have scattered Judah, so that a man could not lift up his head; but these are come to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations, which lifted up the horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.’”

THE meaning of this vision is by no means obscure. Among the Orientals a horn was the symbol of power. Being a pastoral people, and finding the strongest of the herd always furnished with horns, the horn became

20 And the Lord shewed me four carpenters.

21 Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Ju-

dah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

the natural symbol of power and pride. To lift up the horn, was to be proud of conscious strength; to have horns coming out of the hands, was to have power in the hands, &c. The number four has given rise to many fanciful conjectures, but undoubtedly refers to the four cardinal points of the compass, which include every possible direction, and so represent all possible enemies. Wherever the people of God turned, there was a power to oppose them. Such was the condition of the Jews then, with the Assyrian, Chaldean and Samaritan on the north, the Egyptian on the south, the Philistine on the west, and the Ammonite and Moabite on the east, they were encircled with foes.

But there also appeared four artificers, whether carpenters or smiths does not appear from the original, and depends on whether the horns were wooden or metallic, a fact not stated. But their office was to break the horns in pieces. The gist of the vision lies in the coincidence of the numbers of the artificers and horns. For every horn there was a cleaving artificer to beat it down; for every enemy there was an antagonizing instrument to counteract it, already provided by God. Hence, although on all sides there were enemies to oppose the erection of the temple, and the completion of the city, there was provided by God a neutralizing and counteracting power adequate to destroy them all.

CHAPTER II.

THE event has verified the prediction. The temple went up, and the city was builded, in spite of all the efforts of opposing enemies, and now those enemies have passed away, and their gorgeous cities are but heaps of desolation. In its narrowest scope, therefore, the vision has been verified, and the promise intended to encourage the lingering people in erecting the temple has been fulfilled. But its sweep was much wider than the Jews, considered in their national capacity. It referred to them as the theocracy, and hence these promises are made to the Church, and declare the great truth that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her. Such has been the fact thus far, and such will it ever be, for he that is with her is more than they that are against her. For every evil there is a remedy ; for every enemy a deliverer. The evil will be allowed to come, and the enemy to assail, but at the appointed hour, the fraying artificer shall come forth to neutralize the one and vanquish the other.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The Church of God has always been surrounded with enemies, and will be until the last enemy is destroyed by her head, (v. 18, 19.)

(2.) She can never perish, for more are they that are with her, than they that are against her, (v. 20, 21.)

1 I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.

2 Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length thereof.

3. And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him,

4. And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein :

VISION III.

CHAPTER 2.—*The man with the measuring line.*

ANALYSIS.

I. A man is seen with a measuring line, symbolizing the fact that the boundaries of the Church were then to be declared, (v. 1—3.)

II. The future enlargement of the Church promised, under the fact that Jerusalem would spread beyond her walls into the country, (v. 4, 5.)

III. In view of this enlargement the exiles are called home, (v. 6, 7;) Divine protection promised, (v. 8, 9;) and the conversion of the world predicted as a consequence of God's dwelling in the midst of his people, (v. 10—13.)

V. 1, 2. "And I lifted up mine eyes, and looked and behold a man, and in his hand a measuring line. And I said, 'Where art thou going?' And he said unto me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what is its breadth, and what is its length.'"

THE apparatus of this vision is very simple and easily understood. A man is seen with a measuring line, as in Ezek. 40 : 1—3, who is probably the angel of the covenant, the Son of God, who goes forth to measure Jerusalem. This indicates at once that the Church should be enlarged, and that Christ was to be the author and definer of this enlargement. The interpreting

5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

6 ¶ Ho, ho, *come forth*, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the

angel having left him was met by another messenger from the measuring angel, who directed him to run to Zechariah, indicating thus the spirit with which God's messengers serve him. Those who would do God's will aright must neither crawl, nor walk, but run with eager alacrity. Zechariah is called a young man, not only on account of his age, but also in allusion to his subordinate relation to the angels, as *παῖς*, *puer*, *garçon*, and boy, are used in their respective languages to indicate relation rather than age, being applied often to servants who have long passed the years of boyhood. The substance of this communication is that Jerusalem shall be enlarged, and attain a high measure of prosperity, and that her enemies shall be overthrown.

V. 3, 4. "And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel came out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, (*Zechariah*,) saying, Jerusalem shall inhabit villages. For the multitude of men and cattle in her midst."

Henderson and some of the recent German expositors, such as Hitzig, Maurer and Ewald, maintain that "the young man" is the man with the measuring line; others think that it was the interpreting angel. But as it was a communication intended for the prophet, we prefer with most interpreters to take Zechariah as the person described.

"Jerusalem shall inhabit villages," *i. e.* shall so spread out as to extend beyond her narrow walls, and reach

four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord. 7 Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.

the adjacent villages: and her security shall be such that she shall not need the protection of walls to guard her from the incursion of enemies. Literally, this was fulfilled in the subsequent great growth of the city. But its reference was mainly to the Church of which Jerusalem was but the theocratic symbol. The narrow walls of the Mosaic forms were to be thrown down, and her limits extended to those who were then beyond these boundaries, and this with the most perfect safety and advantage. It is at least a curious coincidence that when this enlargement actually did take place, the dwellers in villages (*paganî*) became synonymous with those to whom heathenism had been driven gradually from the centres of population, until at last having reached and converted these very *paganos* (pagans), Jerusalem in very deed inhabited the villages.

V. 5. "And I will be to her, saith Jehovah, a wall of fire around, and for a glory will I be in her midst."

But is there not something unsafe in this unwallled extension? Is there not danger in simplifying the forms of the spiritual Jerusalem, as well as in extending beyond the walls of the literal Jerusalem? The answer is no! for (v. 5) God will be to her a wall without, and a glory within, furnishing a security and a splendor far more glorious than any external munitions. Hence they might labor for that extension whether in the narrower form of the work then before them, or the

8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts : that toucheth you, toucheth the apple
 After the glory hath he sent me unto of his eye.
 the nations which spoiled you : for he 9 For behold, I will shake my hand

wider form of that enlargement that was yet future,
 with unwavering confidence and hope.

V. 6, 7. "Ho ! Ho ! fly then from the north country, saith Jehovah, for as the four winds of heaven have I scattered you, saith Jehovah. O Zion ! deliver thyself, thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon."

As there were yet a number of Jews in Babylon, the angel urges them to return, first, because of the judgments to come on Babylon, ("the land of the North,") and secondly, because of the blessings to come on Jerusalem. "As the four winds," &c., means, not that God had scattered the Jews *to* the four winds, but *as* the four winds scatter, *i. e.* violently and afar off. Zion means the Jews yet remaining who are urged to leave Babylon before the assault of Darius, that soon afterwards occurred. "Daughter of Babylon" means simply Babylon, see Isa. 1 : 8 ; Ps. 9 : 14 ; Ps. 137 : 8.

V. 8. "For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts : after the glory hath he sent me to the nations that spoiled you, for he that toucheth you, toucheth the pupil of his own eye."

The phrase "after the glory" has received several expositions. Blayney, Newcome, Hitzig, Maurer, and others, understand it to mean that God had sent the speaker after the glory to obtain it, but "after" is always used as an adverb of place or time, and not as a preposition. Hence it is better with Calvin, Henderson, and others, to make it refer to the glory in v. 5,

upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants : and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.

of Zion : for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

10 ¶ Sing and rejoice, O daughter

and declare that after this glory, *i. e.* not only in point of time, but in point of fact, *besides* this glory, God has sent me to punish your enemies. In other words, I am not only a glory to you, but also an avenger upon your enemies. The speaker is the Divine angel, or the Son of God. The image of the last clause is both expressive and beautiful. Henderson refers the pronominal suffix to God, representing the Jewish people as the apple of his own eye, and Calvin favors that view. Most interpreters refer it to the enemy.

V. 9. "For, behold, I will shake my hand (*fist*) over them, and they shall be a spoil to their own servants ; and ye shall acknowledge that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me."

V. 9 repeats the threat of v. 8, using a gesture of menace, and predicts that they should be a spoil to their servants, which was literally fulfilled when the Persians conquered Babylon, and ruled where they once served, and shall yet be more widely fulfilled in God's subjugation of all his enemies.

V. 10. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold I come ; and I will dwell in thy midst, saith Jehovah."

V. 10 predicts that coming of the covenant angel that first took place in the incarnation, and shall be more perfectly fulfilled only when he comes the second time without sin to salvation. The language of this verse is almost identical with that of ch. 9 : 9, that

11 And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people : and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know

unquestionably refers to the incarnation. Even Kimchi refers this verse to the Messiah.

V. 11. "And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, shall be to me for a people, and I will dwell in the midst of them, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto thee."

V. 11 announces the conversion of the Gentiles, and the general recognition that shall be made of Christ's messianic character and divine mission.

V. 12. "And Jehovah shall inherit Judah his portion, in a land of holiness, and shall choose again Jerusalem."

V. 12 proclaims the future restoration of the Jews to their ancient relation to God.

V. 13. "Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah, because he is arisen from the habitation of his holiness."

V. 13 is a grand peroration, in which the prophet loses sight of the present and addresses the distant future. God seems to be slumbering and delaying his judgments, and hence men are growing bold and impious. But see ! he arises like a giant refreshed with slumber, and comes forth to do his strange and terrible work. Be silent, therefore, all flesh, before this dread apparition !

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Although Zion has not yet lengthened her cords and widened her stakes to her appointed limits, yet the measuring line has gone forth that gives her bounds to be

that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

12 And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

13 Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

the habitable earth. Hence, if this future extension was a motive to the Jew, in his work of rearing the temple of wood and stone, much more is it to us in our work of erecting the great spiritual temple on the foundation, Jesus Christ, (v. 1—4.)

(2.) We learn here the true glory of the Church. It is not in any external pomp or power, of any kind; not in frowning battlements, either of temporal or spiritual pretensions; not in rites and ceremonies, however moss-grown and venerable; not in splendid cathedrals and gorgeous vestments, and the swell of music, and the glitter of eloquence, but in the indwelling glory of the invisible God. Her outward rites and ceremonies, therefore, should only be like what the earth's atmosphere is to the rays of the sun, a pure, transparent medium of transmission, (v. 5.)

(3.) The punishment of the wicked as truly declares the glory of God as the salvation of the righteous, (v. 8.)

(4.) The wicked shall ultimately be the slaves of their own lusts, those appetites and passions that were designed to be merely their obedient servants, shall become their tormenting and inexorable tyrants, (v. 9.)

(5.) The incarnation of Christ, and his indwelling in the Church, are grounds of the highest joy, (v. 10.)

(6.) Christ is a divine Saviour. In v. 10, 11, we have

one Jehovah sending another, and the Jehovah sent is identified with the angel of the covenant, who was to come and dwell in the Church, whom we know to be Christ. Hence, unless there are two distinct Jehovahs, one divine and the other not, Christ, the Jehovah angel of this passage is divine.

(7.) The Church of God shall cover the earth, and become in fact what it is in right, the mightiest agency in human history. Though now feeble and despised, she shall one day include many nations, and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father, (v. 11.)

(8.) Delay of punishment is no proof of impunity. God often seems to be asleep, but he is only awaiting the appointed time, but in the end, when all seems as it was from the foundation of the world, the herald cry shall go forth, be silent, O earth, for Jehovah is aroused to his terrible work, and the day of his wrath is come. Let men kiss the Son whilst he is yet in the way, before his anger is kindled but a little, and they perish before him like stubble before the whirlwind of flames.

1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

VISION IV.

CHAP. 3.—*Joshua the High Priest before the Angel of JEHOVAH.*

ANALYSIS.

I. Joshua, in his representative character, stands before the Divine angel in filthy garments, with Satan accusing him. The filthy garments, symbolical of sin in the people, are removed, and clean ones given in their place, symbolical of pardon, (v. 1—5.)

II. A charge and promise given to him in this capacity, (v. 6, 7;) a promise of the Messiah, and a blessing to the Church as a consequence of his coming, (v. 8—10.)

V. 1. “And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.”

THIS vision is of less obvious interpretation than the preceding, perhaps for the reason that its truth lies nearer the deepest throbbings of the human heart. A sense of sin, and a feeling of hopeless ill-desert, are among the deepest emotions of a heart that has been touched by the Holy Spirit. This is the ever-recurring state of the human heart, both individually and collectively, because it rests on the ever-during relations that connect man and God. A sense of sin fairly awakened produces despair, if we are thrown back on the resources of reason. We cannot hope in God, for we tremble before his justice. Thus it was with the Jewish church at this time. They felt that they had sinned, and hence had no

2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem re-

buke thee: *is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

ground in themselves to hope for God's favor. They knew that their priests had also been unfaithful, and hence they had no hope in them. Why then go forward with the temple, when both priest and people must defile rather than hallow its courts? Was it not presumption to expect that their labor would be accepted? These were the suggestions of Satan to their hearts, to deter them from their work, suggestions with which the people of God are, alas! too familiar to this day. God will not accept so vile and faithless a heart, so lame and mutilated a service as you render him, says the tempter, therefore you had better abandon it all, and enjoy sin at least if you cannot enjoy holiness. This brings us to the heart of the vision. It is designed to show the people of God, that their personal demerit is no ground for distrusting the mercy of God, for he receives them not because of their own righteousness, but that of another; and that at this particular period, the unworthiness of the priesthood was no reason for their destruction and the overthrow of the temple, as they were typical, and the end of their institution was not yet served. Such is the general purport of it.

The scene is laid in the temple. Joshua the high priest is seen standing before the Divine angel performing the functions of his office. He is not, as some suppose, arraigned for trial, with Satan as his accuser, but is standing in his official character to represent the

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from

people and the priesthood. He represents the people in his character as priest, and the priesthood in his character as high priest. This representative character must be carefully noted, as it contains the essence of the vision. He stands as the representative of the theocratic people, and the priestly order as then existing. But he is clothed in filthy garments, the common symbol of sin. Both people and priesthood feel that they are sinful and unworthy, and hence fear to hope for a blessing from a holy God on their labors. Satan then stands to accuse them in the person of their representative, representing thus these suggestions of the tempter to which we have alluded. "You are not fit to appear before God, and there is nothing in you that can be pleasing to him, therefore abandon his service, which you are only polluting, and act out your character in your conduct, by indulging openly in sin and rebellion."

V. 2. "And Jehovah said to Satan. Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan! Jehovah rebuke thee! he that chooses Jerusalem! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?"

Here, then, God gives his answer to the tempter. "Begone, false fiend! Blacken not the glorious gospel by such lying suggestions! It is not Jerusalem that chooses Jehovah, but Jehovah that chooses Jerusalem. It is not the burning brand that plucks the hand, but the hand that plucks it. Hence though Jerusalem, the people of God, whom Joshua represents, are all covered

him. And unto him he said, Behold, from thee, and I will clothe thee with I have caused thine iniquity to pass change of raiment.

with sin as with a garment, I have chosen them in spite of this sin, not that they should continue in it, but that they should be freed from it."

V. 3, 4. "And Joshua was clothed in filthy garments and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake to those who stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments away from him ; and he said to him, (*Joshua*) Behold I take away from thee thy sins, and they shall clothe thee with festal garments."

Then to show that it was not their righteousness but another's that was the ground of their acceptance, and that it was not to encourage them in sin, but to remove it, the divine angel commanded, v. 4, that these filthy garments (the symbol of sin) should be removed, and festal robes (the symbol of imputed righteousness) should be put on him, thus setting forth the great and consoling doctrine of a gratuitous justification because of the merits of the Redeemer. This and this alone can comfort the heart of the penitent, whether a solitary monk, weeping and striving in the convent of Erfurth, or a desponding people brooding in discouragement over the ruins of Jerusalem.

V. 5. "Then I said, let them place a clean tiara upon his head ; and they placed a clean tiara upon his head, and they put garments upon him, and the angel of Jehovah was (*still*) standing (*there.*)"

Here, then, the prophet interposes, (v. 5,) to bring to view the second main thought of the vision. The first had reference to Joshua representing the whole people, who are assured that God will not destroy them because

5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

of their unworthiness. But now for their more immediate comfort, to quell their fears as to the priesthood, the prophet desires a token to be given of the continuance and official purity of this order, and hence asks that a clean tiara or priestly mitre be placed on his head, to indicate that this purification was complete, both in its nature and in its extent. This was done (v. 5) whilst the angel of the Lord was standing there, to show his approval of, and interest in this process.

V. 6, 7. "And the angel of Jehovah answered to Joshua, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my laws, thou shalt judge my house, and also keep my courts, and I will give thee guides among these that are standing here."

V. 6, 7, show the conditions annexed to this forgiveness. It was a salvation *from* sin, not *in* it; and connected with obedience. This obedience, then, was connected with a promise of reward. This reward was judging God's house and guarding his courts, which included supreme authority in sacred things, such as was assigned to the priesthood. מְהַלְכֵימָם is taken by Acker-mann, Maurer, Rosenmüller, Hitzig, Ewald, and others, as the plural of the noun מְהַלְכֵי, meaning *walks* or *walk-ing places*; but this gives no satisfactory sense. It is therefore better with Henderson, Hengstenberg, and some of the older interpreters, to take it as the Chaldaic form of the Hiphil participle of מָלַךְ, meaning "*those*

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also

keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

8 Hear now, O Joshua, the high

who cause to go," or "walk," i. e. *guides*. Those who are thus alluded to were the angels. It is therefore a promise of angelic aid and ministry similar to Ps. 91 : 11, 12, and parallel passages. The cheering encouragement of this every trembling heart can feel.

V. 8. "Hear, I beseech thee, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy colleagues who sit before thee, for men of omen are they: for behold I bring my servant, BRANCH."

V. 8 presents another reason for encouragement. The priesthood would not be destroyed because of its typical character. *Men of omen*, are men who shadow forth something future, (see Isa. 8 : 18, 20 : 3 ;) in other words, typical men, whose office foreshadows something to come. What this was is then declared, "my servant, BRANCH." These are undoubted appellations of the Messiah. He is called "servant" in such passages as, Isa. 42 : 1, 49 : 3, 50 : 10 ; Ezek. 34 : 23, &c. ; and *Branch*, in Jer. 23 : 5, 33 : 15. This designation is given to him to indicate his original obscurity, and the gradual development of his character. The type then would continue until the coming of the anti-type, the order foretoking the Messiah would not cease until he came, and hence they could go on in the erection of the temple, in which these priests were to minister.

The notion of some of the Jewish, and a few Christian interpreters, that the person predicted under the

priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee : for they *are* men wondered at : for behold, I will bring forth my servant The BRANCH.

9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua ; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes : behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the

name of Branch was Zerubbabel, is wholly untenable, for the Branch had not yet appeared, whilst Zerubbabel had. Even Maurer, Hitzig, and similar critics, concede that the Messiah is here meant.

V. 9. “ For behold the stone which I have laid before Joshua, upon this one stone shall there be seven eyes ; behold, carving I will carve it, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I will remove the sin of the land in one day.”

V. 9 gives the reason for the fulfilment of this glorious promise. Everything seemed so desolate, that there was no hope of such a blessing as the coming of the Messiah. God declares that although his people were thus obscure and desolate, he had never lost sight of them. He represents his people, or the theocracy, by a stone, a *single* stone (*Ehad*), lying before Joshua, as if worthless. But he says that on this one stone are “ seven eyes.” Seven being the number of perfection, the seven eyes represent the all-seeing eye of Jehovah, and show the sleepless regard which he bestows upon his Church. The image of a stone was selected, because the main work of the theocratic people then was the erection of a temple. God assures them that he has not cast it aside, but would yet polish and chisel it, and make it suitable for its glorious destiny. The removal of sin “ in one day,” refers to the perfection of the atonement to be made by the Messiah, which needs not daily

LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

10 In that day. saith the LORD of

hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the

fig tree.

repetition like the sacrifices of the priesthood, but “by one offering he perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Heb. 10 : 14. Henderson refers “the stone” to the literal foundation of the temple, but with a very needless restriction and literality. God did not carve that stone, and if one part of the verse is figurative, so must be the other.

V. 10. “In that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, ye shall call every man to his neighbor, under the vine and under the fig-tree.”

V. 10 refers to the security and peace that should reign in the Messianic period, first in the heart of the penitent believer, then in the bosom of the faithful Church, and then at last in the glories of the latter day and heavenly rest. 2 Kings 18 : 31 shows that this was a familiar image of prosperity and peace. Thus, as in all these visions, the prophet connects the present with the future, the passing and perishing with the unchanging and eternal.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The divinity of Christ. The Jehovah angel of v. 1 is called Jehovah in v. 2, and this Jehovah angel, as appears from other passages, especially Haggai 2 : 6, 7, and Malachi 3 : 1, compared with Mark 1 : 2, we know to be Jesus Christ.

(2.) Satan’s temptations are never so subtle or so powerful as when they assume the form of penitence

and humility. But the greatness of our sin only magnifies the greatness of the mercy that pardons it.

(3.) The origin of our salvation and the ground of our hope are in the love and grace of God, and not in our own worthiness or merit, (v. 2.)

(4.) We are saved by the imputed righteousness of Christ and not by our own merits, (v. 4.)

(5.) A gratuitous justification furnishes no excuse for inaction and sin, but leads to more entire obedience, (v. 7.)

(6.) Fidelity in God's service shall be gloriously rewarded, (v. 7.)

(7.) Angelic guidance shall be given to the faithful people of God, (v. 7.)

(8.) The ceremonial system of the O. T. typified Christ, (v. 8.)

(9.) The atonement of Christ is perfect, and needs no addition of penances or human merits, (v. 9.)

(10.) The tendency of true religion is toward peace and prosperity, to men individually and collectively, (v. 10.)

1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his sev-

en lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof

4 So I answered and spake to the

VISION V.

CHAPTER 4.—*The Golden Candlestick, and the two Olive Trees.*

ANALYSIS.

I. A golden candlestick symbolizes the theocracy, and two olive trees the source of its strength. The prophet asks the meaning of the vision, (v. 1—5.)

II. The teaching of the vision: that all the work of the Church was to be done by the supply of divine strength, and hence all obstacles would vanish, (v. 6—11.)

III. The explanation of the various parts of the symbolical vision, (v. 12—14.)

V. 1—6. "And the angel who spoke with me returned, and awaked me as a man who is awaked from his sleep: and he said unto me, 'What seest thou?' And I said, 'I have looked and behold a candlestick all of gold, and a bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps upon it, and seven tubes to each lamp on the top of it: and two olive trees, one on the right hand of the bowl, and one on the left hand.' And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, 'What are these, my lord?' Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, 'Dost thou not know what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, 'This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, and not by power, but by my spirit, saith Jehovah of Hosts.'"

A PAUSE seems to have occurred after the preceding vision, and the prophet, for a time, to have relapsed

angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord?

5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? and I said, No, my lord.

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the

LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

7 Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it.

into his ordinary and normal state. This state compared with the prophetic ecstasy, was as sleep to waking; the ordinary state of the soul being so insensible to those impressions that were made upon it in the prophetic condition. But he was soon roused from that state by the angel and bidden to look. He saw a candlestick of gold with a bowl on the top, having seven lamps, and each lamp furnished with seven feeding tubes, making forty-nine in all, and two olive trees standing beside the candlestick, from the two crowded branches of which the clustering olives were pouring a constant supply of golden colored oil into tubes that led into the bowl. The prophet inquires into the meaning of this vision, and after some delay is told, (v. 6,) that it conveys the truth that in carrying on the work of the Church, it is not by human power that it is either to be advanced or retarded, but by the strength of God.

The candlestick represented the Theocracy, the Church of God, an image of great beauty, showing her mission to be a light-bearer in a dark world. The material, gold, indicated the purity, preciousness and indestructibility of all that pertained to her. The seven lamps, and seven times seven tubes, indicated, by the use of the

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house ; his hands shall also finish it ; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things ? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven ; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

number of perfection, the manifold modes by which her light was to be given out, and the manifold modes by which grace was to be imparted. The olive trees represented the source of that grace, the Spirit of God, from whom comes forth all supplies of strength for the Church.

Here, then, were these lamps burning continually, lamps that man's hand did not make, and does not feed, and yet supplied from a source that is exhaustless, the living trees that stand beside the candlestick. Now, if the strength to do God's work comes from God, the weakness of man is no obstacle, for when he is weak then is he strong. Zerubbabel may have but few visible resources, but the work was one that after all was to be completed by God, and not by man, and however feeble the Church might seem to be, there was more for her than against her. Hence, as the Jew gazed on this ceaseless flow of strength and grace, he could forget the febleness of man in the unfailing supply of the power of God.

V. 7. "Who art thou, thou great mountain before Zerubbabel ? Be a plain ! He shall bring forth the top-stone with shoutings, Grace ! Grace unto it."

But there were obstacles in the way, like a great

11 ¶ Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof?

mountain. These obstacles should be prostrated like a plain before him, (v. 7,) so that the work should be completed, the top-stone laid, and it should be seen that all was of grace. Hence they should not falter in the work before them.

V. 8—11. "And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have founded this house, and his hands shall finish it, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto you. For who will despise the day of small things? For they shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, these seven eyes of Jehovah, they run to and fro in the whole earth."

V. 8, 9, contain positive assurances that the temple shall be finished by Zerubbabel, and not left unfinished as it had been before, by the intrigues of their enemies.

V. 10 rebukes them for despising the feebleness of the Church in external resources, and overlooking her true glory. That glory lay in the fact that God's eye (the seven eyes) was upon her in love, and although those eyes see all that is in the earth, the most mighty and most magnificent, yet they see nothing that is mighty enough to destroy the Church, or magnificent enough to eclipse her true glory. The plummet (*stone of tin*, Heb.) in the hand of Zerubbabel indicated that the work was there going forward to completion.

V. 12—14. "And I answered and said unto him, 'What are these two olive trees on the right hand of the candlestick, and on the left?' And I answered again and said unto him, 'What are the two olive branches which through the tubes of gold pour out the

12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? 13 And he answered me and said, 'Knowest thou not what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' 'These are the two sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.' "

The meaning of the olive trees, or as the prophet sees more distinctly, of the two olive branches, is next explained. The two questions are asked, and the first left unanswered in vs. 11, 12, to draw special attention to the duality of the olive branches. To what does this refer? The answer is, to the two anointed ones that minister before God. Who are these? They refer to some standing channel of blessing from God, and are alluded to again in Rev. 11: 3, 4, in terms that cannot be mistaken. Without entering at length into the reasons for the opinion, we simply affirm that they refer to a duality of gracious manifestation from God, corresponding to a duality of necessity in the nature of man. There are two grand evils to be overcome, guilt and pollution, and they demand two standing sources of blessing, the one to remove the guilt by atonement, the other to remove the power of sin by giving a higher power of holiness. These two sources are embodied in two official forms, the only two that were connected with the theocracy as permanent elements, the sacerdotal and regal orders. They existed once in Melchisedek, but were ever afterwards divided, as in Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Zerubbabel, &c., &c., until the

Knowest thou not what these *be*? And I said, No, my lord. anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

14 Then said he, These *are* the two

time of the Messiah, who again combined them in his own person, and who by his work, made his people kings and priests unto God. This duality marked all the manifestations of God, for it rested on a deep necessity of human nature, and it was then embodied in the persons of Joshua and Zerubbabel. Since then they were so essential to the theocracy, the people need not suppose that God would allow them to perish, but would continue them in existence until he should come who was a priest after the order of Melchisedek.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The Church is the same under both dispensations, for the promises made to her then are only fulfilling now, showing that then and now she was the same Church. The candlestick is the same, though the tubes may be changed, and the Church is the same, though her official channels be totally altered.

(2.) The Church is the light of the world, and only as Christians show forth their light are they fulfilling their duty, (v. 1—3.)

(3.) God has provided an unfailing source of strength for his people. Their supply comes not from a dead reservoir of oil, but a living olive tree, that is ever drawing from the rich earth its generous furnishings, and then distilling them by seven pipes, a perfect

number, to those who are to be burning and shining lights, (v. 1—3.)

(4.) The whole work of religion in the heart of the individual, and throughout the world, is of grace. Christ is at once the corner-stone and the cope-stone of the Church; and as he was greeted with shoutings of “grace!” when he came the first time, much more shall he when he comes the second time, without sin to salvation, (v. 7.)

(5.) We are prone to judge of God’s work by man’s standard; and because we see but a narrow stream from the fountain, doubt or deny the river, (v. 9.)

(6.) It is not only unwise, but it is wicked to be disheartened because of the external feebleness of the Church, compared with the work she has to do, and the enemies she has to encounter. God is her strength, her glory and her hope, and to despair of her is to deny God, (v. 10.)

(7.) The doctrine and discipline of the Church, the truth and power that God has lodged in her organization and her ordinances, are still the standing channels through which the spirit pours the oil of grace and strength, and hence should both be kept pure and unclogged, (v. 11—14.)

1 Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll.

thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

2 And he said unto me, What seest thou? 3 Then said he unto me, This is the

VISION VI.

CHAPTER 5 : 1—4.—*The Flying Roll.*

ANALYSIS.

I. An outstretched roll is seen flying through the air, twenty by ten cubits, (v. 1, 2.)

II. The meaning of the vision. A threatening against all transgressors of either table of the law, (v. 3, 4.)

V. 1—4. “Then I turned and raised my eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he (*the interpreting angel*) said unto me, ‘What dost thou see?’ And I said, ‘I see a flying roll, in length twenty cubits, and in breadth ten cubits.’ Then he said unto me, ‘This is the curse that goes forth before the face of the whole land, for every thief shall be cut off according to this side, and every perjurer shall be cut off according to that side. I have caused it to go forth, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and it shall go into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that swears falsely by my name, and it shall dwell in the midst of it, and it consumes their house, and its wood and its stone.’”

THE import of this vision is threatening, to show that the object of the prophet was to produce genuine penitence. The parts are significant. A roll, probably of parchment, is seen, 30 by 15 feet, the exact dimensions of the temple porch, where the law was usually read, showing that it was authoritative in its utterance, and connected with the theocracy. Being a written thing,

curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off *as* on this side, according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off *as* on that side, according to it.

4 I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into

it showed that its contents were solemnly determined, beyond all escape or repeal. It was flying, to show that its threats were ready to do their work, and descend on every transgressor. It was unrolled, or the dimensions could not have been seen, to show that its warnings were openly proclaimed to all, that none might have an excuse. It was written on both sides, to connect it with the tables of the law, and show its comprehensive character. One side denounced perjury, a sin of the first table, the other stealing, a sin of the second; and both united in every case where a thief took the oath of expurgation to acquit himself of the charge of theft. This hovering curse would descend in every such case into the house of the offender, and consume even its most enduring parts, until it had thoroughly done its work of destruction.

The immediate application of this vision was to those who were neglecting the erection of God's house to build their own, and thus robbing God, and forswearing their obligations to him. On such the prophet declares a curse shall descend, that will make this selfish withholding of their efforts in vain, for the houses they would build should be consumed by God's wrath.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

The teaching of this vision is that of the law. It

the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

blazes with the fire and echoes the thunder of Sinai, and tells us that our God is a consuming fire. We learn thus a lesson of instruction to those who have succeeded the prophets of the Old Testament, as the authorized expounders of God's will under the New. It is needful to tell the love of God, to unfold his precious promises, and to utter words of cheer and encouragement. But it is also needful to declare the other aspect of God's character: There is a constant tendency in the human heart to abuse the goodness of God to an encouragement of sin. Hence, ministers of the gospel must declare this portion of God's counsel as well as the other. They must declare to men who are living in neglect of duty, that withholding what is due to God, either in heart or life, is combined robbery and perjury. For those who thus sin, God has prepared a ministry of vengeance. There is something most vivid and appalling in this image of the hovering curse. It flies viewless, and resistless, poising like a falcon over her prey, breathing a ruin the most dire and desolating, and when the blind and hardened offender opens his door to his ill-gotten gains, this mystic roll, with its fire-tracery of wrath, enters into his habitation, and fastening upon his cherished idols, begins its dread work of retribution, and ceases not until the fabric of his guilty life has been totally and irremediably consumed.

5 ¶ Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what *is* this that goeth forth.

6 And I said, What *is* it? and he said, This *is* an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This *is* their resemblance through all the earth.

VISION VII.

CHAPTER 5 : 5—11.—*The Woman in the Ephah.*

ANALYSIS.

I. An ephah is seen coming forth, in which a woman was sitting. A talent of lead was raised up and laid on the ephah, which was then lifted up by two winged women and carried into the land of Shinar, (v. 5—11.)

II. The explanation of the vision: that the people for their sins should be carried into a long and distant exile, (v. 8, 11.)

V. 5—11. "Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, 'Lift up, I pray thee, thine eyes, and see what this is that goeth forth.' And I said, 'What is this?' And he said, 'This is the ephah which goeth forth,' and he said, 'This is their appearance in all the land.' And behold a talent of lead was lifted up. 'But this is the woman that is sitting in the midst of the ephah.' And he said, 'This is wickedness.' And he thrust her down into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the stone of lead upon its mouth. And I raised my eyes and saw, and behold two women came out, and the wind in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they raised the ephah between earth and heaven. And I said to the angel that talked with me, 'Where do these carry the ephah?' And he said unto me, 'To build for it a house in the land of Shinar: and it (*the house*) shall be settled and fixed on its own base.'"

THIS vision, like the preceding, is of a warning character, and somewhat more obscure in its symbolical apparatus. A dim outline rises to the eye of the prophet,

7 And behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead : and this *is* a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

8 And he said, This *is* wickedness.

And he cast it into the midst of the ephah ; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

9 Then lifted I up mine eyes, and

to which the angel calls his attention, but which he cannot at first distinctly make out. The angel tells him that it is an ephah, a very common dry measure containing about three pecks. He then sees a mass of lead containing about a *cut.*, lifted up above the measure, and on looking more closely he sees a woman in the measure. This woman is then violently thrust down into the measure, and the mass of lead laid upon its mouth, after which two winged women carry it away into the land of Shinar, where it was to be permanently deposited in a house prepared for it there.

The general meaning of this is to show, that when the measure of the people's wickedness became full, then their punishment should come, and they should again be carried into the land of their enemies in exile, not for seventy years, but for a long time. As the flying roll symbolized the certainty and completeness of their punishment, so this vision indicated its swiftness and mode. The ephah is selected simply as a common dry measure, to symbolize the thought that there is a certain measure of sin beyond which the people cannot go with impunity. The woman sitting in it, represents the Jewish people, by a common figure. The phrase, "this is their appearance (Heb. *eye*) in all the land," v. 6, simply means, this represents that to which the people are looking, or tending, viz., to fill up the

looked, and behold, there came out wings; for they had wings like the two women, and the wind *was* in their wings of a stork: and they lifted up

measure of their sin, and when they have filled up the measure of their sin, God will lay upon them their punishment. When the prophet perceives the woman in the measure, he is told that this is (represents) wickedness, *i. e.* that of the Jewish people. Henderson thinks that the wickedness here represented was idolatry, and that the vision predicted the removal of idolatry from Palestine to Babylon. But there is no reason at all to limit it thus, but rather the contrary. Idolatry had not been a sin of the Jews for a century, and would hardly be represented as an existing thing, as this vision does. It did not exist in the land, and could not, therefore, be removed out of it. Moreover, it was not removed to Babylon, in any sense, literally or figuratively, and did not remain there as the vision declares, (v. 11,) for the Mohammedan occupants of that region are not idolaters. Hence the explanation that refers it to the entire wickedness of the Jewish people of all kinds, is more consistent with the preceding vision, and gives a better sense. The mass of lead symbolizes the heavy judgment that God was holding over them, and which at the fulness of time he would allow to fall. Accordingly, the wicked woman is thrust down into the small measure, crushed and doubled together, and the heavy weight laid upon her to keep her thus prostrate. Then there appear two winged messengers, with outstretched pinions, as if the wind was raising them up, and their

the ephah between the earth and the heaven. talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?

10 Then said I to the angel that

wings were strong for flight like those of the stork. There were two, because it required two persons to lift such a measure. They symbolized the messengers of God's wrath that should desolate Judea, and banish the people. They were to carry it into Shinar, which is here the symbol for an enemy's country, and not the exact country to which they were to be exiled. There it was to be put in a house, shut up, and this house to be built strongly and securely for a permanent habitation, to show that this exile would not be like the first, a brief sojourn, but a long, weary and enduring banishment from the land of their fathers; when their resting should not be on God, or on the rock Christ Jesus, but on "their own base," they should be left to themselves, weighed down like lead with judicial blindness, stupidity, darkness, and hardness of heart.

The vision then predicted what happened four hundred years afterwards, when the measure of their iniquity being full by the rejection and murder of the Messiah, their hearts being gross and their ears heavy, the hour of vengeance came. Then appeared the Roman eagles, and after the most desperate struggle, the Jewish nation was crushed, and scattered to the four winds, wandering in enemies' countries, not resting on the promise of God, but weighed down with leaden obstinacy, and resting on their own works and righteous-

11 And he said unto me. To build it shall be established, and set there it an house in the land of Shinar : and upon her own base.

ness. How striking the symbol ! how fearful the fulfilment !

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Every individual, and every nation, has a measure of sin ; and until that measure is filled up, God's long-suffering will wait for repentance and reformation, (v. 5, 6.)

(2.) There hangs above each sinner a crushing weight of wrath, poised and ready to descend with overwhelming destruction, (v. 7.)

(3.) If the measure is filled up, the weight shall fall and crush the sinner with its ponderous mass of punishment, (v. 8.)

(4.) The finally impenitent shall be driven from God into gloomy exile, and left to himself, "to rest on his own base," to be subject to the thrall of his own lawless lusts that he has so long pampered into strength, and to reap as he has sowed, through a long and limitless banishment, (v. 11.)

1 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. 2 In the first chariot were red

VISION VIII.

CHAPTER 6 : 1—8.—*The Four Chariots.*

ANALYSIS.

I. The vision. Four chariots with four differently colored horses come forth from between two brazen mountains, (v. 1—4.)

II. The meaning of the vision: that they were God's agencies in executing his purposes of wrath and mercy on earth, (v. 5, 6.)

III. The result of these agencies, protection to the people of God, punishment to their enemies, (v. 7, 8.)

V. 1—8. "And I turned and lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold four chariots came out from between two mountains, and the two mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot piebald and fleet (*or strong*) horses. And I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, 'What are these, my lord?' And the angel answered and said unto me, 'These are the four winds of the heavens, going forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth. That which has the black horses goes forth to the north country, and the white go forth following them; and the piebald go forth to the south country.' And the fleet went forth, and they desired to go that they might walk through the earth; and he said, 'Go walk through the earth;' and they walked through the earth! And he cried to me, and spake to me saying, 'Behold these that go forth into the land of the north have quieted my spirit in the land of the north.' "

THE scene of this vision is in all probability the valley of Jehoshaphat, which lies between Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. The reason for selecting this spot

horses; and in the second chariot
black horses;

horses; and in the fourth chariot
grizzled and bay horses.

3 And in the third chariot white

4 Then I answered and said unto

was its proximity to the temple, which was the standing symbol of the theocracy. This was the nearest spot to the temple, accessible to chariots, and hence the most suitable for locating a vision which referred to the theocracy. The prophet saw four chariots coming forth from between two mountains of brass. The chariot being used mainly in war, and on great state occasions, was a symbol of authority, and owing to its warlike use, of judgment. The number four has the same significance here as in the four winds of Daniel, the four cherubs of Ezekiel, the four angels at the four corners of the earth in the Apocalypse, and the four horns and four artificers of the second vision. Alluding to the four points of the compass, it is the symbol of universality, a judgment that goes in every direction. The two mountains were the mountains that stood around Jerusalem, on one of which the temple stood. They symbolized the immovable foundation on which the theocracy rested, viz., the promise and purpose of God; and to give strength to this symbol, the mountains are represented as brazen. Brass being a much more valuable metal, both absolutely and relatively, to the ancients than it is to the moderns, it serves to indicate at once the strength of the protection with which God surrounds the Church, like a mountain of brass, and the resistless might that accompanied the judgment that was

the angel that talked with me, What
are these, my lord?

5 And the angel answered and said
unto me, These *are* the four spirits

thus threatened. The duality of the mountains is probably not significant, or if so, has essentially the same meaning with the two olive trees of vision fifth. But it probably refers only to the locality of the temple, which being on Moriah, a chariot could only approach it by coming between two mountains. The chariots, or winds, had been stationed at the temple, awaiting the commands of God, and having received their commands the prophet sees them going forth to obey them. The colors of the horses are significant. Red, the color of blood indicates carnage; black, sorrow and death; white, victory; and piebald, a combination of them all, with the additional epithet of strong or fleet, to show the nature of the judgments to be inflicted. The angel declares these chariots to be the four winds of heaven, that are often in Scripture the symbols of the means employed by God, to execute his will. Two of the chariots go toward the north, the country of Babylon; one toward the south, Egypt, (these being the two greatest enemies of Israel at that period;) and one, the red probably, here also called fleet, went through all the earth, so as to include all possible enemies. More chariots are sent against Babylon than Egypt because of her greater cruelty and guilt. The black horses that went forth to Babylon, symbolized the trouble that was coming upon that haughty city, and the white horses that followed indicated that this trouble

of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

6 The black horses which *are* therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and

would terminate in conquest and subjugation. This was fulfilled about three years after the utterance of the prophecy, when Babylon revolted against the Persian rule, and was completely destroyed by Darius. God explains the vision by declaring that the chariots that went forth against Babylon had appeased his wrath by inflicting punishment on that country, and it follows that the same is true of the other chariots, although the fact is not specifically mentioned. Babylon being the great enemy of the Jews, it only is mentioned, and others follow as a matter of course. For illustrations of the phrase, "quieted my spirit," in the sense of "pacify," see Ezek. 5: 13; 16: 41; 24: 13.

Such is the vision. The general meaning of it is very clear. The enemies of the Church shall be punished, is the motto of the picture, and the purport of the vision. The immediate application of the truth was to the existing circumstances of the Jewish church, but it contains a general proposition or law of the divine procedure that is now in fulfilment, and will so continue until the restitution of all things spoken of by the holy prophets since the world began. Following the preceding vision, which denounced wrath on the Jews, it declares that after the Jews have been punished, God will destroy their enemies, who will also be the enemies of the Church. Now, as the threatened punishment of

the grizzled go forth towards the south
country.

7 And the bay went forth, and
sought to go that they might walk to

the Jews is not yet completed, so this punishment which was to follow that completion is also incomplete, and the main fulfilment yet to come.

We have therefore in this vision an instance of what has been called the continuous fulfilment of prophecy. This takes place when the prophecy is not so much a simple prediction of facts, as the annunciation of a great principle of divine procedure, in the garb of existing and well-known facts, but yet equally applicable to other facts all along the history of God's dealings with man. Thus the most abstract and formulated statement of the essence of this vision is, the enemies of the Church shall be punished. Its immediate application was to Babylon and Egypt, the existing representatives of the ancient enmity of the serpent's seed, but this application is of course but a single one, that does not exclude the future examples of this principle of the divine government, that may and must arise. This is wholly different from the old double sense of prophecy, and is a most obvious and reasonable canon of interpretation.

And how striking the fulfilment of this threatening, when we remember the circumstances under which it was made. Could the haughty nobles of Babylon, in the gorgeousness of its magnificence, and the pride of its power, have heard the threatening of this obscure Jew, amidst the ruins of Jerusalem, with what derision

and fro through the earth : and he through the earth. So they walked said, Get you hence, walk to and fro to and fro through the earth.

and contempt would they have treated the threat ! The anathema that was so feebly uttered against the mightiest and richest city of the world, to the eye of sense seemed like the ravings of lunacy. Yet that feeble whisper was the uttered voice of Jehovah, and the elements of ruin in their remotest lurking-place heard the summons, and began to come forth. Slowly and silently did they come up to this dread work, and yet surely and resistlessly, until the glory of these high palaces was dimmed, and the magnificence of these gardens and temples was covered, and now the winds whistle through the reeds of the Euphrates, where Babylon then sat in her pride ; and loneliness, desolation and death are stationed there the sentinel witnesses of the truth that His word returns not to him void, that His spirit is quieted in the land of the north.

Egypt also was yet proud and powerful, Memphis still sat in her queenly pride by the old and solemn Nile, and Thebes still retained the glory of that wonderful architecture that yet amazes the world. They had stood thus from the hoariest antiquity, and how should it be thought that at the bidding of the descendant of an Egyptian slave, this ancient magnificence would depart. Yet this bidding was obeyed, and wave after wave of desolation swept over this haughty land, until now the pyramids, the sphinxes and the temples of the

8 Then cried he upon me, and that go toward the north country have spake unto me, saying, Behold, these quieted my spirit in the north country.

mighty past, but mock the degenerate baseness of the mournful present.

Thus was it later in history with Greece and Rome, thus shall it be with guilty and godless Europe, thus shall it be with every enemy of the Church, who attempts to thwart the designs of God in the world. But as the final development of this vision of judgment was to be subsequent to the completion of the threatened punishment of the Jews, we know that it has not yet received its last and mightiest fulfilment. That shall take place only when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on all his enemies. Then, and not until then, shall this vision receive its last, its most terrible, and complete fulfilment, in the dread scenes of that day for which all other days were made.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The history of the world is all arranged and conducted in reference to the destinies of the Church, and the agencies that control that history go forth from the seat of the Church's great head, the unseen temple, (v. 1.)

(2.) God has in operation every species of agency, human and angelic, animate and inanimate, needful for

9 ¶ And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and
 10 Take of *them of* the captivity, go into the house of Josiah, the son of
even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Zephaniah;

the accomplishment of his purposes, and will send them forth at the proper time. Hence political changes and revolutions are, after all, only the moving of the shadow on the earthly dial-plate, that marks the mightier motions going forward in the heavens, (v. 2—8.)

VISION IX.

CHAPTER 6 : 9—15.—*The Crowning of Joshua.*

ANALYSIS.

I. The symbolic act. The prophet commanded to take of the silver and gold that a deputation from Babylon had brought, and make a crown to be placed on the head of Joshua, (v. 9—11.)

II. Its meaning. Joshua, the crowned high priest, typified the Messiah, who was to be at once priest and king, and who would complete the great work of redemption, and reconciliation between God and man, (v. 12—15.)

V. 9—15. “And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying: Take of (*them of*) the captivity, of Heldai, of Tobijah, of Jedaiah, and go thou in that day, and go to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, who (*all*) have come from Babylon: and take thou silver and gold, and make crowns, and place them on the head of Joshua the son of Jozedek, the high priest. And speak to him saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts: Behold a man whose name is BRANCH, from his place shall he grow up, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah. And he shall build the temple of Jehovah, and he shall bear majesty, and he sits and reigns upon his throne, and is a priest upon his throne, and the council of peace shall be between them both. And the crowns shall be to Helem and to Tobi-

11 Then take silver and gold, and head of Joshua the son of Josedech, make crowns, and set *them* upon the the high priest ;

jah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of Jehovah. And the far off shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah, and ye shall know that Jehovah of Hosts hath sent me unto you, and it shall be thus (*to you*) if ye will listen to the voice of Jehovah your God."

THIS vision concludes the revelations of that memorable night, and they end as they began, like other revelations of God, in Christ. In this closing vision, or rather living tableau, which he was commanded to have made in concluding the visions of the night, two things demand investigation : (1,) the symbolic action, and (2,) the meaning of it, as explained by God himself.

(1.) *The symbolic action.*

A deputation of Jews had brought gold and silver from Babylon to Jerusalem to aid in the erection of the temple. This deputation consisted of four men, who represented those by whom they were sent. This representative character appears in their names, which are significant, and which, in two cases, are changed, to call attention as it would seem to their significant character. Heldai, which means robust, is changed for Helem, which means strong ; Tobijah means the goodness of God ; Jedaiah is, God knows ; and Josiah, which signifies God founds, is changed for the kindred name Hen, grace, whilst the name of his father Zephaniah means God protects. In consequence of the peculiar grammatical construction of one clause, " who have come from Babylon," it has been supposed that Josiah was

12 And speak unto him, saying, The BRANCH; and he shall grow up
 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, say- out of his place, and he shall build the
 ing, Behold the man whose name is temple of the LORD :

not of the deputation, but a resident of Jerusalem at whose house they lodged, and this would seem to have been the interpretation of our English translators, by their transposition of this clause to another part of the verse. But the position of it after the name of Josiah seems to be designed to indicate him as one of the number, and giving the relative ("who") its usual meaning, we have a clear and consistent sense. It is only necessary to suppose that Josiah was the treasurer of the deputation, and that the gold and silver were at his house, to see why it was necessary to go there to obtain it for this symbolic purpose. The prophet was commanded to take the other members of the deputation, and obtain from the whole of them a portion of the precious metals they had brought with them from Babylon. Of this metal he was to make crowns, or perhaps one crown compounded of two or more parts, such as Christ is represented as wearing, Rev. 19 : 12, (many crowns or diadems.) The verb is singular. This diadem, or combined crown, was to be placed on the head of Joshua the high priest, to set forth a great fact in the future, which is explained in the succeeding verses. The symbolic action then was, to take the gold and silver of the deputation, and make a crown which was first to be placed on the head of Joshua, and afterwards hung up as a memorial in the temple.

13 Even he shall build the temple of and shall sit and rule upon his throne: the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and he shall be a priest upon his

(2.) *The explanation of this symbolic action.*

There are two points involved in this explanation: 1st, what is meant by putting the crown on Joshua; and 2d, why the material was taken from the treasure brought by the deputation.

1st. What did the crowning of Joshua signify? Joshua, as high priest, we have seen in Vision IV., to be himself a typical person, and hence was fitted to receive this symbolic act, which was significant of an investiture with kingly authority. This kingly authority could not be promised to Joshua individually, for the office was limited to the family of David. It must then have referred to him in his typical character, as the representative type of the Messiah. This is put beyond doubt by the epithet Branch, which is really one of the appellations of the Messiah, as may be seen in Jer. 23 : 5, 33 : 15, and Zech. 3 : 8. Hence the crowning of Joshua was a typical representation of the conferring of kingly power on the Messiah.

We have in vs. 12, 13, a description of the Messiah. The phrase "from his place shall he grow up," is a description of his obscure origin. He shall not openly descend from heaven, in visible glory and greatness, but shall slowly grow up out of the earth, in lowly humiliation. This was true of him as a man, for he was the humble carpenter's son for thirty years, and grew slowly in the shade as a Nazarene. It was true of him as Mes-

throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

14 And the crowns shall be to Heliem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah,

siah, for he was a root out of a dry ground, despised and rejected of man. It has been true of him as a recognized Saviour in the world, for his Church began as a little flock, and is yet in a minority among men. It is true of him as a life in each heart, for Christ is formed within us the hope of glory, gradually, first the blade, then the stalk, and then the full ear in the stalk. Hence this phrase is strikingly descriptive of the Messiah as he has been actually manifested in the person of Jesus.

The building of the temple of Jehovah, which is repeated for emphasis, to show its prominence in his work, is explained by Christ himself, when he says, "destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again," which in like manner has its full significance only in that Church which is at once the body of Christ, and the spiritual temple founded on apostles and prophets, with that corner-stone which the builders rejected. "Bearing the majesty," refers to the kingly glory that shall be his, in spite of his lowly origin. He shall bear the crown. This is more fully expressed by the words "he shall sit," (*i. e.* securely and permanently) "reign," as a king, though the beginning of his kingdom is thus obscure.

His character is more fully set forth in the next phrase, "a priest upon his throne," which asserts the kingly and priestly character of Messiah, as it is asserted

and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD. 15 And they *that are* far off shall come and build in the temple of the

in Ps. 110 : 4, “thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek,” *i. e.* a kingly priest, and a priestly king.

The phrase in v. 13, “the counsel of peace shall be between them both,” refers to the union of the priestly and kingly offices in the work of redemption. “The counsel of peace” is the counsel that produces peace, and this is done by Christ in the exercise of these two offices, by one of which he purchases redemption, and by the other applies it ; by the one expiates sin, and by the other extirpates it ; and thus reconciling man and God, causes peace on earth, and good will to man. We have, then, in these words a full description of the atoning work of the Messiah, and the application of that work in the development of the Church.

We are now able to see, 2dly, why the material for the crown was taken from the gold brought by the deputation. It was to typify the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church. This is directly asserted in v. 15, “and the far off,” (the very expression used by Paul in Eph. 2 : 17, to designate the Gentile Ephesians, “you that are afar off”) shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah, and carry forward his glorious kingdom. This is then an exact parallel to ch. 2 : 11, 8 : 10, Isa. 60 : 9, 10, and many other passages of a like purport. The silver and gold were brought from the distant captives, and the crown was to be hung up

LORD ; and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And *this* shall come to pass, if ye will

diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

in the temple as a memorial of the fact, that the distant outcast nations were coming, and would one day be admitted to the full privileges of the Church. The condition of this blessing is then given in the words that follow, declaring that if the theocratic people are faithful they shall retain their privileges, but if unfaithful, they shall be cut off, and the wild olive branches grafted into the original tree, and that the fulfilment of this prophecy would prove his divine mission as a prophet.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) We have here, then, a proclamation of the missionary character of the Church. Christ is yet a Branch, yet growing, and not yet revealed, and hence men reject him. But he is yet a king, despite of the lowliness of his Church, and the wickedness of men, and as such we must acknowledge him. It is only by resting upon him as a priest and as a king that our souls can find peace. We must be pardoned by his atonement, and governed by his laws, or we can never be at peace. To those who refuse to receive him in these offices, he will come again in power and great glory, to take vengeance on all his enemies, (v. 12, 13.)

(2.) The crown that yet hangs in the temple, is a call to missionary activity. We may be able to do but little, so were the Jews in Babylon, but that little must

be done, and God will bless us. We cannot go in person to this work, neither could they, but we may send our representatives as they did, to act in our place. Men are found willing to go far hence among the Gentiles, and only ask the Church to enable them to do so, and wo! to the church that refuses to respond. Obedience is the condition of inheritance, and if we refuse to listen to God, God will refuse to listen to us, and will cast us off from his kingdom as he did the faithless Jews, and we remain as do they, a fearful memorial of the danger of neglecting the commands of God. How shall the far off hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent. The missionary activity of the Church is the circulation of her life-blood; suspend this and she swoons, stop it and she dies, (v. 14.)

(3.) The two great themes of the preacher are sin and salvation; man a great sinner, Christ a great saviour; and the great test of piety in preacher and people is the fervency of the missionary spirit, (v. 15.)

PART II.—DIDACTIC.

CHAPTERS 7, 8.

THE occasion that called forth this portion of the prophecy, was a question of casuistry. There was but one fast appointed by the Mosaic law, the day of atone-

ment, and this was rather an incident connected with the day, than a prominent part of its observances. But in process of time other stated fasts were instituted among the Jewish people, which gradually became very stringent in their binding authority. One of these was on the anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the 17th day of the 4th month; or the month Thammuz, answering to the moon of July. A second was on the 9th day of the 5th month, Ab, (August,) commemorating the burning of the city by Nebuzaradan, and the destruction of the holy and beautiful house of their fathers. A third was on the 3d day of the 7th month, Tishri, (the moon of October,) in memory of the massacre of Gedaliah and others by Ishmael, as recorded in Jer. 41:1—10. A fourth was on the 10th of the 10th month, Tebeth, (January,) the day that Nebuchadnezzar commenced the siege of Jerusalem. These were all merely human appointments, but like all similar additions to God's ordinances, they soon obtain a control over the minds of the people that led them into superstition. They were observed with great care doubtless during the captivity, and even after the return of the people from Babylon. But after the return, a question as to the propriety of their continuance arose in the minds of some, for the solution of which they desired the declaration of the prophet. Having been instituted on account of special reasons, the query was, when the reasons are removed, shall the ob-

1 And it came to pass in the fourth fourth *day* of the ninth month, *even* year of king Darius, *that* the word of in Chisleu : the LORD came unto Zechariah in the

servances continue? *cessante ratione, cessatne ipsa lex?*—
 When the city is reinhabited, and the temple rebuilt, shall we continue to mourn stately their destruction? To answer these queries, a delegation was sent to the prophet, who, before replying to the direct question, reproves in ch. 7, the superstitions that had accumulated around the fasts, and then in ch. 8, answers the query in distinct and specific terms.

CHAPTER VII.

ANALYSIS.

I. A question about the propriety of continuing the stated fasts under the altered circumstances of the people, brings a delegation to the prophet to solve this doubt, (ch. 7: 1—3.)

II. The answer of the prophet.

(1.) A reproof of the selfish and godless motives that inspired their observances, (v. 4—7.)

(2.) An exhortation to the performance of weightier matters of the law, by the example of their ancestors, who, in spite of the warnings of the prophets to this effect, neglected these duties and were severely punished, (v. 8—14.)

(3.) A further exhortation to obedience by promises of the future prosperity of Jerusalem, (ch. 8 : v. 1—8.)

(4.) An exhortation to the vigorous prosecution of the erection of the temple by reason of the manifest favor of God already shown, and the fulfilment of the promises already made, (v. 9—12.)

2 When they had sent unto the lech, and their men and to pray before house of God, Sherezzer and Regem-me- the LORD,

(5.) A further motive to obedience drawn from the future extension of the theocratic blessings to the heathen, (v. 13—17.)

(6.) Having thus prepared their minds for the answer to the question about fasts, the prophet declares that they were all to be set aside as incongruous to the joyful condition of the theocracy, (v. 18, 19.)

(7.) He then concludes with a prediction of the calling of the Gentiles, of great dramatic beauty, thus linking the humble and struggling present with the magnificent and conquering future, and showing that all these passing duties of the present, were significant and important only because of their connection with the mightier unfoldings of the purposes of Jehovah in the scenes of the latter-day glory, (v. 20—23.)

The preliminary facts are stated in ch. 7 : 1—3.

V. 1—3. “And it was so in the fourth year of Darius the king, that the word of Jehovah was to Zechariah in the fourth (*day*) of the ninth month, in Chislen. And Bethel sent Sherezzer and Regem Melech, and their men, to pray before the face of Jehovah; and to speak to the priests which were in the house of Jehovah of Hosts, and to the prophets, saying; Ought I to weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done for so many years?”

The date of this transaction was two years after the symbolic visions of the preceding portion, and the temple was therefore advanced near to its completion. The condition of the theocracy was prosperous and promising, so that the people began to doubt the propriety of indulging mournful memories of the past, when

3 *And* to speak unto the priests hosts, and to the prophets, saying, which *were* in the house of the LORD of Should I weep in the fifth month, sepa-

there was so much to excite joyful hopes of the future.

The only difficulty in these verses is in the second, where our version translates it, “when they had sent unto the house of God Sherezzer,” &c. This makes the singular verb (שֶׁזֶרְזָר) impersonal, and makes *Beth-el* an accusative, referring it to the temple. But the temple is never called *Beth-el*, but *Beth-Jehovah*, as in v. 3, and moreover the use of it in this clause would be rather tautological, as the latter part of the verse explains the where, and the why of this mission. Hence Maurer and Hengstenburg, following Lightfoot, refer *Beth-el* (the house of God) to the congregation, or the people of Israel. But this is equally unauthorized. There are instances of this tropical use of *beth*, referring to the people of Israel, but as far as we are aware of them, always in connection with Jehovah the covenant name of God, and never with El, which only expresses an attribute which belongs in smaller measure to creatures. *Beth-el* is uniformly used as the name of the old city of Luz, where the ark was for so long a time kept, and which for this reason was regarded as one of the sacred cities of the land. Usage, therefore, requires us to give it the same signification here, and the sense is a perfectly good one. The people of this old and sacred city would naturally be among the first to discuss such questions as these, and to send to Jerusalem for their solution.

rating myself, as I have done these so many years?

4 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,

5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy

Hence it is said “Bethel sent,” or the inhabitants of Bethel sent, &c., and in the reply it is intimated that the query was from a single city, for it is said, v. 5, “speak unto *all* the people of the land,” as if to assure them that the reply was designed to have a scope wider than the source of the question. There is no reason for departing from the usual meaning of the terms. This is the view taken by Henderson, Ewald, Blayney, Hitzig, and the LXX. The fast of the 5th month is mentioned, because that was the commemoration of the destruction of the temple, an observance which would seem incongruous after the temple was rebuilt.

The deputation was sent first to pray, perhaps that God might solve their doubts, or bestow a fresh prosperity on Israel, and afterwards to seek at the mouth of his ministers the solution of their difficulties. The phrase rendered “pray,” means to stroke the face, then to flatter by caressing, then to supplicate, or pray. (See Ex. 32 : 11 ; 1 Sam. 13 : 12.)

But the Jewish people needed something more than information in regard to the continuance of this fast. The whole doctrine of fasting had become overlaid with an incrustation of formalism and superstition, that needed to be broken up. Fasting had become not a means but an end, a mere form, as it is in Mohammedan and Papal countries at this day, and had attached to it an

years, did ye at all fast unto me, *even* did drink, did not ye eat *for yourselves*,
to me? and drink *for yourselves*?

6 And when ye did eat, and when ye 7 *Should ye not hear* the words which

opus operatum efficacy that wholly destroyed its real value. They thought that God must bless them, indeed was bound to bless them, if they rigidly observed these outward rites, whatever was their inward character. Thus formalism in religion acted in the time of the restoration, precisely as it acted in every subsequent period in the history of the Church, leading men to be scrupulous about the mint, anise and cummin, the postures, costumes and rubrics of religion, whilst the weightier matters of justice toward man, and piety toward God, were neglected and forgotten. Hence before a mere question of ritual observance could be settled, it was important that their minds should be set right on the deeper questions of their spiritual relations to God. The prophet, then, instead of answering the question about the fast of the 5th month, proceeds to rebuke them for their selfish and stupid will-worship, and their ignorance in regard to the whole subject of fasting, not only as to this, but as to all the stated fasts that they had been observing.

V. 4—6. "Then was the word of Jehovah of Hosts to me, saying: Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, these seventy years, did ye fast unto me, unto me? And when ye ate, and when ye drank, was it not to yourselves that ye were eating, and to yourselves that ye were drinking?"

The grand error of all their observances, was that they were "without God;" not done because of his

the LORD hath cried by the former prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

command, not supported by his authority, not directed to his glory, and not therefore deserving his approbation. The repetition of the phrase “unto me,” at the close of the 5th versè, is emphatic, and gives the key to the passage. Their fasting and feasting were alike selfish and godless, alike wanting in elevated aim, and alike centered on themselves. The radical principle of all piety, reference to God, was wanting in all their conduct, and hence before asking questions about the form, it were better to secure the substance; before raising questions about the outward manifestations of piety, it were better to assure themselves that they have piety itself.

But some might be disposed to plead ignorance as an excuse. The prophet meets this evasion by telling them that this very ignorance was culpable in them, for they had the teachings of the former prophets on this very question of fasting.

V. 7. “Are not these the words which Jehovah cried by the hand of the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in peace, and also her cities round about her, and when the south and the plain was inhabited?”

The English version makes “words” the object of a verb understood, thus making the verse an expostulation for disobedience, rather than an additional asseveration. But as the particle כִּי is sometimes used to designate the subject of the verb, it is more natural to take

8 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother :

10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the

poor ; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the

it so here, thus obviating the necessity for an ellipsis. These are not novelties that are spoken in your ears, or words that have had no corroborating proofs. Are they not the very teachings of the older prophets? Did not Isaiah (ch. 58) and others assure you that it was not such a fast that God had chosen? Did they not warn your fathers, when all was yet prosperity, that such conduct would bring a curse on the land? And did not that curse descend and depopulate Jerusalem, and those regions round about her that once were crowded with life? Has not God then taught you alike by his word and his providence, and can you under such circumstances urge the plea of ignorance? If you follow your fathers in their sin, must you not also follow them in their suffering?

But that there might be no doubt in regard to the duties omitted, and the teachings neglected, the prophet gives an epitome of both in the following verses :

V. 8—10. "And the word of Jehovah was to Zechariah saying : Thus spake Jehovah of Hosts (*to your fathers*) saying : Judge the judgment of truth, and work kindness and compassion, every man toward his neighbor : and the widow, and the fatherless, the stranger and the poor, do not oppress, and do not devise evil in your hearts, any man against his neighbor."

These were the instructions given to their fathers by

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 the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man

the former prophets; but how these were received, and what were the consequences of this reception, are next pointed out.

V. 11—14. “But they (*your fathers*) refused to hear, and presented a refractory shoulder (*one that refused to wear the yoke*), and made heavy their ears against hearing: And their heart they made an adamant against hearing the law, and the words which Jehovah of Hosts did send in his spirit by the hand of the former prophets, wherefore there was great wrath from Jehovah of Hosts. And it came to pass, that as He cried and they did not hear, so they cry and I hear not, saith Jehovah of Hosts. And I scattered them to all nations whom they knew not, and the land was desolate after them, so that none went out or came in, and they made the land of desire to be desolate.”

The meaning of these verses is very obvious. The disobedience of their fathers, and the punishment that followed, are held up to warn them against following in their footsteps. As they refused to wear the yoke of obedience, God laid upon them the yoke of oppression; and as they hardened their hearts like the diamond against God's word, God broke these hard hearts by his judgments. When these judgments came down on them, they cried to God, but as they had refused to hear him, he then refused to hear them. The change of tense in v. 13, from the preterite in the first clause to the future in the second, is not accidental, but designed to show that the action is still continued,

passed through nor returned : for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

8 : 1 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; I was jealous for Zion with great jea-

lousy, 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 ;

which is the force of the Hebrew future in such a connection as this. (See Nordheimer's Grammar, § 967, l. a.) The meaning is that God had refused to hear their cry, and continued to do so even to the present time. Thus they had closed the throne of grace against themselves, and opened the throne of judgment. From this throne came forth the mandate of destruction, like a whirlwind, scattering them among their enemies, and leaving their pleasant land desolate, and desolate by their own wilful and persevering disobedience. The land of desire or delight was Canaan. (See Jer. 3 : 19.)

Having urged them to obedience by the fate of their fathers, the prophet next urged them by promises drawn from the future prosperity of Jerusalem, (ch. 8 : 1—8.)

V. 1—3. "And the word of Jehovah of Hosts was to me saying, Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, I was jealous toward Zion with great jealousy, and with great fury was I jealous toward her. Thus saith Jehovah, I have returned to Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called 'city of the truth,' and the mountain of Jehovah, 'mountain of holiness.'"

The metaphor of the first verse is so common and obvious as to require no explanation, and yet it is full of instruction. God demands the whole heart, and will not be content with a divided throne. As the husband cannot brook the estrangement of his wife's affections to

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 very age.

5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.

a rival, so God cannot allow the bestowal of our affections supremely to any other object. This is idolatry, and as such will be punished with intense severity, either in this world or in the next. But he assures them, (v. 3,) that this outburst of anger is past, and that now he has returned to Jerusalem with his former love, and will dwell in her midst. God's presence in heaven creates all its bliss, and God's presence on earth will make it an antepast of heaven. But this will manifest itself in an appropriate way. God is truth and holiness, and they who enjoy his presence must partake of both. Hence Jerusalem was to be a city of truth, and Moriah a mountain of holiness. These phrases which are drawn from Isaiah, are used in the same sense as in the older prophet, and refer to the theocracy whose seat was in Jerusalem, and therefore predict not simply the temporal enlargement of the nation, but the permanent enlargement of the Church. This future prosperity is further described in the next verses.

V. 4, 5. "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, there shall yet sit old men and old women, in the streets of Jerusalem, and the man whose staff is in his hand for multitude of days. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in the streets of it."

The image here presented is one of great force and beauty. The city rises before us as the glow of sunset

6 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts.

begins to steal over Olivet, and the lengthening shadows begin to warn the laborer home. The streets are not silent or deserted, as they have hitherto been, but there sits the old man gazing on the scenes of peaceful beauty before him, while the aged companion of his earlier years sits by his side, to enjoy with him the freshening breeze that comes cool and sweet from the distant sea, while before them and around them are the merry shout, the joyous glee, and glad gambols of happy childhood, whose ringing echoes mingle sweetly with the tinkle of the bells and the lowing and bleating of the flocks that come softly from the hills as they hie them homeward to the nightly fold. There is an exquisite beauty in this picture that would strike a Jewish mind with peculiar force, to which the promise of old age and posterity was one of the richest that could be made. Indeed, the presence of the two extremes of life is one of the usual signs of prosperity. Old age and childhood not only grace a community, the one by its venerableness, and the other by its beauty, but they also prove its peace and prosperity. When war, famine, pestilence or anarchy, have been raging, there are but few of either class, for their feebleness makes them the earliest victims. Hence in the streets of Jerusalem, there were but few of either in her desolation, for even those who did remain abstained from coming forth from

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; the east country, and from the west Behold, I will save my people from country;

their houses through fear. But the time was coming when security would be so general, that old and young would meet in the peaceful streets without fear of molestation or injury.

In looking at the wider scope of this prediction, which sets forth the enlargement of the Church, although we may not say that it refers to the children of the Church whose connection with it has been sealed by the baptismal blessing, yet we will say, that no language could, with more significance and beauty, set forth this fact in the New Testament church, than this beautiful promise, of the children that shall be seen in the streets of the holy city.

But there seemed to be something almost incredible in these promises, and their faith was staggered by the very greatness of the blessing. It is therefore added, to meet this feeling,

V. 6. "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, if it is wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, is it also wonderful in my eyes, saith Jehovah of Hosts?"

The common error of men in regard to God, is judging of him by themselves. Under the influence of this error, the Jews thought such promises incredible. But God assures them that they must not judge him by themselves, for though to their pusillanimous weakness it seemed a thing too wonderful for belief, yet it was not so to his mighty and unlimited strength.

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.

9 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts ;

V. 7, 8. "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, behold, I am he saving my people, from the land of the east, and from the land of the setting sun. And I will lead them, (*viz. from these lands to Jerusalem,*) and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness."

The terms of this prediction carry us beyond any facts at that time existing, and refer to events then future. It predicts a return of the Jews from the west as well as the east, whilst at this time the only dispersion existing, was toward the east in Babylon. Hence, an universal dispersion is implied in this universal restoration, the terms, from east to west, being inclusive of the entire earth. This general dispersion did not occur until the final fall of Jerusalem, since which there has been no general restoration of the Jews, either in a literal or a figurative sense. Hence the main facts predicted, are yet future. That they include a literal restoration of the Jews to their own land is probable, but that this is the main purport of the prophecy, is just as improbable. There is something more than a mere political restoration required by the general drift of the prophecy, which is spiritual and not temporal, and which therefore demands a spiritual reunion to the spiritual theocracy, or the blood-bought and blood-washed Church of God. And this is particularly demanded by the covenant formula of v. 8, "they shall be my people, and I will be their God," which is always

Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which *were* in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.

10 For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither *was there any* peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbor.

the exponent of spiritual blessings, and the fact is put beyond all question by the explanatory addendum, "in truth and righteousness," which expressly affirms that this restoration and union are not to be outward, visible and temporal, but inward, invisible and spiritual. They will be a sincere and justified people, as he will be a true and pardoning God. Hence, whilst the general sense of the prophecy has been fulfilled in every case wherein prosperity was bestowed on the Jewish nation before the advent of Christ, its terms have never been fully met by any event that has yet occurred, and we are to look for the grand restoration among those latter-day things that are to complete the restoration of all things spoken of by the holy prophets before the world began.

Having predicted this future prosperity to the theocracy, he uses this as a motive to urge them to the energetic prosecution of the rebuilding of the temple, (v. 9—12.)

V. 9, 10. "Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, strengthen your hands, ye that in these days hear these words by the mouth of the (*same*) prophets who (*were*) in that day, when the house of Jehovah of Hosts was founded, that the temple might be built. For before these days there was no hire of a man, and hire of a beast, there was also none. And to him going out and coming in, (*the traveller,*) there was no peace from the enemy, and I stirred up all men, every man against his neighbor."

11 But now I *will not be* unto the residue of this 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*.

He urges them to carry forward the great work of the temple, as the proper mode of testifying their faith and hope in God, and enforces these urgencies by an appeal to their experience. The same prophets that promised prosperity at the foundation of the temple, (viz. himself and Haggai,) now promised yet greater prosperity if that temple was pushed on to final completion. He challenges an investigation into the truth of the predictions then given, and shows their fulfilment before their eyes. Then all was confusion, insecurity and trouble. Labor was not rewarded, for no man had the means of doing so, or the secure enjoyment of his property to induce him to employ either man or beast. Robbers and marauding parties of their enemies infested the country so much, that no man could travel through it without danger of becoming a victim. And to this external peril there was added internal strife, every man against his neighbor, so that all was anarchy and confusion. Such was the condition of affairs when the temple was founded, but as they prosecuted this work, prosperity and peace began to return, and now the whole aspect of things was changed, giving token that God had opened the windows of heaven and poured out upon them a blessing. Hence they had evidence before their eyes of the faithfulness of God to the words

13 And it shall come to pass, *that as* so will I save you, and ye shall be a
 ye were a curse among the heathen, O blessing ; fear not, *but* let your hands
 house of Judah, and house of Israel ; be strong.

of his holy prophets. The continuance of this returning prosperity is then further promised.

V. 11, 12. “ But now, not as in the former days, (*will*) I (*be*) to the remnant of this people, saith Jehovah of Hosts. For the seed shall be safe, (*Heb. of peace,*) the vine shall give her fruit, and the earth shall give her produce, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things.”

The argument here is from the past to the future ; as God has fulfilled his promises heretofore, so will he hereafter. Therefore go forward with this work. And when we ascend from the temporary facts that called forth this appeal, to the more unchanging ones that are connected with them, we find the same principle to be true. The faithfulness of God to his Church and people in the past, is a guarantee that he will not forsake them in the future, and an encouragement to go forward in the great work of erecting the spiritual temple, of which this material temple was but the outward symbol. Let our hands be strong in this great work, by remembering the fact that God has ever been faithful to his promises in the past, and therefore will continue to be faithful to them in the future.

That the extended view we have taken of the prophecy is the true one, appears yet further from the next paragraph, in which the calling of the Gentiles is distinctly predicted, first implicitly and then explicitly.

V. 13. “ And it shall be, that as ye have been a curse among the

14 For thus saith the Lord of hosts ; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath. saith the Lord of hosts, and I repented not: 15 So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah : fear ye not. 16 ¶ These *are* the things that ye

nations, oh house of Judah, and house of Israel, so I will save you, and ye shall be a blessing : fear not, (*therefore,*) strengthen your hands."

The words "curse" and "blessing," are here used, not in the sense of being a source of curse and blessing to the heathen, so much as an example of it so striking as to become proverbial. As the nations were accustomed to curse one another, by wishing that they might be as the Jews, so prostrate was their condition, so hereafter to wish this would be a form of benediction instead of malediction, so great would be their prosperity. For this concrete sense of these terms, see 2 Kings, 22 : 19 ; Jer. 24 : 9, and Gen. 12 : 2 ; Ps. 21 : 7.

V. 14—17. "For thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, as I determined to punish you (*the house of Israel*) when your fathers provoked me, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I repented not, so, on the contrary, I have determined, in these days, to do good to Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah, fear not. These are the words which ye must do, (*obey,*) speak the truth, every man to his neighbor ; truth and the judgment of peace judge in your gates ; devise not evil in your hearts, each man against his neighbor, and an oath of falsehood do not love, for all these are the things which I hate, saith Jehovah."

The form of address in v. 14, furnishes an illustration of the organic unity in which the theocratic people were regarded by God. He says, "as I determined to punish *you,*" when the determination was really to punish their fathers, with whom they were, however, connected in this

shall do ; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor ; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates :

17 And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor : and love no false oath : for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the Lord.

organic unity of the visible Church. A parallel but yet more striking instance of the same thing, is found in Haggai 2 : 5 : “ According to the word which I covenanted with *you* when ye came out of Egypt,” where the remoteness of date was so great, as to make the form of expression possible only in view of this federal unity, under the aspect of which, God delights to contemplate his Church. Those who deride Abrahamic covenants, and covenant relations and blessings, as mere sectarian figments, have with Esau’s blindness, though not, we trust, with Esau’s guilt, undervalued their birthright.

The argument is, that as the threatened punishment has been so faithfully inflicted, so the promised blessing will with equal fidelity be bestowed, and the argument is *à fortiori*, if the work of severity, so alien to God’s character, has been inflicted with such inflexible determination, how much more shall that of goodness, which is so much more consonant to his nature ?

The conditions of this promised blessing are set forth in v. 16, 17, and the demonstrative “ these ” with which the passage opens, indicates that a contrast is drawn between these things, and the mere ritual and rubrical questions that had engaged so much of their attention. As if he had said, the question of humanly ordained fasts is a very trifling one, for *these* are the weighty

18 ¶ And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me saying, 19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; The fast of the fourth *month*, and the

matters of the law, the observance of which is the great duty of the people. Do these things, and the minor questions of ceremonies will soon be decided. The sins specified are those that it seems were most rife, falsehood, perjury, fraud, and injustice. The expression "in your gates," shows that the reference is to judicial procedure, as the gate of the city was the place where such business was transacted. The reason given for avoiding these sins, viz., because God hated them, is instructive, for it brings out the great principle of piety that runs through all revelation, that religion consists in loving what God loves, and in hating what God hates, our nature being thus brought into conformity with His. When this is done, the creature has reached the completeness of its development, and hence this is the grand rule of conduct and attainment.

The prophet now at length proceeds to answer the question about fasts, and answers it more fully than it had been asked. The query was only in regard to a single fast, that which commemorated the burning of the city and temple, but the prophet adduces all the fasts, and gives the same rules regarding them all. They were all to be turned into days of rejoicing.

V. 18, 19. "And the word of Jehovah of Hosts was to me, saying, 'Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, The fast of the fourth (*month*), and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah for joy and gladness, and for festal observances, therefore love the truth and peace.' "

fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

For the fast of the fourth month (Thammuz 17th), in which Jerusalem was captured, see Jer. 52 : 6, 7; for that of the fifth month (Ab. 9th), see 2 Kings 25 : 8; for that of the seventh month (Tishri 3d), for the massacre of Gedaliah see Jer. 41 : 1—10; and for that of the tenth month (Tebeth 10th), the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem, see 2 Kings 25 : 1, and Jer. 52 : 4. So far from the continuance of these days of fasting, they were to be changed into days of festivity, so great would be the blessing on the people. When God makes the sun shine, the tear-drops should be dried; and when his blessing comes upon us, the memory of our sorrows should be used only to enhance our present joy. But the moral condition of this is reiterated, “love truth and peace.” God will bless, but not in spite of man’s wickedness.

The ground of this joy is then more fully set forth, and shown to be the conversion of the Gentiles, or the enlargement of the Church from its narrow Jewish form to its wide and comprehensive universality in the Messianic period.

V. 20—23. “Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, It shall yet be that peoples shall come, and the inhabitants of many cities. And they shall go, the inhabitants of one (*city*) to another, saying, ‘Let us go to pray before Jehovah and to seek Jehovah of Hosts.’ ‘I will go also.’ And they shall come, many peoples and many nations, to seek Jehovah of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, In those days (*it shall be*)

20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; come people, and the inhabitants of
It shall yet come to pass, that there shall many cities :

that they shall seize (*viz.* :) ten men from all the tongues of the nations, they shall seize the skirt of a man (*that is*) a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'

The form of this prophecy is highly dramatic. The scope of it is to predict the introduction of the Gentiles into the theocracy, and the consequent enlargement of the Church. This is described by a bold and beautiful personification. A movement is seen among the nations that have hitherto hated the Jews, a pervading and powerful movement, that stirs them to their remotest extent. The inhabitants of one city run to another in their eagerness, and cry, "let us go to pray before Jehovah, &c." The instant response of each one thus addressed is, "I will go also." The intensity of the feeling is set forth partly by the abruptness of the expressions, and partly by the intensive verbal form in the Hebrew, "let us go, going," *i. e.* let us all certainly and speedily go, lest we be too late. Thus they start, not by ones and twos, but in crowds to hasten to Jerusalem, that they may secure the favor of God. As they near the holy city, they run to seize the outer garment of a Jew, ten of the crowding Gentiles eagerly surrounding one of the Jews, to cast in their lot with them, to become one of their number, and to share their privileges because they have heard that God is with them. The numbers ten and one are used in that definite for an indefinite sense, which we have in

21 And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and

to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

22 Yea, many people and strong na-

English in the expression "ten to one," and which is common in the Bible, see Gen. 31 : 7; Lev. 26 : 26, &c. The phrase "from all the tongues of the nations," is of course an easily understood idiom for nations using all the different languages. To seize the hem of the garment is a gesture of earnestness, importunity, and perseverance, which is emphatic were it done by only a single person, but when done by ten persons, it becomes significant of an intensity of anxiety, and a depth of conviction, of the very highest grade.

When this prediction was uttered nothing seemed more hopelessly improbable than its fulfilment. The Jews were a poor, despised, obscure tribe in the heart of Syria, whose existence was only known to the mighty world by their furnishing a trophy to the victorious arms of Babylon. Greece was just rising in the firmament of human history, and as she ascended to her brilliant zenith, her track was marked by the sweeping of the phalanxes of Alexander and the legions of Antiochus over the hills and valleys of Judea. And yet this prophecy remained unfulfilled. Rome was then in the rugged feebleness of her wolf-nursed infancy, and slowly continued to grow until she reached that gigantic stature in which she ruled the earth, and her conquering legions under Pompey again swept over this fated land, and even desecrated the places of her holy solem-

tions shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts ; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold, out of all lan-

nities. Five hundred years rolled away, and yet this prophecy remained unfulfilled, indeed seemed further from fulfilment than when it was uttered.

But at length the time arrived, and there came to Jerusalem “men out of every nation under heaven—Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,” all came up to Jerusalem to seek the face of Jehovah, and from the lips of a Jew they heard words that caused them to cry out “Men and brethren what shall I do?” They scattered to their own homes again, and carried with them the strange words that had so deeply moved their souls, and being followed by these wonder-working men, there soon began to work a new life among the nations of the earth, and this life took hold in its origin and efficacy upon *a Jew*. Greece with her polished dialectics, Rome with her mailed mightiness, Asia with her soft voluptuousness, all submitted to the authority of a Saviour who was a Jew ; all rested their hopes for eternity upon a Jew ; and soon received as divinely inspired the words and writings of men who were Jews. And for nearly two thousand years the mightiest intellects and largest hearts of the race, have breathed the spirit

guages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you : for we have heard *that God is with you.*

and studied the words of men who were Jews, and have sought as the most precious boon of existence the privilege of being covered with a robe of righteousness that was wrought by the divinely incarnated hands of one who is of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, though as to his higher nature, God over all blessed forever. And at this day there are literally men of all nations, and kindreds, and tribes, and people, who are laying hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, and casting in their lot with those whom God chose to be a people for himself, and resting their hopes on that crucified Jew, who is the Saviour of the world. Hence thus far, the prophecy has been amply fulfilled, but its grandest fulfilment is yet to come when Jerusalem shall arise from the dust of her degradation, and Moriah be crowned with the symbols of a pure worship, and Olivet echo to the songs of the ransomed of Zion who shall return with joy and everlasting gladness. Then and not until then shall this prophecy have its grandest and fullest fulfilment, in the glory of the latter-day restoration of Israel.

And it is beautiful to remark the diffusive missionary spirit that must accompany this great enlargement to Israel, showing as it does the identity of all true religion. The inhabitants of one city shall not be content with idly waiting until another city shall hear of these glad tidings, nor shall they merely send by another, but they

shall go, and themselves urge this great duty of seeking the Lord, and urge by the powerful suasion of example. “Let us go,” with its loving earnestness shall then meet with the glad response, “I will go also.” And as clouds and doves to their windows shall they come, and lay hold, by a faith that will take no denial, of him who is the only name under heaven by which men can be saved. Thus the kingdom of heaven shall suffer violence, and the violent shall take it by storm. How beautifully all this comports with the religion of the New Testament in its living and glowing form, we need not point out; and how exactly the teachings of the prophet in regard to fasts and external ceremonies correspond with the teachings of Christ and Paul, we need not unfold at length, but only refer the thoughtful reader to their coincidences, as instructive proofs that after all, the Religion of the Bible is the same, by whomsoever taught, and the Old and New Testament but different stages in the growth of the same great tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. May every Christian resort to its balm-breathing leaves more constantly and earnestly, and he shall find them ever rich with angels’ food that shall give his soul her daily bread.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

Many of these have been anticipated, but a few others may be briefly enumerated.

(1.) Prayer ought to precede every undertaking, but especially every religious undertaking, (7 : 1, 2.)

(2.) When we are in doubt as to any case of duty, we should spread it before the Lord. When the fire descends from heaven on the altar, its light will enable us to see clearly, (v. 3.)

(3.) All stated fasts tend to degenerate into superstition, unless there is some strong counteracting agency. The original reference to God is lost in the mere outward act. This is the case with the Popish observances of the present day, (v. 5.)

(4.) Selfishness is the bane of all true piety, as godliness is its essence, (v. 6.)

(5.) Warnings of punishment when no signs of it are seen, are too often disregarded, (v. 7.)

(6.) They who cherish hard hearts, must expect hard treatment. The harder the stone, the harder will be the blow of the hammer to break it, (v. 8—14.)

(7.) They who will not bear the burden of obedience, must bear the burden of punishment, (v. 11.)

(8.) Loving anything as much as God, is unfaithfulness to his love, (c. 8 : 1.)

(9.) Men judge God by themselves in interpreting his promises, much oftener than in interpreting his threatenings, (v. 2.)

(10.) God does not forget his threatenings any more than his promises, (v. 14, 15.)

(11.) When God covenants with his people, he also covenants with their children, (v. 17.)

(12.) All true piety is instinct with the missionary spirit, desire for the salvation of others, (v. 20—23.)

PART III.—PROPHETICAL.

CHAPTER 9—END.

THE first question that meets us in regard to this portion of Zechariah, is its authenticity, or, whether it is the production of Zechariah. It is plain that this is a question totally distinct from its inspiration. It may be a part of the word of God, and yet wrongly ascribed to Zechariah. This question is still strongly discussed by able critics on both sides, and therefore cannot properly be passed by in an attempt to elucidate the prophecy.

One of the first to question its authenticity was Joseph Mede, who, in his remarks on Matthew 27 : 9, 10, Epist. 31, says : “ It may seem the Evangelist would inform us that those latter chapters ascribed to Zachary (namely, 9th, 10th, 11th) are indeed the prophecies of Jeremy ; and that the Jews had not rightly attributed them. Certainly, if a man weigh the contents of some of them, they should in likelihood be of an elder date than the time of Zachary ; namely, before the captivity, for the subjects of some of them were scarce in being after that time. And the chapter out of which St. Matthew quotes (c. 11), may seem to have somewhat much unsuitable with Zachary’s time ; as a prophecy of the destruction of the temple, then when he was to encourage them to build it. And how doth the sixth verse of that chapter suit with his

time? There is no Scripture saith they are Zachary's, but there is Scripture saith they are Jeremy's, as this of the Evangelist. As for their being joined to the prophecies of Zachary, that proves no more they are his than the like adjoining of Agur's proverbs to Solomon's proves they are therefore Solomon's, or that all the Psalms are David's, because joined in one volume with "David's Psalms." Mede was followed in this opinion by Hammond, Kidder, Bridge, Whiston, Newcome and Secker, among the English commentators. On the continent this view was adopted by Flügge, Döderlein, J. D. Michaelis, Seiler, Eichhorn, Bauer, Bertholdt, Forberg, Rosenmüller, Corrodi, Gramburg, Hitzig, Credner, Maurer, Ewald and Knoble. J. Pye Smith and Davidson, in England, also take this side of the question. De Wette, in the earlier editions of his *Einleitung*, took this position, but in the later editions avows his belief that they were written by Zechariah. The authorship of Zechariah has been defended by Blayney, Carpzov, Beckhaus, Jahn, Koester, Hengstenberg, and Burger. It will thus be seen that there is much weight of authority on both sides. Among those who deny the authorship of Zechariah, there is great diversity of opinion as to the real authorship. Mede ascribes them to Jeremiah, and supposes that his prophecies were in a fragmentary and confused state during the captivity, and were arranged by Zechariah. Eichhorn refers one part to the time of Alexander; Corrodi, the 14th chapter to the time of Antiochus

Epiphanes ; Bertholdt, a part to an author in Josiah's time, and a part later ; Rosenmüller, to the age of Uzziah ; and indeed each critic has his own peculiar theory as to the date and the authorship of these chapters. This great variety of view shows that the marks of date are by no means so clear as those affirm who deny the authenticity ; for if they were, there would be more uniformity. Hence, we are led to look at the reasons for this denial more carefully.

(1.) The first reason adduced by Mede is the ascription of the passage in Zech. 11 : 12, 13, to Jeremiah, by Matthew. This is the only point about which there is any real difficulty. We cannot, with the neologist, say that it was a slip of memory on the part of the Evangelist, for this would be to deny his plenary inspiration. Nor can we suppose with some that the Evangelist quotes from an apocryphal book ascribed to Jeremiah. There was such a book, as we learn from Jerome ; but it was obviously, as he pronounced it, a spurious fabrication of a later age than that of the apostles. Henderson, Griesbach, and others, suppose that there has been an error of the copyist. They, believing the gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew, show how such an error might readily be made. But this hypothesis in regard to the original language of this gospel is not sufficiently proved to make it the basis for another hypothesis. Others conjecture that Ἰπριου was written by some early copyist instead of Ζηριου. This last supposition is by no means improbable. Dr. Henderson

cites a number of MSS., in which the name Jeremiah is omitted, or that of Zechariah inserted. But after all, the weight of authority yet is in favor of the common reading, and hence we must look for some other explanation. The one which, on the whole, seems to be most reasonable, is that of Hengstenberg, that the Evangelist quoted the earlier prophet on whose prophecy the later one was based, to indicate this connection. The reasons on which this view is based, may be seen drawn out more fully in the notes on Chapter 11: 12, 13, and need not here be repeated. One thing is very certain, that in the age of the apostles this portion of the prophecy was ascribed to Zechariah, for it occupies that place in the LXX., which was written three hundred years before, and used by our Lord and the writers of the New Testament. It does not seem probable that the Evangelist would make a correction of the Jewish Canon, in this indirect manner, without giving some intimation to that effect. The uniform reference of these chapters to Zechariah in the Jewish Canon, is much more difficult to account for, if he did not write them, than the verse in Matthew is, if he did. Hence we are led to the conclusion that this reference was not intended to deny the received opinion that these chapters were a part of the prophecies of Zechariah, and rightly referred to him as their author.

(2.) It is said that the contents refer it to an earlier age than that of Zechariah. This depends on the interpretation of particular passages which it will after-

wards be seen do not require this interpretation. Ephraim is mentioned, but it is used as it is in the prophetic writings, as the designation of Israel, and we find Israel spoken of in Malachi in a manner precisely similar, and yet no one from this fact infers that Malachi lived before the captivity. There is not the slightest intimation that there was a separate political organization in Israel at the time when the prophecy was written.

Other texts will be found to refer to events after the time of Zechariah, and not before, as we examine them in detail. The absence of all references to a King as existing in Judah or Israel, clearly intimates that the prophecy was written at a time when the kingly office had ceased to exist. This fact has led Eichhorn and others to place the date of these chapters as late as the age of Alexander.

(3.) It is alleged that a prophecy of the destruction of the temple would have been most unlikely in Zechariah, whose object was to urge its erection. This would be true if the prophecies were uttered at the time of its erection. But they were probably uttered toward the close of the prophet's life, and many years after the temple was completed. Hence this objection rests on a confusion of dates.

(4.) The difference of style is also alleged. This is accounted for in part by the difference of age, the early portions being written when the prophet was a young man (ch. 2 : 4), and in part by the difference of aim

in the prophecy. Differences just as great appear in other prophecies whose authenticity has never been questioned. In Amos the first two chapters have one style and one formula of address, "Thus saith Jehovah;" the next three another, "Hear ye this word;" and the seventh and eighth a third, "Thus hath Jehovah showed me." But no critic has thought of dismembering Amos on this account. And yet the differences in this prophecy are not more important or decisive of a different hand. The purposes for which the three portions of Zechariah were written were so different that they demanded a difference of style fully as great as we actually find. To refer these portions to different authors would be as valid a procedure in criticism as to say that the author of the Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful could not be the author of Reflections on the French Revolution, or that the author of Paradise Lost could never have written Paradise Regained, or the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce. There is no difference of style or expression that is not fully accounted for by the interval that probably elapsed between the composition of the first and third portions, and the different purposes they had in view.

Hence, in view of the facts that these chapters were ascribed to Zechariah by those who formed the Jewish Canon, under divine guidance, as we believe, and but a few years at most after the death of Zechariah; that they were so regarded when the Septuagint translation was made three hundred years before the time of our Lord and

the apostles ; that this opinion was unchallenged by any inspired writer, with an ambiguous exception, which is susceptible of another interpretation ; that the contents of these chapters have nothing that refers them to any other age, except we deny the possibility of prophecy, with the neologists ; and that the reason obviously animating many of the assailants of the authenticity, is a desire to disprove their prophetic character, we feel constrained to adhere to the general judgment of both the Jewish and Christian churches, that these chapters belong to the prophecies of Zechariah, and are so to be interpreted.

The contents of this portion of the prophecy are of great variety, and intended obviously for the whole Church, stretching as they do from the time of the prophet to the undeveloped future when Christ shall return a second time without sin to salvation. This will be seen by an enumeration of the various discourses. I. The Syrian conquests of Alexander, c. 9 : 1—8. II. The lowly King Messiah, v. 9—12. III. The Maccabean deliverance, v. 11—17. IV. Future blessings to Judah, c. 10 : 1—5. V. The restoration of the Jews, v. 6—12. VI. The storm preceding the coming of Christ, c. 11 : 1—3. VII. Christ assuming the pastoral care of the Theocratic people, v. 4—14. VIII. The curse of evil rulers after the rejection of Christ, v. 15—end. IX. Future blessings to Judah, c. 12 : 1—9. X. Future repentance and blessing to Jerusalem, v. 10—end. XI. Fruits of penitence, c. 13 : 1—6. XII. The sword

awaking against the shepherd, v. 7—9. XIII. Future glories of the Church, chap. 14.

It will be seen at a glance that these prophecies carry us to some of the deepest soundings of the vast ocean of prophetic revelation; and if the chart we shall present of this portion of it should not be satisfactory to all, they who have fathomed these depths lowest will be best prepared to make allowance for any failures.

I. THE SYRIAN CONQUEST OF ALEXANDER.

CHAPTER 9: 1—8.

ANALYSIS.

- I. The threatening, and the reason for it, (v. 1.)
- II. The course of conquest traced, beginning at Damascus and extending along the Mediterranean coast to the Philistine cities, (v. 2—7.)
- III. The safety of the Jewish people amidst these conquests of Alexander.

V. 1. “A BURDEN, the word of Jehovah on the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be its rest, for to Jehovah is the sight of man, and all the tribes of Israel.”

V. 1. THIS prophecy most obviously predicts the conquests of Alexander the Great in the countries that bordered the Holy Land. Its introduction here is appropriate, because it refers to a state of facts that would affect the Theocracy, and would also, at the same time, affect the enemies of Israel.

The word “burden” seems to be a sort of title or

1 The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the

motto to the prophecy to indicate its minatory character. It is never prefixed to prophecies of any other character, and seems to be an appropriate inscription to such predictions, that hang in the Bible, like dark clouds, surcharged with a burden of wrath. The metaphor is so natural and common, that it is wonderful that any attempt should be made to deny the obvious significance of this word as marking those utterances of prophetic inspiration that contain heavy tidings. The elaborate investigation of Hengstenberg has so completely established this meaning of the word that it may be considered as settled.

The name Hadrach is somewhat obscure. Hengstenberg considers it a symbolical name for Persia, compounded of terms signifying “strong—weak,” but his reasoning is too fanciful to be admitted. As all the other names are actual names of cities, we would not expect a symbolical name without some reason that does not appear in the passage. Others say that there was a city of this name near Damascus, but it is very doubtful whether such a city ever existed; and if it did, whether its importance was such as to justify its place at the head of this prophecy. Hence the opinion of Henderson is the most probable, that it is the name of a king, and perhaps a corruption of the common name of the kings of Syria, Hadad. Whatever view be taken, the general meaning of the prophecy is the

tribes of Israel, *shall be* towards the LORD. thereby: Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

2 And Hamath also shall border

same. The tempest was first to fall on this land, whatever it was.

“And Damascus shall be its rest.” This is a parallel passage to ch. 6 : 8, where it is said that the anger of the Lord shall rest on the north country. The meaning is that a permanent judgment shall rest on Damascus, implying that this judgment should not be of a wholly destructive character, and hence Damascus remains until the present day.

The next clause assigns the reason for these judgments, and hence begins with the particle “for.” The common interpretation of the phrase, “to Jehovah is the eye of man,” makes it an expression of the providence of God ; but if “eye” retains its ordinary signification, it should be in construction with Jehovah and not with man, to express the fact that the oversight of Jehovah was directed to man, and the sentence should read “to man is the eye of Jehovah.” Kimchi, Calvin, Blayney, and Henderson take the words in their natural order, and make the clause mean that men and the tribes of Israel look to God in this time of trouble. They take כִּי as a particle of time. But this view does not cohere with the context fully, which seems to require a reason for the infliction of the judgment rather than the looking of men to God under it. This will be done if we give to כִּי the sense of *adspectus* or *appear-*

3 And Tyrus did build herself a the dust, and fine gold as the mire of strong hold, and heaped up silver as the streets.

ance, a sense that it has in several passages. (See Num. 11 : 7 ; Ez. 1 : 4 ; Dan. 10 : 6, &c.) The meaning then would be that the relative aspects of the world and the people of Israel had come up before God, he had seen their situation, and hence would bring judgments upon the one whilst he protected the other. The general idea is clear, that these judgments are brought upon the lands in question because the attention of God was directed to them, as well as to the tribes of Israel, and would equalize any apparent anomalies in their relative conditions.

V. 2. "Also Hamath shall border on it, Tyre and Sidon because it is very wise."

Hamath, which lay at the entrance to Palestine from Damascus, should not only border on Damascus in territory, but also in treatment, and should lie in the track of the conquering invader. Pursuing his southern course he should reach Tyre and Sidon, whose conceit of wisdom and godless pride must be punished. The Tyrians were celebrated for their worldly wisdom. (See Ezek. 28 : 3—5, 12, 17.) When Alexander desired admission to their city under the pretext of sacrificing to Hercules, they replied that the ancient and true temple of that god was at Old Tyre, on the main land, and sent him a crown of gold to conciliate him, and prevent him from urging an entrance into their city.

4 Behold, the Lord will cast her the sea; and she shall be devoured out, and he will smite her power in with fire.

Tyre and Sidon were two of the oldest and richest cities in the world, the one famed for her arts and manufactures, especially in glass and pottery, the other for her commerce. The fine harbor of Tyre had made her the depôt for the rich stream of Asiatic trade whose current has always enriched the channels through which it flowed, and her merchant princes were among the rulers of the world. Having almost a monopoly of the carrying trade of the Mediterranean, her wealth became enormous, and her inhabitants lived in a style of luxury that has but few parallels in history. Like Venice in modern times, she became arrogant and contemptuous in her feelings towards other nations, and especially towards the Hebrews, because of their comparative poverty. Hence that offensive pride alluded to in this verse.

V. 3. "And Tyre has built for herself a strong hold, and has heaped up silver as dust, and gold as the mire of the streets."

Old Tyre had been built on the continent, but owing to its greater exposure to invasion, another city was erected on an island about half a mile from the shore. The prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel seem to have been directed against Old Tyre, and were fulfilled to the letter by Nebuchadnezzar, who razed the city to its very foundations and left it a heap of ruins. After the overthrow of Old Tyre, the Tyrians concentrated their strength on the island, surrounded it with a double wall

5 Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; rowful, and Ekron: for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king

150 feet high, filled in with 25 feet of earth, which together with the surrounding sea, made the city apparently impregnable. This is the "strong hold" mentioned by the prophet, and her flourishing commerce had at this time made silver and gold to be heaped up in her coffers like the dust of the streets. For the prophet to predict her overthrow, would be like a modern seer to predict the razing of Gibraltar or the sacking of London. Yet it was precisely then that he declared that this proud queen of the waters should be overthrown.

V. 4. "Behold the Lord will dispossess her, and will cast into the sea her bulwark, and she shall be consumed with fire."

It is here predicted that the Lord would dispossess her from her strong seat, cast her girdling bulwark into the sea, and that she should be consumed with fire. Two hundred years passed away, and still Tyre sat in her queenly pride on the throne of the seas, and no power on earth seemed likely to attempt the fulfilment of this prophecy. At length there appeared on the shore an army of Greeks, who demanded the surrender of the city. But they were without a navy, and without any means even of reaching these mighty walls, or arresting for a moment the commerce that thronged her ports, and we cannot wonder that the Tyrians derided the presumption of the young chieftain. But her hour was come. Alexander, after various expedients, finally re-

shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. dod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

6 And a bastard shall dwell in Ash-

solved to take the ruins of Old Tyre, and run a mole from the shore to the island, which, after incredible labor he did, thus fulfilling another prophecy, that the very dust of Old Tyre should be scraped off, and her stones, timber and dust be laid in the midst of the water! (See Ezek. 26 : 4—12, &c.) Having completed this mole, he took the city after a siege of seven months, put to the sword about 10,000, enslaved 30,000, and burnt the city with fire, thus, against the most stupendous improbabilities, fulfilling this remarkable prophecy to the very letter.

V. 5, 6. "Ashkelon shall see it and fear, Gaza (*shall see it*) and tremble greatly, and Ekron, for her reliance is disgraced, and a king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. An alien shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will destroy the pride of the Philistines."

These verses describe the conquering march of Alexander along the shore, and depict the terror that the Philistian cities felt when they heard that even Tyre (which is called the reliance of Ekron, that being the most northern city of the Philistines, and nearest to Tyre) had been overthrown. This we know from history to have been the precise track of Alexander; and so completely have these prophecies been fulfilled, that the traveller can hardly discover the sites of some of these once proud and powerful cities. The perishing of a king from Gaza, is the destruction of her form of

7 And I will take away his blood that remaineth, even he, shall be for out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth; but he our God, and he shall be a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.

government and her subjugation; the dwelling of an alien in Ashdod, is the banishment of the native population; and the destruction of the pride of the Philistines, is the overthrow of those external means of attack and defence in which they placed their pride. History records the complete fulfilment of these prophecies. Of Gaza it is recorded that after a siege of two months it was taken, and the governor, or king Betis, dragged round the city; a fact that may be, in part, referred to in the prediction, "a king shall perish from Gaza." In rendering מְמִירָה "a bastard," our version has followed the Septuagint version of the word in Deut. 23: 2, the only other text where it occurs. But the great majority of interpreters give it the meaning of alien, a foreigner.

V. 7. "And I will remove his blood from his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth, and he that remains, even he, shall be for our God, and he shall be as a prince in Judah, and Ekron as the Jebusite."

The removal of his blood from his mouth, would seem, by the parallel phrase, to refer to the overthrow of idolatrous practices, one of which was the drinking of sacrificial blood.

In the clause, "and he that remains, even he, shall be for our God," it is intimated that this ruin shall not be total, but that some would remain, who should afterwards be converted to God. This conversion is illustrated by comparing those alluded to among the Philis-

8 And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth : and no oppressor shall pass through them any more : for now have I seen with mine eyes.

times to the Jebusites, who were incorporated into the Theocracy, after their subjugation by David. "Ekron as the Jebusite" is there explanatory of the same conversion that is expressed in the parallel clause, "he shall be a prince in Judah." This prediction received its fulfilment in the time of Christ, when a great multitude from Tyre and Sidon came to him, (Luke 6 : 17,) and when churches were planted along these coasts that Paul visited, and from which in the Dioclesian persecution there went up a great cloud of witnesses.

V. 8. "And I will encamp around my house because of the army, because of the passer by, and because of the returner, and the exactor shall no more pass through them, for now I see with mine eyes."

The question would naturally arise here to the Jew, will not this temple which we have built be in danger when such a conqueror is ravaging Palestine? Is he not likely to attack Jerusalem, and undo all this work of our hands? The prophet assures them that the temple is safe, because God will encamp around it, because of this invading army. And it is a remarkable fact, that when Alexander was advancing upon Jerusalem with great fury, he was arrested by a dream, and induced not only to spare it, but also to confer upon it great privileges. Hence in this narrowest sense the prediction has been completely verified.

But as the temple was only a symbol of the Church, the promise must have its widest fulfilment only in the glorious antitype, that Church that is kept as the apple of God's eye, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The condition of all men is laid open to the eye of God, and he will appoint judgment or mercy according to that condition, (v. 1.)

(2.) Worldly-wisdom is at last greatly inferior to that wisdom, the beginning of which is the fear of the Lord, (v. 2.)

(3.) However secure nations or men may think themselves in sin, their sin will be sure to find them out. Never has sin more proudly entrenched herself than in godless, but magnificent Tyre. Never has every element of earthly prosperity seemed more completely under control than in her case. And yet they were all swept like chaff before the whirlwind of the wrath of God, when the time for the fulfilment of his threatenings had come. Hence though nations now trample on law and right, and seem long to flourish in their sin, let not the child of God be impatient. Let him remember that two hundred years passed away after the utterance of these threatenings against Tyre, and she seemed stronger than ever, and yet when the day of doom had dawned, the galleys that left her on their stated voyages the peerless queen of the seas, when they returned

found her but a bare and blackened rock, a lonely monument of the truth, that our God is a consuming fire. If, then, God thus executes his threats even on a mighty commonwealth, in spite of his delay, let not the fact that judgment against an evil work is not executed speedily cause the hearts of the sons of men to be fully set in them to do evil. Let men remember that it is a falsehood to violate a threatening as much as to violate a promise, and that God will not make himself a liar to save man in his sins, (v. 3—7.)

(4.) Amidst all the tumults of nations, the true people of God are safe, being guarded by the arm of Almighty-ness, (v. 8.)

II. THE LOWLY KING MESSIAH.

CHAPTER 9 : 9, 10.

ANALYSIS.

I. A call to the Church to rejoice because of the coming of her King Messiah, (v. 9.)

II. The reasons for this rejoicing : (1.) His personal character (v. 9.) (2.) The nature and extent of his kingdom, (v. 10.)

THAT this passage applies to Christ is beyond all refutation. It was exactly fulfilled in his history, when he made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and is referred to him expressly by the Evangelist. (See Matt. 21 : 4, 5.) It contains expressions from older Messianic prophecies, the reference of which is generally admitted :

9 ¶ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of thee : he *is* just, and having salvation ; Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusa- lowly, and riding upon an ass, and lem ; behold, thy King cometh unto upon a colt the foal of an ass.

it was always so understood in the Jewish Church, until Christians used it as an argument in favor of Christ : and, finally, it can be consistently applied to none other. Hence, we are justified in taking it as a *jubilate*, addressed to the Church in view of her king, who is described as (1) just, (2) endowed with salvation, (3) lowly, (4) externally poor, “riding on an ass ;” and whose kingdom (v. 10) is declared as to its character to be peaceful, (v. 10,) and as to its extent, universal.

V. 9. “Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem, behold ! thy King cometh unto thee, just, and endowed with salvation, is he, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a foal, the son of she-asses.”

The Theocracy, or Church, is called to rejoice because of the coming of her king. The kingly office of the Messiah, which was conferred upon him for the accomplishment of the work of redemption, is often alluded to as ground for rejoicing. (See Ps. 2, &c.) The ground of this rejoicing is expressed in the words succeeding, to be the character of the king, and the nature and extent of his kingdom.

(1.) He is “just.” The righteousness here referred to is not his priestly, but his kingly righteousness, that rigorous justice of his reign in virtue of which no good should be unrewarded and no evil unpunished. In the unequal allotments of the present, when the good so often suffer and the bad so often escape, it is surely

ground for rejoicing that the king, under whose rule this dispensation is placed, is just, and will render to every man according to his work. This attribute is assigned to the Messiah also in Isa. 45 : 23 ; 53 : 11 ; Jer. 23 : 5 ; 33 : 15, &c.

(2.) He is “endowed with salvation.” The word נִשְׁעַר is a difficult one here, and has received a great deal of attention from interpreters. Being in the niph'al or passive conjugation, it would literally be “saved,” “protected,” or “delivered.” This would give a good sense, but rather a tame one, compared with the other characteristics named in the prophecy. Hence it is usually taken in a secondary sense, as expressing not simply the reception of a salvation, but its possession as a gift that was capable of being bestowed upon others. The same word occurs in this sense elsewhere, as Deut. 33 : 19 ; Ps. 33 : 16, &c. The meaning then would be that God was with him, in spite of all his lowliness, sustaining him in the mighty work he had undertaken, and that this protection was bestowed upon him not as an individual but as a king, a representative of his people, so that he would not only enjoy it himself, but possess the power of bestowing it upon others. Hence, while his inflexible justice might make us tremble in our sin, the fact that he was also endowed with a free salvation, and a salvation which he could bestow as a kingly right, would remove these fears and enable us to rejoice in this coming king. This is the interpretation of this word by the LXX., the Targum, the Syriac, and Vulgate

versions, Bochart, Grotius, Marekius, Dathius, Newcome, Henderson, and Hengstenberg, with some slight differences of opinion on a minor question of grammar.

(3.) He was to be “lowly.” This word נָּוֶה is sometimes rendered meek, because of the Greek word used in the quotation of this passage in Matt. 21 : 5, which has this meaning. But as the word נָּוֶה always refers to lowliness of outward circumstances, and נָּוֶה to lowliness of disposition, Hengstenberg and others allege that the Evangelist did not mean to endorse the absolute accuracy of the Septuagint translation of the word, but simply to quote it as a well-known version. If the usual sense of the word be given, the Church would be summoned to rejoice because of the humiliation of her king. And however incongruous such a ground of rejoicing may seem to be to men generally, the heart that is crushed with penitence or grief will comprehend the reason of this summons. Had this august king been as sorrowless as he was sinless, had he been a robed seraph or a crowned monarch, the poor and suffering could never have approached him with confidence, for he could not have sympathized with them in their sorrows. But when he comes to us as one who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, we welcome him with joy, and understand why we are called to rejoice, because he comes to us as the lowly king. It is marvellous that expositors should have found so much difficulty here, when the reason of this call to rejoice might have been found in the yearnings

10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto

of their own hearts for the sympathy of one who has himself tasted sorrow. Surely a suffering child of God can understand how blessed a thing it is to have a Saviour king who has known himself what it is to suffer.

(4.) He was to be externally in poverty, "riding upon an ass, and upon a foal, the son of she-asses." This is a prediction of poverty, for although in earlier times kings rode on asses, after the time of Solomon they were never so used, horses having taken their place. The employment of the horse in war also made the use of the ass an indication of peace as well as of poverty. The two members of the sentence are in the form of a climax, the use of an untrained colt being less honorable than that of a full-grown animal. The plural "she-asses," is merely the indefinite plural, as in Gen. 21 : 7, where "sons" is evidently used for the indefinite "son," since Sarah had but a single son. The exact fulfilment of this prophecy in the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem was merely a specific illustration of the general prediction, not the entire object of the prediction itself. Its range was much broader than this single event, and indeed would have been substantially fulfilled had this event never occurred. The specific fulfilment however rivets the prophecy more absolutely to Christ.

V. 10. "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the bow of war shall be cut off, and he

the heathen; and his dominion *shall* river *even* to the ends of the earth.
be from sea *even* to sea, and from the

shall speak peace to the nations, and his dominion (*be*) from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

V. 10 describes the peaceful character of the Messiah's kingdom in metaphorical terms, such as are used elsewhere for the same purpose. The chariot and horse are of course those used in war, and their removal is equivalent to the cessation of warfare. The word Ephraim here does not prove that this prophecy was written before the exile, but only that the prophet was familiar with the prophets of that period, and used their language when he would describe the whole land of Palestine.

The extent of this kingdom is indicated *first* by the fact that he would "speak peace to the nations," (*Gentiles*), and hence would rule beyond the limits of Israel; and *secondly*, by the phrase from "sea to sea," &c., which, by comparison with Ps. 72, and other passages, will be found to express absolute universality, being equivalent to the known world. The Euphrates and the Mediterranean were the geographical limits of the earth as known to the Hebrews, and by introducing one into the first member of the parallelism, and the other into the second, the universality of the Messiah's kingdom was emphatically declared.

That the tendencies of Christ's kingdom are to universal peace and universal piety, we need not pause to argue, and that these tendencies shall yet be fully em-

bodied, we believe as well from the voice of history as from the word of prophecy. We have only to patiently labor, and patiently wait, and the white banner of the lowly king shall in due time be unfurled from every mountain-top, and over every valley, and men be brother-murderers and brother-haters no more.

This beautiful prediction of the Messiah is a sort of episode, where the longings of prophecy for this mighty future seemed to burst forth, as if irrepressible. These involuntary gushings up of the prophetic hopes are exceedingly touching and beautiful. The prophet then returns to a nearer future in the succeeding verses.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Christians should be happy. No people have a better right or better reason to rejoice, (v. 9.)

(2.) The righteousness wrought out by Christ is the great ground of his Kingly authority, (see Phil. 2 : 6—10,) and also of the joy of his people, (v. 9.)

(3.) A suffering people can find great comfort in the fact that they have a suffering Saviour ; see Heb. 4 : 15, (v. 9.)

(4.) Christians need never repine at earthly poverty when their King had not where to lay his head, (v. 9.)

(5.) War will cease on earth only when wickedness ceases, and wickedness will cease only when Christ's universal empire begins, (v. 10.)

11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.

III. THE MACCABEAN DELIVERANCE.

CHAPTER 9 : 11—17.

ANALYSIS.

I. The distress that would follow the Grecian conquests of Alexander and his successors, (v. 11, 12.)

II. The wars occasioned by the revolt of the Jews under the Maccabees, (v. 13—15.)

III. The Maccabean victories and their results, (v. 16, 17.)

THE key to this passage lies in v. 13, where a revolt of the chosen people against the sons of Javan (Ionia or Greece), is predicted. There was no such collision between the Jews and the Greeks, except under the successors of Alexander. Hence the prophecy must refer to the times of the Maccabees. It was natural that, after predicting the conquests of Alexander, some allusion should be made to the important events succeeding.

V. 11. "Also thou—in the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners, from the pit, and there is no water in it."

"Also thou"—The prophet here turns to the Theocracy to assure her that, in view of her covenant relation, she should be delivered during the troublous times that must precede the coming of the lowly king. "In the blood of thy covenant," means on account of the covenant sealed with blood, referring to the Sinaitic covenant, which guaranteed protection to the chosen

12 ¶ Turn you to the strong hold, I declare *that* I will render double unto ye prisoners of hope : even to day do thee ;

people while in the path of duty. The imprisonment in a pit where there was no water, is a metaphor drawn from the deep wells often found in dungeons, into which they lowered prisoners in special cases, and is a figurative representation of the distress that would be occasioned by the successors of Alexander. How great this distress was may be learned from history. Palestine was the battle-ground of contending rivals for empire, and suffered the usual calamities of such a position. But these sufferings reached their height under the ravages of the cruel Antiochus, who rifled and polluted the temple, murdered and enslaved thousands of the people, and attempted to overturn the religion of Jehovah, and establish the worship of Jupiter. His enormities were so great that the image of the prophet was by no means exaggerated. But these very severities were doubtless the means of preventing a national apostasy. The mild rule of the Ptolemies might soon have seduced the Jews from their allegiance, but the terrible persecutions of Antiochus only made them cling more obstinately to the faith of their fathers.

V. 12. "Return to the strong hold, O prisoners of hope! Even to-day (*am I*) declaring, I will render double to you."

V. 12. The image of the dungeon in v. 11, suggests that of the strong hold, which is simply a metaphor for divine deliverance. God calls the people to return to him, and he will protect them. The phrase "prisoners

13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning : and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

of hope," means prisoners who have hope—a hope resting on the covenant. He then assures them that great as was their affliction, their prosperity should be doubly greater.

The next two verses are addressed to the Greeks, and declare, by two images, the deliverance that God would work. When it is remembered that at this time the Greeks were an obscure people, scarcely known beyond their own borders, this prophecy becomes one of the most remarkable in the Scriptures.

V. 13. "For I have bent to me Judah, the bow have I filled with Ephraim, and I have raised up thy sons, O Zion! against thy sons, O Javan! and have made thee as the sword of a mighty man."

V. 13. God appears here as a warrior, taking Judah for his bow, and Ephraim for his arrow, and bending the weapon against the enemies of Zion.

Then addressing Zion and Javan alternately, he declares that he will make Zion like the sword of a mighty man, *i. e.* irresistible and invincible.

V. 14. "And over them Jehovah will appear, and his arrow goes forth like lightning, and the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet, and he goes forth in the storms of the south."

V. 14 changes the image to that of a tempest, the arrowy flashes of whose lightning and the trumpet-peals of whose thunder, make it an army of resistless power.

15 The LORD of hosts shall defend them ; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones ; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine ; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.

16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people : for *they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.*

Storms of the south are violent storms, because such was their usual character, (see Isa. 21 : 1.)

V. 15. “Jehovah of Hosts will protect them, and they eat and they trample under foot the sling-stones, and they drink, and make a noise as from wine, and they are full as the altar-bowls, and as the corners of the altar.”

V. 15 turns again to the covenant people, and describes them under the image of a lion, who devours his enemy and then treads him under foot. These enemies are represented under the image of sling-stones, to show their feebleness ; for only small stones were suitable for a sling ; stones which, when on the ground, were perfectly harmless. This lion was intoxicated with blood as with wine, filled with it like the bowls of the altar, and sprinkled with it, like the corners of the altar. These images of sanguinary conquest are very powerful.

V. 16. “And Jehovah their God will save them in that day, as a flock (*will he save*) his people, for as gems of a diadem are they lifted up in his land.”

V. 16 contains yet other images of prosperity. God would not only give victory but afterwards peace, and hence the warrior and the lion are now exchanged for the shepherd and the flock, and the spent and worthless stones of the sling scornfully trampled under the feet,

17 For how great is his goodness, shall make the young men cheerful,
and how great is his beauty! corn and new wine the maids.

are contrasted with the brilliant and costly gems of the diadem that are honorably placed upon the head.

V. 17. "For how great is his goodness! and how great his beauty! Corn makes the young men to grow, and new wine the maidens."

V. 17 is an exulting exclamation in view of the goodness and loveliness of God's character, and the blessings he would then grant to the Theocracy. Corn and wine indicated peace and prosperity that permitted the performance of agricultural labor, whilst the increase of young men and maidens indicated the peaceful increase of population, and showed that children were not cut off, as they commonly are, in a state of war or trouble.

These images of prosperity predict the deliverance that should take place under the Maccabees, which we know to have been one of the most wonderful in history. The tyranny of Antiochus aroused this brave family, whose victories over the repeated armies sent to subdue them, have no parallel but in the rapid conquests of Alexander or Napoleon. Having retaken Jerusalem, the temple was restored and the feast of the Purification instituted, which connects itself with the history of our Lord. The Maccabean rule was one of such prosperity as to fulfil the terms of this prophecy, and designate its era as one of the bright pages in the Hebrew annals.

The spiritual interpretations that are often given of this passage, are not wholly accommodations of its

terms. All the facts of the Jewish history are looked at in their relation to the Messianic blessings, and have their value mainly in this connection, and hence as objects seen in the same plane and parallel, their outlines and lights are often blended. We, too, are often in a horrible pit and miry clay. We, too, are prisoners of hope, who are to go forth by the blood of the everlasting covenant; and we, too, have an enemy more terrible by far than the gigantic Epiphanes, and are menaced with a storm of ruin more fearful than that which swept over widowed Judea. Hence the call to turn and flee to the strong hold, is one that may still be sounded to man, and the promised blessings of this passage shall but prefigure those greater blessings that shall be bestowed upon those who are the flock of the good shepherd, and who are among the jewels that glitter in his diadem of many crowns.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The covenant love of God, and his faithful promises that are sealed with blood, are the hope of the Church in a time of trouble, (v. 11.)

(2.) Let sinners, who are also prisoners of hope, turn to the strong hold Christ, ere it be forever too late, and God will give them a double blessing, (v. 12.)

(3.) Men are only the instruments in God's hand for accomplishing his purposes, (v. 13.)

(4.) However terrific the tumult of wars and revolutions, the people of God are safe, (v. 14, 16.)

I Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain ; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

(5.) After the storm comes the rainbow. After the tears of suffering faith, comes the radiance of joyful hope, (v. 17.)

IV. PRAYER AND PROMISE.

CHAPTER 10 : 1—5.

ANALYSIS.

I. The call to prayer, because (1) thus God would bestow blessing, (v. 1); (2) their former objects of worship were false, (v. 2); (3) their former rulers were wicked, (v. 3.)

II. Promise of blessings in answer to prayer ; (1) rulers from themselves (v. 4); (2) conquest of their enemies, (v. 5.)

V. 1. " Ask of Jehovah rain, in the time of the latter rain ; Jehovah shall (*then*) cause lightnings, and shall give abundant rain, to every man grass in his field."

WE have here expressed the connection between prayer and promise on the one hand, and prayer and the processes of nature on the other. The blessing of rain, which to an agricultural people, was inclusive of all other temporal blessings, and symbolical of all spiritual ones, was promised ; but this promise was dependent on its supplication in prayer. Just as in the great blessing of the descent of the spirit on an individual or a Church, though a free gift, it must be obtained by prayer. It is this fact that makes the spirit of prayer

2 For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams ; they comfort in vain : therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because *there was* no shepherd.

in the Church an index at once of her piety, and of the spiritual blessings she may expect from God. When the Church pours out a fulness of prayer, God will pour out a fulness of his spirit. The inspired writers see no difficulty in the connection between prayer and the processes of nature, such as the mole-eyed philosophy of modern times discovers. They think that the God who has created the elements, may direct them according to his will. "The latter rain" was that which fell in March, to ripen the harvest, whose seed had been watered by the former rain in October. We must not suppose that because God has begun to bless us, we may relax our prayers and efforts. The former rain may be given, but we must also ask for the latter rain. We may have the former rain of conversion, but if we would have the latter rain of ripened sanctification of nature, we must continue to ask of God. So, also, in the revival of religion. The former rain may occur, and souls be converted, but if we would have the ripening of the seed in active Christians, we must ask of God, and he will give growth, greenness and maturity.

V. 2. "For the teraphim speak nothingness ; and the soothsayers see falsehood ; and the dreams speak vanity ; they comfort falsely ; wherefore they wander as a flock, they are troubled because there is no shepherd."

V. 2 gives the reason for that suffering of the Jews that made God's interposition necessary. They had

3 Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats ; for the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.

4 Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the

forsaken God for other sources of light, and hence soon found themselves in darkness and emptiness. It is a mournful proof of man's depravity that he will believe any one sooner than God, and seek comfort anywhere rather than from heaven. But when men resort to their earthly teraphim, they find at last that they have been deceived, and are left in loneliness and sorrow. So it was with the Jews. They wandered like silly sheep, and soon found themselves among the wild mountains and the howling beasts of prey. The teraphim were the household gods of the heathen, some sort of images, the form and character of which we do not know. The etymology of the word is uncertain.

V. 3. "Against the shepherds my anger is kindled, and the he-goats will I punish, for Jehovah of Hosts visits his flock, the house of Judah, and makes them like a caparisoned horse in war."

The people had shepherds, but they were false ones, and they are here threatened. "The he-goats" are the leaders of the people, an image taken from the flock which the he-goats usually head, as they move from place to place. They who are first in crime, will be first in punishment. But God will visit his flock in mercy, and make each one, instead of a timid sheep, to be a war-horse, decked for the battle.

V. 4. "From him (*is*) the corner-stone, and from him the pin, from him the bow of battle, from him comes forth every ruler together."

battle bow, out of him every oppressor together. 5 ¶ And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down <i>their enemies</i> in	the mire of the streets in the battle : and they shall fight, because the LORD <i>is</i> with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.
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V. 4 predicts that the rulers of the country shall then come forth from the people themselves, and not from foreigners. These are called corner-stones and pins, which were used to suspend things upon, because such men were the support of the State, on which everything was sustained or suspended. So, from themselves should come forth military deliverers, symbolized by the "battle-bow." All this was literally fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees, but receives its highest fulfilment in the self-sustaining energy and resources of the kingdom of Messiah.

V. 5. "And they shall be as heroes, trampling on the mire of the streets in war, and they fight, for Jehovah is with them, and the riders on horses are put to shame."

V. 5 predicts the conquests of the chosen people, that they will trample down their enemies as mire in the streets, and overcome cavalry, so formidable usually to the infantry of the Jews. The cavalry of Antiochus was thus trampled down by the resistless ranks of the the Maccabean armies. But, as in previous cases, for reasons already given, these temporal blessings of the Theocracy but symbolize the higher blessings of the Church, whose triumphs are bloodless and tearless, and whose strength is that of the spirit, mighty to the pulling down of strong holds, and the subduing of principalities and powers.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Prayer and promise are the two wires of the telegraph between earth and heaven, the one coming forth from the lips of man, the other from the lips of God, (v. 1.)

(2.) Prayer for promised blessings is as needful as the promise itself, for it is the condition of its performance ; the time of the latter rain may have come, and yet we must ask for it, (v. 1.)

(3.) All the laws of nature are as completely under the control of God now as when they were originally impressed, and can be turned to the answer of prayer as readily as to the reward of right doing in any other form, (v. 1.)

(4.) All comfort in religion is not true comfort, for it may rest on an error or a heresy, that shall be proved false at last, (v. 2.)

(5.) Rulers who are first in doing, will also be first in suffering, if this doing is wrong-doing, (v. 3.)

(6.) God is in human history, (v. 4, 5.)



V. THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

CHAPTER 10 : 6—12.

ANALYSIS.

I. The permanent establishment of the two great divisions of the chosen people in their own land, (v. 6, 7.)

II. The causes of this restoration, (1) God's redeeming work (v. 8;) (2) their penitence, (v. 9.)

III. The extent of this restoration reaching to all possible places of dispersion, (v. 10, 11.)

IV. The conversion of the Jews, (v. 12.)

THE prophets do not observe an exact chronological order in their prophecies, but often group together the nearer and more remote. Like a painter who in depicting a landscape will put on the same canvas the hillock at his feet and the mountain that lies leagues away, so they often place the remotest objects in immediate proximity to the nearest in sketching their wondrous pictures. This arises partly, from the nature of the prophetic vision that saw future events as it were in the same plane ; partly, from the fact that the greater future was connected with the lesser present by some bond of relation, causal or otherwise, and hence ought to be considered in connection with it ; and partly, from the fact that we naturally rise to the great future, even though but imperfectly connected with the present, when we would draw encouragement to bear existing toils and trials. Thus it is with the minister of the gospel now, who continually breaks away from the narrow present to the more glorious future, either on earth or in heaven, and thus naturally would it be with the prophets of the Old Testament. Hence we need not be surprised to find a mingling of events in the same prophecy that are very remote in their chronological relations. Such is the case in the present instance, where the restoration of the Jews, an event

6 And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I *am* the LORD their God, and will hear them.

7 And *they of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty *man*, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see *it*, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

still future, is connected with the Maccabean deliverance, an event long since past. Like the near planet and the remote fixed star, though widely different and widely apart, they are seen as if side by side in the prophetic firmament.

Henderson follows Grotius in supposing that this restoration took place before the coming of Christ, but the terms in which it is described can hardly be restricted to any return that took place during that period. Calvin refers it entire to a spiritual restoration. But the most natural interpretation seems to be that which predicts a future return to their own land, and a spiritual return to God, which is predicted as a separate and ultimate result in v. 12.

V. 6. "And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will again cause them to dwell, for I have compassion upon them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them out, for I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them."

V. 6 declares the permanent establishment of the two tribes, and the reason of it found in their covenant relation to God, and his compassion on them.

V. 7. "And Ephraim shall be as a mighty man, their heart shall rejoice as (*with*) wine, and their sons shall see and rejoice, their heart shall rejoice in Jehovah."

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.

V. 7 extends the same blessing to Ephraim, the most prominent of the ten tribes, most of whom had not yet returned from captivity, and hence needed encouragement.

V. 8. "I will hiss to them and collect them, for I have redeemed them, and they shall be many as they were before."

V. 8 begins to widen the view to include the great restoration. "I will hiss to them," is an image taken from the management of bees, where the apiarist hisses or whistles to collect the swarm. It is designed to express the ease with which a work, seemingly so difficult, could be accomplished. God has only to hiss and these scattered exiles will be brought back. The word "redeemed" and the context show that this restoration is connected with their conversion to God.

V. 9. "And I will sow them among the peoples, and in distant lands they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return."

V. 9 shows that the dispersion alluded to was with a special design. They were "sown," and like seed long buried in the dust, they are awaiting the time of germination. It may also indicate the future use of the Jews, when this germ of vitality shall be awakened, in extending the knowledge of the true God as missionaries. The slight hold that they have on every soil where they now live, the commercial, and hence cosmo-

10 I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and *place* shall not be found for them.

11 And he shall pass through the

sea with affliction, and 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 depart away.

politan character of their pursuits, making a change of residence so easy to them, fit them peculiarly for missionary work. If converted generally, they would be a seed of great power in almost every nation of the world. The mention of their children indicates the completeness and permanence of this restoration.

V. 10. "And I will bring them back from the land of Egypt, and from Assyria will I gather them, and to the land of Gilead and Lebanon will I bring them, and there shall not be room to contain them."

V. 10 proves that this dispersion alluded to here is not the Babylonish captivity, but a later and wider one. Egypt and Assyria are taken as types of all the lands of their dispersion, the one being the first great oppressor of the chosen people and the other among the last, and the one lying on the north whilst the other lay on the south. Hence they are here taken merely as types of the universal dispersion, just as Shinar in ch. 5 : 11. So in the next clause, Gilead beyond Jordan, and Lebanon on the hither side, represent the entire land of promise.

V. 11. "And he passes through the sea, the affliction, and he smites in the sea the waves, and all the deeps of the river are put to shame, and the pride of Assyria is overthrown, and the rod of Egypt shall give way."

V. 11, keeping up the allusions of v. 10, employs the

12 And I will strengthen them up and down in his name, saith the LORD; and they shall walk LORD.

passage of the Red Sea as an image of the future deliverances of the great restoration. "He" probably refers to God, and "affliction" is in apposition with "sea," showing that it is to be taken metaphorically and not literally. Smiting the waves in the sea, is stilling them, putting down all opposition. "The river" is either the Nile or the Tigris; if the latter, its peculiar importance as a means of defence to Nineveh may be alluded to. "The rod of Egypt shall give way" is of course a metaphorical statement of the fact that the power of all enemies to restrain and oppress the chosen people would be forced to relax. The general meaning of the verse is that all future obstacles would be as powerless to arrest this return as the Red Sea and Jordan were to prevent that of their fathers.

V. 12. "And I will strengthen them in Jehovah, and in his name shall they walk, saith Jehovah."

V. 12 predicts their conversion. Here again we find one Jehovah speaking of another, and predicting the fact that in the name they now despise and hate, they shall walk, and shall bear that name with joy. They shall call themselves Christians, for as it is in Christ that they are to be strengthened, he is this Jehovah.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Christians should pray for the conversion of the Jews, since that conversion is promised. We must pray

for rain in the time of the latter rain. It was stated in 1853, that the latter rain had appeared in Palestine the previous year, for the first time since the downfall of Jerusalem. If this be true, it would indicate a reason for prayer that the latter rain of the Spirit may be poured out, according to promise, (v. 1.)

(2.) The dispersion of the Jews during nearly two thousand years, for the crime of rejecting Christ, proves that this crime is one of no ordinary magnitude, and that it is a fearful thing to bear the rejected blood of the Redeemer. If these things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry? (v. 8, 9.)

(3.) When the fulness of time comes, all the difficulties in the way of fulfilling God's promises shall melt away, (v. 10, 11.)

(4.) There are evidently two Jehovahs spoken of in v. 12, one of whom is the speaker, and the other spoken of. Hence there are either two Gods, which leads us to polytheism, or two persons of the same Godhead, which leads us to the doctrine of the New Testament, that Christ, in whom all the redeemed are at last to be saved, is Jehovah, God over all, blessed forever, (v. 12.)

VI. THE MISSION OF MESSIAH.

CHAPTER 11.

ANALYSIS.

I. The troubles that would precede the coming of Christ under the image of a storm, (11 : 1—3.)

II. The coming of Christ to make one last effort to save the covenant people. (1) The call to the shepherd to take charge of the flock, (v. 4—6.) (2) His answer to that call, and actual assumption of the pastoral office, (v. 7, 8.) (3) His rejection and sale for thirty pieces of silver, (v. 9—14.)

III. The curse that would follow this rejection, under the symbol of an evil shepherd who oppresses the flock and is afterwards punished, (v. 14—17.)



IN the utterances of God to his people, the voice of Ebal is always set over against that of Gerizim, and the blessing to faithfulness is enforced by the curse against unfaithfulness. This is necessary, owing to our proneness to sever the blessing from that obedience which is its condition, and expect the one whilst we neglect the other. It is therefore necessary for God to show us that in the same cloud where the rain is treasured there also sleeps the thunderbolt. Hence after promising (chap. 10 : 1,) the refreshing showers, on the condition of fidelity, the prophet now turns to the stormy rush of evils that would come in their place, if they were unfaithful. These evils are described in a highly dramatic form in ch. 11.

1 Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that
the fire may devour thy cedars.

2 Howl, fir tree ; for the cedar is
fallen ; because the mighty are spoil-

Part 1. The storm preceding the coming of Christ, v. 1—3.

V. 1—3. " Open, O Lebanon, thy gates, and let the fire consume thy cedars. Howl, O cypress, for the cedar falls, for the lofty are laid waste ; howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest falls. A voice of howling of the shepherds, for their glory is laid waste : a voice of roaring of the lions, for the pride of Jordan is laid waste."

Henderson follows most of the interpreters in referring this passage to the temple. The Jews, generally, so explained it, and nearly all the Christian expositors have followed them. But Calvin properly remarks that it is a most frigid interpretation, and hence gives the true view, which has been followed by Hengstenberg, and a few others, that it is a prediction of tumult and trouble, under the image of a storm traversing the whole land of Palestine.

It is a highly dramatic passage. The prophet looks to the north, and sees sweeping down a terrific tempest, that bursts through the rocky ramparts of Lebanon, consumes with its lightnings the lordly cedars, lays waste the lofty monarchs of the forest, and spreads terror and ruin along its track. The cypress is called to tremble, because the mightier cedar has been unable to withstand the shock, and the oaks of Bashan to fear because the dense and firmly knit forest has been prostrated by its rush. There mingles then with the crash of the storm a voice of terror and despair from the shepherds who see their broad pastures laid waste ; and a cry of rage and fear from the lions as their lairs on

ed ; howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the forest of the vintage is come down. of the shepherds ; for their glory is spoiled ; a voice of the roaring of young lions ; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

3 ¶ *There is* a voice of the howling

the banks of the Jordan are torn up by the sweep of the hurricane. "The pride of Jordan," is a well-known phrase for the beautiful shrubbery that lined its bank, in whose tangled recesses the wild beast found a shelter. The passage is a bold and beautiful description of a tempest that sweeps over the entire length and breadth of the holy land, prostrating everything before it. This metaphor describes the storm of invasion, bloodshed and oppression that should roll over Palestine after the glorious Maccabean era, and before the coming of the Messiah. The designation of Lebanon and Bashan belong to the metaphor, and not to the fulfilment, being designed to set forth by the usual course of such storms the track of this tempest, and hence it is not necessary for us to show that any invasions actually came by the way of Lebanon. The reference is to that desolating storm of civil war that caused the calling in of the Romans, whose legions swept like a whirlwind of steel over the land, and finally prostrated every vestige of independent authority, from the cedar of Lebanon to the lowliest cypress, from the peaceful shepherd to the lion-like spirit that refused to be subdued, and humbled the whole land beneath the mighty power of Rome. It was this state of deep prostration that constituted the dark hour before the dawn, the fulness of time on the arrival of which the great shepherd was to come. God

4 Thus saith the LORD my God ; that sell them say, Blessed be the LORD ;
 Feed the flock of the slaughter ; for I am rich, and their own shepherds
 5 Whose possessors slay them, and pity them not.
 hold themselves not guilty ; and they

had sent messenger after messenger, some of kindness, and some of wrath, but at that time he would make one more effort, and send forth his own son, made of a woman, made under the law, saying, "surely they will reverence my son."

Part 2. Christ assumes the pastoral care of the Theocracy.

V. 4—14.

The prophet here appears as a type of Christ, and performs a series of symbolic actions that represent the advent of the Messiah "to his own," and his rejection by them, with its bitter consequences. One last effort will be made to rescue them from the wrath they are so recklessly braving. By remembering that this whole passage is a dramatic representation, in which the prophet acts as a type of Christ, in the first instance, and of the foolish shepherd in the second, the interpretation will be clear and easy.

V. 4. "Thus saith Jehovah my God, Feed the flock of slaughter."

V. 4. "Flock of slaughter" is a flock doomed or sentenced to slaughter, in consequence of their insane rejection of the care of the good shepherd. During the war with the Romans, and the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, a million and a half of the Jews were slaughtered.

V. 5. "Whose buyers slaughter them, and do not become guilty ; and whose sellers say, blessed be Jehovah, for I am enriched, and their shepherds spare them not."

6 For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD; but lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver *them*.

V. 5 expresses the thought that, although once they who oppressed the covenant people would be guilty and so treated by God, now the sins of the people were such that these oppressions were righteous punishments, and their agents therefore not guilty for the execution itself, however they might be for the mode and motives with which they performed it. By the buyers and sellers are meant the Romans, who used the Jews, as they did all their conquests, as mere merchandise, making from them the greatest possible gain for themselves. "Their shepherds" refer to the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews, and there is predicted here that extortion and treachery in which the Pharisee and Sadducee wrung from the unhappy people what the Roman had failed to extort, and both combined thus in spite of their mutual hate in this work of shameless robbery.

V. 6. "For I will no longer spare the dwellers in this land, saith Jehovah, And behold! I will give up each man to the hand of his neighbor, and to the hand of his king, and they lay waste the land, and I will not deliver out of their hand."

V. 6 gives the reason for making this last effort to save them; their wickedness could no longer be borne, but must be arrested either by penitence at the call of Christ, or punishment at the sword of the Roman. The nature of the punishment is described in the latter clauses. Civil war and intestine discord are delineated

7 And I will feed the flock of slaughter, called Beauty, and the other I called *even you*, O poor of the flock. And Bands ; and I fed the flock. I took unto me two staves ; the one I

in each man being given into “ the hand of his neighbor,” whilst the Roman oppression is indicated by “ the hand of the king.” Both these were fulfilled in those fearful times when the bloody factions that wasted the land found but a single bond of union, and that in their common hate of their rightful king, and their prophetic cry, “ we have no king but Cæsar.”

V. 7. “ So I fed the flock of slaughter, in order that (*I might preserve*) the humble of the flock. And I took to myself two staves, the one I called Favor, the other I called Union, and I fed the flock.”

V. 7 represents Christ as taking by covenant the mediatorial work, and gives his reason for so doing. That reason is contained in the phrase, “ therefore the humble of the flock.” This phrase presents no little grammatical difficulty. The word לְכֶם is taken by our translators and others as a pronoun with the preposition לְ prefixed, and rendered as a dative of advantage, “ for you,” *i. e.*, for your sakes, “ I will feed the flock.” This is the sense of the passage, but it requires us to assume a form of the pronoun that never occurs elsewhere. Henderson, and others, take it as a participial noun, in the sense of “ truly,” לְ being considered as redundant. This gives a good sense, but a more unusual meaning to the word, and does not cohere with the context so well, unless we render לְכֶם “ miserable,” which is not its proper meaning here, (see v. 11.) Others translate it

as an adverb, rendering it “because.” This would give the exact sense, but this word, in strictness, never has the sense of “because,” but always that of “therefore.” But there are cases in which it is used to introduce not only the cause but the design of an action. (See Alexander on Isa. 26 : 14.) Taking it in this sense it would furnish the design with which Christ fed the flock, namely, to feed or save “the humble of the flock,” the remnant of faithful ones who had never bowed the knee to Baal. We have rendered זָנִי by “humble,” because it has that double sense of outward lowliness and inward meekness that זָנִי has, especially in this passage. This portion of the flock is referred to in v. 11 more explicitly as the humble of the flock who clung to the Messiah. Hence the fact is set forth, that Christ assumed the work of feeding the Jewish people, in order that he might save that remnant of them who were waiting for the salvation of Israel. Had there not been such a remnant, he would have come as an avenging instead of a suffering messenger from God.

The assumption of this work is symbolically represented by taking two staves of office, or crooks, such as shepherds usually carried. One was called *Favor*, (Eng. version, *Beauty*,) and symbolised the favor with which God caused the Jews to be regarded by other nations, and their rights respected until the work of redemption was completed. How marvellously they were thus preserved, with all their records, usages, and institutions, until “the son of David” came, is well known. Alex-

8 Three shepherds also I cut off in one month ; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then said I, I will not feed you :

ander, Antiochus and Pompey, were alike held back from destroying them until the mystic staff was broken, after which the power of Titus and the malignity of Julian were alike impotent even to save or restore their temple. The second staff was called *Union*, (Eng. version, *Bands*,) and symbolised that union within themselves, which was secured until the coming of Christ, in order that it could be seen that all the words of prophecy in regard to him were minutely fulfilled.

V. 8. "And I destroyed three shepherds in one month, and my soul was grieved with them, and their soul abhorred me."

V. 8. "I destroyed three shepherds in one month." The obscurity of this phrase would have been more easily removed by interpreters, if the three-fold nature of Christ's work had been recollected, and its relation to the Jewish polity. He was the great antetype, of which that polity was the complex type. Now he, as our Redeemer, appeared as a Prophet, a Priest and a King, and thus fulfilled all the significance of these three orders in the old dispensation. He was the promised prophet, the one and only priest, and the king in Zion, and hence his appearing brought these respective orders in the theocracy to an end, since they were only designed to foreshadow his advent and kingdom. This was done in judicial anger also ; they were deposed because of their unfaithfulness in the discharge of their duties. "One month" is mentioned to show that this was done

that that dieth, let it die; and that and let the rest eat, every one the flesh that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; of another.

gradually and yet not protractedly. A month is the intermediate measure of time between a day and a year, and expresses thus that gradual transition from the old to the new dispensation, which did in fact occur. The one overlapped and evolved the other.

The other clauses of the verse represent that mutual aversion that existed between Christ and the magnates of the Jewish people. He denounced them with terrible severity, as vipers, hypocrites, &c., whilst they hated him so that they even gloated in fiendish delight over his agony on the cross.

V. 9. "Then I said, I will not feed you, the dying, let them die, the cut off, let them be cut off, the remaining, let them consume each the flesh of the other."

V. 9 sets forth the final abandonment of the Jewish people to their fate, when it became evident that they would not listen to the voice of Jesus. They were left to their fatal choice. A threefold calamity is predicted; pestilence and famine, "the dying;" war, "the cut off;" and intestine discord, "let them consume each the flesh of the other." How terribly these predictions were fulfilled may be seen from the pages of Josephus, where this threefold calamity is set forth in the most appalling details, in relating the history of the latter days of the Jewish republic.

V 10. "And I took my staff Favor and brake it; to abolish my covenant that I had made with all nations."

10 ¶ And I took my staff, *even* Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

11 And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it *was* the word of the Lord.

V. 10 refers to that period when God let loose the angry nations of the earth against his people, and removed that girdle of protection that he had so long kept around them. This is symbolised by breaking the staff *Favor*, which is explained as abolishing the covenant that God had made with all nations. This covenant was of course not a formal engagement between God and all nations in favor of the Jews, but an ordinance of God in reference to all nations, by which they were restrained from destroying the Jews. A similar form of speech will be found in Hos. 2 : 20, when God makes a covenant with the beasts, the birds, and the insects, and in Job 5 : 23, which speaks of a covenant with the stones of the field. This was fulfilled when the Roman eagles gathered in hungry ferocity about the dying commonwealth.

V. 11. "And it (*the covenant*) was abolished in that day, and thus they knew, (*viz.*) the humble of the flock who clung to me, that this is the word of Jehovah."

V. 11 states that when this protection was withdrawn "the humble of the flock" who clung to Christ should know that this was the word of Jehovah. This was remarkably fulfilled. When Jerusalem was compassed with armies, the Christians remembered the warning of Christ to flee to the mountains, and accordingly when Titus unaccountably raised the siege for a few days, as

12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver.

if to give them an opportunity of obeying Christ's words, they fled to Pella, and escaped the fate of those who remained in the city. Thus they knew that this was the word of Jehovah.

V. 12. "Then I said to them, if it seem good in your eyes, give me my reward, and if not, withhold it, and they weighed my reward, thirty pieces of silver!"

V. 12 contains the record of the final rejection of Christ. The expression, "if it seem good in your eyes," &c., is one of indignant contempt, with an intimation that to retain that reward was a far more costly thing than to bestow it. The reward was that travail of his soul which it was promised he should see and be satisfied, when men would receive him as a Saviour from sin. They, however, not only withheld that obedience and love that were the proper return for the work of Christ among them, but they added insult to injury. "They weighed," (alluding to the ancient mode of computing the value of money,) "my reward, thirty pieces of silver." This was the price of a servant who was gored by an ox, (see Ex. 21 : 32,) a fact that made the sum a gross insult to him who was the Lord of all. How exactly this was fulfilled, when the traitor sold his master for thirty pieces of silver, all now know. It was fulfilled in its very minutest particulars.

V. 13. "And Jehovah said to me, Cast it to the potter, this magnificent price at which I was valued of them, and I took the thirty

13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them it unto the potter: a goodly price that to the potter in the house of the LORD. I was prized at of them. And I took

pieces of silver, and I cast it down in the house of Jehovah, (*to be given thence*) to the potter."

V. 13 shows what was to be done with this price, which is ironically called a "magnificent price." It was to be cast to the potter. This was a proverbial phrase for cast it to an unclean place, like our phrases, "throw it to the dogs," "to the moles and the bats," and others of like character. The origin of this proverb was in the fact that the potter for the temple had his shop in the valley of Hinnom, because it furnished the most suitable clay for his purpose. This valley was a polluted place to the Jews, because of the idolatry once practiced there, and also because of the fact that Josiah defiled it with carrion, bones, &c. See 2 Kings 23:10. Hence to cast a thing to the potter, was to cast it to the valley of Hinnom, or to intimate that it was an unclean and unholy thing. That it was to be cast there, was because of a prophecy in Jer., chs. 18th and 19th, where the valley of Hinnom and the shop of the potter are taken as scenes for symbolic actions that apply to this precise period of Jewish history. The prophet Zechariah mentions the potter to connect this prophecy with the older one of Jeremiah, and show that it was only a fuller development of it, or more strictly a second and wider execution of the threatening then contained against unfaithfulness. That this view of the relation of the later to the earlier prophecy is correct, is proved

by Matt. 27 : 9, when it is said, "There was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field as the Lord appointed me." The very fact that seems at first sight a difficulty, is the one that proves this connection. It will be seen that the words of Zechariah are referred to Jeremiah, and this is the uniform reading of all the best MSS. of the gospel. Why then is the prophecy referred to Jeremiah? For the very same reason that a man quoting from the abridgement of a law book, would probably refer to the original author rather than the compiler, even though he quoted the words of the compilation. This is not a solitary instance in the New Testament writers. Mark 1 : 2, 3, quotes the words of Malachi, and refers them to Isaiah, to show the relation between the prophecies. So it is here. The passage is quoted, not verbatim, but with slight explanatory variations, as if to suggest to the reader the fact meant to be indicated by connecting the name of the earlier prophet with the form of the prediction that was given in the words of the later. This was much more obvious to the Jews than it is to us, because the minor prophets were all regarded as constituting but one book, and hence rarely quoted by name, and regarded as supplemental and subsidiary to the major prophets. Hence we see how wonderfully the prediction and the fulfil-

14 Then I cut asunder mine other the brotherhood between Judah and staff, *even* Bands, that I might break Israel.

ment have been connected in their very minutest terms, and their very obscurest intimations.

It ought to be remarked, however, that the majority of commentators prefer the supposition that there has been a mistake of the transcribers, and that Jeremiah has been written for Zechariah in the contracted form, or that a marginal reference to Jeremiah has crept into the text, the Evangelist having originally written only "the prophet" without giving any name, the view held by Augustine. Either of these suppositions is probable, and if supported by external evidence, would be admissible. But in view of the changes made by Matthew in quoting the and text, the connection actually existing between the two passages as predictions of the same period, the opinion of Hengstenberg, which is given above, seems to be the most probable.

V. 14. "And I broke my second staff Union, to destroy the brotherhood between Judah and Israel."

V. 14 predicts by the symbol of breaking the second staff Union, the intestine discord that raged so fearfully after the rejection of Christ by the Jews. The destruction of the brotherhood between Judah and Israel is not to be taken literally, for this bond had been broken long before in the time of Rehoboam, but is used as a metaphor of disunion. The breach of the past, with its mournful results, is used as a type of the future. How terribly this prediction was fulfilled can be seen in the

15 ¶ And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

16 For lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the

pages of Josephus. The most terrible factions that have ever torn out the vitals of a commonwealth appeared in Judea, and amidst the terrors of invasion without and the horrors of fratricide within, this prophecy was fulfilled. The staff of protection from evil abroad and the staff of continued union at home were both broken, and the double horrors of foreign and domestic war paid the fearful penalty of rejecting the Lord of life, and setting upon him a price which in itself was an insult, and a mockery.

Part 3. The curse of evil rulers after the rejection of Christ.

CH. 11 : 15—*end.*

These verses describe a second symbolic action, in which the prophet predicts the curse of evil rulers by taking the implements of a foolish shepherd. What these were we are not told, but they were doubtless implements calculated to injure and destroy, rather than to benefit the flock. He thus declared that after rejecting their rightful Lord, God would send upon them wicked and cruel rulers, who would waste and scatter them.

V. 15. "And Jehovah said to me, again, take to thee the implements of a foolish shepherd."

V. 15. "Again," seems to be spoken to the prophet and to summon him to the resumption of those sym-

young one, nor heal that that is broken, he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and
nor feed that that standeth still : but tear their claws in pieces.

bolical actions that were connected with the predictions, and that now were to express a new state of facts.

V. 16. "For behold! I raise up a shepherd in the land. The perishing will he not visit, the straying will he not seek out, the wounded will he not heal, the feeble will he not nourish, and the flesh of the fat ones will he eat, and their hoofs will he break off."

V. 16. "The shepherd in the land," is of course not to be taken as an individual, but as representing the ruling power, in whomsoever vested. The characteristics of that power would be neglect, greediness and cruelty. The perishing, straying, wounded and feeble, who needed his aid, would be neglected, whilst the fat ones would be devoured, and adding cruelty to greed, their very hoofs would be broken off.

Henderson restricts this verse to Herod, but without sufficient reason. Herod was undoubtedly included, but to limit it to him would restrict the threatening to the time of the advent, instead of extending it, where it undoubtedly reaches, to the downfall of the Hebrew commonwealth.

V. 17. "Wo to the worthless shepherd, forsaking the flock! A sword upon his arm! and upon his right eye! His arm shall surely be withered, and his right eye shall surely be blind."

V. 17 declares that these rulers themselves should not escape, but the arm that oppressed should be palsied, and the eye that coveted should be blinded.

The reference here seems mainly, though not exclusively to be to the Romans. They were the rulers, but

17 Wo to the idol shepherd that his arm shall be clean dried up, and leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* his right eye shall be utterly darkened. upon his arm, and upon his right eye :

not the only rulers of the Jewish people. They were at once rapacious, proud and cruel, and they thronged like vultures to batten on the yet quivering flesh of the dying commonwealth. But they in turn were assailed by others, and it is by overlooking the very exactness of the fulfilment of the terms of the prophecy that the query has been raised about their significance. It is said that there is an incongruity in the change of punishment predicted, the first words declaring that it shall be the sword, and the next that it shall be palsy and blindness. But this will vanish the moment we look at the exact facts of the case. Rome, like some old lion who had ravaged for many years, when his eye grew dim and his arm grew weak, lay down to die. And it was precisely then that in addition to this internal feebleness there came upon them from the forests of the North, the sword, and thus there was literally fulfilled the terms of this passage. The sword of the barbarian was added to her own blinded and palsied weakness, and thus judgment inflicted in exact accordance with the words of this prophecy. God often uses instruments, which he afterwards throws into the fire.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) No defence shall protect the wicked from punishment, when God's time has come. Though they tower as high and strong as Lebanon, the storm shall

bow their summits, and though they hide themselves as deep as the lairs in the creeping thickets of Jordan, the tempest shall find them out, and wrap them in ruin, (v. 1—3.)

(2.) Sin is always folly, and the sinner always a fool, for he secures the great evil of punishment in exchange for the small good of gratification, and therefore always makes a fool's bargain, (v. 4, 5.)

(3.) Wicked rulers are a curse of God on a wicked nation. Now as religion tends to prevent such rulers, or at least prevent their choice, there is an obvious connection between politics and religion. Church and state may and ought to be separated; politics and religion ought not, for thus the state becomes exposed to the curse of God, and political evil follows in the train of moral evil, (v. 6.)

(4.) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, (v. 7.)

(5.) Union of feeling in a people is a mark of the favor of God, and disunion a token of his wrath, and usually a beginning of the downfall of a people. May this token of God's wrath long be averted from the people of these United States! (v. 7.)

(6.) Christ cannot be rejected with impunity. Even the Jews, who "did it ignorantly in unbelief," paid a terrible penalty for their crime; how much more terrible will be the punishment of those who have all their unbelief, without any of their ignorance, (v. 8—11.)

(7.) Men now sometimes reject Christ for a far less

reward than thirty pieces of silver, and of course with far more guilt than Judas, (v. 12, 13.)

(8.) God may bear long with the wicked, but there is a point where the piling avalanche will cease to be held back, and descend in fearful ruin, (v. 14—17.)

VII. FUTURE BLESSINGS TO JUDAH.

CHAPTER 12 : 1—9.

ANALYSIS.

I. A message of wrath to the enemies of Israel, (v. 1.)

II. God will use the Jewish people, or the Theocracy, as instruments of wrath against his enemies and theirs, (v. 2—4.)

III. A regularly organized government shall exist, which shall protect the people, (v. 5, 6.)

IV. In scenes of peril and trouble God will protect his people, but to prevent the city from looking contemptuously on the country, the former will be rescued by the latter, (v. 7—9.)

THIS chapter ushers in a set of facts over which there hangs some obscurity, both as to the persons to whom they refer and the time of their fulfilment. They are placed subsequent to the rejection of Christ, and yet they seem to refer to a time yet future, and to represent the rejection of Christ as not a hopeless alienation from God. There can be but little doubt that the events here predicted are yet future. The persons referred to are, we believe, the people of God, the New Testament succession of the Theocracy, the Church of Jesus Christ, which is the continuation of the kingdom

I The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

of God as it existed in the Jewish economy. This brings this prophecy in harmony with the rest of the book, which is designed to trace out the historic course of the covenant people down to the time when the unbelieving Jewish element was to be eliminated, and onward to the period when it should be restored in penitence and faith to the one living Church of the living God.

Henderson supposes that this prophecy refers to the restored Jews, in their national capacity, but this is too narrow an object to contain its promises. Calvin takes essentially the view already presented, and considers these promises made to the whole Church of the future, including the restored Jews, though made in terms taken from the existing and past form of the Church.

V. 1. "A Burden. The word of Jehovah upon Israel, saith Jehovah, who stretches the heavens, and establishes the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him."

V. 1. The word "Burden" is usually, if not always, prefixed as a title to threatening prophecies, as if to indicate the weight of wrath that they embosomed in their dark clouds. Although the drift of this prophecy is consoling, yet it is not wholly so, for the greater part of its predictions are threatenings of evil to the enemies of the chosen people. The words "upon Israel" are supposed by Hengstenberg to indicate Israel as the object of the threatening predictions that follow. Is-

rael, or the ten tribes, being taken as typical of the enemies of the chosen people. This view is favored by the fact that all the subsequent promises are made to Judah and Jerusalem, and none to Israel. It is however not at all an obvious or usual sense of the word Israel, though the sense thus expressed is the real object of the prophecy, *viz.*, comfort to the people of God by the assurance that their enemies should all be destroyed. As there is really no necessity for adopting so unusual a sense to explain the word "burden," it is useless to adopt it.

The language describing God's attributes here is peculiar. It is not who *hath* stretched the heavens, &c., but who is *now* stretching them, and, by a ceaseless exertion of his power, upholding the great ongoings of the universe. The Bible is ignorant of that philosophy which teaches that God has created the universe and wound up its machinery like a clock, and then left it to run on by its own inherent energies. From moment to moment he is exerting his power in maintaining the movements of visible things. The argument is that God is doing all these mighty works, and hence will be able to do less mighty, and that as he has not excluded himself from his creation, he is able to do all that he has promised. It is therefore a most fitting introduction.

V. 2. "Behold! I make Jerusalem a threshold of shaking to all nations round about, and also upon Judah shall it be, in the siege against Jerusalem."

2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

3 ¶ And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people : all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

V. 2. The word כֶּסֶל is usually translated cup, but the more common, if not the only proper meaning, is “threshold,” and as the same figure essentially is used in v. 3, it is most appropriate here. The meaning is that when the nations assail Jerusalem they shall find a crash of ruin falling upon them, just like the man who on entering the house finds the threshold to give way under his feet, bringing down the building in ruins upon his head. The phrase “upon Judah shall it be,” &c., is a difficult one, but seems to mean that Judah shall be involved in the evils of the siege against Jerusalem, *i. e.*, that the evil shall be general, so that all, even the most remote, shall feel it.

V. 3. “And it shall be in that day, I will make Jerusalem a stone of burden to all the nations, all who lift it up shall surely gash themselves, and there shall be gathered against her all people of the earth.”

V. 3 declares that the efforts of the enemies of the Church to overthrow her shall be futile and injurious only to themselves. It shall be like some huge rock, the efforts to raise which only wound and bruise the hand of him who makes the attempt. Jerome states that it was a custom among the cities of Palestine to have a large rock, the lifting of which was a test of strength, and that he himself saw in the Acropolis at

4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

Athens a huge sphere of brass, which was used for the same purpose; no athlete being allowed to enter the games who was unable to lift it. Jerusalem has literally been such a stone, and the Church of God pre-eminently has been a test of this kind, to all who have attempted to use her for selfish purposes.

V. 4. "In that day, saith Jehovah, I will smite every horse with affright, and his rider with madness, and upon the house of Judah will I open my eyes, and every horse of the nations will I smite with blindness."

V. 4 drops this metaphor, and as cavalry was in ancient warfare a very important arm of attack, and one which the Jewish people feared, God promises so to confound the horse and his rider as to prevent them from doing any injury to the chosen people, to whom under the phrase, "I will open my eyes," the supervision and protection of God is promised. He had seemed to slumber or to close his eyes upon and forget them, but now he will bestow upon them special attention and protection. A distinction is evidently made between Judah and Jerusalem, or the province and the metropolis, but what is the exact fact alluded to by this distinction, in the future, we cannot tell. It implies a difference of privilege and of strength among the people of God, corresponding to the difference between a residence within the fortified walls of the city and the hallowed

5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

6 ¶ In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour

shadow of the temple, and a residence in the less holy and less secure regions of the country.

V. 5. “And the princes of Judah say in their hearts, my strength (*is*) the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in Jehovah of Hosts, their God.”

V. 5 brings out this distinction more emphatically. There are several grammatical difficulties about this verse, but the most natural course seems to be to take חַיִּים as a noun meaning strength in apposition with “inhabitants of Jerusalem,” and “in Jehovah” as explanatory of the connection asserted by this apposition. The meaning then would be, that the princes of Judah (who speak for the people) recognize Jerusalem, which is the place of God’s special manifestation, as the source from which their strength is to come, and yet as only the medium of transmission, the strength itself residing at last only in Jehovah. The general fact predicted seems to be that cordial union of all portions of the Church from the lowest to the highest, that will give the fullest scope for the exertion of God’s power in delivering and blessing his people.

V. 6. “In that day I will make the princes of Judah as a pan of fire among faggots, and as a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall consume on the right hand and on the left all the nations round about, and Jerusalem shall yet sit in her own place in Jerusalem.”

V. 6 intimates, that because of the meek acknowledg-

all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, *even* in Jerusalem.

7 The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify *themselves* against Judah.

ment of subordination made by the province, they who humbled themselves shall be exalted, and the province should be made the instrument of delivering the metropolis, and should consume the enemies assembled against the church as a pan of coals sets fire to a pile of dry faggots, or a torch consumes a sheaf of straw. Jerusalem sitting "in her own place," describes a settled and secure state of things in the Church, which should be brought about by the agency of these feebler and humbler instrumentalities, the princes of Judah.

V. 7. "And Jehovah shall help the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the House of David, and the glory of the inhabitant of Jerusalem, may not be magnified over Judah."

V. 7 assigns the reason for the preference given to the humbler agencies; it is to prevent all swelling of pride, and show that God and not man is the source of this deliverance, and also to prevent the more favored from looking down contemptuously on the less favored. The "tents of Judah," in their insecurity and lowliness are placed in contrast with the lofty mountains of Jerusalem. As these privileges were likely to produce pride, God would bestow the honor of this deliverance, as well as the first possession of it, on those who were less favored externally than the inhabitants of the holy city. Such has been his plan in the past, and such it is here declared it will be in the great struggles of the future; the weak

8 In that day shall the LORD defend that is feeble among them at that day the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he shall be as David; and the house of

things shall confound the mighty, and the things that are not bring to naught things that are, in order that no flesh may glory in his presence.

V. 8. "In that day Jehovah will protect the dweller in Jerusalem, and the feeble among them in that day shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them."

V. 8 declares that this favor shall not be restricted to the lowly and less favored, lest it might generate the very evil it was designed to avoid, but that all portions of the Church should be visited and blessed. The highest earthly type of might and glory to the Jew was David, and the highest heavenly was the Jehovah angel, the divine messenger who led them through the desert. These are taken as the standards of comparison to describe this future glory. The weakest of the future shall be equal to the strongest of the past, whilst the strong ("the house of David") shall be as God, namely as the angel of Jehovah. There is no reason for taking *elohim* in any other than its usual sense, expressing the abstract notion of Deity, whilst *Jehovah*, and especially "the angel of *Jehovah*," expresses that concrete and manifested form of divinity that was most significant to the Jew. The apposition here is another proof that the angel of the covenant is a divine person.

V. 9. "And it shall be in that day I will seek to destroy all nations who come up against Jerusalem."

V. 9 declares in general terms the destruction of all

David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

9 ¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

the enemies that shall combine against the Church, here symbolised by Jerusalem.

As the events predicted here are yet future, it were unwise to dogmatise in regard to their exact nature. The general meaning seems to be, that there shall be hereafter a wide and formidable combination of enemies against the Church; that God shall deliver her, not by the instruments to which she has looked, but by others, of the humbler and obscurer part; and that this deliverance should be accompanied by cordial union of affection among all portions of the Church, and followed by a vast accession of strength to every portion of it, and by complete overthrow of her enemies. This great struggle yet before the Church, is one that seems to have loomed up like the lurid smoke of some distant battle to the eye of all the prophets, from Enoch to the seer of the Apocalypse. Blessed is he who is then found faithful!

There is however another great event that is to accompany this mighty struggle, which is, the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people to the Church from which they have been so long separated. This is alluded to and implied in the remaining verses of this chapter and the opening verses of the succeeding.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

- (1.) The agency of God is still exerted as really in the

continued existence of the universe, as in its original creation, (v. 1.)

(2.) The ark of God may be allowed, on account of the sins of his Church to fall into the hands of the Philistines, but it shall be a booty of fearful import, and one, which, over mutilated and prostrate Dagon, shall at last be restored to its rightful possessors, (v. 2, 3.)

(3.) The promise of God is the best protection of his Church, in the time of peril, (v. 4, 5.)

(4.) God may seem to forget his people in their trouble, but it will only be a seeming oblivion, for at the proper time he will open his eyes upon them, and show them that he slumbers not nor sleeps, (v. 4.)

(5.) However feeble the cause of religion may be now, there is a time coming when it shall be in fact what it is in right, and in actual result what it is in natural tendency, the mightiest element in human things, (v. 6, 8.)

(6.) The whole plan of God's dealings with man is to humble that pride, the root of which is selfishness, and the fruit of which is every form of sin, (v. 7.)

(7.) The enemies of the Church of God shall at last perish, (v. 9.)

10 And I will pour upon the house of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look

VIII. FUTURE REPENTANCE AND BLESSING TO JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER 12 : 10—*end.*

ANALYSIS.

I. The outpouring of the spirit on the Church, which shall then contain the restored Jews, (v. 10.)

II. The penitence that shall exist because of their former treatment of Christ. (1) Deep, (v. 11.) (2) Pervading. (3) Personal, (v. 12—14.)

V. 10. “ And I pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and of supplication, and they look upon me, whom they pierced, and they lament for him, as the lamenting of an only child, and they mourn for him as the mourning of a first-born.”

V. 10. There is here predicted a great spiritual blessing from God on the Church, but contemplated mainly as now containing the penitent Jews. “ A spirit of grace and supplication ” is an outpouring of the spirit of God, that awakens gracious affections and leads the heart to prayer. The spirit of prayer is the gauge of the spirit of grace, and the mercury whose rise or fall is an unerring test of the state of the Church.

In this mighty revival that shall take place in the future, there will be much prayer and much penitence. This penitence shall pervade the whole Church, but especial prominence is given here to the recovered Jews.

upon me whom they have pierced, and in bitterness for him, as one that is in
 they shall mourn for him, as one bitterness for *his* first-born.
 mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be

“ They shall look on me whom they have pierced.” As God is here the speaker, this passage has always been a stumbling-block to the Jews, for how could God be pierced? The only fact that explains it is that which they have not yet admitted, that they have crucified and slain that prince of peace who was God manifest in the flesh. As soon as they admit this fact they will see the consistency of the passage, and will mourn the guilt of their fathers in crucifying the incarnate Son, and their own guilt in so long rejecting him.

John 19 : 37 refers this passage to the piercing of Christ’s side, but as this was the act of a Roman soldier and not of the Jewish people, it must be regarded as only a partial fulfilment of the prophecy. It refers to all the sufferings of Christ, which culminated in his death on the cross, and affirms that then the Jews will admit what heretofore they have rejected, a suffering and dying Messiah. There is a change of person from the first to the third, which is not unusual with the prophets, (see Nordheimer’s Grammar, § 768, 1, 6,) and which, in view of what was to be said in reference to the speaker, was highly appropriate.

This passage has always been regarded as one of no small difficulty; at least, the expositors have found no small difficulty with it, from the fact that if its obvious meaning be admitted, a real prophecy and a suffering

and yet divine Messiah must also be admitted. Hence Jews in earlier times, and neologists in later, have endeavored to get rid of this meaning. Some alleged that קָרַח here means not to pierce, but to grieve, or to insult, and that the charge is that of insulting or blaspheming God. This is the rendering of the LXX and the Chaldee. Calvin favors it to a certain extent, but finds, in the literal fulfilment on the cross, a divinely arranged procedure, giving a symbolical exemplification of this insulting treatment of God. Rosenmüller, Eichhorn, Theiner, Maurer, De Wette, Winer, and others, contend very strenuously for this opinion. But it is a sufficient objection to it that the word never occurs in that sense, but always in the sense of literal piercing, even in this prophecy, (ch. 13 : 3.) And the whole context is at variance with this meaning. The mourning, to which it is compared, was for a literal piercing, or death, in the case of Josiah, and, unless it is a literal death here, the depth of sorrow indicated in these words seems hardly explicable, and the analogy fails.

That the passage refers to Messiah was admitted, even among the Jews, the later interpreters explaining it of Messiah Ben Joseph, or the suffering Messiah, whom they invented to meet the passages of Scripture that speak so clearly of this characteristic of the promised Redeemer. But as they believed that this Messiah son of Joseph was a mere man, the difficulty met them that Jehovah declared "they shall look on ME whom they have pierced;" so that if it refers to the Messiah

he cannot be a mere man, but must be divine. To escape this difficulty, they changed the text, and made it read "him," instead of "me." This was at first only a marginal reading, as appears from some of the MSS., but was afterwards admitted into the text. But many of the most able Jews reject this gloss, and admit that "me" is the true reading. Scarcely any scholar of any note, even among the infidel critics, admits this interpolation. Hence this evasion is utterly inadmissible, and the text still stands, asserting that the Jews would look at Jehovah whom they had slain, a prophecy which can only be interpreted in the light of the cross.

It is useless to discuss the opinion of some of the early Jews, adopted in later times by Jahn, Bauer, Bertholdt, and others, that the mourning here was for the death of Judas Maccabeus, or some other Jewish leader, for this is liable to the same objections with the last-named opinion. Calmet admits this view, but says that Judas Maccabeus was a type of Christ. Ackermann, who quotes it at length, coincides with it as most probable. But there is no necessity for supposing any such reference as this, for the context refers obviously to events later than the Maccabean age, and events some of which are still future. Indeed, this very mourning is obviously yet to take place.

Hence, the only meaning that the text will bear is, that Jehovah is the speaker, and that he is speaking of himself, and the manner in which he has been treated by his people, and will be hereafter. Having, in the

11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

previous passage, under the symbol of a shepherd, declared how the people would treat him, in their blindness and madness, he then predicts that they would repent of this treatment, and turn to him with deep and heartrending penitence.

When their eyes were open to see what they had done, they would mourn. The bitterness of this mourning is described by two illustrations, a private and a public. The private is the grief that a parent feels at the loss of a first-born and an only child. The bitterness of this agony in any parent is a most vivid image of sorrow, but to a Jew, with his passion for posterity, and his impression of disgrace and curse connected with childlessness, this illustration was one of the most significant that could be used. There is an allusion to this passage in Matt. 24 : 30, and also in Rev. 1 : 7, implying its Messianic interpretation.

V. 11. "And in that day the mourning shall be great in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the vale of Megiddo."

V. 11 expresses the public example of sorrow, and it was the most expressive in the history of the Jewish people. The death of the good Josiah was the darkest and saddest event in the history of the monarchy, for it was the quenching of all hope. He was a link of bright memories in the past, and bright hopes in the future, and when he fell, and fell under the displeasure of God, it was as the giving up of the ghost. It was like the

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 ;

14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

13 The family of the house of Levi apart.

death of Hampden in the English history, or like what the death of Washington in the darkest hour of the Revolution would have been in our own, a calamity that would have wrung a wail of agony and despair from a whole people.

Hadad Rimmon was the name of a place in the plain of Esdraelon, that great battle-field of nations, near Megiddo, and was called, in the time of Jerome, Maximianopolis. It was probably named from the Syrian god, Rimmon.

V. 12—14. “ And the land mourns, family by 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 ; the family of the house of Levi apart and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Shimei apart and their wives apart ; all the remaining families, family by family apart, and their wives apart.”

V. 12—14 describes the universality of this mourning. It should extend to every family, and every individual, leading each one to retire alone and weep. The selection of names seems designed to express the fact, that from the highest to the lowest this mourning should extend. David and Levi express the kingly and priestly orders, or the civil and ecclesiastical, whilst Nathan, who was not the prophet, but a descendant of David, (see 2 Sam. 5 : 14, Luke 3 : 31,) and Shimei, who was a descendant of Levi, (see Numb. 3 : 18, 21,)

carry the lamentation to the remotest members of these two great orders.

The mourning of the wives apart simply alludes to the Jewish custom of separating the males from the females, even in acts of worship.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) There shall be a revival of religion in the future history of the Church that shall gather in the Jews, (v. 10.)

(2.) This revival shall be characterized by the invariable marks of an outpouring of the spirit, namely, a spirit of prayer and penitence, (v. 10.)

(3.) Prayer is the barometer of the Church. When the spirit of supplication is low, there is but little of the Spirit of God, and as soon as the prayer meeting begins to fill up with earnest suppliants, the Christian may hope for a blessing, (v. 10.)

(4.) All true repentance arises from a sight of a dying Saviour, one who has died for us. Terror may produce remorse, only a sense of forgiven sin will ever produce true repentance. True repentance is after all only love weeping at the foot of the cross, the soul sorrowing for sins that have been so freely forgiven, (v. 10.)

(5.) True religion is a personal thing, and when it takes strong hold of the heart, will lead the soul apart to solitary wrestling with God, and acts of personal humbling before him. Confession of sins past and re-

I In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

solutions of obedience for time to come. Grace needs solitary meditation to grow, just as much as the plant needs the repose and darkness of night, (v. 12—14.)

IX. FRUITS OF PENITENCE.

CHAPTER 13 : 1—6.

ANALYSIS.

- I. The opening of the fountain of pardon and purity, (v. 1.)
- II. The extermination of idolatry, false prophecy, and sorcery from the land, (v. 2.)
- III. The zeal of God's people in the work of cleansing, (v. 3,) and the penitent confessions of false prophets themselves, (v. 4—6.)

V. 1. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened, to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness."

WE have shown before that the preceding chapter refers to a great revival of religion in the Church, which is yet future, and to this revival especially as it should include the Jews, who would at that time be restored to the Church from which they had been so long separated by unbelief. The depth of their penitence is described very vividly in ch. 12 : 8—14. Connected with this penitence, however, would then be, what their previous mourning had never attained, a felt possession of pardon. This is represented by the metaphor of a fountain,

2 ¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered : and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land.

that bestows the double blessing of refreshment to the thirsty and purification to the unclean. This fountain is not then opened for the first time, for it has long been flowing from the riven rock. But it is opened then for the first time to the house of David, after their long and weary wanderings. Like Hagar they had wandered in the wilderness until they were ready to perish, ignorant of the refreshment that was near them, until the Lord opened their eyes to see the fountain. Prominence is here given to its purifying power, because of the guilt that had so long rested on the covenant people. The word "sin" here refers to the guilt, and "uncleanness" to the defilement of moral evil, and the verse teaches the Jews that mere ceremonial observances are not sufficient to remove these. The two cardinal doctrines of justification and sanctification by the blood of Christ are therefore here brought out clearly.

V. 2. "And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall not be remembered any more ; and also the prophets, and the spirit of uncleanness will I remove from the land."

V. 2 describes the consequences of this pardon. A free forgiveness does not lead to indolence, but to a more vigorous discharge of duty and extirpation of sin. The two great sins of the Jewish people before the cap-

3 And it shall come to pass, *that* father and his mother that begat him when any shall yet prophesy, then his shall say unto him, Thou shalt not

tivity were idolatry and false prophecy, and these are taken as the types of all ungodliness of whatever specific form. All actual, outward idolatry and false prophecy have ceased among the Jews, and hence these sins are only the types of sin in general. It is, however, worthy of remark, that the only sin of heart that is called emphatically idolatry, is a sin that is supposed to be peculiarly that which besets the Jew, the worship of mammon, and who can tell but that the wealth of the world is gathering into the hands of Jews, in anticipation of that mighty Exodus that is yet to be made by the sons of Jacob. Certain it is that a general conversion of the Jews would throw an amount of wealth into the treasury of the Lord, of which we now can have no conception, and give a blow to the rule of gold such as no other event we can now specify would be likely to do. "The spirit of uncleanness" is here put in contrast with the Spirit of God, who inspired the true prophets, and refers doubtless to more than a mere impersonal depravity of human souls, but to spiritual influences of demoniac form, such as are so often referred to in the Bible in connection with sin.

V. 3. "And it happens, if a man still prophesy, his father and his mother who begat him say unto him, 'Thou shalt not live, because thou hast spoken falsehood in the name of Jehovah,' and his father and his mother who begat him, pierce him through in his prophesying."

V. 3 describes in dramatic form the effect of this re-

live ; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD : and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

4 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied ; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive :

moval of sin. There is not only a passive abandonment of sin, but also an action antagonistic to it that is strong enough to overcome the most powerful principles of our nature. The one selected is parental affection, whose strength is such as usually to survive the greatest unworthiness in its object. The prodigal boy may be despised and hated by all the world, and yet the heart of the father will yearn kindly toward the hapless out-cast, and the arms of the mother will be ever ready to fold him in forgiving love. Now the love of duty that can surpass an affection like this, must be of a most controlling character. The precise incidents here conceived seem to have been suggested by Deut. 13 : 6—10, 18 : 20, where the nearest relation of the false prophet was required to put him to death, a heroic sense of duty that had been embodied thus in Hebrew law, long before Brutus made it famous by a similar act in Roman history. The general truth is, that the religious emotions shall swallow up, like Aaron's rod, all others in the nature.

V. 4. "And it happens in that day, the prophets are ashamed from their vision in their prophesying, and they shall no longer put on the mantle of hair to deceive."

V. 4 declares that so general will be the power of this religious reformation, that even sin itself shall hide its head in shame. The false prophets shall be ashamed

5 But he shall say, I *am* no prophet, I *am* an husbandman ; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

6 And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thy hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.

to utter their pretended visions. The prophets usually wore a hairy garment, such as was worn by mourners, because of the solemn and often mournful purport of their messages. Hence deceivers adopted the same garb, but this symbol of deception shall then be laid aside in dread of the fiery storm of zeal for God that shall sweep the land.

V. 5, 6. "And he says, 'I am not a prophet, I am a husbandman, for a man has sold me from the time of my youth.' And he (*the former*) says unto him, 'What then are these wounds between thy hands?' And he replies : (*they are the wounds*) 'which I received in the house of my lovers.'"

V. 5 and 6 describe in dialogue form the detection of one of these prophets. He is seized by some zealous vindicator of the law, and in his fright he exclaims that he is not a false prophet, but a field servant, who was purchased for that purpose in his youth, and hence could not have exercised the prophetic function, being under the absolute control of a master. The interrogator, however, detects falsehood in the statements of the prophet, and forces him to confess his character. He sees scars in his hands. The phrase "between thy hands," means this, as appears from Prov. 26 : 13, where "between" has the same signification. He demands an explanation of these scars, and the guilty man confesses with shame that they were received in the service of idols. This verse is often applied to Christ, in the gross-

est misapprehension of its meaning. It applies solely to the detected false prophet. Some have taken the passage as a continuance of his defence, asserting that these were scars received from his master, but besides destroying the fine dramatic finale that the real sense gives us, it is inconsistent with the terms used. "Lovers," in the Hebrew, is the word usually employed to represent the objects of idolatrous love and service, and must so be taken here, and 1 Kings 18 : 28, and other passages show that cutting the flesh was a part often of idolatrous worship. It is, therefore, the trembling confession of a confused culprit, who is detected, and in shame and terror acknowledges his crime in hope of mercy.

But it is proper to say that some of the ablest interpreters prefer the other interpretation, which represents the scars as received from his parents, among whom are Calvin, Hitzig, Maurer, Ackermann, and some of the older expositors. Hengstenberg, Henderson, and others prefer the one just given, making the passage to be a highly picturesque description of the zeal for God, the hatred of evil, and the shrinking fear and concealment of sin that will be found in the great Revival of the future.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

- (1.) The fountain of pardon and purity is flowing beside many a soul that is too blind to perceive it, (v. 1.)
- (2.) The atoning work of Christ has provided for

purity as well as pardon, and the one is inseparable from the other. Ignorance or malignity must be the origin of the averment that justification by faith is not favorable to sanctification, (v. 1, 2.)

(3.) Love to God must be paramount to all other affections, even the tenderest of which the heart is capable. It is, in our present imperfect sanctification, inconceivable to us how we could acquiesce in the perdition of our children, without a pang that would poison all the bliss of heaven, and yet it shall be so. Much as we love them, we shall love God and his law immeasurably more, (v. 3.)

(4.) Sinners shall at last be made to confess their sins, and the justice of their punishment, and the bitterest drop in the cup of their agony will be that they have wrung it out for themselves, and that it is all just, (v. 4—6.)

X. THE SWORD AWAKING AGAINST THE SHEPHERD.

CHAPTER 13 : 7—9.

ANALYSIS.

I. The Divine decree, that Christ should die for the sins of his people, (v. 7.)

II. The dismay and dispersion that his death would occasion, (v. 7, 8.)

III. The salvation of the elect through much tribulation, (v. 9.)

It is not unusual with the prophets to give at the opening or the close of a prophecy a summary of its

contents. An instance of the first, we have in ch. 11 : 1-3, and an instance of the second we have in the passage before us. It sums up the preceding prophecy, which had declared the assumption of the pastoral charge of the flock by the Messiah, his rejection by the people, their rejection by God, their dispersion and subsequent restoration. This summary is in this case the more necessary, because the reason for cutting off the Messiah was not stated. Only the human agency was brought out, because the deeper significance of this awful fact was not pertinent to the scope of that portion of the prophecy. It seemed a mysterious thing that one whose coming was to be such a blessing should be cut off before he had bestowed that blessing. It seemed a final triumph of wickedness, and a defeat of the merciful purposes of God by the insane folly of man. It was therefore necessary before ending the prophecy to bring to view that deeper mystery that underlaid this fact, and show that God's great purposes were in it all, and that what seemed man's final ruin was really man's appointed salvation.

The meaning of this passage is clearly fixed by Christ, when in Matt. 26 : 31, 32, he applies it expressly to himself, at that dread hour when he was about to finish the mystery of redemption. There is in the whole compass of human knowledge, nothing more awfully sublime, than this seeming schism in the Godhead. It is as if sin was so dreadful an evil, that the assumption of its guilt by a sinless Mediator must for a time make a division

7 ¶ Awake, O sword against my smite the Shepherd, and the sheep
 Shepherd, and against the man *that is* shall be scattered: and I will turn
 my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: mine hand upon the little ones.

even in the absolute unity of the Godhead itself. It is the most awful illustration of the repulsive and separating power of sin, that the history of the universe affords.

V. 7. "O sword! awake against my shepherd, against a man, my nearest kin, saith Jehovah of Hosts, smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will bring back my hand upon the little ones."

This verse has been variously interpreted. Calvin thinks that it applies to Christ only in common with the whole body of pastors, and cannot be restricted to him or to his death. Maurer refers it to Jehoiakim, others to Pekah, others to Judas Maccabeus, and others to the false prophets of v. 4—6. But as Sanctius well remarks, we have this verse expounded by the very best expositor, Jesus Christ, and applied specifically to himself, in Matt. 26 : 31. The obvious connection of this verse with ch. 11 : 4—14, would corroborate this exposition, were it necessary to add to the authority of the omniscient prophet.

The sword is the symbol of judicial power. The taking away of life being the highest function of government, the sword, which is the instrument of violent death, was selected as the symbol of these functions. The magistrate was called one who beareth the sword, see Rom. 13 : 4, because he wielded judicial power. Hence the great doctrine here set forth is, that the death of Christ was a judicial act, in which he endured the

penalty of that law whose penal power was symbolised by this sword of divine wrath. The sheep had deserved the blow, but the shepherd bares his own bosom to the sword, and is wounded for the sins of his people, and bears those sins in his own body on the tree. The vicarious nature of the atonement is therefore distinctly involved in this passage.

But who was this shepherd? “A man, my nearest kin.” He was a man, with all human sympathies and emotions, but he was more than a man, the nearest kin of Jehovah. The word קָרִיב is only found elsewhere in the Pentateuch, where it is used for the nearest kin, and sometimes as synonymous with brother. See Lev. 5:17, etc. It is never used to indicate similarity of office, as Socinians assert on this passage, but always nearness of relation or kindred. Hence it here must refer to a human nature that beyond this humanity has a nature in the nearest possible relation to Jehovah, which of course must be a divine nature. Hence we have here clearly a twofold nature in the suffering Messiah, human and divine.

The versions vary in rendering this phrase.

The LXX renders it, “a man, my fellow-citizen;” Aquila, “a man, my kinsman;” Symmachus, “a man of my people;” Theodotian, “a man, my neighbor;” the Syriac, “the man, my friend;” the Vulgate, “a man, my connection;” De Wette, “the man, my equal;” Arnheim, “the man whom I have associated with myself.” The last two versions are remarkable, as coming

8 And it shall come to pass, *that* in therein shall be cut off *and* die ; but
all the land, saith the LORD, two parts the third shall be left therein.

the one from a Rationalist and the other from a Jew, and express very nearly the exact truth. It is one equal with God, and associated with him, and such an one can only be found in Immanuel.

The scattering of the sheep must not be limited exclusively to the dispersion of the disciples on the night of Christ's arrest, but refers to that general dispersion that should follow the death of Messiah. The flock that the shepherd was to feed was the whole theocratic people, of whom the Christians were but a part. The dispersion, therefore, applies to the whole people. The extent of the dispersion is explained in the next verses. To "bring back the hand" is to interpose in reference to any one, whatever be the animus of the interposition, and to do so upon the little ones, is that interposition in favor of the humble and faithful that is alluded to elsewhere, (see ch. 11 : 7, 11.) It was partly fulfilled in the gathering of Jewish disciples into the Christian church.

V. 8. "And it shall be in all the land, saith Jehovah, two portions shall be cut off and die, and the third portion shall remain in it."

V. 8 predicts the destruction of a majority of the theocratic people, after the death of Messiah. The phrase, "a mouth of two," (probably a mouth-portion of two, a double portion of eatables,) is taken from Deut. 21 : 7, and here means a large portion. This

9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

was fulfilled in the immense destruction of the Jewish people that took place after the death of Christ, when probably two-thirds of the nation were destroyed by war, pestilence, and famine.

V. 9. "And I bring the third part into the fire and purify them as silver is purified, and try them as gold is tried. They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them, I will say they are my people, and they shall say, Jehovah is my God."

V. 9 declares that the smaller portion that would be saved, must be brought through great trials. This portion includes not only the Jews who were converted to Christianity, and who passed through the fires of persecution, but also that portion that survived the dispersion, and still remain in unbelief. They are still in the furnace, but the time comes when they shall be purified and return to God in covenant love, and be received by him again into favor. These verses, therefore, give us an epitomised history of redemption, and show that there are yet purposes of mercy in reserve for the ancient covenant people.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) How fearful an evil is sin, when it could call forth the sword against God's own co-equal and well-beloved Son! (v. 7.)

(2.) Christ was man, and yet equal with God, (Phil. 2 : 6,) or, God and man in one person, (v. 7.)

(3.) The death of Christ was the judicial sentence of God against sin, the endurance of the penalty of the law, and was, therefore, strictly vicarious and propitiatory, (v. 7.)

(4.) No human merit can mingle with the infinite merit of the work of Christ, for he trode the wine-press *alone*. It is impossible for us to eke out our works with Christ's work, or to attempt with our "filthy rags" to patch the seamless robe of his righteousness. When the shepherd was smitten the sheep were scattered, and the blow fell on him alone, (v. 7.)

(5.) God often makes his people pass through the furnace, not that they may perish, but that they may be purified, and thus reach a better salvation, (v. 9.)

XI. FUTURE STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER 14.

ANALYSIS.

I. Great assault on the people of God, (v. 1, 2.)

II. Interposition of God in their favor, (v. 3,) giving them some remarkable means of escape, (v. 4, 5;) and after a mingled condition of things, a final and glorious deliverance, (v. 6, 7.)

III. Spiritual blessings and enlargement: (1) a perennial source of spiritual refreshment, (v. 8;) (2) the true God the object of worship throughout the world, (v. 9;) (3) special facilities for intercourse among the people of God, (v. 10, 11.)

IV. Judgments on the enemies of God and his people, (v. 12—15;) submission of all nations to God's laws, under heavy penalties, (v. 16—19.)

V. Universal holiness, (v. 20, 21.)

THIS chapter is one of those portions of Scripture which, like sealed orders to a vessel, which are not to be opened until a certain latitude is reached, can only be read in perfect comprehension after the Church has reached a point in her history yet future. Until the seal is removed at the appointed time, we can only conjecture the full meaning of the predictions, and await the clearer light of the future. The chapter seems to refer to facts distinct from those predicted in the last chapter, probably the last great events of the present dispensation, that are described in other prophecies in terms of such fearful grandeur. It seems to point to that last great struggle of the powers of evil with the Church, which is to be ended by the coming of Christ in great power, and the complete establishment of his kingdom of glory. It is therefore parallel with the prediction of Enoch, concerning the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his holy ones; with that of Ezek. 39, about the battle of Gog and Magog, and the corresponding passage in Rev. 20, referring to the same great events. The general facts predicted are, a wide combination against the Church, a time of trouble ensuing, in the midst of which the Lord appears in terrible power, destroys the enemies of his people, establishes the Church in permanent glory, inflicts enduring punishment on the finally wicked, and brings about a state of holiness that shall be the last and perfected state of the Church.

This chapter has been variously interpreted by expo-

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; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and

sitors. Calvin, Grotius, Dathius, Aekermann, and others refer it to the times of the Maccabees. The early interpreters, such as Jerome, Cyril, and Theodoret, and among the later, Lowth, Scott, Adam Clarke, and Henderson apply the first part to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the rest to events yet future. It is evident that no events have yet occurred in history to which these predictions are applicable without much forcing, and it seems most natural to interpret the first verses of the chapter as we interpret the rest.

V. 1. "Behold a day comes to Jehovah. And thy spoil is divided in the midst of thee."

The phrase "a day comes to Jehovah," means more than that the day of Jehovah comes. It conveys the thought that this time is to be one of special glory to Jehovah, in which his government shall be vindicated and his name glorified. The second member of the verse is addressed to the Church, and shows that she also shall share in the glory of this day. The promise, "thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee," is a promise of victory and security. Victory is indicated by "spoil," and security by the manner in which the spoil was to be divided: not secretly in places of concealment, for fear of a return of the enemy, but openly in the midst of the city; showing that the enemy is completely vanquished. Hence this verse is the caption of the prophecy, showing that it predicts glory to

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. 3 Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

God and triumph to his Church, taking Jerusalem here as the symbol of the Theocracy, or the Church of the future.

V. 2. "And I collect all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city is taken, and the houses plundered, and the women dishonored, and half the city go forth into captivity, and the remnant of the city shall not be cut off from the city."

V. 2 explains how this spoil comes to be in the hands of the Church. It is the spoil of those who have come up to destroy her. In consequence of her coldness and defections, a combination of enemies is allowed against her. This is represented under the image of a siege, with obvious allusion to the capture of Jerusalem by Babylon. There is first the investiture of the city by the besiegers, then the breach, and then the pillage, brutality, and cruelty that accompanied the sack of a city. But this capture should not be like the first one, so vividly in their memory then, for "the remnant of the city shall not be cut off from the city." There shall be a faithful few who shall be left like wheat when the chaff has been winnowed by the tempest, and who shall not be cut off from the city.

V. 3. "And Jehovah goes forth, and fights against those heathen, as in the day of conflict, in the day of battle."

When the scene is darkest, and the enemies of the Church seem to be completely victorious, God himself appears in a form of terrible majesty, and takes part

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.

against the invading nations. What shall be the exact mode of this interposition, the event only can fully declare. "The day of conflict," alluded to in the second member of the verse, is probably the Egyptian deliverance, which is called a battle in Ex. 14 : 14, 15 : 3, and which always was regarded as *the* deliverance of the nation, by way of eminence.

V. 4. "And his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the east, and the mount of Olives is split in the midst from east to west, a great valley, and half the mountain recedes to the north, and half to the south."

V. 4 describes the first great act of interposition, viz., an earthquake, which divides the Mount of Olives in half, and opens out a valley toward the Jordan, which would be a prolongation eastward of the valley of Jehoshaphat. The mount of Olives is chosen as the spot that commanded the finest view of Jerusalem, and hence the one most suitable for God to occupy as a position of observation.

V. 5. "And ye flee into my mountain valley, for the mountain valley will extend to Azal, and ye shall flee, as ye fled before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and there comes Jehovah my God, all holy ones with thee."

V. 5 explains the reason for opening out this valley. The Mount of Olives would be an obstacle in the way of a sudden flight from the city. When, therefore, the earthquake was sent in judgment on the enemies of the

5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal : yea, the mountains : for the valley of the mountains ye shall flee, like as ye fled from be-

Church, it was necessary that the few faithful should be enabled to escape like Lot from Sodom ; and to enable them to do so in the speediest manner, the same mighty convulsion that was sent to swallow up the enemy opened up a way of escape for them. “ My mountain-valley,” (lit. valley of my mountains,) would seem to be the valley of Jehoshaphat, which lay along Zion and Moriah, which may be called God’s mountains, from their peculiar sacredness. This is said to extend, in consequence of the disruption of the Mount of Olives, to Azal. The word *Azal* means, probably, standing still, or ceasing, and may be used to express the fact that the valley of deliverance should extend to the point where all danger would cease. If it designates any actually existing place, it must have been some small city east of Jerusalem. . . . The earthquake in the days of Uzziah is not mentioned in the historical books of the Old Testament, but is alluded to in Amos 1 : 1, as a very memorable event in the history of Judah. . . . It is impossible for us to take this whole passage literally, for God cannot literally place his feet on the Mount of Olives, but how far it must be taken as figurative, we cannot now tell. It is clear, however, that it predicts scenes of confusion and terror, in the midst of which God shall interpose by some amazing acts, which shall at the same time destroy his enemies and deliver his people. How far the mighty agencies of the material

fore the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah : and the LORD my God shall come, *and* all the saints with thee.

world shall be actually employed, it is impossible for us now to say with certainty.

The last member of the verse seems like a sudden exclamation. After looking at the earthquake, and the rending mountain, and the flying crowds rushing to a place of safety, the prophet looks up and sees a sight that causes him suddenly to cry out with joyful surprise, "there comes Jehovah my God! all holy ones with thee!" The surprise is indicated not only by the abrupt transition, but also by the change of persons from the third to the second. The "holy ones" are the inhabitants of heaven, whether angels or redeemed souls, and the same with the saints, &c., that are so frequently mentioned in connection with the coming of the Lord. This coming of Jehovah is distinct from the interposition predicted in v. 3, 4, and seems to be that last great coming to judgment, elsewhere so vividly depicted. This exclamation is thrown in parenthetically, like that in 13 : 7, "awake, O sword," &c., as if the prophet had lifted his eyes from the dim and troubled scenes he was contemplating to a more distant but more radiant future, the light of which enabled him to look more steadily on the scenes more immediately before him. Having gazed for an instant of exulting rapture on that glorious procession that he saw approaching, he then returns in the next verse to describe more in detail the events he had been just before describing. This sud-

6 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the light shall not be clear, nor dark :

den transition from a nearer to a remoter future, that has some connection with it, we have already noticed frequently in this prophecy, and need not pause to explain or defend it, for it is the natural action of the mind in looking at a series of future events.

V. 6. "And it shall be in that day, it shall not be light, precious things are obscured."

This verse returns to the events that are to attend this interposition of God for his Church. The words *תִּקְרָהּ יְקָפְאָהָ* are somewhat obscure, and have received various interpretations. The older versions and some of the modern interpreters, render it "cold and ice." But this is wholly at variance with the usage of at least the second word, which elsewhere means invariably something costly, or precious. Henderson connects "light" with "precious things," and translates it "there shall not be the light of the precious orbs, but condensed darkness." This, however, requires several changes of the reading, and takes the last word as a noun, when it never elsewhere appears in that form. Hengstenberg renders them "that which is precious will become mean," and also refers them to the heavenly bodies. But there is no necessity for such a restriction. *תִּקְרָהּ* means anything *costly*, and does not at all suggest the heavenly bodies, if indeed it is applicable to them. And *יְקָפְאָהָ* means *to contract* or *lessen*, and if the received reading be retained, it is the future Kal, and may be construed

7 But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night : but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

with *בְּקֶרֶת* without any grammatical difficulty, as Hengstenberg has shown. Hence the phrase would mean that bright things were losing their brightness, and thus their value. These bright things need not be limited to any single class of objects.

When the light disappears, all precious things, heavenly and earthly must be obscured, and the general fact predicted seems to be, that in the time of trouble here declared, all that is most prized among men, all the guiding lights of human ambition, and all the precious things of human affection, shall lose their former value, and darken under a gloomy eclipse.

V. 7. "And it shall be one day, it shall be known to Jehovah, not day, and not night, and it shall be that in the evening time it shall be light."

V. 7, declares that this state of darkness shall not be long in duration, nor shall it be total in its obscurity. It shall be only "one day, known to Jehovah," but a short time, and this time limited by the purposes of God. The words, "not day, not night," indicate that it shall not be a total obscurity, but only a twilight dimness, in which the darkness of the past shall be yielding to the light of the future. And then when it seems to the fainting hope of God's people that this darkness is thickening into the deeper gloom of night, it suddenly breaks away, like the outburst of the setting sun, after a day of clouds, and at "evening time it shall be light." The

8 And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem ; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea : in summer and in winter shall it be.

meaning is as obvious as the image is beautiful, and in the experience of many a Christian has it been true, as it will be in the great sunset of the world, that when the gloom that has thickened through the waning noon seems to be deepening into the blackness of night, then is the sudden sunburst of a bright revealing of the face of God, so that in the evening time there is light.

Henderson translates this verse, "when it shall not be day and night," and interprets it to mean that it shall be all day and no night, and refers it to the Millenium. But this wrenches the verse from its context, and gives no sufficient force to the last clause, "in the evening time it shall be light." This implies that previous to the evening it had not been clear light, and naturally refers to the nearest subject.

V. 8. "And it shall be in that day, living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, their half to the eastern sea, and their half to the western sea, in summer and winter it shall be."

V. 8 predicts the coming of blessings on the earth, by means of the Church. These blessings are set forth under the symbol of living (*i. e.* running) waters, a symbol which is frequently used in Scripture to express not only divine blessings, but these very blessings that are yet in store for the Church. See Isa. 44 : 3, &c.; Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing forth from the temple, ch. 47 ; Joel 4 : 18, and Rev. 22 : 1. To an Oriental in his burning clime, the image of a gushing stream,

9 And the Lord shall be King there be one Lord, and his name over all the earth : in that day shall one.

whose grassy margin was overhung by waving trees, was one of the most significant that could be used to express a divine blessing. Their going out from Jerusalem, implied that the Church should be the medium of these blessings ; their flowing to the Eastern and Western seas, *i. e.* the Dead and Mediterranean, implied their universality, as these were the limits of the holy land ; whilst their perennial endurance is declared by the fact that they would be unaffected by either the summer's drought or the winter's cold.

V. 9. "And Jehovah shall be king over the whole land, in that day Jehovah shall be one, and his name one."

V. 9 explains this blessing in more distinct terms. It shall consist in the acknowledgment of God's rightful authority. Hitherto men have revolted from the one God, and served divers lusts and vanities, and made to themselves gods many and lords many. But then they shall acknowledge God as their rightful ruler, and all acknowledge the same God, know God by the same name, and worship him with the same views. This seems to be the meaning of the words, "Jehovah shall be one and his name one." The diversities of the present shall give place to a living and glorious unity. This is as if in designed denunciation of the type that infidelity is now assuming, that all existing forms of religion are good, and that it is bigotry to assert any one only true system of religious belief and practice. Henderson ren-

10 All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem : and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses.

ders the second clause "In that day Jehovah alone shall be, and his name alone," objecting that the other translation implies that before that day Jehovah was not one. But the same objection may be urged to his own translation, that it implies that before that day Jehovah did not exist alone. In either case something must be supplied, and there is really but little to choose between the translations.

V. 10. "All the land shall be changed, as the plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, and she shall be exalted and sit in her place, from the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, to the gate of the corner, and from the tower of Hananeel to the king's wine-presses."

V. 10 describes symbolically the future exaltation and restoration of the Church. This is described first by the prediction that all the mountainous region round about Jerusalem should be levelled into a plain, like the plain or valley of the Jordan. "From Geba to Rimmon," expresses the fact that this would be general, as Geba was the northern limit of Judah (2 Kings 23 : 8), and Rimmon (not the rock Rimmon, but Rimmon of Simeon, Josh. 15 : 32,) was the southern. The fact predicted is, not that the Church should be exalted so much as that the world should be humbled ; the cold and stony pride that has hitherto surrounded the Church should be abased, and that Church left in her lofty pre-eminence as the dwelling-place of God among men.

11 And *men* shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction ; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 ¶ And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the

people that have fought against Jerusalem ; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth.

The future restoration of the Church to her former condition is described by the terms, " From the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate," &c. This refers to the capture and sack described in v. 2, and declares that all trace of this destruction shall be effaced. The places named here are the boundaries of the city as they were known in the time of Zechariah, the gate of Benjamin being on the north, the first gate on the east, the tower of Hananeel on the south-east, the wine vats on the south-west, and the corner gate on the extreme west. The general fact predicted is that all traces of this time of trouble should be effaced, and the Church restored to all her former glory.

V. 11. " And they dwell in her, and there shall be no more curse, and Jerusalem sits in security."

V. 11 declares that there should be no return of these seasons of trial. Being kept pure, she needed not again to pass through the furnace, the days of her mourning being ended.

V. 12—15. " And this shall be the plague, with which Jehovah shall plague all nations which warred against Jerusalem ; his flesh shall rot, and he standing on his feet, and his eyes shall rot in their sockets, and their tongue shall rot in their mouth. And it shall be in that day there shall be among them a great confusion from Jehovah, and they shall seize each man the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight in Jerusalem, and the wealth of

13 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor.

14 And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the

all the nations round about shall be gathered; gold, and silver, and garments in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, the mule, the camel, and the ass, which shall be in these camps, as this plague."

V. 12 introduces the declaration of the punishment that God would inflict on his enemies. This passage is parallel to Isa. 66 : 24, and seems to allude to the same general facts. It is a figurative description of the punishment of sin. The first element of the punishment is *corruption*, which is set forth by the terrible image of a living death, a fearful, anomalous state, in which the mouldy rottenness of death is combined in horrible union with the vivid, conscious sensibility of life. The soul of the sinner, in its future consciousness of sin, shall feel its loathsome corruption as vividly as now it would feel the slow putrefaction of the body that rotted piecemeal to the grave.

The second element of the punishment is given in v. 13, viz. : *mutual hate and contention*. The image is that of a panic-struck army, in which each man clutches and strikes in frantic fury his nearest neighbor. Hell shall be hate, in its fiercest and hatefulest forms. Sin is now the cause of all the quarrels on earth; it shall be the cause of endless quarrels in hell. Oh, the thought of an everlasting scene of rage, hate, and conflict is intolerable! and yet this is but sin left to itself.

heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

15 And so shall be the plague of the

horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

16 ¶ And it shall come to pass, *that*

The third element of this punishment is given in v. 14, viz. : *loss of the blessings previously enjoyed*. This is represented by the image of spoil. The wealth of the nations that besieged Jerusalem shall be taken by Judah and Jerusalem, which are here combined in the triumph, as they were combined in the struggle described in ch. 12. This is parallel to the fact alluded to in the parable where the one talent is taken from the unfaithful servant and given to him who has ten talents. The blessings that sinners now have, and abuse in having, will then be taken from them and given to others.

‡ after verbs of fighting generally means “*against*,” but there are undoubted instances in which it has its natural meaning “*in*,” (see Judges 5 : 19.) and hence it may be so rendered here without impropriety.

A fourth element is described in v. 15, viz. : *the infectious nature of sin*. Sin defiles all that it touches. It has defiled the earth and all it contains, so that it must be burned up ; and it will hereafter transform the dwelling-place of its possessors into a hell, and their companions into fiends, and make it necessary that the very instruments of enjoyment they have possessed in life should be taken from them and destroyed.

These denunciations of punishment may refer to events preceding the last judgment, but they will not

every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

probably have their complete fulfilment until afterwards, when sin shall have developed itself perfectly into sorrow and everlasting woe.

V. 16. "And it shall be that the remnant of all the nations who came up against Jerusalem, shall go up from year to year, (*to Jerusalem,*) to worship the king, Jehovah of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

V. 16 turns to the Church, and asserts her supremacy over all her enemies, and her extension over all the earth. This is done by the statement that all that survive of the nations of the earth shall come up to the observance of the feast of tabernacles. This is of course not to be taken literally, as it would be impossible as a literal fact, without a miracle, and in contradiction to the obvious teachings of Paul in regard to the temporary character of these ordinances. The feast of tabernacles was selected as the ground of this figurative prediction, because it was a feast of peculiar joy. It was instituted as a memorial of the wanderings in the wilderness, and as an acknowledgment of the ingathering of the harvest. It therefore clustered around it the memories of the past and the blessings of the present. The selection of it as a basis of the representation of future blessings to the Church implies, that in that period predicted her wanderings in the wilderness shall have ended, her seed-time of tears shall have issued in a reaping time of joy, and along the hills of light that

17 And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

stretch away in the Canaan above, there shall roll the everlasting song of her harvest home.

Henderson interprets this prediction literally, but perceiving the impossibility of all nations coming up to Jerusalem in mass, he makes them come up by representatives, which is of course to depart from the letter. There is, however, no more reason to take this literally, than to take other statements of the chapters, such as vs. 4, 5, 7, 8, &c., which are confessedly to be taken in a metaphorical sense. The future of the Theocracy or Church, is predicted under the forms and facts of the time when the prediction was made.

V. 17. "And it shall be that whoever of the tribes of the earth, will not go up to Jerusalem to worship the king, Jehovah of Hosts, upon them there shall be no rain."

V. 17 threatens that upon those who refuse to go up, there shall be no rain. It is not meant to be implied, that at the time predicted there shall be such disobedient persons, for in v. 16 it is clearly implied that there shall be none of such. It is rather a figurative assertion of the fact that, in this future condition, the present mingled state of reward and punishment shall end. Now God sends rain on the just and the unjust, then he will separate the good and the evil, and render unto every man according to his works.

V. 18. "And if the family of Egypt will not go forth, and come up, and there shall not be upon them (*therefore any rain,*) there

18. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that *have* no rain; there shall be the plague, where- with the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

shall be the plague with which Jehovah shall plague the nations that do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

V. 18 amplifies this thought. It might be thought that to some this threatening would convey nothing that they would fear, just as the threatening of no rain would not be feared by Egypt, which in fact rarely had any rain, but depended for water on the Nile. Thus to threaten a hardened sinner with the withholding of the gentle showers of divine grace, would seem to him to be no punishment, for he never had enjoyed these showers from heaven, but found his enjoyment in the turbid waters of the earthly. It is then declared that even for such, there shall be a suitable punishment, and one that they shall feel. God's magazine of wrath has an instrument for every shade of guilt. They who fear not the drought, shall tremble before the pestilence. The somewhat obscure words, וְלֹא עֲלִיָּהִים, we have taken as expressing the result of the supposed disobedience, as threatened in v. 17. If Egypt refuses to obey, and as a consequence of this refusal there falls no rain upon her people, then although this would be no punishment to be dreaded by them, there shall be a punishment which they must dread, namely the plague. Some interpreters supply "the Nile," and make this a prediction, that the Nile should not overflow. But this is very forced, and we naturally expect that such an ellipsis will be supplied, if possible, by some word already used,

19. This shall be the punishment of nations that come not up to keep the Egypt, and the punishment of all feast of tabernacles.

which in this case is obviously the word "rain," which gives a clear and consistent sense.

V. 19. "And this will be the sin of Egypt and the sin of all nations, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

V. 19 explains what is the real nature of the sin of the impenitent world, namely, a refusal to attach themselves to the people of God. It is therefore only a figurative declaration of the fact that unbelief and being ashamed of Christ are the damning sins of the world.

Henderson takes the word "*sin*" here in the sense of "punishment," and the verse as declaring that this is the punishment of disobedient nations, but that makes the verse a tautology.

V. 20, 21. "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses 'SACRED TO JEHOVAH.' And the vessels in the house of Jehovah shall be as the sacrificial bowls upon the altar. And every vessel in Jerusalem and Judah shall be SACRED TO JEHOVAH OF HOSTS. And all the sacrificers shall come, and take from them and offer in them, and there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of Hosts, in that day."

V. 20, 21, closes up this picture of the future with a fitting finale, developing the great fact that this future state of the Church would be happy because it would be holy, and that this holiness would extend to everything connected with her. The distinction between sacred and profane was introduced by sin, and would cease with its termination on the earth. The Mosaic dispensations drew the line with much sharpness and narrowness; the Christian dispensation widened the

20 ¶ In that day there shall be upon the Lord's house shall be like the the bells of the horses, HOLINESS bowls before the altar.
 UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in 21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and

limits, and made all the saints to be priests, but there comes a time when this consecration shall be wider still, and extend to the minutest things pertaining to life. The "bells of the horses" were those bells that were fastened to them partly for ornament and partly to make them easily found if they strayed away at night. They were not necessary parts of the harness, and trifling in value. When, therefore, it is said that even they should have the inscription that was engraved on the breastplate of the high priest, this declares the fact that even the most trifling things in this future state of the Church should be consecrated to God, equally with the highest and holiest.

It is further stated that the vessels in the temple used for boiling, receiving ashes, &c., shall be as holy as the golden bowls that were used to catch the blood of the sacrificial victim. This is to affirm that all outward distinctions in the Church, official and otherwise, should be swallowed up in the great brotherhood of the children of God.

To show the extent of this holiness, it is added that the very cooking utensils of Jerusalem should be holy to the Lord, or that the smallest acts of the daily life should be consecrated, and holiness diffuse itself in living power through the whole man, in all the departments of his activity, leading him whatsoever he does to

in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts : and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein : and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

do all to the glory of God. The idea is, absolute and universal consecration to the Lord.

The words "all the sacrificers shall come," &c., imply that this condition shall be one of active obedience, and not of mere passive enjoyment ; whilst the prediction that there should be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord, affirms that no profane or unclean person shall there be found in the redeemed Church. Most of the expositors take "Canaanite" here to mean "merchant," as it sometimes does. But there is no necessity for thus restricting its meaning. It was to the Jew the type of an alien, and here predicts that the mingled condition of the present shall give place to a state in the future in which all shall be holy, and nothing unclean be found in the new Jerusalem. The whole passage is then parallel with the sublime close of the Apocalypse, in which the holiness of the heavenly state is depicted in such magnificent terms. All shall be happy because all shall be holy. Sorrow shall cease because sin shall cease. The groaning earth shall be mantled with joy because the trail of the serpent shall be gone, and the Eden of the future make us cease to look back with longing at the Eden of the past. If then a man would have the beginnings of Heaven, it must be by this absolute consecration of everything to God on earth, for precisely as "holiness to the Lord"

is upon the “bells of the horses,” shall their melody have the ring of the golden harps. Let a man’s life be a liturgy, a holy service of acted worship, and his death shall be a sweeter melody than the fabled song of the dying swan, and his eternity the song of Moses and the Lamb.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) There are scenes of trouble yet before the Church of the most appalling character. There is as much necessity for such scenes now, as there ever has been in the past. The divisions of Christians into sects, parties, and cliques, the alienation often of brother from brother, has made the Church, not like a mass of pure gold, ready for the fashioning workman, but like a mass of ore, cold, earthy, dim and defiled, ready for the furnace. Let this ore be cast into the furnace, and the dross will be purged out, the pure metal flow together in bright and beautiful blendings, and the gold come forth seven times refined. Hence, as we read the promises of future purity and power, we cannot see how they can so well be fulfilled as by purging with fire. And as we look at the troubled state of political affairs, and the menacing aspects of Popery and Infidelity, we can readily see how this may soon happen, (v. 1, 2.)

(2.) When the Church’s greatest need shall come, then shall come God’s greatest deliverance, so that we need not fear, Ps. 45, (v. 3—5.)

(3.) Christ is coming to the earth, in such form at

least as shall fulfil his purposes of mercy to his friends and justice to his foes, (v. 5.)

(4.) However dark the day, in the Christian life, at evening time there shall be light. His life is a twilight, but it is the twilight of the morning, that shall brighten and broaden into a day that has neither sunset nor night ; whilst the twilight of the sinner is that of the evening, that shall thicken and blacken into that long and gloomy night that knows no morning, (v. 7.)

(5.) There is but one way of salvation, one object of worship, and one Mediator, (v. 9.)

(6.) In the future glory of the Church the mountains of imaginary causes that now separate Christians shall vanish, and they all see eye to eye, and be *one*, even as their God and Saviour, (v. 10.)

(7.) The most fearful punishment of sinners is simply to leave them to themselves. Sin is but hell in embryo, hell is but sin in development, (v. 12—15.)

(8.) God has a scourge fitted for every sin, and all shall receive precisely as they have deserved, (v. 18.)

(9.) When there shall be universal holiness, there shall also be universal happiness, (v. 20, 21.)

MALACHI.

M A L A C H I .

TRANSLATION.

SECTION I.

THE EXPOSTULATION.

1. A BURDEN !
The word of Jehovah to Israel.
By the hand of Malachi.
2. 'I have loved you,' saith Jehovah.
And ye say, 'In what hast thou loved us ?'
'Was not Esau brother to Jacob ?' saith Jehovah.
And I loved Jacob ;
3. And I hated Esau ;
And I made his mountains a waste,
And his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness.
4. But if Edom should say, '*although* we are overthrown,
Yet will we return and build up the ruins.'
Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts :
'They may build up, but I will cast down,
And (*men*) shall call them the borders of wickedness.
And the people against which Jehovah is angry forever.
5. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say,
Let Jehovah be exalted from the borders of Israel.'

SECTION II.

The Sin of the Priests.

6. 'A son honors a father,
And a servant a master.
Now if I am a father, where is my honor ?
And if I am a master, where is my reverence ?'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts to you.
'O priests ! despising my name.'
7. And ye reply, 'In what have we despised thy name ?'
'Offering upon my altar polluted bread.'
And ye say, 'In what have we polluted thee ?'

- In your saying, 'The table of Jehovah is contemptible.'
8. And when ye offer the blind in sacrifice,
Is not this evil?
And when ye offer the lame and the sick,
Is not this evil?
Offer it, I pray you, to your governor ;
'Will he be pleased with it, or accept your face ?'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
9. And now I pray, supplicate the favor of God,
That he may be gracious to us.
(*Since*) by your hands must this be done.
'And will he accept your persons ?'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
10. 'Who is there among you that will shut the doors,
So that ye may not be kindling fire upon my altar in vain ?
I have no delight in you.'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts,
'Nor will I receive an offering from your hands.
11. For from the rising of the sun to his going down,
My name shall be great among the nations.
And in every place incense shall be offered to my name,
And a pure offering :
For great is my name among the nations,'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
12. 'But you are profaning it in saying,
That the table of Jehovah is polluted ;
And (*in saying*) of its produce, that the food is contemptible.
13. And ye say, (*also*), Behold what a weariness !
And ye have snuffed at it,'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
'And ye have brought the stolen, and the lame, and the sick,
And have offered an offering.
Shall I accept this from your hands ?'
Saith Jehovah.
14. 'Cursed be the deceiver, who hath a male in his flock,
And offers and sacrifices a corrupt thing to the Lord !
For a great King am I,'
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
And my name is feared among the nations.
- 2 : 1. And now to you is this command, O priests !
2. And if ye will not hear,

- And if ye will not lay to heart,
 To give glory to my name,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts ;
 Then I will send upon you a curse,
 And I will curse your blessings.
 Yea, I have cursed them (*already.*)
 Because ye lay not to heart (*this thing.*)
3. Behold I will rebuke the seed for you,
 And spread dung upon your faces,
 The dung of your festal offerings,
 And they shall take you away in it.
4. And ye shall know that I have sent unto you this command-
 ment,
 That it might be (*a confirmation of*) my covenant with Levi,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
5. My covenant with him was (*to give to him*) life and peace.
 And I gave them to him ;
 (*And on his part to me it was to give*) reverence :
 And he did reverence me, and feared before my name.
6. The law of truth was in his mouth,
 And iniquity was not found in his lips ;
 In peace and uprightness he walked before me,
 And converted many from sin.
7. For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge,
 And the law should they seek from his mouth ;
 For he is the messenger of Jehovah of Hosts.
8. But ye have departed from the way ;
 Ye have caused many to stumble in the law.
 Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi,
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
9. And I also will make you contemptible and mean before all
 the people.
 According as ye have not kept my ways,
 And have been partial in (*dispensing*) the law.

SECTION III.—CHAPTER II : 10–16.

Mixed Marriages.

10. Is there not one Father to all of us ?
 Has not one God created us ?
 Wherefore then do we act treacherously one toward another.

- In profaning the covenant of our fathers ?
11. Judah acts treacherously,
And wickedness is done in Israel and Jerusalem ;
For Judah has profaned the holiness of Jehovah,
(*Even that*) which he loved,
And has married the daughter of a strange god.
12. Jehovah will cut off the man who did this,
The watcher and the answerer,
From the tabernacles of Jacob ;
And him presenting an offering to Jehovah of Hosts.
13. And this in the second place ye have done.
Ye have covered with tears the altar of Jehovah,
With weeping and crying,
So that there is no seeing of your offering,
Or accepting favorably from your hands ;
And ye say, Wherefore ?
Because Jehovah is the witness
Between you and the wife of your youth ;
Toward whom you have acted treacherously,
And she your companion and the wife of your covenant.
15. And did he not make (*us*) one ?
And the remainder of the spirit was with him.
And wherefore (*did he thus isolate us, as*) one (*people ?*)
(*Because he was thus*) seeking a seed of God.
Take heed then to your spirits,
And do not act treacherously to the wife of your youth,
16. For he hates putting away,
Saith Jehovah, the God of Israel.
- And the one who covers his garment with iniquity,
Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
Take heed then to your spirits,
And do not act treacherously.

SECTION IV.—CHAPTER II : 17—III : 6.

The Coming of Christ, and the Forerunner.

17. “ ‘Ye weary Jehovah with your words.’ ”
And ye say, ‘Wherein do we weary him ?’
In your saying, ‘Every one who does evil is good in the
eyes of Jehovah ;’

- And in them he delights ;' or
 'Where is the God of judgment ?'
- 3 : 1. 'Behold, I send my messenger,
 And he shall prepare a way before me.
 And suddenly there shall come to his temple
 The Lord whom ye are seeking.
 And the Messenger of the Covenant for whom ye are longing,
 Behold he shall come,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
2. 'And who shall endure the day of his coming ?
 And who shall stand in his appearing ?
 For he shall be as a refiner's fire ;
 And as a fuller's soap.
3. And he shall sit, refining and purifying the silver ;
 And shall purify the sons of Levi,
 And refine them, as gold and as silver,
 And they shall be Jehovah's,
 Offering sacrifice in righteousness.
4. And grateful to Jehovah shall be
 The sacrificial offering of Judah and Jerusalem,
 As in the days of old ;
 As in the years of the past.
5. And I draw near to you for judgment.
 And I will be a swift witness
 Against the sorcerers, and the adulterers,
 And those who swear to a falsehood,
 And those who defraud the hireling of his wages,
 And the widow and the orphan,
 And those who oppress the stranger,
 And who fear not me,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
6. 'For I am Jehovah ; I change not.
 And you, (*therefore*), sons of Jacob, are not consumed.'

SECTION V.—CHAPTER III : 7-12.

Neglect of Tithes and Offerings.

7. 'From the days of your fathers
 Ye have departed from my statutes,
 And have not kept them,

- Return unto me, and I will return unto you,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
 And ye say, 'Wherein shall we return?'
8. Will a man defraud God?
 Because ye have defrauded me.'
 And ye say, 'Wherein have we defrauded thee?'
 'In tithes and offerings.'
9. Ye are cursed with a curse!
 For ye have ye defrauded,
 The whole nation (*of you.*)
10. Bring all the tithes into the house of the treasury,
 And let there be food in my house.
 'And prove me in this, I pray you,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
 'If I will not open to you the flood-gates of heaven,
 And pour down upon you a blessing perpetually.'
11. And I will rebuke for you the devourer,
 And it shall not destroy for you the fruits of the ground,
 And it shall not blight for you the vine in the field,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
12. And all nations shall pronounce you blessed,
 For ye shall be a land of delight.'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts."

SECTION VI.—CHAPTER III: 13.—END.

Reprofs and Warnings.

13. 'Your words have been violent against me,'
 Saith Jehovah.
 And ye say, 'What do we say against thee?'
 Ye say, 'It is vain to serve God;
 And what profit (*is it*) that we have kept his observances?
 And that we have walked mournfully
 Before Jehovah of Hosts.'
15. And now we pronounce the proud happy,
 They are built up, the workers of iniquity;
 Also, they tempt God and escape.'
16. Then they who feared Jehovah, spake,
 Every man to his neighbor;

- And Jehovah attended and heard ;
 And there was written a book of remembrance before him
 For those who feared Jehovah,
 And for those who thought upon his name.
17. And they shall be mine,'
 Saith Jehovah of hosts.
 'In the day in which I shall make up my possession.
 And I will spare them
 As a man spares his son that serves him.
18. And ye shall return.
 And discern (*the difference*) between
 The righteous and the wicked,
 And between him who serves Jehovah,
 And him who serves him not.
- 4 : 1. For, behold ! the day comes !
 Burning like a furnace !
 And all the proud,
 And all the doers of evil, are chaff !
 And the day that comes burns them,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
 'Who will not leave to them root nor branch.
2. And then shall rise on you who fear my name,
 The Sun of Righteousness,
 And healing in his wings.
 And ye shall go forth and leap as calves of the stall.
2. And ye shall trample down the ungodly ;
 For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet,
 In the day which I make,'
 Saith Jehovah of Hosts.
4. 'Remember the law of Moses, my servant,
 Which I commanded him in Horeb,
 For all Israel, statutes and judgments.
5. Behold ! I send unto you Elijah, the prophet,
 Before the day of Jehovah comes,
 The great and the terrible !
6. And he shall return the heart of the fathers to the sons,
 And the heart of the sons to the fathers,
 Lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI.

THERE is something peculiarly solemn in the closing book of the Old Testament canon. The stern vigor of its reproofs, the yearning tenderness of its appeals, and the sublime sweep of its predictions, combine to give it an intrinsic interest of the profoundest character. But this interest is greatly enhanced by its position. It is the transition-link between the two great dispensations of redemption—the last note of that magnificent oratorio of revelation, whose wailings of sorrow and breathings of hope were soon to give place to that richer song, which should be not only of Moses, but also of the Lamb; and tell not only of Eden and Sinai, but also of Calvary and Heaven. Hence we find sounding through it voices of the past and voices of the future—the knell of the departing and the chimes of the coming age. It is, perhaps, in part to this fact that we owe some of the abruptness that characterizes this prophecy in so unusual a degree.

The same kind of interest attaches to the personal history of the prophet. He appears before us with some of the vague mystery as well as the stern vehemence of Elijah the Tishbite; delivers his message with an indignant earnestness, reproves the Pharisaic wick-

edness of the present, points forward to the glorious yet dreadful future, and disappears as suddenly as he came. His very name is by no means certain. The name Malachi (*my messenger*, or *my angel*) is commonly taken as an apocopated form of the name "*messenger*," or *angel of Jehovah.*" But the only instance of such an apocope given by Gesenius (Uri for Uriah) is very doubtful, if not absolutely erroneous. The invariable suffix in such forms is מַלְאָכִי and not מַלְאָכִי; and the name would have been Malachiah, like Zechariah, and the large class of compounded names of this formation. Hence it was very anciently conjectured that this was not the name of the prophet. The Septuagint translates מַלְאָכִי בְיַד "by the hand of his angel," or "*messenger*," showing that they regarded it as not a proper name. The Targum of Jonathan adds after the word Malachi, "*who otherwise is called the scribe Ezra*;" which, with other conjectures as to his name among the Jews, identifying him with Haggai, Mordecai, &c., shows that Malachi was regarded by them as merely a name of office. Indeed Haggai is actually called by this very name, "*the messenger of Jehovah*," in Hag. 1 : 13. And as the precise form itself occurs in chap. 3 : 1, of this prophecy, where it must be translated "*my messenger*," there seems to be a very strong probability that it was given originally, at least, as an official rather than a personal title. He was called, by eminence, "*the messenger of God*," partly because he was the last inspired messenger of the Old Testament, and partly because he came to announce the

coming of the great Messenger of the New; chap. 3 : 1. But as there is no other instance in the Old Testament in which the official title alone of the writer is prefixed to the book, it is by no means impossible that the official became a personal designation, as was afterward virtually the case with John *the Baptist*, and even the Apostle Peter. Calvin coincides in the conjecture that he was Ezra, but in the absence of all intimation to this effect from the Scriptures, and the rejection of the conjecture by some Jewish authorities themselves, the opinion is inadmissible.

There is less difficulty in determining the age of the prophet than in ascertaining his name or personal history. Indeed it may be regarded as absolutely settled by Vitringa, who, in his elaborate disquisition, (*Observationes Sacræ*, lib. vi, cap. vii,) comes to the conclusion that Malachi prophesied about the time of the second return of Nehemiah from the court of Persia, which was somewhere between the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B. C. 432, and the year B. C. 424 ; for Artaxerxes died after a reign of forty-one years, and Nehemiah returned the second time to Jerusalem during his life. Neh. 13 : 6. The temple was evidently built, (chap. 1 : 10 ; 3 : 1—10,) which places him after Haggai and Zechariah ; a civil ruler was over the Jews, which places him before the death of Nehemiah, who was their last civil ruler ; and the crimes reprov'd by the prophet, such as mixed marriages, neglect of tithes, &c., were precisely the abuses corrected by Nehemiah.

As these abuses were actually reformed by Nehemiah, we are compelled to assign the date of the prophet as precisely coincident with the second reformation of Nehemiah, or about B. C. 424. He then sustained the same relation to Nehemiah that Haggai and Zechariah did to Joshua and Zerubbabel, or Isaiah to Hezekiah, and Jeremiah to Josiah, in the earlier history of Israel. The silence of the Book of Nehemiah is no valid objection to this view, because it does not profess to be a complete history of the times, but only a personal narrative of the acts of the author. It is an interesting coincidence, therefore, that while this stern Hebrew was reproving the formalism and falsehoods of the people of Jerusalem, Socrates was engaged in a similar work among the mercurial masses of Athens.

The characteristics of the times of Malachi are apparent on the surface of the prophecy. Before the captivity the besetting sins of the Jews were idolatry and superstition. Afterward they were prone to the other extremes of practical atheism and Epicureanism. There were two elements then at work which afterward issued in the frigid formalism of the Pharisees, and the scoffing scepticism of the Sadducees. But the predominant element, owing to the fact that they were in the transition-state from superstition, was the Pharisaic,—a spirit of proud and bigoted self-righteousness that claimed the favour of God with insolent haughtiness, at the very moment that this favor was forfeited by unbelief and neglect of duty.

The Captivity had cured the people of their tendency to idolatry, but it had also infused some elements of evil into their character. The Chaldean philosophizing had perhaps been insensibly at work, modifying their views, and Orientalizing their habits of thought, in accordance with the subtle doctrines of that school of speculation, which so naturally tended to Pantheistic and Manichean errors. The general result of this state of mind was an insensibility to the unseen and spiritual, and a grasping after mere temporal and earthly good. Hence they expected to be rewarded by God in worldly blessings for the mere external performance of acts of worship. The promises of God, by Haggai and Zechariah, were interpreted in accordance with this carnal literalism, and outward blessings were expected in reward for the discharge of mere outward duties. Hence when these outward blessings were not bestowed, they charged God with a violation of his promises, instead of inquiring whether they had not failed to fulfil the conditions annexed to these promises. Two generations had passed away since the temple was completed, and this callous unbelief and self-righteousness had assumed a definite and palpable form. They had been warned by Zechariah, (ch. 5 ; 10 : 3 ; 11 : 6 ; &c.) that their obduracy and unbelief would be punished, but they turned a deaf ear to these warnings. They had no real sense of sin, and hence did not appropriate these warnings to themselves. They deemed themselves secure in a claim to God's favor, holding God as bound to bless them because of their adoption

of him as the object of worship, and his withholding this blessing as a violation of his covenant. This unbelief was found in the mind of the priests as well as the people, leading them to engage in God's worship in a most slovenly manner; to bring mean offerings to the temple; to intermarry with heathen and repudiate their Jewish wives; and neglect in general all that was spiritual in the Theocratic requirements. And the worst of all was that they were wholly unconscious of any dereliction of duty in these respects. Their secret feeling obviously was, that they had done as much for God as he had done for them, had given him mean gifts because he had done the same to them, and had kept their part of the covenant just as faithfully as he had; and if they had shown a preference for the heathen in the selection of wives, it was no more than he had done in the bestowal of outward prosperity. And yet all this time they seemed to be perfectly secure of a claim to the possession of God's favor, perfectly sure that they were the only persons on earth who had any right to expect any peculiar blessings from God, or to be called his people. This self-righteous spirit was at the root of all their sins, as will be seen by a careful perusal of the prophecy. It had wrought its mournful results for many years preceding the first return of Nehemiah; so that he found the people disheartened, the worship of the temple neglected, and flagrant abuses encouraged in violation of the law. These he partially reformed during his first visit; but having returned to the Persian court, and remained there an indefinite time, (Neh.

13 : 6, 7,) probably from ten to twelve years, he came back to Jerusalem, and having found that the people had relapsed into many of their former sins,—such as mixed marriages, (13 : 23—30,) withholding of tithes, (13 : 5,) and neglect of the Sabbath, (13 : 15—22,)—he set himself vigorously to the work of a second reformation, that might be more permanent than the first. It was then, as we infer, that he was joined by Malachi, that the special dealings of God with his ancient Church might be finished, and the canon of Scripture closed up, until the coming of that great Messenger of the covenant, who was to open a new dispensation of the great plan of redemption. He thus ends the great argument precisely where the evangelists take it up, so that a verse of his prophecy is made the introduction to one of the Gospels. (See Mark 1 : 2.)

The canonical authority of Malachi has never been called in question. It is found in all the authoritative enumerations of the canonical books, and is referred to repeatedly in the New Testament as an inspired prophecy. (See Matt. 11 : 10 ; 17 : 12 ; Mark 1 : 2 ; 9 : 11, 12 ; Luke 1 : 17 ; and Rom. 9 : 13.)

The prophecy is composed of six distinct portions. Part I. (1: 1—5) opens the charges against Israel by laying bare the root of their sin, an insensibility to the love of God, that had been so signally unfolded in their history ; and shows, by reference to the history and condition of Edom, how great had been that love. Part II. (1: 6—2 : 9) addresses the priests, reproving

them for their neglect of the worship of God, and their profanation of his ordinances ; threatening punishment for these sins, and predicting the calling of the Gentiles. Part III. (2 : 10—16) rebukes the mixed marriages of the people, and their injurious treatment of the Jewish wives. Part IV. (2 : 17—3 : 6) predicts the coming of Christ and his forerunner, and the different aspects in which he will appear from that in which he is looked for by the Jews. Part V. (3 : 7—12) reproves their withholding of tithes. Part VI. (3 : 13—4 : 6) describes more fully the sinful character of the people, contrasts it with the character of those who fear the Lord, and then describes the contrast in their destinies that shall take place in the dread scenes of the future.

SECTION I. CHAP. 1 : 1—5.

The Expostulation.

ANALYSIS.

I. The motto of the prophecy, a burden or message of wrath, (v. 1.)

II. The vindication of God from the secret charge made against him in the minds of the people, that he had not loved them, because he had not outwardly blessed them. This is refuted by comparing their history with that of Esau, the brother of their great forefather, whose land was wholly laid waste, whilst theirs was yet inhabited. An appeal to their history, as compared with that of other descendants of Abraham, proves that God had loved them, though he had chastened them, (v. 2—5.)

COMMENTARY.

CHAPTER I.

1 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

V. 1. "A BURDEN. The word of Jehovah to Israel by the hand of Malachi."

THIS verse contains the caption or heading of the prophecy. The word "burden" is the motto that describes its character. It is always prefixed to prophecies of a threatening character, and seems designed to indicate the fact, that like some dark cloud, heavy with its pent-up fury, these prophecies are surcharged with the wrath of God, and hang ready to pour their dreadful contents on those against whom they are directed. Many modern commentators give the word the meaning of "declaration;" but Hengstenberg shows clearly (*Christology* II. pp. 77—79) that its undoubted meaning is "burden," in a threatening sense. (See *Zech.* 9 : 1.)

The addressing of the prophecy to Israel proves that the distinction between the Ten Tribes and Judah was obliterated, and the whole nation was supposed to have returned, in the persons of those who actually did re-migrate. This throws some light on the vexed question

2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his
 Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved mountains and his heritage waste for
 us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? the dragons of the wilderness.
 saith the LORD : yet I loved Jacob.

of the fate of the Ten Tribes, and indicates that their existence and destiny were merged with those of Judah and Benjamin, at the Restoration. It is therefore useless to look for them in any separate form after this date, and indeed they are not alluded to afterwards as separately existing.

V. 2, 3. "I have loved you, saith Jehovah. And ye say, 'In what hast thou loved us?' Was not Esau brother to Jacob? saith Jehovah. And I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and I made his mountains a waste, and his heritage for the jackals of the wilderness."

V. 2, 3. There is something very touching in the opening of this message of rebuke. Addressing a self-righteous and disobedient people, we would naturally expect an outburst of indignant invective. But instead of this God speaks to them in accents of the softest tenderness—though the reproaching tenderness of love. It is like the language of some weeping parent, who seeks to woo back a prodigal child, by recalling to his memory the love that has been lavished upon him. And it is in painful contrast with this tearful tenderness of God's love that we hear the insolent challenge of the ungrateful people, "In what hast thou loved us?" Here they lay bare the root of their sin—insensibility to the love of God, and to their own wickedness. They had been punished, and left to adversity; but instead of referring these calamities to the love of God, chasten-

ing their sins, they considered themselves unjustly treated, and met the tender expostulation of God with dogged insolence and hard ingratitude. Their history was crowded with proofs of God's kindness in the midst of his chastisements; but with perverse hearts they looked, not at what he had left but at what he had taken. But it is too true that, in this respect, they only acted as men act still toward God—enjoying his mercies with thankless oblivion of the giver, until some of those mercies are removed, when he is acknowledged only by murmuring complaints.

It is an additional illustration of the patient love of God that he condescends to argue the case with them. He refers to the fact that Jacob was chosen while Esau was rejected; and that they, as the children of Jacob, were enjoying the blessings that followed this choice. Their history as a people, then, compared with the history of the children of Esau, showed wherein God loved them. "Hated" is used in a negative, not a positive sense, as in the phrase, "If any man come unto me, and *hate* not his father and mother," &c. Paul quotes this text, Romans 9: 13, in illustrating the dealings of God. The argument is very obvious. Israel complained that it had not enjoyed outward prosperity, and hence had no tokens of God's love. It is replied that Israel had been much more favorably dealt with than Esau, without any claim to such treatment, and in this respect had tokens of God's love: Israel was only straitened. Edom was laid waste. The phrase לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מְרִירָה is some-

4 Whercas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places ; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down ; and they shall call them, The border of wicked-

what doubtful. Maurer, Gesenius, Henderson, and others, following the Septuagint and the Syrian version, render it “ habitations of the desert.” But there seems to be no necessity for a rendering so unusual. If we suppose מִצְדֵּי to be the plural of צֶדַי, we have a common image of a deserted spot. (See Isa. 13 : 22 ; 43 : 20, &c.) The fact that it is a feminine form is no objection to this view, for many common nouns take both forms of the gender in the plural, (see Nordheimer’s Grammar, § 556, 558.) When a city became a place for the dens of jackals, it was a complete solitude.

V. 4. “ But if Edom should say (*although*) we are overthrown, yet will we return and build up the ruins : thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They may build up, but I will cast down ; and (*men*) shall call them the borders of wickedness, and the people against which Jehovah is angry forever.”

This verse predicts the hopelessness of Edom’s desolation, in spite of all the efforts of man to the contrary. Such efforts were strenuously put forth ; but at last the curse of God was stronger than man, and the lonely solitudes of Petra now remain as monuments of the fact that God’s words never fail. The perpetuity of this desolation is guaranteed by the fact that the current of eastern commerce that once enriched Edom, has been diverted beyond all hope of recall into other channels. Yet when this prophecy was uttered, and for years after, Edom was a prosperous and powerful country.

ness, and The people against whom
the LORD hath indignation for ever.

5 And your eyes shall see, and ye
shall say, The LORD will be magnified
from the border of Israel.

The prediction that it should be called “the borders of wickedness” is strikingly fulfilled by its present condition, for it is one of the most dangerous spots in the East. It can only be visited with a strong escort. Therefore the prophecy thus far has been fulfilled.

V. 5. “And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, Let Jehovah be exalted from the borders of Israel.”

This verse predicts the fact that Israel, although now insensible to God’s favor toward them, should hereafter so acknowledge it, as to admit that Israel should exalt and praise him. Rosenmüller, Mairer, and Ewald render the second clause, “Jehovah is great beyond the boundary of Israel,” as if the Israelites were simply to acknowledge his power outside of their national limits. But it is more natural to suppose that the prophet predicts the future acknowledgment of his peculiar favor to Israel, and the ground thus created for an ascription of praise to him from the land thus favored. Henderson connects “from the borders of Israel” with “ye shall say,” as if it were a simple prediction that the Israelites would hereafter praise God. But it is more than this; it predicts that they would acknowledge that Israel *ought* to praise Jehovah. “Let the whole people exalt Jehovah for his special goodness to them.” This allows the words to be taken in their natural order, and both members of the clause to be construed together. The

meaning then is, "However blind you may now be to God's special love to you, you shall hereafter see it, and shall exclaim in comparing nations with yourselves, Let Jehovah be extolled from all the habitations of Israel." This admission has often since been forced from the lips of the Jewish people.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) God's threatenings are very weighty, and may well be called "A Burden." Men must choose between an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, and an exceeding great and eternal weight of wrath, (v. 1.)

(2.) God is love. This is true even when he afflicts, for whom he loveth he chasteneth. We must not therefore infer that he does not love us, because he afflicts. The gardener prunes the grape which he values, not the thistle which he hates. The fruit tree that is highly prized is trimmed that it may bear more fruit, the forest tree that is designed for the flames is left to grow in unpruned luxuriance. Yet in answer to these assurances of God to us, we often say in our murmuring, "In what hast thou loved us. Where is the proof?" It is a mournful proof of human depravity that the love of God is often least acknowledged, where it is most manifested, (v. 2.)

(3.) The sovereign eternal purpose of God is the only ground of his bestowal of favors on one man which he withholds from another. The apostle Paul saw as deeply as any other man the difficulty of making salvation de-

pend on the elective love of God, but he saw more deeply the difficulty of making it depend on anything else. We may make the world with the Hindoo philosophy rest on the elephant, and that on the tortoise, but after all, the same difficulty meets us in finding a resting-place for the tortoise. So we may refer our salvation to our own volition, and that to the self-determining power of the will; but after all, we reach a basis which demands a Divine support, and it is just as philosophical to rest the world on that at first, as to be compelled to rest the whole cumbrous machinery there at last. It is all of God, from Alpha to Omega, from first to last, and in our prayers and praises, if not in our disputings and reasonings, we will ascribe it all to the sovereign grace of God. “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” There may be difficulties in referring salvation to the election of God, there are still greater in trying to refer it to the election of man, (v. 3.)

(4.) God still addresses men with the same touching appeal, “I have loved you;” and he still meets the same hard, ungrateful response, “Wherein hast thou loved us?” Men suffer many forms of outward evil and inward grief, because of their sins; but instead of referring them to the proper cause, their own wickedness, they impiously accuse God in their hearts of being indifferent to their welfare. They refuse to look at the tokens of love strewed all along their history, and dwell in obstinate ingratitude on the evils that their own sin has entailed upon them. And yet that history is crowded

with such tokens. Besides the unnumbered blessings that each one individually has received, God has passed by our elder brethren, the angels who kept not their first estate, and provided a salvation for man. Here is a token of love as high as heaven, and as broad as eternity, that may be urged like the love of God to Jacob in rejection of Esau, in proof that the love of God to man is wonderful, and past finding out. And the perpetual rejection of the sinning angels, like the perpetual desolations of Idumea, stands as an everlasting proof of the goodness and severity of God—goodness to those who had not been doomed to such a fearful rejection; severity inscrutable and mysterious to those who have, (v. 2.)

(5.) The power of man can never reverse the sentence of God. It is vain to rush on the bosses of his buckler, or to resist his will, (v. 4.)

(6.) God will be glorified in the punishment of sin as well as in the reward of obedience. Hell is full of God's glory, as well as heaven, and the sinner shall show it forth in his perdition not less truly than the saint in his salvation, (v. 5.)

SECTION II. CHAP. 1 : 6—2 : 9.

The Sin of the Priests.

ANALYSIS.

I. The priests charged with violating their duty to God, whom they acknowledged as a father and master, in withholding filial and submissive reverence, (v. 7.)

6 ¶ A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master : if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour ; and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear ? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name ?

7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar ; and ye say, Wherein have we

polluted thee ? In that ye say, The table of the Lord *is* contemptible.

8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil ? offer it now unto thy governor ; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person ? saith the Lord of hosts.

II. Specifications under this charge. (1) Offering defective sacrifices, (v. 7.) (2) Undervaluing the hallowed places, (v. 8.) (3) Failing to vindicate the purity of God's house as they ought to have done, (v. 9, 10.)

III. The consequent rejection of the Jewish people, and the bringing in of one from among the heathen that would serve God more faithfully, (v. 11.)

IV. Their neglect of duty reprov'd and additional threats uttered, (v. 12—14.)

V. The priests especially reprov'd and threatened, (2 : 1—3 ;) contrasted with former priests, (v. 5—7 ;) and their dereliction of duty severely denounced, (v. 8, 9.)

V. 6. "A son honors a father, and a servant a master. Now if I am a father, where is my honor ? and if I am a master, where is my reverence ? saith Jehovah of hosts to you, O priests ! despising my name."

THE priests boasted that God was a Father and a Ruler to them, and hence expected blessings from his hand. God requires that they show the sincerity of this claim by treating him as they professed to regard him.

V. 7, 8. "And ye reply, 'In what have we despised thy name ? Offering upon my altar polluted bread. And ye say, 'In what have we polluted thee ?' In your saying, 'The table of Jehovah is contemptible.' And when ye offer the blind in sacrifice, is not this evil ? And when ye offer the lame and the sick, is not this evil ? Offer it, I pray you, to your governor ; will he be pleased with it, or accept your face, saith Jehovah of hosts."

9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us : this hath been by your means : will he re-
gard your persons ? saith the LORD of hosts.

These verses develop in detail their sin, and show that they treated God as they would not dare to treat an earthly ruler, striving to put him off with the mere shreds and ekings of time, strength, and means, and then wondering that he does not reward them for such niggard mockery. "Bread" in v. 7 is of course to be taken in the sense of food, as it often is, and here refers rather to flesh than to bread, from the fact that it was offered on the altar of sacrifice, where flesh only was presented.

V. 9. "And now, I pray, supplicate the favor of God that he may be gracious to us, (*since*) by your hand must this be done. And will he accept your persons, saith Jehovah of hosts?"

The principal question in regard to this verse is whether it is serious exhortation or irony. Michaelis, (and Rosenmüller, of course, who usually transcribes Michaelis word for word, except when he is too orthodox,) Hitzig and others, take it as a serious exhortation to repentance. The difficulties in this view are, that the whole tone of the passage is reprehensive, and not hortatory; and that the challenge, "Will he accept your persons?" identical with the phrase "accept your face," in verse 8, seems to imply that God would not listen to them, and hence an exhortation to pray to him would seem idle. We therefore prefer with Maurer to take it ironically: "Go, then, with such ragged offerings, and intercede with God, since this is your duty as

10 Who *is there* even among you for nought. I have no pleasure in that would shut the doors *for nought?* you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar will I accept an offering at your hand.

priests; and think you that he will accept such an insult? I tell you nay. He will fling it in your teeth with, "Who hath required it at thy hand, thus to tread my courts."

The second member of this sentence is rendered by Henderson and others as the English version, "this hath been by your means," although they admit the ironical character of the verse. But it is much more in accordance with the irony of the passage to take this clause not as stating that the present evil has been the result of the action of the priests, but as a refined mockery. "Intercede for us with God, for you are the men whose office calls you to this duty; you are the professed avenues to God." This was a bitter flash of irony.

V. 10. "Who is there among you that will shut the doors, so that ye may not be kindling fire upon mine altar in vain? I have no delight in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, nor will I receive an offering from your hands."

This verse is taken by our English version, by Henderson, and most of the English expositors, as an accusation of a mercenary spirit in the priests: "Who is there among you that would shut the doors *for naught?*" as if they were charged with being unwilling to do the smallest service for God without reward. But the coherence of the passage with what follows requires a different interpretation. It is not an indolent, merce-

nary spirit that is rebuked, but a want of zeal to vindicate the purity of God's house. The meaning is, "Where is there among you some Phinehas, who will rise in holy indignation and shut the doors of my house against such desecration, and prevent this smoking of useless and polluting sacrifices upon my altar? Better withhold your beggarly apology for religion than insult me, and add to your own guilt by palming it upon your conscience as an acceptable service to God." It is, therefore, a burst of indignant scorn upon such attempts to palter with God in the matter of religion. Then, as now, men sought, as for the philosopher's stone, a cheap religion—one that would insure heaven to them on the easiest terms. Hence they made a shuffling compromise with duty, compounding for the lowest possible per-centage of self-denial and effort. God assures them that a cheap religion, like most cheap things, was always dear, since it always cost more than it was worth—for it was worth just nothing. God will not despise the widow's mite, but he will despise the miser's mite—especially when the blinded man is dreaming that by this beggarly shift he is securing the favor of God. As he drops his pittance into the treasury of the Lord, a voice comes forth from the throne, Who is there among you that will close the doors against this insulting mockery, and tell the starveling giver that he had better keep his miserable apology for a gift, for it was worse than thrown away when presented as an offering to God. O! that this voice of indignant scorn could be

11 For from the rising of the sun *shall be* offered unto my name, and a even unto the going down of the same, pure offering: for my name *shall be* my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

rung through the laggard Churches of Christendom, who are striving to solve the same impossible problem in the maxima and minima of spiritual calculus, with how little self-denial and active labor a man may reach heaven at last.

The wish that the doors of the temple should be closed, conveys an intimation that if no one is found to shut them God will do it himself; or rather will forsake that temple, and leave it an altar without a promise, and a shrine without a divinity. This explains the force of “for” in the next verse.

V. 11. “For from the rising of the sun to his going down my name shall be great among the nations, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering, for great is my name among the nations, saith Jehovah of hosts.”

This verse is elliptical, the exact antecedent to “for” not being expressed. The intimation is: “But if there be none who will thus vindicate the glory of my name among the priests of my own temple, still that name shall be glorified; *for* a people will be raised up from among the heathen who not merely in this temple, but ‘in every place,’ shall offer, not the blind and lame, but a pure offering to my name.” This, then, predicts the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles into the Church. The conversation of Christ with the Samaritan woman, at Sychar, is a striking commentary on this verse.

12 ¶ But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted: and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, is contemptible.

13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

And who can tell but that, if we also are faithless in God's work, others may be raised up from the dark places of heathenism, and we left to perish in our rejection? Certain it is that God's name will be glorified on the earth; and if we are false to our duty, he can of the very stones raise up children to Abraham, while we are shut out.

V. 12. "But you are profaning it in saying that the table of Jehovah is polluted, and (*in saying*) of its produce that the food is contemptible."

This verse renews the charge of sacrilege in further detail. The "produce" of the altar was the offerings of the people, from which the priests obtained their subsistence, which the priests despised, like the godless sons of Eli, perhaps longing gluttonously for more luxurious fare.

V. 13. "And ye say, (*also*,) Behold what a weariness! And ye have snuffed at it, saith Jehovah of hosts. And ye have brought the stolen, and the lame, and the sick, and have offered an offering. Shall I accept this from your hands, saith Jehovah."

These words amplify the charge. The priestly function was to them a weariness, in view of its imperfect reward; and they "snuffed" at the provision that was made for them at the Lord's table. Religion is still a weariness to many, and the provisions it furnishes to

14 But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I *am* a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.

the soul snuffed at with ill-disguised contempt—*אֶת־הָאֵלֹהִים*, *it*, refers to the produce of the table of the Lord, in v. 12; *אֶת־הָאֵלֹהִים* means torn away by violence—that is, stolen, and not lacerated.

V. 14. “Cursed be the deceiver who has a male in his flock, and offers and sacrifices a corrupt thing to the Lord! for a great King am I, saith Jehovah of hosts, and my name is feared among the nations.”

This verse reproves the people, as well as the priests, for withholding suitable offerings to the temple. A male victim was more valuable than a female. It was, indeed, expressly required by the law. See Lev. 1 : 3, 10, &c. The same intimation of a removal of the Church to the Gentiles, if the chosen people were unfaithful, as in v. 11, is made in the second clause. Alas! how often do we keep back the firstlings of our flocks, the best of our services, and offer God the shreds of our time, the weary remnant of our thoughts and affections, and the niggardly gleanings of our means! It is in touching reproach that God refers to the heathen, as if he had said: The very heathen fear me more than my own people: even now in their blindness they have more dread of offending me than those whom I have chosen. Alas! heathenism in the great day will condemn much of our Christianity.

1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings ; yea, I have

cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart.

3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts ; and *one* shall take you away with it.

CHAPTER II.

V. 1. “ And now to you is this command, O priests ! ”

HAVING in chap. 1 : 14, turned aside for a moment to the people, he returns to the priests, whom he rebukes for violating the covenant of the priesthood : (1) by unbelief and disobedience, v. 2, 3 ; (2) by corrupt teaching, v. 4—8 ; (3) by partiality in dispensing the law, ver. 9.

V. 2. “ If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay to heart to give glory to my name, saith Jehovah of hosts, then I will send upon you a curse, and I will curse your blessings. Yea, I have cursed them, (*already*) because ye lay not to heart (*this thing*). ”

This verse threatens a curse for disobedience, if it were persisted in. The phrase *וְנִם אֶרְוֹתֶיךָ* is taken by Maurer and others as an emphatic repetition ; but it seems more natural to give *נִם* its ordinary meaning, and take the verb as a preterite. Then the sense would be : “ This is no idle threat, for the curse is even now upon you because of your sin ; ye are condemned already. ”

V. 3. “ Behold I will rebuke the seed for you, and spread dung upon your faces, the dung of your festal offerings, and they shall take you away in it. ”

To rebuke the seed is to forbid its growing. “ For

4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

you," is for your disadvantage. (For this use of זֶה see Nordheimer, § 868.) The spreading of dung on the face is an image of the most insulting indignity, while the being carried away in it is assurance that this indignity will be permanent,—a thing that cannot be fled from, but will cleave to and follow its objects wherever they go.— אֲנִי is to be taken here impersonally.

V. 4. "And ye shall know that I have sent to you this commandment, that it might be (*a confirmation of*) my covenant with Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts."

This verse is susceptible of two interpretations. That of Rosenmüller and others makes "this commandment" to be in apposition with "the covenant with Levi," asserting their substantial identity; but this is incompatible with the words אֲנִי which express design. We therefore prefer that of Maurer, which takes the last clause as explaining the design of this commandment, with its threats, namely, to establish the original covenant with Levi, and bring the priests back to the purity of their sacred order, and thus effect a complete reformation. This verse then explains the special mission of Malachi as a Reformer. It was to bring back the priests to the original Levitic covenant, and restore the true spirit of the Mosaic institutions that he came forth.

V. 5. "My covenant with him was (*to give to him*) life and peace, and I gave them to him, (*and on his part to me*) reverence; and he did reverence me, and feared before my name."

5 My covenant was with him of life *for* the fear wherewith he feared me, and peace; and I gave them to him and was afraid before my name.

V. 5 explains more fully the covenant with Levi, alluded to in the fourth verse; and shows, by the mode in which Levi observed it, how much his descendants had violated it. The grammatical construction of מִרְאָה is somewhat doubtful. Rosenmüller and others take it as an accusative in apposition with the suffix ׁ, representing the design for which the life and peace were given. We prefer with Maurer to take it as a nominative in apposition with "covenant," just as "life and peace" are in the preceding clause, and expressing the other branch of the covenant. The sense then would be as follows: "My covenant with Levi was this, namely, on my part there were to be given to him *life and peace*, and I fulfilled my part, and gave them to him; on his part there was to be rendered to me *reverence*; and he did reverence me, and fear before my name." This furnishes the most consistent sense, and requires no unusual grammatical construction. It states first the conditions of the covenant on both sides, and secondly the fact that these conditions had been faithfully met. This was at once a reproof to the irreverent descendants of Levi, and an explanation of the absence of those blessings from God's hand which they considered to be guaranteed to them by the covenant. The covenant referred to we have in Numbers 25 : 12, 13, "Behold I give unto him my covenant of *peace*; and he shall have it and his seed after him, even

6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

8. But ye are departed out of the

the covenant of an *everlasting* priesthood,"—life and peace.

V. 6. "The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips ; in peace and uprightness he walked before me, and converted many from sin."

V. 6 describes yet further the conduct of the ancient priesthood. The law of truth in the mouth refers to their truthful teachings, the absence of perversity in their lips to their upright judgments in judicial cases. See Deuteronomy 17 : 8, 9 ; 19 : 17, where judicial functions are expressly recognized in the priesthood. And as the priests were especially to judge of the fitness of sacrificial offerings, the comparison becomes yet more bitter as a reproof.

To walk with God is to follow his precepts, as did Enoch, (Genesis 5 : 22 ;) Noah, (6 : 9 ;) and Abraham, (17 : 1.) To walk in peace is so to walk as to please God ; and to walk in uprightness is to walk sincerely, without guile. The effect of this kind of walking with God, then, as now, was the conversion of sinners.

V. 7. "For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge, and the law should they seek from his mouth ; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts."

V. 7 declares that these were the proper functions of the priesthood, and hence those in whom they were wanting were derelict to their duty.

way ; ye have caused many to stumble at the law ; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.

9. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

V. 8. “ But ye have departed from the way, ye have caused many to stumble in the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith Jehovah of hosts.”

The priests are here openly charged with the dereliction hinted at in the previous verse. They not only failed to teach others to keep the law, but they taught them by example, if not precept, to break it. Maurer and De Wette render “ law” here by “ teaching.” It is, however, not necessary to depart from the usual meaning of the word, and that which it has elsewhere in the context. Even if it refers to the effect of their teaching, this is expressed by retaining the ordinary meaning of the word. But the meaning of the verse probably is not to charge them simply with teaching error, but to assert that they not only neglected to teach the people to keep the law by precept, but, on the contrary, taught them to break it both by precept and example.

V. 9. “ And I also will make you contemptible and mean before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, and have been partial in (*dispensing*) the law.”

V. 9 threatens these punishments, and declares that as they had violated the conditions of the covenant, God would inflict its penalty. As they had exercised their priestly functions, judicial and otherwise, partially respecting the persons of one class while they disregarded

those of another, God would visit them with punishment for this injustice.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Men often acknowledge God as a father and a master in words, who deny it in deeds, (e. 1 : v. 6.)

(2.) He who undervalues the ordinances of God's house, insults God, (v. 7.)

(3.) Men often treat God as they would not dare to treat one another, and make offerings to the Ruler of the universe that would be despised by an earthly ruler, (v. 8.)

(4.) Prayer without corresponding practice is a solemn mockery, (v. 9.)

(5.) Men never gain anything by trying to drive a hard bargain with God. A cheap religion is always a cheat religion, (v. 10.)

(6.) God will always raise up a people to serve him. If we do not, others will take our place, (v. 11.)

(7.) Men who neglect the Lord's table profane the Lord's name, (v. 12.)

(8.) We may deceive ourselves, we can never deceive God, (v. 13, 14.)

(9.) Ministers of religion have a fearful responsibility, for they cannot sin or suffer alone. They drag others down with them if they fall, and have a part of their sins to bear. (2 : 1, 2.)

(10.) If men refuse to be taught by precept, they must be taught by punishment, (v. 3, 4.)

(11.) If we expect God to give us blessings, we must give him obedience, (v. 5.)

(12.) A faithful ministry will usually be sealed by the conversion of sinners, (v. 6, 7.)

(13.) Fearful will be the fate of an unfaithful minister, (v. 8, 9.)

SECTION III.—CHAPTER II : 10–16.

Mixed Marriages.

ANALYSIS.

I. The way prepared for showing the sin for mixed marriages, by exhibiting the paternal relation of God to Israel, and the brotherhood thus created. This makes any mutual wrong very heinous, (v. 10.)

II. The wrong specified, namely, marriages with the heathen, such as the Mosaic law forbade, (v. 11.)

III. The punishment threatened against the man who thus offends, (v. 12.)

IV. A second crime, namely, unfaithfulness to the wives they already had, and the sorrow thus caused to these wives, (v. 13.)

V. The aggravations of that crime, (v. 14.)

VI. The heinousness of the crime arising from the fact that it contravened the whole object of the Mosaic dispensation, (v. 15.)

VII. The warning to abandon this sin, (v. 16.)

THE prophet now turns to reprove the sin of mixed marriages, which we learn from Nehemiah was one of the crying sins of the Jews at this time. The greatness of the sin arose from the fact that it tended to defeat one of the purposes of the Mosaic economy. God iso-

10. Have we not all one father? hath his brother, by profaning the covenant not one God created us? why do we of our fathers? deal treacherously every man against

lated the Jews from all other nations, that they might be a nursery for the great ideas of religion that were to be elaborated in the history of the world, and a stock from which he would bring forth the Messiah. All mingling with other nations who had not been trained in this way and preserved for this purpose, tended to defeat this design. Especially was this true of matrimonial alliances. Heathen women retained a natural longing for the indulgences of their own religion, and easily led their husbands into guilty compliances. The women of Moab and Philistia, and the wives of Solomon, furnish mournful proofs of this fact. They led their infatuated husbands and paramours into the grossest idolatry. Hence these connexions were grievous sins against God; but as they led to cruel treatment of the Jewish wives, they were also sins against humanity. The prophet strikes at once at the heart of the sin, and shows that it is want of fidelity to God that lies at the root of it all. Whoever violates the theocratic law, rebels against God who made it. They, therefore, who chose heathen wives, thereby rejected the God of Israel.

V. 10. "Is there not one father to all of us? Has not one God created us? Wherefore, then, do we act treacherously one toward another, (lit. *a man towards his brother*,) in profaning the covenant of our fathers?"

V. 10 opens somewhat abruptly. The argument is this: God has chosen us as his children, from all other

11. ¶ Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem ; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

nations, to preserve us a peculiar people for peculiar purposes. To intermarry with heathen defeats these purposes, and therefore is a sin against our Father God. The fatherhood here spoken of is not that of the whole human race, or the reasoning would be without force, since he was in that sense the Father of the heathen as well as of the Jewish woman. The word “create” does not militate against this view, for it is used exactly as in Isa. 43 : 1, “Thus saith the Lord that *created* thee, O Jacob,” &c.

The Jewish people were a family of God, and to introduce heathen members into it, without permission from God, was to violate both the filial and the fraternal relations.

V. 11. “Judah acts treacherously, and wickedness is done in Israel and in Jerusalem ; for Judah has profaned the holiness of Jehovah, which he loved, and has married the daughter of a strange god.”

V. 11 specifies the crime by which this filial relation had been violated, viz., marrying the daughter of a strange god, or, in other words, the worshippers of strange gods. The filial relation is used in Scripture to express the relation between worshipper and worshipped. (See Jeremiah 2 : 27, “Saying to a stock, Thou art my father,” &c.)

V. 12. “Jehovah will cut off the man who did this, the watcher and the answerer, from the tabernacles of Jacob, and him presenting an offering to Jehovah of hosts.”

12. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

13. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

V. 12 declares that however lofty or sacred be the position of the offender, he shall surely be punished. The proverbial phrase *קָרָא וְעָנָה*, Gesenius renders “the waking and the answering,” supposing that it refers to the watch of the Levites in the temple, when one kept awake and called, and the other answered. The Arabs have a similar proverbial expression, “No caller and no answerer.” The meaning is, whatever or whoever he may be ; being an idiomatic phrase for universality, like our English one “root and branch.”

V. 13. “And this in the second place have ye done. Ye have covered with tears the altar of Jehovah, with weeping and crying, so that there is no seeing of your offering, or accepting favourably from your hands.”

V. 13 turns to the human aspect of this sin, and shows the cruelty that it involved to the Jewish wives. By a bold and beautiful figure he represents the guilty husbands as covering the altars of God with the tears and cries of their injured wives, so that the offering on the altar cannot be seen by God. The mute supplication of a sacrifice may rise to invoke a blessing on the offerer ; but above it, and rising first to heaven, is the language of injured innocence that calls down a curse on the man who has wronged the helpless and confiding wife of his youth.

14 ¶ Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Henderson takes the numeral here as an adverb of time, and understands the prophet to charge them with committing this offence a second time, *i. e.*, once before under Ezra, and now under Nehemiah.

V. 14. "And ye say, Wherefore, Because Jehovah is the witness between you and the wife of your youth, toward whom you have acted treacherously, and she your companion and the wife of your covenant."

V. 14 opens with a query from the people, Wherefore God thus refused to receive their offerings? The answer is, Because he was a witness to the nuptial contract. Marriage is a religious act, having all the solemnity of an oath; and God is called to witness this compact, and therefore to punish any violations of its terms. This was true, in an especial sense, with the theocratic people, for reasons already suggested. The phrase "wife of your covenant" alludes to the fact that the wife was a daughter of Israel, the covenant people; and therefore a sin against her, in this respect, was a sin against God. The phrases "wife of your youth" and "companion" are thrown in to show the aggravated nature of this offence. "She whom you thus wronged was the companion of those earlier and brighter days, when in the bloom of her young beauty she left her father's house and shared your early struggles, and rejoiced in your later success; who walked arm in arm with you along the pilgrimage of life, cheering you in

15 And did not he make one? Yet a godly seed. Therefore take heed to had he the residue of the Spirit. And your spirit, and let none deal treacherously wherefore one? That he might seek against the wife of his youth.

its trials by her gentle ministry ; and now, when the bloom of her youth has faded and the friends of her youth have gone, when father and mother whom she left for you are in the grave, then you cruelly cast her off as a worn-out, worthless thing, and insult her holiest affections by putting an idolater and a heathen in her place." There is something very touching in these allusions to the aggravations of this wrong, arising from the tender associations and memories of youth.

V. 15. "And did he not make (*us*) one? And the remainder of the Spirit was with him. And wherefore (*did he thus isolate us as*) one (*people?* Because he was thus) seeking a seed of God. Take heed then to your spirits, and do not act treacherously to the wife of your youth."

V. 15 is one of some difficulty, and has been singularly misunderstood by the commentators. Most of the continental interpreters, including Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Hengstenberg, follow Kimchi, and interpret it as referring to Abraham, and stating an objection of the Jews, thus making אֶחָד a nominative. "Did not one (*viz.*, Abraham) do so?" *i. e.*, take a heathen Hagar to wife? The prophet replies Yes : but it was to raise up a godly seed. This interpretation is so unnatural that it is amazing that it should have been so generally adopted. It is liable to insuperable objections. First, there is no reason for supposing an allusion to Abraham here. He is never called by the name of "the one,"

nor was his conduct a parallel at all to that reprovèd. The crime reprovèd here was putting away their covenant wives and taking heathen wives. But Abraham did not put Sarah away when he took Hagar ; and he took her also at Sarah's request, and not as the Jews then did, in utter disregard of the wishes of their wives. Hence the cases are wholly dissimilar. Secondly, this interpretation gives no sufficient sense to the words *וְהָיָה רֵשֶׁת׃ לְיָדָיו*. The tame rendering "to him there was a remnant of intelligence" of Maurer, shows how utterly unmeaning they are on this interpretation. The idea of "remainder" cannot be made to cohere with this view of the words. The same thing is true of the idea of *one-ness* that is made so prominent. Thirdly, in every other case an objection by the people is introduced by the formula, "ye say," the omission of which here is fatal to this view. Hence we are constrained to reject this interpretation.

Others, with Calvin, Henderson, and most of the English interpreters, refer the words to Adam and Eve. But the case of Adam and Eve does not touch the one before us. It would be pertinent if the sin reprovèd were polygamy, but not at all so when it is the putting away of a covenant, *i. e.*, a Jewish wife, and taking a heathen in her place. This also, like the preceding interpretation, gives no force to the *one-ness* insisted on in the verse as bearing on the question, and which furnishes the key to the passage. The cases of Adam and Abraham have nothing that meet the logical demands

of the verse. The true view of the passage seems to be something like this: The prophet at the outset (v. 10) had argued the oneness of the Jewish people from the fact that they had one father. They were therefore one, and these mixed marriages that violated this oneness were wrong. This wrong became more apparent when the reason for this oneness is regarded. Having then shown that the Jews were breaking this arrangement and inflicting cruel injustice on their covenant wives, he asks again, as he did at the outset, "Did not God make us one? Did he not separate us from other nations into an isolated unity? Yet this was not done because the blessing was too narrow to be spread over other nations, or because infinite fulness was exhausted; for the residue of the Spirit was with him. There remained an inexhaustible fulness of spiritual blessing that might have been given to other nations. Why then did he choose but one? It was that he might make a seed of God, a nation which he should train to be the repository of his covenant and the stock of his Messiah, a people in which the true doctrine of the unity of God should be cherished amid surrounding polytheism and idolatry, until the fulness of time should come. Now to introduce this very polytheism and idolatry into the chosen people, and to reject the wives who were protected by the covenant, was to break up this oneness, and do that which if persisted in would amalgamate the Jewish people with the other nations of the earth." Such we consider to be the argument of the prophet; and its obvious consistency

16 For the LORD, the God of Israel. ment, saith the LORD of hosts : there-
saith, that he hateth putting away : for fore take heed to your spirit, that ye
one covereth violence with his gar- deal not treacherously.

and force, its development of the significance of the words "one," "remainder," and "seed of God," that are the pregnant words of the sentence, demonstrate it on presentation to be the true view of the passage. It gives its full force to the idea of oneness, and presents an argument of great force against these unlawful marriages. This view of the passage is presented by the Rev. P. Fairbairn, of Saltoun, Scotland, in an essay in the *Christian Treasury* for 1847, Edinburgh, p. 187.

V. 16. "For he hates putting away, saith Jehovah the God of Israel ; and the one who covers his garment with iniquity, saith Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirits, and do not act treacherously."

The words *כִּי-יִטֵּא וְיִצְלַח* are rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Luther's translation, "if he hate her, let him put her away." But as it is a *quasi* putting away that is condemned, a permission to do so in such a connexion would seem to be incongruous. The ordinary sense of *כִּי* is "for," and not "if," as this view demands ; and the absence of pronominal suffixes and the form of the second verb are inconsistent with this view. The form would be *יִצְלַח*, the Pret. Kal, instead of the Piel Inf. construct as we find it, in which conjugation it has the sense of divorcing. (See Gesenius, s. v.) Hence it is better, with most modern interpreters, to take Jehovah as the subject of the first verb, and render it,

“for he (Jehovah) hates (*such*) putting away,” *viz.*, as has just been described. This is given as the reason for the warning to “take heed and not act treacherously to the wife of your youth.” The change of persons from the third to the first is not at all uncommon. (See Zech. 14 : 2, 3.) Henderson changes the pointing so as to make the verb “hates” an active participle, with the pronoun “I” understood. But he gives no authority for it.

The words *על־לבושו־הַמָּסַח־הַכֹּסֶף* have been variously rendered. A common rendering is, “who covers violence with his garment,” *i. e.*, conceals it. The grammatical objection to this is, that *על* with this verb always designates the thing covered, and not the covering itself. (See Deut. 13 : 8 ; Hab. 2 : 14. &c.) It may be rendered “who covers his garment with violence.” The word “garment” was used among the Hebrews to designate the conjugal relation, (see Deut. 22 : 30 ; Ruth 3 : 9 ; Ezek. 16 : 8,) somewhat as the word “bed” is with us. It is, also, so used in Arabic. Hence, to cover the garment with violence, was to act in a violent and unjust manner toward the conjugal relation, just as to be unfaithful to the bed is with us to be unfaithful to the nuptial obligations. This brings the phrase into exact harmony with the rest of the section, and makes a fitting conclusion to this solemn rebuke.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) The great doctrine that underlies this section is, that God has a people in the world bound to him by

special relations, and, by virtue of this fact, bound by special relations to one another. The violation of these relations to each other is therefore a violation of their relations to him. The Christian Church is still such a people, and although its relations to the world are very different from those of the Jewish people, this law of mutual obligation is still in force. The Church is one family, and is bound to act thus in all the dealings of its members with each other. And even in the matter of marriage, her members must not be unequally yoked, but have reference to their Christian obligations in forming this relation, and marry in the Lord, *i. e.*, in accordance with the obligations that bind them to the Lord. The neglect of this principle has caused incalculable wretchedness and apostasy in the past, and condemned many a heart either to life-long sorrow, by the sin of a partner in life, or worse still, to a fellowship with that sin, and its consequent condemnation, (v. 10.)

(2.) God has a special regard for all that is specially devoted to him, (v. 11.)

(3.) No position shall exalt the sinner above the flood-mark of God's wrath, or cover him from his lightnings, (v. 12.)

(4.) The cries of those whom men have injured will be louder in the ears of God than the prayers of the injurer, and the tears of the helpless oppressed will hide the costliest offerings of their oppressors, (v. 13.)

(5.) God is the witness to every marriage ceremony,

and will be the witness to every violation of its vows, (v. 14.)

(6.) The object of the family relation is to train souls for eternity, and raise a seed for God, (v. 15.)

(7.) Sin is that abominable thing which God hates, (v. 16.)

SECTION IV. CHAPTER 2 : 17—3 : 6.

The Coming of Christ and the Forerunner.

ANALYSIS.

I. The laying bare of a sceptical state of mind, which whilst it cherished the hope that Messiah would come and rectify all things, yet wholly mistook the purposes of that coming for the same reason that it doubted the providence of God in the affairs of the present, (v. 17.)

II. Announcement of the Messiah, who was expected, indeed longed for, to correct all existing anomalies in the condition of the covenant people, (v. 1.)

III. This coming, however, would be very different in its results from the expectations then had in regard to it. He would come to purify and punish, and not to give prosperity to a disobedient people, (v. 2.) This process would especially go forward in regard to the priests, (v. 3.) When the process should be completed, then the favor of God would be restored to the people, and not until then, (v. 4.)

IV. As to the present generation, if they persisted in sin, God would certainly punish them, in spite of the hopes of impunity which they cherished because of his past forbearance, (v. 5.) This impunity was not because they had not deserved to be destroyed, but because of God's unchangeable love, and his remembering the covenant made with their fathers, (v. 6.)

Chap. 2 : 17. "Ye weary Jehovah with your words. And ye say, 'Wherein do we weary him?' In your saying, 'Every one

17 ¶ Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him*? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

who does evil is good in the eyes of Jehovah, and in them he delights;’ or, ‘Where is the God of judgment?’”

HERE opens another count in this solemn indictment, the charge of an Epicurean scepticism, or a denial of the providence of God in human affairs, so far, at least, as their own condition was concerned.

There is no attribute of God more wonderful than his long-suffering. It has borne with a sinful world for six thousand years, with unwearied patience, and is even now waiting to be gracious. Hence when we read, as we do in this verse, that this attribute is exhausted, we infer that the wickedness which possessed such power as this, must have been very flagrant. What then is this enormity? Not murder, or lust, or any of the most atrocious crimes of the human standard of guilt, but the abuse of the long-suffering itself as an indication that God was indifferent to sin. To pervert this very kindness into a pretext for so blasphemous a thought exhausted the kindness itself, and extorted from the prophet the indignant accusation, “Ye weary Jehovah with your words.” The extent of their depravity is evinced by the mode in which this charge was met. It was not met with penitent regret, or even silence, but with the insolent challenge, “Wherein do we weary him?” What have we done so much worse than others that God charges us with wearying him? The prophet replies, that it was in saying that either God loved evil-

and the references to it in the New? An answer to doers, or there was no directing hand of a righteous God in the affairs of men.

The cause of this ungodly challenging of Divine Providence lay in the existing circumstances of the Jews. After they returned from the captivity, they continued, in spite of the efforts of Haggai and Zechariah, to neglect the more important duties of religion, while they discharged other lesser ones with superstitious punctiliousness. Because of the discharge of these minor duties, they conceived God as laid under obligation to prosper them. But because of the neglect of the higher duties God did not prosper them, even as much as surrounding heathen nations were prospered. Instead, however, of inferring that their peculiar privileges above the heathen brought after them peculiar guilt in the neglect of these privileges, and demanded peculiar punishment, they looked only at the few points of their obedience, and inferred that they were unjustly dealt with in not being rewarded for them. They therefore came to the monstrous conclusion, that either God loved and rewarded the evil-doer, like the surrounding heathen; or if not, "Where is the God of judgment"? Where is the proof that there is any directing hand of God in human affairs? Either there is no providence, or it favors the wicked. Hence they longed for the coming of that Messiah whom the prophets had promised, and whose coming was to bless the chosen people; supposing that when he came all these apparent anomalies would be rectified, and prosperity return to Israel.

These delusions are corrected in the remainder of the section, when it is shown that this Messiah shall come ; but his coming, so far from bestowing reward upon them in their sins, would only hasten their punishment, and bring about that final rejection which should scatter them, like autumn leaves, all over the earth. The state of mind, therefore, which the prophet addresses, is not that of scepticism as to the ultimate coming of Messiah, as interpreters generally assume ; but false views as to the purpose and result of that coming. This is proved by chap. 2 : 1, where they are said to be “seeking” him, and “longing” for his advent, not doubting it. It was not doubt about his coming, but delusion that he would correct. “He shall come as you expect, but not with the results that you expect.” Such is so clearly the drift of the passage that it is surprising that the other view should have obtained such universal prevalence.

CHAPTER III.

Chap. 3 : 1. “Behold, I send my Messenger, and he shall prepare a way before me, and suddenly there shall come to his temple the Lord, whom ye are seeking, and the Messenger of the covenant for whom ye are longing. Behold he shall come, saith Jehovah of hosts.”

Chap. 3 : 1. In regard to this important verse several questions arise. Who is the Messenger sent to prepare the way? Who is the Lord? Who is the Messenger of the covenant? And what is the connection of this passage with previous prophecies in the Old Testament,

1 BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, the messenger of the covenant whom
 and he shall prepare the way before ye delight in: behold, he shall come,
 me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, saith the LORD of hosts.
 shall suddenly come to his temple, even

the last question will aid us greatly in reaching an answer to the others, and therefore we address ourselves first to its consideration.

This passage is evidently founded on Isaiah 40 : 3—5: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,” &c. This was probably a favorite passage with the Jewish people at this time, from which they drew their hopes of a Messiah, who should rectify all their anomalies and grant them a signal prosperity. Hence they looked anxiously for the promised forerunner who would herald his coming. Malachi assures them that this prophecy would be fulfilled—the forerunner and the Lord would both surely come as they were predicted. The voice was to cry from a wilderness, not in a literal sense so much as a figurative. The condition of the chosen people would be that of a wilderness—one of desolation and ruin. Now when that desolation was darkest and wildest the voice of summons should be heard calling upon them to prepare for the coming of the Lord. This voice is applied expressly to John the Baptist in Matthew 3 : 3; Mark 1 : 3; Luke 1 : 76; 3 : 4; and John 1 : 23. But the question arises, Is John alone referred to by this voice? Hengstenberg, Olshausen, and other expositors of note, say that he is not the only one referred to, but only the last one of a series. This is inferred

from the use of the plural "our God," and from the fact that this preparation was really the work of all the prophets who prophesied until John, and not of John alone. The cry was the same, but it was taken from lip to lip along the whole line of prophets, until the last and greatest of them could say, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

In the citation of this prophecy in Mark 1 : 3, it is preceded by that of Malachi 3 : 1 ; and there is a difficulty in the quotation that does not meet the eye of the English reader. The received text reads "as it is written in the prophets," which, as the quotations are from both Malachi and Isaiah, presents no difficulty. But the true reading is admitted to be "as it is written in Isaiah the prophet," and hence the question arises, How can the passage from Malachi be referred to Isaiah? Hengstenberg explains it by the fact that the passage in Malachi rested on that in Isaiah, and hence the original was quoted, as it was the greater, as well as the older prophecy, to indicate this connection. This is very ingenious, though Olshausen (on Matt. 3 : 3) remarks, that it seems forced. The fact is, that as the minor prophets were regarded as but one book, they were rarely quoted by name, and where they were cited with one of the major prophets, the name of the latter was naturally given, especially as in this case, when the other evangelists had cited the major prophet by name. The omission, therefore, of the name of Malachi, is unimportant.

It is then plain from this brief reference to the rela-

tions of this text to Isaiah and the Gospels, that "the messenger" here predicted was John the Baptist. Mark quotes it with several verbal alterations to adapt it to his purpose in the use he makes of it. Christ expressly refers it to John the Baptist in Matthew 11 : 10, and Luke 7 : 27. Hence there can be no doubt in the mind of any believer in the claims of Christ, as to the proper reference of this text to John the Baptist. The only question is, whether it refers to him exclusively. Hengstenberg and others say here also, that it does not. Their reasons are, (1) the connection with Isaiah 40 : 3, where not an individual but a series is meant ; (2) the word "behold," intimating a nearer connexion with the time of the prophet than the age of John ; (3) the connection of this passage with chap. 4 : 5, that predicts the coming of Elijah, which, as we shall see, is the strongest reason of the three. By this interpretation the word "messenger" is applied to that long series that ended in John, to all of whom this preparatory work was assigned. The prophecy was really fulfilled in John, though not exhausted by him, but possessing a continuous fulfilment all along the history of the past. The work of John was too narrow to meet the sweep of the predictions of this prophecy. Hence, when he appeared in the wilderness, fasting, and clothed in the wild garb of the old prophets, he appeared rather as a symbol to gather in his own case all the scattered delineations of prophecy, and explain their meaning and application, than as himself the end and

object of these prophecies. His appearance was not so much a mere fulfilment of prophecy, as a reëxistence of all its awful and glorious voices, couched under obvious symbols. The Jewish people were in a state of desolation, all the bloom of their civil and spiritual life withered, and their hearts as hard as the parched wilderness. Hence, when John took up his abode in the wilderness, he presented to the people a vast and silent symbol of their condition. He came, clothed in a garb of penitence, like the older prophets, and eating a diet of penitence, to present a symbol of the great duty of the people, *repentance*. He then proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah, thus gathering up the three great topics of prophecy, sin, repentance, and salvation, and presenting them for the last time before the coming of the expected One. His ministry was therefore a symbolical epitome of all that had gone before, in the prophetic teachings of God to the Church ; and hence he was, as the last representative of this long line of ambassadors from God, pre-eminently the messenger.

Who then is meant by “the Lord” יהוה? We reply, God ; because יהוה with the article always has this meaning. See Exod. 23 : 17 ; 34 : 23 ; Isai. 1 : 24 ; 3 : 1 ; 10 : 16, 33, &c. In Dan. 9 : 17, it seems to mean the Son, where the prophet prays to God to grant his request, for the Lord’s sake. The fact that God is the speaker proves the same thing ; for after declaring the way shall be prepared “before *me*,” he

adds that the Lord should come, thus identifying the Lord with himself.

There is now but little difficulty in determining who is meant by the "messenger of the covenant." The authority of the New Testament settles it to be the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The "covenant" here does not mean any specific outward transaction between God and the Jews, but that deeper inward relation which he has to the whole Church, involving, as it does, the great purpose and plan of redemption, of which Christ was the executive agent. In distinction from this national covenant, Christ is called "the Mediator of the new covenant," Heb. 12:24; in allusion to such passages as this one, Jer. 31:31, &c. He is called the "messenger" or "angel" of the covenant, in allusion to Exod. 23:20; where the Jehovah Angel is promised as the guide of the people. This angel is thus identified with the Shekinah, that went before the tribes, dwelt in the tabernacle, and afterward in the temple, through which all the manifestations in the Old Testament were made. This text, compared with Mark 1:2, identifies this angel with Christ, proving thus, that all the theophanies of the Old Testament were through the Son, who became flesh, and dwelt among us. Those who wish to pursue this interesting theme more fully, will find it very ably discussed in the *Lectures on Divinity*, by Principal Hill, of St. Andrews. (Book iii. chap. v. sec. 1—3.) The bearing of this point on the Socinian controversy is obviously very important, for if

this is established, it follows irresistibly that Christ is God.

The words "for whom ye are longing," show clearly that the state of mind existing then was delusion and not doubt, as is commonly stated. They longed for Messiah to bring those temporal blessings which Jehovah had not bestowed on them yet, and the prophet corrects their error as to the purpose of his coming. To assume, as the expositors do, that only the pious portion of the people thus longed for him, is perfectly unauthorized and arbitrary, for the very persons longing thus, are those reprov'd for sin, and threatened with his coming. The temple here is not necessarily to be limited to the literal temple, any more than the wilderness in which the other messenger was to appear. The theocratic people, the Church, is sometimes called the temple of the Lord. (See Jer. 7 : 4 ; and especially Zech. 6 : 12, 13, 15, which is exactly parallel to this passage.) The Church is frequently so called in the New Testament. (See 2 Cor. 6 : 16 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 4 ; Rev. 3 : 12, &c.) The literal temple was only a symbol of this spiritual temple, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone.

V. 2. "And who shall endure the day of his coming? And who shall stand in his appearing? For he shall be as a refiner's fire, and as a fuller's soap."

V. 2. "The day of his coming," and his "appearing," are not to be limited to the first advent of Mes-

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.

3 And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

siah, but to his entire work, including the whole dispensation that shall end with the judgment. The "day of his coming" is parallel to "the day of the Lord" mentioned so frequently in the prophets, (see Amos 5:18; Joel 2:11, &c.) and afterward called "the great and dreadful day of the Lord," in chap. 4:5, where it is obviously identical with the day spoken of here. This is further proved by the allusions to this text in the New Testament, *e. g.*, Luke 21:34, 36; Eph. 6:13; and Rev. 6:16, 17, where this "standing" at his appearing is referred to a period yet future. The mission of Christ is regarded as a whole, from the manger of Bethlehem to the throne of judgment, and declared to be for the fall as well as for the rising of many in Israel, a work that should separate the pure from the impure, just as the refiner's fire and the fuller's washing lye, or potash. This process began during the life of our Lord on earth; it has been going on ever since; and will continue until the final separation, of which we have so solemn a description from the lips of Christ himself in Matt. 25:31—46.

V. 3. "And he shall sit, refining and purifying the silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi, and refine them, as gold and as silver, and they shall be Jehovah's, offering sacrifice in righteousness."

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in the former years.

V. 3 takes up the metaphor of v. 2, and, slightly altering it, gives it more distinctness, and presents us with an image of exquisite beauty. When the ore is cast into the glowing crucible, it seems as if it were to be destroyed, and could it reason, it would, like Christians when put into the furnace of affliction, infer that the result and design must be destruction. But when the process is ended, that which went in cold, sordid, and impure, comes forth bright, glowing, and unalloyed. And the refiner is beautifully represented as coming and sitting down beside the crucible, that the fire may not be too hot, or the process left incomplete. He bends in patient love over the furnace, until, (in the rule given to the Manchester ladies, who sought an illustration of this text in a refiner's shop,) when he looks down on the liquid metal, he can see his own image perfectly reflected there; then the process is completed, and the fire removed. The Old Testament images of "sons of Levi," "sacrifice," &c., are here used to express New Testament facts with obvious propriety. לִיְיָהוָה means belonging to the Lord, including their own joyful acknowledgment of this fact.

V. 4. "And grateful to Jehovah shall be the sacrificial offering of Judah and Jerusalem, as in the days of old, and as in the years of the past."

V. 4 declares the result of this process, that the offerings of the people shall be grateful to God. These sacrifices are of course eucharistic, and not expiatory, such as are mentioned in Rom. 12 : 1 ; 1 Peter, 2 : 5, &c.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment ; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the

V. 5. "And I draw near to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and the adulterers, and those who swear to a falsehood, and those who defraud the hireling of his wages, and the widow, and the orphan, and those who oppress the stranger, and who fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts."

V. 5 refers to the godless cavil of chap. 2 : 17, "Where is the God of judgment?" as if he was totally removed from all notice of human affairs. God says that he is near to them for judgment, and a swift witness against their crimes, committed against their helpless wives and dependents. He may seem not to notice sin, and to delay its punishment, but all the time his sleepless eye is noting the sinner, and his thunder but grows hotter the longer it sleeps. While these impious cavillers were inferring that God did not hate sin, because he did not punish others, they would suddenly receive a proof of his justice in his punishing themselves. The first three crimes were against their wives ; sorcery was connected with the idolatrous worship to which their heathen wives allured them, and was a common practice among the later Jews, as appears from Acts 8 : 9 ; 13 : 6 ; and also from Josephus (Arch. 20 : 6 ; B. Jud. 2 : 12, 23,) quoted by Hengstenberg. The other crimes were against the unprotected, of whom God touchingly represents himself as the protector and avenger. Oppression of the helpless is defiance of God. The root of their crimes is traced in the fact that they do not fear God—a crime whose folly seems even greater, if possible, than its wickedness.

fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. 6 For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

V. 6. "For I am Jehovah, I change not, and you (*therefore*) sons of Jacob are not consumed."

V. 6. The exact force of *כי* in this verse is somewhat obscure. It must be taken as a causal particle, introducing a reason for, or an inference from what precedes. The connection is probably as follows:—In view of this prevalent wickedness, there were two conclusions that might be drawn. First, that of the sceptic—that God had ceased to punish sin, since the sinning people still continued to exist; and secondly, that of the timid believer—that with so much sin, Israel must be destroyed. God replies that neither of these conclusions is correct. "They are spared and not consumed, because I am Jehovah, the covenant God of their fathers, and they, sons of Jacob, to whom I am bound by covenant; and while I spare them, I will also punish them, and while I punish them, I will also preserve them from total extinction!" The stress of the verse, then, is found in the meaning of the name Jehovah, which was the covenant name of God to the Jews, as is clearly proved by the remarkable—and on any other hypothesis, inexplicable—passage, Exod. 6 : 3; and is here used in antithesis with Jacob, the covenanting head of the visible theocracy. So when the Church grows cold, and there shall be no faith on the earth, the hope of the Christian must be founded, not on the visible tokens of either impunity or gathering doom, but on the unchanging love

of God, who will not allow the gates of hell to prevail against her. The immutability of God, then, is at once the guarantee that his people shall be cast into the furnace, and also that they shall not be consumed.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) One of the greatest sins we can commit, is to infer that the inequality of human condition is a proof that God is indifferent to human conduct. The inference is unfair, on a sufficiently extensive induction of facts, if we know nothing of God, but most atrociously wicked, even if more plausible, in view of what we actually know of him as a righteous ruler, (2 : 17.)

(2.) We may look to Christ as God, and as such trust in and worship him. There is one being called the Angel of the Lord, Angel of the Presence, Angel of the Covenant, &c., who appeared to Abraham in Mamre, (Gen. 18 : 1, 2, 16 ; 19 : 1,) and who is there called Jehovah ; who appeared to Jacob in Bethel, (Gen. 31 : 11 ; 48 : 15,) to Moses in the bush, (Ex. 3 : 2, 4, 6,) who went before the camp in the Shekinah, (Ex. 14 : 19,) who delivered the law at Sinai (Acts 7 : 28,) who led the people through the desert, (Isa. 63 : 7, 9,) who was promised as the one who was to make the new covenant, (Jer. 31 : 31,) and who is predicted by Malachi, (3 : 1,) as to appear in the temple then existing. This Messenger, we are thus clearly taught, was Divine, for he is called Jehovah. This Divine Messenger, Mark

(1 : 1, 2) assures us, was Jesus Christ. Hence, Jesus Christ is “ God manifest in the flesh,” “ God over all, blessed forever.” (See also John 12 : 41, compared with Isa. 6 : 10, and 1 Cor. 10 : 9.)

(3.) It is not enough to desire the coming of Christ. Many have longed for it to whom it was a fearful apocalypse of wrath, (3 : 1.)

(4.) The remedial dispensation of God’s mercy in Christ has two aspects—one of wrath, the other of love. The Angel of the Covenant is the same that led the people out from Egypt ; and like that cloud-girt presence of Jehovah, it has an aspect of terror to the foes of God, while it has an aspect of love to his friends. The gradual dispensation of the gospel is separating the gold of the earth from its dross, in the mass of men, and doing the same refining work in every Christian heart. When the separating process is complete in the one case, the world will end ; when in the other, the fire will be put out in the furnace of affliction, and the purified spirit brought out of the crucible, (v. 2.)

(5.) Afflictions are God’s refinings. The purer the gold, the hotter the fire ; the whiter the garment, the harder the washing, (v. 3.)

(6.) Ministers who are to be eminently useful are often eminently afflicted, (v. 3.)

(7.) The prayer that rises from the broken and contrite heart is often the sweetest offering to God. The incense must be put on the burning coals before its fragrant smoke will ascend ; the sandal wood must be

crushed and bruised before it will give out its sweetest odor, (v. 4.)

(8.) The helpless, who have no human protector, have a mightier and surer one in God. He may allow them to be oppressed for a time, but in the end will visit swift and terrible judgment on their oppressors, (v. 5.)

(9.) Let not the Christian heart grow timid in a time of prevalent wickedness and unbelief, in the fear that the ark of God may perish. The sons of Jacob shall not be consumed—the seed of Christ shall not perish. The unchangeableness of God is the sheet-anchor of the Church. He will be faithful to his Son, and to his word, however disheartening external circumstances may appear to our wavering faith, (v. 6.)

(10.) The perseverance of the saints is guaranteed, not by their unchangeable love to God, but by his unchangeable love to them, and his eternal purpose and promise in Christ Jesus, (v. 7.)

SECTION V. CHAPTER 3 : 7—12.

Neglect of Tithes and Offerings.

ANALYSIS.

I. A general charge of disobedience and degeneracy, and a call to reformation, (v. 7.)

II. The specific sin of neglecting tithes and offerings adduced in answer to the challenge of the people, (v. 8.)

III. A call to reformation in this particular, and a promise of blessings in that event, (v. 9—12.)

7 ¶ Even from the days of your fathers ye have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? 8 ¶ Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Where-

V. 7. "From the days of your fathers ye have departed from my statutes, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. And ye say, 'Wherein shall we return?'"

V. 7. It is a principle in God's government that the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children, in order that parental affection may be an additional restraint against sin. Now, the Jews having begun their wanderings after returning from captivity, at the point where their fathers had left off, instead of repenting of and forsaking their sins, this law of hereditary guilt was allowed to take its course. God, however, assures them that if they return to him in penitence, he will return to them in prosperity. They then, with the same stolid impenitence that they have all along shown, ask wherein they were to return—as if the accusation of departure was a calumny.

V. 8. "Will a man defraud God? Because ye have defrauded me. And ye say, 'Wherein have we defrauded thee?' In tithes and offerings."

V. 8 answers this insolent question with a burst of indignant invective. What, when the cry of your injured wives, the ruins of the holy city, and the neglected altars of the temple, are all telling of your having withheld from God his dues, do you ask wherein you must return? Will a man defraud God, and yet think that he has nothing to repent of? The word עָרַב having the radi-

in have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in

mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not *be room* enough to receive it.

cal sense of covering or hiding, is properly *to defraud*, rather than *to rob*. The force of אֵי seems to be as follows: "Can you think that sacrilege is not a crime to be repented of? Yet you have committed that crime, because ye have defrauded me. Again, the hardened insolence of the people rears its brow, and demands wherein has this fraud been committed? And God answers: "In tithes and offerings."

The tithes required by the Mosaic law were, first, a tenth of all that remained after the first-fruits, (which belonged to God and must be given to him,) which tenth was God's, as the original proprietor of the soil, and was paid to the Levites for their maintenance. (Lev. 27 : 30–32.) Secondly, from this tenth the Levites paid a tenth to the priests. (Num. 18 : 26–28.) Thirdly, a second tenth was paid by the people for the entertainment of the Levites and their own families at the tabernacle. (Deut. 12 : 18.) Fourthly, another tithe was paid every third year for the poor, widows, orphans, &c. (Deut. 14 : 28, 29.) The first three classes of tithes are specially referred to here, as appears from the context, though the fourth was also withheld, as we would infer from chap. 3 : 5. "The offerings" are referred to in chap. 1 : 7–14.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground ; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

V. 9. "Ye are cursed with a curse ; for ye have defrauded, the whole nation (*of you*)."

V. 9 states that, because of this defrauding of God, the people were cursed, as already stated in chap. 2 : 2. The position of "me" we regard as emphatic, designed to intimate the enormity of the attempt to defraud God. For the syntax of ך, which is here taken causally, see Nordheimer, § 1093, 6, *e. a.*

V. 10. "Bring all the tithes into the house of the treasury, and let there be food in my house, and prove me, I pray you, in this, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open to you the flood-gates of heaven, and pour down upon you a blessing perpetually."

V. 10 contains God's challenge : Be faithful to God, and see whether he will be faithful to his promises. "All the tithes : " (see under v. 8 what these were.) The phrase ךְ־לְכֹל־לְבָרְכָה has been variously rendered ; literally it means, "until a failure of sufficiency," and the interpretation depends on the exact reference of sufficiency. Our version understands sufficiency of room to receive the blessing ; but it seems most natural to refer it to the source of this sufficiency, viz., God. This makes it precisely analogous to the corresponding passage where this idiom occurs, (Psa. 72 : 5,) "Until a failure of the moon," *i. e.*, as long as the moon endures, which was equivalent to saying perpetually : so here it would be equivalent to, "as long as the sufficiency of God endures ;" and as this sufficiency is infinite, it means

12 And all nations shall call you a land, saith the Lord of hosts, blessed: for ye shall be a delightful

perpetually. We have preferred to translate the idiom into its proper equivalent in our language. The reasoning is, that constant obedience will produce a constant shower of blessing; the exact meaning of the phrase being *perpetuity* of blessing rather than *abundance* of blessing as it is commonly rendered, a thought which was sufficiently expressed by the words "pour down" and "flood-gates of heaven." It is, however, proper to say, that most of the interpreters prefer the other meaning, making "to the failure of sufficiency" mean more than sufficient, which would be expressed rather by the excess of sufficiency than by its failure.

V. 11. "And I will rebuke for you the devourer, and it shall not destroy for you the fruits of the ground, and it shall not blight for you the vine in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts."

V. 11. "The devourer" is not any specific kind of destroyer, but any and every one, rational or irrational. The allusion is the threat of chap. 2 : 3, which is here specifically revoked, on condition of repentance and obedience.

V. 12. "And all nations shall pronounce you blessed, for ye shall be a land of delight, saith Jehovah of hosts."

V. 12 promises a blessing in the same form in which it is promised in Deut. 33 : 29 ; Zech. 8 : 13.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) As men love their children, let them avoid that sin that will be to them a legacy of sorrow, (v. 7.)

(2.) We must come back to God if we would have God come back to us, for it is we who have changed, and not God ; He is the same, (v. 7.)

(3.) We may try to defraud God, but in the end will only defraud ourselves. The eagle who robbed the altar set fire to her nest from the burning coal that adhered to the stolen flesh. So men who retain God's money in their treasuries will find it a losing possession. No man ever yet lost anything by serving God with a whole heart, or gained anything by serving him with half a one. We may compromise with conscience for half the price, but God will not endorse the compromise, and like Ananias and Sapphira, we will lose not only what we thought we had purchased so cheaply, but also the price we paid for it, (v. 8.)

(4.) One cause of the spiritual barrenness of the Church is the parsimony of its members, (v. 9.)

(5.) If we would have God open his treasury, we must open ours, (v. 10, 11.)

(6.) Let Christians cease to defraud the Lord's pensioners, and the Lord's house ; become whole-hearted, and open-handed Christians, and the cloud will soon rise over Carmel, and the heavens grow dark with rain, (v. 12.)

SECTION VI. CHAP. 3 : 13—END.

Reproofs and Warnings.

ANALYSIS.

I. The unbelieving state of mind which lay at the bottom of all their evils, again reproved. This consisted in saying (1) that

they who served God gained nothing by it, and (2) that they who disobeyed him were not only unpunished, but actually blessed, (v. 13—15.)

II. The true characteristics of those who served God, amidst this abounding hypocrisy and wickedness, and their true reward. They conferred together, and they would be rewarded in the great events of the future, (v. 16, 17.)

III. These unbelieving ones should see in those days to come that there is a difference between right-doing and wrong-doing, (v. 18.)

IV. The time when this vindication shall take place; viz.: the day of the Lord, (c. 4 : 1.) The results of that day, (v. 2—4.)

V. The events preceding it, viz.: the mission of Elijah and its results, (v. 5, 6.)

The passage (v. 13—15) repeats in a more aggravated form the sin of the ungodly Jews, reprovèd in the previous portion of the prophecy. That sin was—charging God with partiality and injustice, because he did not reward them for their mercenary and imperfect obedience, while the heathen seemed to be so much more prosperous. There is a sort of climax in the utterance of their feelings. At first, their murmurings were such as to cause God to say that he had no pleasure in them. (Chap. 1 : 10.) Then their unreasonable pertinacity was such that their words wearied him. (Chap. 2 : 17.) But now their insolence arises so high as to amount to audacious violence. (Chap. 3 : 13.) The error, lying at the root of all this, was a mistake in regard to the nature of God's service, and converting it into a mere mercenary kind of worldliness, supposing that, if it did not reward, in the good things of this life,

13 ¶ Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee? God: and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

14 Ye have said, It *is* vain to serve

all those who performed its outward observances, whatever was the motive of these performances, it was a failure. They mistook, at once, the spiritual motives and feelings required, and the eternal rewards promised to those who served God.

V. 13. “ ‘Your words have been violent against me,’ saith Jehovah. And ye say, ‘What do we say against thee?’ ”

V. 13. עָזַב with עָלַי is literally to be *strong upon* any one, *i. e.*, to be violent. It represents the aggravated insult contained in the words of the Jews, as if they really forced God to punish them. נִבְרַחְתִּי, being the Niphal form of the verb, has the reciprocal sense of this conjugation, (see Nordheimer, vol. i. p. 94, § 141, 3,) and implies that these things were said—not directly *to* God—but *of* God, to one another. For this meaning of the word, see Ezek. 33 : 30, where it is fully explained in the context.

V. 14. “Ye say, ‘It is vain to serve God, and what profit (*is it*) that we have kept his observances, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?’ ”

V. 14 expresses the corrupt feelings, the utterance of which had so insulted God. They had engaged in the discharge of duty, not from any love to God, but from a hope of being well paid for it; and when they found that God did not pay them as they expected, they murmured, and charged him with being unjust.

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that tempt God are set up; yea, they that work wickedness are even delivered.

Their error, however, was not in thinking that God would reward those who faithfully served him, but in thinking that such beggarly services as theirs, arising from such ignoble motives, had any claim on God's favor. "To walk mournfully" was to assume the garb of penitence, which was the garb used by mourners. They had even submitted to fasting and humiliation, and yet had not been paid for it, forgetting the teaching of Isaiah 58, in regard to the fast which God had chosen.

V. 15. "And now we pronounce the proud happy; they are built up, the workers of iniquity; also, they tempt God and escape."

V. 15 is a continuation of the conversation of the people with one another. "And now" expresses the inference they stated to each other, as to be drawn from their adversity as compared with the prosperity of the heathen. "Since we are not rewarded, who serve Jehovah, and the proud heathen flourish in prosperity, we must now pronounce them the favorites of God, and say that he builds up the workers of iniquity, and allows them, who dare him to punish them, by breaking his laws, to escape." This atrocious insinuation, that God favored evil-doers, was the highest insult they could have uttered, and was that which, as it were, drove God to inflict his judgments upon them.

V. 16. "Then they who feared Jehovah spake, every man to his neighbor; and Jehovah attended and heard: and there was

16 ¶ Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another; and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

written a book of remembrance before him, for those who feared Jehovah, and for those who thought upon his name."

V. 16. It is a cheering thought that no defection from the truth has ever been so wide spread, as not to leave a remnant who never bowed the knee to Baal. Such was the fact here. Amid the astounding wickedness of the people, there were still those who were faithful to God. Their *character* is described as those "who feared Jehovah." This fear is not the fear of terror or guilt, but the fear of a love that is always tremblingly alive to the possible alienation of its object. Their *conduct* is also described: "They spake one to another." While the wicked spake to one another words of daring scepticism, they who feared the Lord were speaking to each other words of encouragement and faith. Maurer and Hitzig endeavor to show that the persons referred to in this verse are the same with those spoken of in verses 13—15. But the promises in verses 16, 17, are plainly inconsistent with the heavy condemnation implied in verse 13. The reward of this fidelity is then stated. The kings of Persia were accustomed to enter in a book the names of those who had rendered any special service to the king, in order that they might be duly rewarded. (See Esther 6 : 1.) This, or the books in Daniel 7 : 10, may be referred to here, to express the fact that their fidelity would not be over-

17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

looked. The faintest whisper which they utter in the ears of each other will be heard and recorded in heaven.

V. 17. "And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, in the day in which I shall make up my possession, and I will spare them, as a man spares his son that serves him."

V. 17. The word יָצִיט in the English version is rendered "jewels ;" but it strictly means "a possession," implying some special value, though without limiting it to the precise kind of valuables indicated by the word jewels. It will admit of two constructions. The first is that preferred by Maurer and the older interpreters, which connects it with יְהוָה יִצְטֵנִי, and gives the sense, "They shall be my possession in the day that I shall make." This construction is at variance with the accents, and does not give that fulness of significance to the promise that seems to be demanded by its terms. Hence the other construction is preferable, which declares that in that great day of final adjustment, when God shall make up his own peculiar people from the assembled millions of the earth, then these humble and fearing followers of Jehovah, in the midst of abounding wickedness, shall be his ; and when the threatened wrath begins to consume the enemies of God, he will spare them with all a father's yearning fondness for a docile and loving child. Thus the prophet carries the mind forward to the mighty adjustments of the future,

18 Then shall ye return and discern between him that serveth God and him between the righteous and the wicked, that serveth him not.

in which all the seeming anomalies of the present shall be fully explained and wholly removed forever.

V. 18. "And ye shall return and discern (*the difference*) between the righteous and the wicked, and between him who serves Jehovah, and him who serves him not."

V. 18 expresses the fact alluded to in v. 17: "Now you murmur at the ways of God as unjust in seemingly confounding the righteous and wicked, thus refusing to him the justice you concede to a man, not to condemn an unfinished plan, because it seems to you to be objectionable. It is in part to test your disposition to trust in God in spite of all appearances that perplex, and to make your service of him less mercenary and selfish, that this blended state of facts is allowed. But when the experiment has been fully made, and it is thus seen who will be faithful in the face of perplexity, and who will be otherwise, then shall you see clearly that there is a difference between the righteous and the wicked as broad as the abyss between heaven and hell."

CHAPTER IV.

V. 1. "For behold! the day comes! burning like a furnace! and all the proud, and all the doers of evil are chaff! and the day that comes, burns them, saith Jehovah of hosts, who will not leave to them root nor branch."

V. 1. IN this verse we have a prophecy that requires the application of what we may call the principle of successive fulfilment. This is one of great importance

1 For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn, as an oven : and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

in interpreting the Bible, if we would avoid confusion. There are a number of statements by the sacred writers that are designed to apply to distinct facts, successively occurring in history. If the words are limited to any one of these facts, they will seem exaggerated, for no one fact can exhaust their significance. They must be spread over all the facts before their plenary meaning is reached. There is nothing in this principle that is at variance with the ordinary laws of language. The same general use of phrases occurs repeatedly. Thus, Berkeley's celebrated line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way," is fulfilled with every new advance of occidental greatness, and includes the smallest as well as the greatest facts of this nature. The expression, "The schoolmaster is abroad," has its fulfilment in every successive teacher of youth who goes forth to his work. Every language contains these formulas, which refer not to any one event, but a series of events, all embodying the same principle, or resulting from the same cause. Hence, there is nothing in this principle at variance with the laws of language.

We find repeated instances of this species of prediction in the Scriptures. The promise in regard to the "Seed of the woman," (Gen. 3 : 15,) refers to no one event, but runs along the whole stream of history, and includes every successive conquest of the religion of

Christ. The same thing is true of the promise, that men shall beat their swords into ploughshares : and kindred predictions of the peace that shall ensue in Messianic times. They refer to every advance that is made in the peaceful tendencies of the religion of the Bible, and await their fullest fulfilment in the future.

There is a class of predictions in interpreting which this principle is eminently important. It is that which refers to what the old theologians called the *novissima*, to which this verse belongs. When Christ speaks of these last things, he does it in terms that obviously refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and yet as obviously transcend that event. This has led to the Universalist dogma, that there is no day of judgment, except in that indefinite sense in which every judicial visitation of God is a day of judgment, just as every gracious visitation of God is a day of grace. Relying on the indefinite use of the word day in Scripture, they seek to eviscerate these predictions of a future day of judgment of all the tremendous significance that they have commonly possessed.

They refer to the fact that Peter applied Joel's prediction of the day of the Lord to the events of Pentecost, in Acts 2: 16 ; and from thence infer that the formula " day of the Lord " cannot be applied to a future judgment, as it is commonly held. The difficulty which they press, however, can be wholly removed by adopting this principle of successive fulfilment. It is true that the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, Babylon, and Jerusalem, and all subsequent visitations of

God's wrath, were days of the Lord, and in each one of them the proud and evil-doers were as chaff. But as each one did not exhaust these ominous predictions, so all together have not yet met the full reach of the terrors, which will only be done in that future day in which the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the drama of earth shall be ended. All previous judgments were but reddening of the dawn, that bethought the coming, but did not unfold the terrible brightness of that awful day. As the prophet in this verse gazes upon its distant rising, he exclaims, as if in breathless emotion, It comes! burning like a furnace! the wicked proud are chaff! the day burns them! There is something very forcible in these abrupt exclamations, as if the prophet was elevated on some mount of vision, and actually beheld this terrible pomp come rolling up the distant skies, on its reddening pathway of fire and blood. The finality of this day is distinctly declared in the utter ruin that it is predicted to bring.

V. 2. "And then shall rise on you who fear my name the Sun of Righteousness, and healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and leap as calves of the stall."

V. 2 presents the situation of the righteous in this future day of terror, as contrasted with that of the wicked. To the wicked, the day should come fierce and consuming as a furnace; to the righteous it should dawn in peace, and the sun that should illumine it would be not one of condemnation, but of "righteousness,"—not one of destruction, but of "healing."

2 ¶ But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

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

Wings are attributed to the sun, poetically, in allusion to his apparent motion, just as we read of “the wings of the morning,” in Psa. 139 : 9. The image of the sun seems to have been suggested by the expression “day,” used in the preceding verse, in order to make the contrast more striking between the day of terror to the wicked, and of gladness to the righteous. The phrase “Sun of Righteousness” is generally applied to Christ in popular language, and if the ultimate ground of this future gladness and righteousness is brought in view, the phrase is undoubtedly applicable to him. But we cannot think that the prophet here meant to predict Christ personally by this phrase, or indeed to look at the ground of this righteousness at all. His object was to show the contrast that this future day would present to the righteous, from the aspect it would present to the wicked ; and while it is true that the foundation of this contrast rests on Christ, yet it is the contrast itself, in its bright and joyous character, rather than the foundation that is here contemplated by the prophet. To leap as a young animal, which after confinement exults in the joyousness of freedom, is a striking image of the joy that the righteous shall feel after being kept so long waiting for deliverance.

V. 3. “And ye shall trample down the ungodly : for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day which I make, saith Jehovah of hosts.”

4 ¶ Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments.

5 ¶ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

V. 3 is designed to meet the perplexity of the righteous, in view of the prosperity of the wicked. That prosperity would be brief, and soon reversed. The image of ashes refers us back to that of fire in v. 1. which was to consume the ungodly.

V. 4. "Remember the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb, for all Israel, statutes and judgments."

V. 4 expresses the condition on which this future blessing would be bestowed, namely, obedience. Obey the law already given, and at the proper time it shall be found, that in the end it shall be well with the righteous, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

V. 5. "Behold! I send to you Elijah the prophet, before the day of Jehovah comes, the great and the terrible!"

V. 5. The main difficulty in this verse, is, to answer the question, Who, or what is Elijah? Is he the Tishbite, who is personally to reappear on earth? So the Jews, and even some of the early Christian fathers, thought. But the reference by Christ himself of this passage to John, proves that this could not be its meaning. Indeed, the fact that he is called "the prophet," and not "the Tishbite," implies that it is his official, and not his personal relations, that are here contemplated. If, then, it is not Elijah personally, is it John personally that is here predicted under the name of Elijah? This view of the case is contradicted by the express as-

sersion of John. When, in evident allusion to this passage he was asked, (John 1 : 21,) “Art thou Elias?” he replied, “I am not;” and then, as if to meet the supposition, that he might thus only mean to deny that he was Elijah reappearing on the earth, when he was asked further, “Art thou that prophet?” (the article here must be taken as emphatic,) he replies, “No,” thus asserting that none of these prophecies found an exhaustive fulfilment in him individually. The Jews supposed that this prophecy would be fulfilled finally in a single individual, and that when this individual would come, the time of Israel’s glory was near at hand. It was this false view of the passage that John denied, and not any reference of it to him. He must have known from the communication of the angel to his father, (Luke 1 : 16, 17.) that this prophecy had a reference to him, and his adoption of the costume of Elijah proved the same thing; hence it could only have been the exclusive application of the text to him that he meant to deny.

In what sense, then, is Elijah predicted? The fact that John, to whom the passage is applied by Christ, calls himself “the voice crying in the wilderness,” which we have seen (Mal. 3 : 1) to be identical with “the messenger” then predicted, proves that Elijah is here to be understood in the same sense with “the messenger.” We are here therefore presented with another case of successive fulfilment, such as we found in v. 1. Indeed, this is expressly intimated when we are told that John was to come in “the spirit and power of Eli-

jah," (Luke 1 : 16, 17.) As Moses in the preceding verse was taken as the representative of the law, the preceptive revealings of God, so Elijah is taken as the representative of the prophets, or the prophetic revealings of God. This was done again in the transfiguration, where these men appear in their representative and not in their personal character. This use of Elijah is not unknown to the Old Testament ; in 2 Chron. 21 : 12, it is said that "a writing from Elijah the prophet" came to King Jehoram, when Elijah had been for many years in heaven. This can only mean a prophecy, in the spirit of Elijah. So in 1 Kings 19 : 15, 16, it is predicted that Elijah shall do acts that in fact were done by Elisha (2 Kings 8 : 13) and one of the young prophets, (2 Kings 9 : 13.) This also implies that Elijah was taken as a representative of the prophetic order, or more strictly, of the spirit of prophecy. This prophetic mission was to reprove, to instruct, to warn, and to predict. The general fact, then, that is predicted, is, that before God comes in his terrible mission of judgment, he will send agencies to revive and reform his people, so that they may escape from the wrath to come. Were it announced to us that before God would cut off an apostate Church, he would send a Luther, we should instantly comprehend the meaning of the prediction, and see no confusion of language, but rather a greater clearness in this use of a typical or representative man. Thus, then, it is predicted, that before God sends wrath, he will send messengers to summon to repentance. This was done before the downfall

of the Jewish people. John, as the first of these sent messengers, had especial prominence, but he was not the last ; others followed with the same message, “ Repent, for the day is coming !” And in every subsequent revival of religion in the Church it has been so. In the reformation of the sixteenth century, Elijah came in the burning words of Luther, Calvin, and Knox ; in the eighteenth, in the fervid spirits of the Wesleys, Whitefield, and Edwards ; and now that we are verging upon yet more fearful unfoldings of the wrathful visitations of God on the earth, we look for Elijah to come forth again in some new and mighty awakening of men to repentance. Indeed, to every regenerated soul there is essentially this coming of Elijah, this summons, “ Repent, for the day is coming !” And as the faithful minister of Christ goes forth, it must be ever in the same spirit, calling on men to repent, and pointing to the lurid flashings of that *dies iræ*, which, when once perceived by the startled eye of the soul, will lead it to flee to the only refuge from this wrath to come. We thus see, that instead of a narrow prediction that is exhausted by its application to a single man, and that confuses us by this restriction, we have a magnificent formula of the spiritual world, that stretches like a law over all its phases, and gives unity to them all, from the most mighty to the most minute.

V. 6. “ And he shall return the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to the fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.”

V. 6 describes the work of the preacher of repent-

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

ance. The expression, "return the heart of the fathers to the sons, and the heart of the sons to the fathers," has usually been explained to mean the restoration of domestic harmony among the people. But this is a very meagre sense of words that close up the utterances of God to his people for twelve generations. Want of domestic concord was not one of the sins charged upon the people, and its removal would hardly be the great work assigned to the Elijah messenger. The meaning is suggested in the words of the angel to Zacharias, in Luke 1 : 16, 17 ; where, instead of the clause, "the heart of the sons to the fathers," is put, "the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." This paraphrase indicates that the hearts of the devoted ancestors were to live again in the obedience of their repentant posterity, and that the backslidden sons were to be restored to the piety of their fathers. The piety of the fathers had been referred to repeatedly before, (see 1 : 2 ; 2 : 5, 6 ; 3 : 4,) and the promise is, that this piety should live again in the children, under the Elijah call to repentance ; and it is threatened, that if this is not the result, the land shall be laid under the terrible *herem*. This was a devotion to destruction, such as was done to the Canaanites by the judicial act of God. As these guilty nations were cut off because of their sins, so should the people who had taken their place on the soil of the land of promise, or those who in turn would take their place on the covenants of promise, if they imitated their sin-

ful example. This was fulfilled five hundred years afterward, when the chosen people were finally rejected, and the awful blood was upon them and their children, according to their own imprecation. And to this hour, the soil that was wet with that blood lies under the terrible *herem*, and will so continue, until that Elijah call that shall bring back the heart of David, of Isaiah, and of Nathaniel to their exiled posterity, enabling them to see him whom they have pierced, and to cry, “My Lord and my God.” And by the same principle of interpretation that we have applied to the previous verse, do we extend this warning to every age of the Church, and find in it the germ of the solemn admonition of Paul in discussing the same subject, (Rom. 11 : 20, 21,) “Be not high-minded, but fear ; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he also spare not thee.”

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

(1.) Men often utter most atrocious charges against God without being fully conscious of the bearing of their words of complaint, (v. 13.)

(2.) Men who expect to be paid in this world for serving God have mistaken God for mammon. Religion is not a thing of bargain, but of love ; and whenever a man begins to chaffer for easier terms, he shows that his heart is not right with God, (v. 14.)

(3.) The disposition to value religion by the worldly

property it bestows, is an old tendency of the human heart, and one not yet wholly eradicated, (v. 15.)

(4.) When the wicked are talking against God, the righteous should talk for him. Religious conversation is necessary, all the more, for the very reasons that often chill and repress it. When a fire burns low, the coals that are alive should be brought near together, that they may be blown into a flame. So when all is cold and dead, living Christians should draw near and seek the breathings of the Spirit, and kindle each other by mutual utterance. The words thus and then spoken shall be heard and recorded in heaven, (v. 16.)

(5.) The reproofs and warnings of this section are eminently applicable to our epicurean age. There is the same tendency to challenge the dealings of God now that there was then, and there is the same need to point men forward to the mighty adjustments of the future, in which all these apparent anomalies will be rectified, and to urge them to listen to the heavenly voice that calls them to repent, believe, and obey, assuring them that if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is *Anathema, Maran-atha!* (v. 17, 18.)

(6.) The best motive to present duty is to be drawn from future destiny, (4 : 1.)

(7.) We can afford to walk in the dark now, if we are assured of eternal light hereafter, (v. 2.)

(8.) Before God sends wrath he will send calls to repentance, and give room to repent, (v. 5.)

(9.) Let no present impunity encourage any to per-

sist in sin, for out of Christ God is a consuming fire. And it is suggestive of much solemn thought, that the last utterance of God to the Church and to the world, before the coming of the Messiah, the word that was to sound through four hundred years of history, was that awful word, "*Curse!*"

THE END.

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