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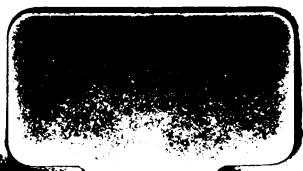
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ELEMENTS
OF
PROPHECY.

BY W. KELLY.



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G. MORRISH, 24, WARWICK LANE,
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P R E F A C E .

THE work now before the reader is the examination of a book which appeared many years ago from the pen of a certain professor of Moral Philosophy and was regarded at the time by not a few as conclusive against Futurism. Even then, as some know, it was my intention publicly to test how far its principles were scriptural, and its reasonings valid; and it seemed to me none the less a duty because of the deliberate and strong conviction, whatever the delinquencies of the Futurists, that its tendency was retrograde, to the dishonour of Christ and the injury of the church of God. The professor however having since then divulged views on the punishment of the wicked which shocked all orthodox men, including of course those of his own party, I have judged it best not to give his name, nor to cite formally from his book. Hence such as have not read it might scarcely gather that my work is controversial; while those who do possess it will see that, however briefly, I have endeavoured to follow up with conscientious care his use of scripture and his argument, as well as his plan, so as to leave nothing unrefuted which seemed worth noticing. The Christian will perceive and I hope learn from God how much larger and more exact and profound is revealed truth than either the Historical scheme or the Futurist. This is the fruit I desire by grace to the praise of the name of the Lord Jesus.

London, December, 1876.

INTRODUCTION.

PROPHECY is the revelation of the thoughts of God as regards the future, and His glory in Christ is the one blessed end of the prophetic word, as well as of all the divine actings. Make man, make self, the end, and singleness of eye is gone ; darkness ensues by the just judgment of God—a result as sure in the domain of the spiritual understanding as in that of the spiritual conscience. It is true we may say of the prophetic part what the Holy Ghost says about the whole written word, that it is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Still, the revealed acts are the expression of the principles of God's government of the world, and therefore the accomplishment portrayed in His word is the place where we learn these principles fully. This is surely what we have to ascertain. Otherwise we form our own notions of that which God has given us, prophecy, whereby to know His thoughts. Our business is to gather of what God speaks ; and though all scripture is given for our profit, it is in no way necessary that all should be about ourselves. The glory of God in dealing with Jews is, in its place, as much the object of our faith as His dealings with Christians. And the apprehension of the distinctions in His ways, that is, real understanding of His word, depends on our knowing to whom it applies.

Is not this taking away scripture from the church ? Quite the reverse. There is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel, as revealed in the Bible, which is not *for* the church, but it is not *about* the church. That such passages are so written as to bear an analogous application to the Gentile body, now grafted into the olive-tree of earthly testimony, I do not deny—an application which calls for the utmost caution, and a right division of the word of truth, because each dispensation has its own peculiarities, and in some cases there may be, and are, points of decided and intended contrast. Still, the church is not the subject treated of under the names of Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem ; and the effect of the unrestricted accommodation of such passages, to which we have been all accustomed, has been not only to rob the Jews of their promises, but to lower and obscure incalculably the privileges of the church, so far as present realization is concerned.

There is now, however, a considerable class of persons who admit that the only complete fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy involves the restoration of the literal Israel to their own land, and their national blessing and peace there, according to the new covenant, in the presence and personal reign of the Messiah. Hence, as a whole, they rightly refer the prophecies of future glory to the same people whose sins and judgments are therein detailed. They acknowledge that the reign of Christ over the converted Jewish people in the millenium is a very different thing from the secret counsels of grace which, through faith, have saved souls from the beginning. So far there is a step, and an important

step, in the true direction. But here is a stopping short. It is not seen that the rejection of Christ, by Jew and Gentile on the cross, and His consequent exaltation at the right hand of God, and the intermediate mission of the Holy Ghost here below till the Lord returns again, have made way for the accomplishment and revelation of an unique work of God, which had been kept secret from previous ages and generations. This work is the church, Christ's body.

It is not merely an increase of light as to the counsels of salvation, on which the entire line of the faithful, from Abel downward, had reposed, but there was a hitherto unknown and hidden mystery respecting a body destined to be the consort of Christ in heavenly glory at His coming, and meanwhile called into manifestation and enjoyment of its privileges by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who was to commence, sustain, and guide it here below, while waiting for the Bridegroom. The Holy Ghost had acted, He had given faith, He had quickened, He had wrought efficaciously and savingly from the first; but there was no baptism of the Spirit till Pentecost. He was not (that is, in this new way) till Jesus was glorified. (John vii.) So the Lord teaches us in Acts i. "*Ye shall be baptized of the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*" When just about to ascend He said this to the already believing, regenerate disciples. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost did baptize them. He imparted many miraculous gifts, "the powers of the world to come;" but besides this He baptized them on that day, never before. Now it is certain that the formation of the body, the church, hinges upon the baptism of the Spirit,

for "*by one Spirit* (as we are told in 1 Cor. xii. 18) *are we all baptized into one body.*" You cannot, therefore, have the body of Christ before the baptism of the Spirit; they are simultaneous and inseparable things. Accordingly we there find for the first time "the church" spoken of as an existing corporation. (Acts ii. 47.) The Lord Jesus, it is true (Matt. xvi. 18), had already said, "Upon this rock I will build my church;" but these words themselves prove that His church did not yet exist, save in the purpose of God. "Upon this rock *I WILL build my church.*"* It was not yet building. The foundation had to be laid; in death and resurrection alone could it be begun. It was essential, as

* Bishop Pearson, whatever may have been unsound elsewhere, has justly remarked, that "the only way to attain unto the knowledge of the true notion of the church is to search into the New Testament, and from the places there which mention it, to conclude what is the nature of it. To which purpose it will be necessary to take notice that our Saviour, first speaking of it, mentioneth it as that which then was not, but afterwards was to be; as when He speaks unto the great apostle, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;' but when He ascended into heaven, and the Holy Ghost came down, when Peter had converted three thousand souls, which were added to the hundred and twenty disciples, then was there a church . . . for after that we read, 'the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.' (Acts ii. 47.) A church, then, our Saviour promised should be built, and by a promise made before His death; after His ascension, and upon the preaching of St. Peter, we find a church built or constituted, and that of a nature capable of a daily increase. We cannot, then, take a better occasion to search into the true notion of the church of Christ than by looking into the origination and increase thereof, without which it is impossible to have a right conception of it."—*Art. IX., "The Holy Catholic Church."*

a condition of the existence of the church, that in the cross the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and Jew and Gentile be made *one new man*: in the next place Gentile and Jewish believers were builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. ii.)

For the Comforter was now come, the promise of the Father, to be in and with them for ever—that Comforter for whom it was expedient that Christ Himself should go away. The old Judaic order was nothing now before God. There was another and better temple, where God's presence was. There was one body, wherein Jewish and Gentile distinctions were absolutely gone, the church on earth, and one Spirit who resided there. It is not a mere continuation of a believing people who looked to promise, but established on accomplished redemption, an entirely new body appears, brought into union with Christ in His heavenly honours, between the first and second advent, while He is absent above. The latter terminus is admitted now by many who would dispute the former. It is confessed that the church is the bride, the Eve of the second Adam, and that the millennial saved people, though just as much saints, as truly redeemed by the blood of Christ, as we are, nevertheless answers to the type of Adam's children, and not of his wife. That is, it is an acknowledged principle that saintship, as in those who succeed the second advent, does not necessarily constitute membership of Christ's body. But as to the former terminus, even a far plainer proof has been here produced as regards the saints who preceded the first advent. Whatever may have been their many and

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precious promises, they are never in scripture called the church of God; nay, it has been shewn that they could not consistently be so termed, because they were not baptized of the Holy Ghost into the one body, and there is no other introduction therein than by that baptism, which did not then exist. The true, the scriptural, limits of the church are the cross and the coming of the Lord Jesus; founded upon the one, and waiting for the other, is that body, one with its Head on high, in which God dwells by the Holy Ghost; a new and unearthly body, having a path here below traced out for it, in many and important respects, quite distinct from what characterized the Old Testament saints, or what will characterize the millennial saints.

If these principles be admitted, their bearing on the faith, affections, worship, and service of the children of God, will soon be felt and seen. But of such consequences this is not the place to speak, though I would here advert briefly to the way in which they affect our apprehension of the prophetic word.

The disciples, though subsequently forming part of the church when it began, were nevertheless not of it during our Lord's ministry on earth. They believed in Christ, they followed Him in His temptations, they were instructed by Him, but were not yet of the church, nor could they be till Jesus was glorified on high, and the Holy Spirit baptized them here below. Their position was thus a peculiar one during that transitional order of things which began with John Baptist, and terminated with the cross, the proclamation going out meanwhile that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. If Matthew x. be examined, it will be

seen that the Lord gave them directions, some of which suited them only in their then state, as in verses 5, 6, some of which might well apply when the Spirit was given, as verses 16, 20, 24, 42, and others, which evidently look on to a future resumption of the testimony among the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes. Compare especially verse 23. Throughout this chapter—and it is not the only one of the kind—the disciples are addressed as having a peculiar connection with Israel, and in no way as being the church, or as representing it. No one denies that much of the chapter was fulfilled after the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the church. It was then, and in Judea, that persecution fell upon them. Still the chapter does not contemplate them as the church, but as Jewish disciples carrying out a Jewish mission, and awaiting, in the difficulties and sorrows of their testimony in that land, the coming of the Son of man. In Matthew xvii. we find Peter, James, and John, the evident types of the spared and converted Jews in the millennium, and in the same scene Moses and Elias, the types of the glorified saints.

It is upon similar Jewish ground that our Lord speaks in Matthew xxiv. His disciples had heard Him pronounce desolation in the preceding chapter. But it was a judgment mingled with mercy; for He distinctly intimated that if the Jews should not see Him henceforth, it was not unlimited; it was *till* ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Vengeance must fall upon the unbelieving generation, such as the mass then were and are. But the time is coming when the nation, or at least a remnant of it,

shall bless and curse not; wise ones who understand shall at length with joy welcome Him whom they crucified on the tree. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Vers. 1-8.)

Now it is not doubted that the church may have used, and may still use, the general principles of this chapter. All belongs to the church, for profit, instruction, reproof, or comfort; but most decidedly Matthew xxiv. is occupied not with the church, as such, but with Jerusalem and the temple, the consummation of the age, the clash of nations and kingdoms, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecutions, and trials, similar to Matthew x., and a preaching of the gospel of *the kingdom* to all the Gentiles throughout the habitable world. Such is the general picture to verse 14. After that, the scene becomes more specific, both as to time, place, and circumstances. Precise interpretation must confine verses 15-31 to a period still future, though Jerusalem is still the foreground. "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand); then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." (Vers. 15, 16.) Now what has this to do with the church as the church? What

has she to do with that holy place? (Compare Acts vi. 13; xxi. 28.) And how could the setting up of the abomination in the Jewish temple be a sign to the church to flee? But no! the passage refutes the idea. "Then let *them which be in Judea* flee into the mountains." Accordingly they are directed to pray that their flight be not on the sabbath-day, nor in the winter, for either might impede their flight and expose them to imminent peril. It is to be a brief though terrible trial: "*except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.*"

That these elect are Jewish elect (see Is. lxxv. 9, 15, 22) is confirmed by the Lord's warning the disciples about false Christs who shall arise. *Could the church*, who knows that she is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air—*could she*, I say, be in danger from the cries, Lo! here is Christ, or there; behold, He is in the desert, or in the secret chambers? But a perplexed Jewish remnant, whose hope is a *Messiah on earth*, might well need such monitions as the Lord here supplies. The coming of *the Son of man* (for it is Christ coming judicially which the chapter contemplates) shall not be secret, but as the lightning shining from east to west. They were not to be enticed by a "Lo, here or there." Other unmistakable signs should be granted. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." (Ver. 29.) Here again it is manifest that the Lord is not describing the translation of the elect church, but the gathering of His elect Israel, and for a plain reason: "When Christ our life

shall appear," says the apostle addressing the heavenly saints, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Christ will not be manifested first, and the church be caught up subsequently; *both are to appear together and at the same time in glory.* But with the elect Jews the case widely differs. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other." (Vers. 30, 31.) They are delivered and gathered *after* the Son of man has already appeared. The church had not only been caught up before, but had come out of heaven along with Christ preparatory to His appearing. (Rev. xix. 11-14.) This prophecy then in any full sense, for I do not deny a partial historic accomplishment, looks to a future state of things, and directly concerns a believing Jewish remnant, quite distinct from the church.

Is it in Matthew, and other Gospels only, where we read of such a converted remnant? By no means. Matthew xxiv. 15, 21 evidently refers us to Daniel for other particulars of the same scenes and times. If therefore it be clear that Matthew xxiv. 15-31 concerns a future converted body of Jews, and not the church, have we not here also a divine help for interpreting Daniel ix. 27; xi. 31; xii. 1, 7, 11, and the connected parts of the same? That is, the saints spoken of in Daniel are Jewish saints, and not the church, properly so called. Daniel's people, or at least

the understanding ones (compare Matthew xxiv. 15) of that prophet, are those whom the Lord further instructs in the prophetic discourse of our evangelist. Again, it is admitted very generally that Daniel and the Revelation are so linked that, when you have determined the bearing of the one, you necessarily therein involve the general interpretation of the other. The beast of Daniel vii. is the beast of Revelation xi. ; xiii. ; xvii. ; and the time, times and a half, in that same chapter answer to the same period in Revelation xii. Compare the image in Revelation xiii. with the abomination of desolation in the Gospel. Plainly therefore, while the Apocalypse has many subjects besides those treated of in Daniel or Matthew xxiv., while it admits of a far closer application than either to the providential history of the empire, &c., since the days of John, the grand final accomplishment of the book cannot be dissociated from the prophecies of Daniel and of the Lord Jesus Himself, which, we have seen, specially regard Jerusalem and the Jews at the end of the age.

Turning to the Psalms we find this truth confirmed. Let us first take Psalm lxxix., and assume what to many readers appears self-evident, that in its full import it tells of a day not yet come. The Holy Ghost there provides an utterance for a suffering people. But for what people? Clearly they are, and speak of themselves to God as, His servants, *His* saints. (Ver. 2.) Now is there a single sentiment which is characteristic of the church of God? Or is there one which does not breathe of Jewish affections and hopes? If the heathen invade Judea, if they defile God's holy temple in Jerusalem and lay the city in heaps, we can

understand how these things may, and will deeply affect the heart of an Israelite. If the Gentiles shed the blood of God's saints like water round about Jerusalem, and give their flesh to the beasts of the earth, rightly may he pray, "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place." But is this the language of the heavenly bride? * Is it suitable to her standing to say, "We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and de-

* The following, from the *Dublin Review* (October, 1847), may illustrate the danger of applying the language of the Psalms to the church, regardless of their proper bearing. "Turn them (the terrible imprecations in the Psalms) how you will, call them prophecies, or what not, evade the plain and natural use of the optative forms in Hebrew as you please, still there is an evident exultation in the destruction of the wicked, which sorts ill with that theory of Christianity which makes benevolence the sum and substance of it, as much as atheists have made it the sum and substance, so to say, of God's character. Yet, somehow or other, the Psalms have been used in the church in all ages more than any one part of holy writ. They are more quoted in the New Testament than even Isaiah is, and more in the Fathers than any part of the Old Testament. A church which believes herself gifted with infallibility, in thus acting, acts naturally. It is natural for her to anathematize heresy (and heretics too, if obstinate), and therefore natural to mould her spirit upon a book which, while it is replete with all that is tender in devotion, yet savours of the king as well as the penitent, and nerves the heart against bearing the sword entrusted to her in vain. If David was a penitent, so was Peter; if David was a king, Cephas also had not a priesthood only, but a *royal* priesthood. The anathemas of the church, then, are a counterpart to the imprecations in the Psalms, the spiritual sword to the material sword of David, and heretics to the crafty enemies."

rision to them that are round about us. How long, Jehovah, wilt thou be angry? for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed." (Vers. 4, 5, 10.) Is it for us to pray that God may be known among the heathen in our sight, by revenging the shed blood of His servants? "O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low." (Ver. 8.)

Is there not another body of saints of whom these words will be far more emphatically true? Not that the church may not blessedly use such a psalm; not that she may not discern what is essentially applicable to herself: but plainly the circumstances, the experience, the cries, are all characteristic of Jewish saints passing through the fire, and not of the church of God. That they are owned servants of God, who suffer in and near Jerusalem before the Lord appears for their deliverance; that in the next psalm they call on Him that dwells between the cherubim to shine forth; that they acknowledge their sins, and the righteous retributive dealings of Jehovah therein; that they deprecate His anger and jealousy, crying, "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved; O Jehovah God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?" that they appeal in faith to the God of hosts, cleaving to the link which binds Him to His people, howsoever failing, and entreat His hand to be upon the man of His right hand, "the Son of man whom thou madest strong for

thyself;" that they are saints is plain, but it is equally evident that the whole current of their prayers, sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, and answered by the Lord in person, is quite inconsistent with the calling of the church. Forgiven all trespasses (Col. ii. 13), I admit that it becomes us, individually conscious of sins, to confess them, in the assurance that God is faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But this goes upon the ground that *we are forgiven* (1 John ii. 12), that we are already accepted in the beloved (Eph. i. 6), and that as He is, so are we in this world (1 John iv. 7); whereas in the Psalms it is plain that the believing remnant have still to cry, "Shew us thy mercy, O Jehovah, and grant us thy salvation," &c. Full known acceptance is evidently not enjoyed until Jesus appears. (Compare Zech. xii. 10-14; xiii. 1; Joel ii., iii., &c.)

As to Psalm lxxxi., it needs little proof that a joyful noise to the God of Jacob, the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery, the blowing up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on the solemn feast-day, that all this is no statute for the church, though it is for Israel; nor are we ever told to look for the finest of the wheat and honey out of the rock. Again, what relation to Christianity have the earthly tabernacles and glory in the land, beautiful as Psalm lxxxiv. and lxxxv. may be? So also the fitting supplication for those who hate *us* is certainly not the language of Psalm lxxxiii. 9-18; but it is the right utterance of faith in Jewish saints, who are looking to God to arise and judge the earth. "Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison;

which perished at En-dor : they became as dung for the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb : yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna : who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. O my God, make them like a wheel : as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire ; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame ; that they may seek thy name, Jehovah. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ; yea, let them be put to shame and perish : that men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth."

While *the church* is being called, God is interfering in no such way. He is proclaiming salvation to the world that rejected and murdered His Son, who is still, so far as man is concerned, the outcast One, though crowned with glory and honour upon the throne of His Father. Hence the church's calling is governed by the present patience of God toward an ungodly world. Suffering, therefore, is her portion meanwhile, and grace, not judgment, her cry to God about her enemies. But the time is fast coming when God's dispensational displays will change, and, instead of making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust alike, " it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come out, that have no rain, there shall be the plague, wherewith Jehovah will smite

the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." (Zech. xiv. 17-19.) When that time comes, there will be another and a suited witness here below; not the church, (whose calling was during the time when the riches of His grace knew no measure, namely, between the cross and the return of the Lord Jesus,) but His people Israel, the righteous remnant become a strong nation on earth. "Jehovah said, I will bring again from Bashan: I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same." (Ps. lxxviii. 6. See all Ps. xciv.) "Remember, Jehovah, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." (Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9.) "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye Jehovah." (Ps. cxlix. 5-9.)* I might thus comment on all

* That the saints at present are characteristically called to *suffer with Christ*, and in no way to resist evil or avenge their own cause, but rather to plead for mercy in behalf of those who thus wrong

the Psalms, save the few which describe the atoning sufferings of Christ personally. In all of them it is the Spirit of Christ in special sympathy with Israel, though the Holy Ghost applies to the church in the New Testament many truths which are equally true of us and of them. (Compare Ps. xlv. 22, with Rom. viii. 36.) But this in no way sets aside their proper and prophetic bearings, any more than Hosea xi. 1 is denied to contemplate specifically the literal Israel, because in Matthew ii. 15 it is referred to Christ.

them, is plain from many scriptures. (Matt. v. 38-41. Acts vii. 60. Rom. xii. 19-21. 1 Cor. xv. 19. 1 Thess. iii. 4. 2 Tim. i. 8; ii. 3, 12; iii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 20, &c.) The servants, in Jewish righteousness, would have plucked up the tares out of the corn-field; they little understood the grace of the kingdom of heaven, which seeks to convert, not to exterminate. "Nay," said the Master, "let both grow together until the harvest," &c. The end of the age will be a period of judgment and not, as now, of grace. The tares are to be gathered and burnt then; and the language and prayers of the saints, as we have observed, will then be modified accordingly. Hence such prayers as those in Revelation vi. 10; viii. 3-5, and such manifestations of divine power as those recorded in Revelation xi. 5, 6, as well as the entire current of the book, which is full of special divine judgments. It is painful to see such a confusion of principles, which in God's word are distinct and contrasted, as is contained in the following extract from a work on prophecy, which forces Rev. vii., ix., to a minute fulfilment in times now past. "At first these prayers may be the pure breathings of grace and love, uttering themselves in desires for the conversion of sinners, and the repentance of an unbelieving world. But as the malice of the world increases and persecution begins to rage fiercely, these tones of mercy and forbearance are mingled with deeper accents of sorrowful anger and righteous indignation. 'How long shall the enemy blaspheme thy name? for ever? Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.' 'Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nation may know themselves to be but men.'"

If then the Psalms are the outpouring of the souls of Jewish saints, if the Spirit of prophecy breathes in them from one end to the other, is it wonderful that the prophet, who especially presents us with the times of the Gentiles, should speak of the trials of the same saints in the last terrible crisis of suffering? Other prophets dwell much upon their ultimate triumphs, in a state totally different from that in which the Jews are now, namely, under Messiah at His coming, and the new covenant. Daniel describes the four great beasts, and more particularly the last with its little horn, before whom three of the first ten horns, or kings, were subdued. "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the high places, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the high places, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii. 25-27.) If Daniel in chapter vii. is occupied with these future Jewish saints and not with the church of God, who does not see that this goes far to decide the just and complete realization of Revelation xii., xiii., and of the prophetic portion generally? For it is confessed by most that the Apocalypse is, to a great extent, an expansion of those parts of Daniel's visions which were still unfulfilled; and those who trace as the grand lesson of the former, the corruptions,

persecutions, and judgment of the papacy, are sure to bend a considerable portion of the latter to the same point. On the other hand, if it be clear that Daniel bears decidedly, in the most literal and important aspect of the book, upon the Jewish remnant during "the time of the end" or closing scenes of Gentile supremacy, the Apocalypse is necessarily fixed as having (I do not say its exclusive, but) its main application in the same eventful epoch.

It is in the final results that God *proves* His judgment. Morally, I admit, we should say that even now there are many antichrists. One might think to hear some reason, that this shewed that the Antichrist should *not* come. But this is not what we have heard in scripture. Neither is it that we deny local events to which many Old Testament prophecies apply. Only it is quite certain if the word of God is to be listened to, that the vast body of the results of prophecy in Old and New Testaments will have their accomplishment in a state altogether different from that which exists at present; when the church will be no longer represented as seven candlesticks on earth, but under the symbol of twenty-four enthroned elders in heaven, and God begins to resume His old associations with the Jews, chastening them in a special way, and judging their proud and blaspheming Gentile oppressors. To leave the Jewish part out, to slight it, as is commonly done, is folly and presumption. It is presumption, for God will finally prove by judgment what He really is, and the truth of all He has said of man, His hatred of sin, and His faithful mercy enduring for ever. He will demonstrate publicly and irrefragably that there is a reward for the

righteous, and a God *that judges in the earth*. To prefer the protracted period is to prefer the moral judgment of man to the perfect manifestation of the almighty judgment of God. It is folly, because the peace and rest which follow God's judgment in power cannot follow our detection of the moral character of what leads to it. The consequences are spiritual vagueness—a condition of soul, in this respect, hardly beyond that of many a pious Israelite who fully acknowledged God's providence, foreknowledge, and wisdom in controlling earthly events. Nay, the judgment and full manifestation of God therein are even less seen in this scheme than a godly Jew might have known before the first advent of Christ.

Daniel ix. may briefly illustrate what I have been seeking to explain. It is clear that this prophecy directly contemplates the Jews and Jerusalem only. "Seventy weeks are determined upon *thy people* (Daniel's people, the Jews), and upon *thy holy city*, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." (Ver. 24.) I do not doubt that this entire period brings us up to the end of the age. The *terminus a quo* is equally clear, and, in my opinion, furnished by Nehemiah ii. From the command to build the city "unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks," the briefer period being occupied probably with the building of the street and wall, and the longer period, added to it, carrying us on to *the cutting off of the Messiah*: "After threescore and two weeks shall

Messiah [not be born, or enter on His ministry merely, but] *be cut off*, but not for Himself." He is rejected; His own received Him not. He died for that nation, though not for that nation only. Now this is most important to note. The death of the Messiah is after the sixty-nine weeks expire, and has nothing whatever to do, so far as the text informs us, with the seventieth week. Between that death and the last week an evident gap appears, not measured by dates, but simply filled up by the revelation of disasters upon the city, sanctuary, &c. In this interval we hear of another prince, not the prince who had already come to bless the city, and who was Himself cut off, but "*the prince that shall come*." It was not foretold that this coming prince was to destroy the city and sanctuary, but that *his people* should. What people are they? Unquestionably, the Romans; and they did thus destroy. Then follows a general picture of woe to the last. "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

But what of the last week? It remains entirely apart, and the particulars are given in the closing verse. "And he shall confirm covenant [not *the* covenant] with many [or the mass] for one week." It is the history of the seventieth week. We have seen Messiah already cut off after the sixty-nine weeks; we have heard of another prince coming, whose people, not himself, destroyed the city and the sanctuary. It is of this future Roman prince we are now to learn. He covenants for one week, for seven years, with the mass of the Jews. (Compare Is. xxviii. 14, 15, 18, 22.) The covenant of Christ is an everlasting covenant, and never marred.

But this is an evil covenant, and it is by-and-by broken. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate." This seventieth week again is taken up, though perhaps not this period only, in the Apocalypse viewed in its future application; the last half of which ^{is} are specified in the period of 1260 days, during which are the witnesses (Rev. xi.), as well as in the time of vengeance, during which the beast has power given which he uses in warring with the saints and overcoming them. (Rev. xii., xiii.; Dan. vii.) These saints, as we have seen before, are not the church, which is nowhere found on earth from the end of Revelation iii. Its earthly pilgrimage and testimony had closed before the week began: from Revelation iv. xix. the church is seen symbolically in heaven, and in heaven only.

Thus is shewn the peculiarity of our position, upon whom the ends of the ages are met. It is a novel, unprecedented and heavenly place, in no way interfering with the vast scheme of God's earthly government: on the contrary, in this latter, room is purposely left for another field, which was entirely hidden of old, namely, for the development of the glory of Christ as the exalted Man. It is with a Christ on high the church is associated. Of course I do not speak of His incommunicable divinity, as the Son, but of a peculiar heavenly glory shared with His bride, and unknown to the Old Testament writers, who dwell so largely upon His Messianic rights. The church then began *after* the cutting off of Messiah, and goes up to meet the Lord

in the air *before* the seventieth week commences with the Roman prince and his covenant. With the cross the earthly people fell under judgment, how long soever it might linger, while God was gathering a remnant to the Saviour. That same cross becomes the foundation of Christ's heavenly body, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. When this work is concluded, the church will be borne away to join the Lord in the air, and renewed dealings will begin with the earthly people once more. The church has, no doubt, committed to her the more complete revelation of these judgments on the Gentiles which precede the good things in store for Israel, but the strictly prophetic part of the Apocalypse is not therefore about herself. On the contrary it reveals, throughout the chief contents of it, the glorified worshipping in heaven, and the blows of divine judgment falling with a deepening intensity, till Christ and the saints come out of heaven and appear together for the destruction of the beast and the false prophet with their armies.

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ELEMENTS OF PROPHECY.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRUE PRINCIPLE COMPARED WITH CURRENT MAXIMS.

CHRIST is the centre of the counsels of God, and hence of prophecy, which treats of the earth and of His government of it for His own glory. Hence the importance of Israel, of whom, as according to the flesh, came Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever. They are His people by a choice and calling which cannot fail in the end, though there may be and has been a fall and a long continued disowning of them in God's righteous judgment of their apostasy. But mercy will restore them ere long, humbly, joyfully welcoming the Messiah they have so long rejected.

This had been feebly seen, nay, generally denied, throughout Christendom for ages. Scarcely any error is more patent throughout the Fathers than the substitution of the church for Israel in all their system of thought. Every Father, whose remains have come down to us, is a witness of the same allegorizing interpretations; not only the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen, but Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and the Pseudo-Barnabas. The Latins followed in the same wake, not Augustine and Rufinus and Jerome only, but

Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius. Not one held the restoration of Israel to their land, converted nationally; the millenarian portion expected that the risen saints would reign with Christ in Jerusalem rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged, not that the Jews would be restored and blessed in the land. The mediaeval writers naturally adopted the same view: so did the Reformers, as far as I am aware, without an exception. All fell into the error of putting the church into the place of Christ, and so of leaving no room for His earthly people, besides His heavenly saints and glorified bride. They neglected the warning of the Apostle Paul, and assumed that the Jewish branches were broken off that the Gentiles might be grafted in, and take their place gloriously and for ever. They did not pay heed to the prophetic word, as Peter exhorts, but applied systematically the predictions of Israel's blessing in the last days to the christian church: still less did they appreciate the day dawning or the day-star arising in the heart. Catholics, papists, protestants, had no real light, no spiritual intelligence, as to the hopes of Israel as distinct from those of Christians.

Is it not as solemn as it is startling to see thus beyond just question the immediate, universal, and lasting departure of the christian profession from prophetic truth? But so it is and must be. For the divine glory in Christ as the centre for all things in heaven and on earth being the revealed purpose of God (Eph. i. 10), when this is forgotten, false hopes spring up. Man, self, becomes the end, instead of Christ; the true light is lost, and darkness ensues in the just retribution of God. The effort to make the church all,

instead of preserving the real dignity of the church as the heavenly spouse of Christ, lowers her to the position of Israel, a people reigned over, not reigning with Him, His inheritance, not heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

The future actings of God as revealed in prophecy are the expression of the principles on which He will govern the world; and so His word is the means by which alone we learn these principles fully. If we fail to ascertain them thus, we form our own thoughts of that which God gave us prophecy whereby to know His mind. Our business is to gather of what and whom God speaks; and no greater delusion can befall us than to imagine that, because all scripture is for our profit, all must be about ourselves. The purpose of God as to the Jews is in its place as truly the object of faith as His counsels respecting the church. Thus, the apprehension of His various ways for glorifying Christ is essential to real understanding of His word. Here, as everywhere, a single eye is needed. With Christ before us the whole body will not fail to be full of light.

Is not this to take away scripture from the Christian? Quite the reverse. To understand it according to God is the truest and richest gain; to misapply it to ourselves in Gentile conceit is ruinous. Yet there is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel as revealed in the Bible which is not *for*, though not *about*, the church. That such scriptures concerning the Jew may have been written so as to bear an analogous application to the Gentiles is not denied; but the application calls for the utmost caution and a

right dividing of the word of truth, because each economy has its own peculiarities, and in not a few things there are confessedly decided and intended contrasts. It is an error therefore to read the church in Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem; and the effect of this alchemy, which the Fathers originated and handed down to popery and protestantism alike, has been both to rob Israel of their proper hope and to lower that of the church incalculably.

Yet no maxim of interpretation can compare with this most misleading identification for importance, antiquity, or widespread reception. Since the apostles, perhaps beyond every other tradition, has this been accepted always, everywhere, and by all. Fathers, Romanists, Reformed, have alike applied it habitually in their comments, as well as in practice.

Few sober minds doubt that the visions in Daniel ii. vii. start from the times of the prophet; that the Revelation applied in some sense from John's day; that the fourth beast sets forth the Roman empire; that the little horn in Daniel vii. denotes its last ruler; that Babylon in Revelation xvii. represents Rome; that the prophecy in 1 Timothy iv. was fulfilled long ago; that the man of sin relates to the Antichrist, and is rather the ecclesiastical or false prophet power of Revelation xiii. than the imperial chief or first beast; that the two woes in Revelation ix. are strikingly illustrated in the Saracens and Turks, and that the days, times, &c., may have had a symbolic force.

But these are points of detail, all of which together are a trifle compared with the one grave principle which effaces Israel from prophecy and installs the church in

their stead. What then can be thought of the judgment that could overlook an error so transcendent, vitiating all sound exposition of both Old Testament and New from Genesis to Revelation? One can account for it by two considerations: first, a quite superficial estimate of the evil involved in this old and general error; secondly, a very exaggerated feeling against those who looked for a personal Antichrist among the Jews and a future revival of the Roman empire before the age ends, lest it should weaken protestantism in the face of the popish re-awakening in our day. There is no adequate sense of the wrong which has been already done the truth for nearly eighteen centuries, and the darkening influence which Judaizing the church has wrought far and wide in Christendom, among the Orientals, Greeks, and Latins, as well as protestants more recently, throughout all its history save the first century. The feverish doubts caused by a few fanciful essayists like Drs. Maitland, Todd, and Burgh, Messrs. Tyso, Dodsworth, and the like, were slight indeed compared with the original paralysis which destroyed all true power in the body of christian profession, whether in the distinct perception of the Christian's heavenly privileges in union with Christ on high, or in the just recognition of God's fidelity to Israel.

To my mind the way in which protestant compromise has played into the hands of Romanism is very serious (and this in many ways more than the prophetic speculations which palliated popery); but I speak of an error far older, deeper, more withering, and less suspected, which seems not to cross the vision of him

who would defend the protestant interpretation of prophecy against the futurist assailant.

The fact is too that it has been the common view of protestants as well as futurists to take for granted the natural if not necessary clearness of fulfilled prophecy ; to make much of general consent among interpreters ; and to decry that view which could not plead antiquity or what was held by alleged heretics. Protestantism has ever made much of history, as if time were the interpreter rather than the Spirit of God leading souls into the truth. Hence protestantism has sought to maintain that prophecy extends in nearly equal proportion over all ages down to the future advent of our Lord. This naturally excites the desire to find what answers to it up to and in our own day. And it is vain to deny that the ablest of protestant interpreters have themselves laid down that the main use of prophecy is to convict, if not convince, unbelievers. Futurists have in this simply turned protestant batteries against the protestant system of interpretation.

The Christian, if wise, will eschew party spirit and narrowness here as elsewhere. He need not be a mere futurist because he cannot be a mere protestant ; and if anything ought to deter him from such systematizing, the contractedness of the one, and the virulence of the other, ought to serve as an effectual beacon against both. That half-a-dozen men in their zeal for what they saw to be unfulfilled pushed matters to extremes against the protestant school which had misled them is clear ; but to say that the system of the futurists in its very foundations directly contradicts the early

writers is the last degree of controversial blindness if not asperity.

I am sure that it is a poor thing to court or reckon up the suffrages of the more ancient Fathers who wrote on prophecy; but it is absurd to deny that, right or wrong, they stand in the main with the futurists against the historicalists. They held that the end was nigh; they held that the Antichrist was an individual, not a succession; they held that he would take Christ's place, not His vicar's; they held that he would set up to be God in the temple of Jerusalem, not as the Pope in Rome; they held that the days are days, not years, so that the times of Daniel and of the Apocalypse would be but a brief crisis. Now these are the capital points of futurism, as opposed to protestantism; and how the earlier Fathers thought is beyond controversy. Their foundations are those of the futurists. What has been alleged by special pleading consists of mere individual eccentricities, exaggerated into its very foundations, in order to ensure (or at least yield the semblance of) an easy victory.

Thus the great mass of futurists have ever held that the visions in Daniel start from his own time, if not from a defined point not far distant as the seventy weeks. But then they suppose a gap in the fourth or Roman empire, which, after extinction, is to revive for the time of the end; and of this they have unquestionable proof from scripture. A few persons attacked were excessive in their sentiments. It was apparently from not knowing how much there is common to intelligent minds both futurist and protestant, as well as to Christians who have larger views than either. It

was ignorance probably ; if not, it was worse. Such strokes of strategy may suit polemical objects ; but they retard the truth, and injure those most who deign to use them or are misled by them.

Not the least hurtful of influences in the protestant system is the assumption that history is the interpreter of prophecy, and the undue place thus given to it. Prophecy explains history, never the converse. No matter how the facts answer to the prediction, they are but the least and lowest part : God's mind in the revealed facts is the lesson, and of this the Spirit is the only teacher, not history. Now He can and does lead the believer into the divine mind as well as the outward facts before, no less than after, fulfilment : so utterly do I reject the alleged futurist principle that fulfilled prophecy is plain as distinguished from the obscurity of what is unaccomplished. Not so : scripture is only understood aright by the Spirit, who is independent of time or history, and gives divine certainty by and to faith, whether the word of God be about the past or the present or the future. On the face of it the theory is false ; for we must understand the prophecy before we can apply it truly, and when we do understand it (which is quite independent of its being fulfilled or not) we have what God meant. The proof of its application to events (that is, of its accomplishment) may be interesting to believers, and useful to meet (or stop the mouths of) unbelievers ; but this is not the primary and ordinary intention, for it is in general given to instruct, cheer, and warn the believer, not merely to prove that God knows and speaks the truth beforehand as in some few exceptional instances.

And just think of the state of mind which could cite Deuteronomy iv. 32, and Psalm xxviii. 5, in proof of the duty of studying history for the interpretation of prophecy! The first passage reminds Israel of the great and terrible fact that God spoke to them out of the fire. Moses appeals to them if ever man had heard the like. What is this to the purpose? Still less, if possible, is the second: the works of Jehovah and the operations of His hands are anything but man's account of man's doings. Nobody doubts that history, as far as it is true, must confirm a prophecy which really speaks of the same events: the question is its use in interpreting.

Nor are notorious facts justly to be styled history. In facts of the kind God acts in known public judgment, of which all the world can take cognizance. The fatal flaw here again is the leaving aside His public government for providence secret in its ways, which is not really the subject of prophecy as the general rule. In short then the use of fulfilment in reasoning with infidels is one thing; quite another is interpretation, which is our question.

It is in vain to deny that prophecy in general, even the visions of Daniel which take in the rise and progress of empire very cursorily, converges on the close of the age. Nor is there the least inconsistency in one who sees this, which it is utter prejudice or dishonesty to evade, complaining of that exaggeration of past or passing events to which the historicalists are notoriously prone. Take Daniel vii. for instance: is it not plain that the early verses as to the first three beasts are only introductory to the object of the Spirit? and

that His object was meant to act as a present thing on the conscience, as well as to guide the feet of the saints when the circumstances appear? The confusion arises from the supposition that God's moral government as such has its results now, which it never can have till Christ be manifested, in view of whom all has been carried on.

To the historicalist Christ or His glory is not the key of God's government; he is occupied with the past or present, which is but a parenthesis of secret providence between God's immediate government of old on earth and His resumption of it in the midst of Israel when the beasts and the Gentiles at large are judged. He makes a Ptolemaic theory, instead of seeing facts as they are with Copernicus; he views Christendom meanwhile as the central object, instead of Christ the true centre of the divine system. Hence, during that period of which history ancient or modern is so boastful, the great actors are regarded but as "beasts;" and all is passed over lightly till the conclusion of their history when judgments crowd into a brief space, and the Lord Jesus closes them all by His own personal appearing to judge and reign. Of these "times of the Gentiles" God has not lost sight; and hence they are noticed in Daniel, Zechariah, and the Revelation; but it is mainly to shew how Christ will displace all and take the reins of God's kingdom.

Now that God has brought in fuller light, the historicalists are those who oppose it most keenly, because it corrects a vast deal of their visionary interpretations, and they are not prepared for that which makes little of man as he is in order to exalt the second Man. Like

the masses in Christendom, they had lost sight of the proper hope of the Christian. Neither did the so-called futurists deliver minds from the prevalent confusion, being occupied themselves with the solemn events of the last crisis of the age or with the reign of Christ manifested in glory that succeeds. They had, none of them, any adequate hold of the heavenly hope as a distinct thing from prophecy. They might be thought to heed the prophetic word, but enjoyed little, if at all, the day dawning and the day-star arising in their hearts. All was confounded for both.

CHAPTER II.

ALLEGED PRESUMPTIONS FOR HISTORICALISM.

THE historical school allege in favour of their view certain presumptions, such as these:—

(1) That it is the nature of scripture prophecy to occupy a continuous range of divine providence, and that this must be especially true of such detailed and symbolic visions as those of Daniel and St. John; (2) that the writers of the primitive church almost unanimously contradict the theory of a future crisis, and agree with the protestant interpreters on the most material points; and (3) that the discordance of those who contend for a convergence on the end of the age is fatal to the alleged superiority of their interpretation in point of simplicity, harmony, and clearness.

(I.)—The following scriptures have been produced to prove, not only that the inference is unsound, but that

the allegation is entirely false. The test chosen is to take the leading prophecies in order from the first and to observe the length of the continuous period over which each of them extends.

1. Genesis iii. 15 is supposed to denote a continuous period of seven thousand years from the death of Abel to the judgment. But surely this is an arbitrary view, and though in the scripture there may be included the enmity between Satan and man, no spiritual mind can fail to discern that according to God's word the grand bearing of it is found in the two great crises of the cross and the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

2. Genesis vi. 3. No one doubts the striving of God's Spirit (or, at least, the days of man) an hundred and twenty years; but, again the interest is concentrated on the judgment which closes all rather than spreads over that interval.

3. Genesis ix. 25—27. The curse on Canaan B.C. 1451 (Zech. xiv. 21), a period of three thousand three hundred years; but here too one looks onward to the future intervention of Jehovah rather than to any partial dealings meanwhile. And so with the blessing on Shem, and the enlargement of Japheth. To treat John iv. 22 as the fulfilment of the former, and Acts ix. 18 (? 15), xxviii. 28 as the fulfilment of the latter, seems most inadequate. It confounds the earnest, which may be more or less continuous, with the fulfilment, which is yet future, and far from an unbroken line.

4. Genesis xiii. 14—17. The possession of Canaan B.C. 1451—A.D. 70 for 1500 years would be a poor answer to the rich words of the God who gave promises to Abraham. The true accomplishment is still

future, and will only be under Messiah and the new covenant.

5. Genesis xv. 13—16. No doubt the Israelites were afflicted 400 years by the stranger; but the point of hope was the judgment of that nation, and Abraham's seed coming out with great substance.

6. Genesis xxii. 16—18. Galatians iii. shews us that no long period is the point meant, but Christ the risen Seed of Abraham through whom blessing comes to all the nations. The Jewish promise of supremacy for the countless seed of Abraham is as yet unfulfilled. There is no question here of a space of 4000 years, but of the consequences of Christ's first coming and of His second.

7. Genesis xlix. 3—27. Here too, in the scattering of Levi, we think not so much of a space as of a fact. There is more ground to speak of continuance in the case of Judah; but it is to me clear and certain that the gathering or obedience of the nations to Shiloh is yet future. It is the kingdom, not the gospel, which is before us here, and a future crisis, not past or present history.

8. Exodus iii. 7—12. The sign is not the space of 40 years, but the final token of bringing Israel to Horeb.

9. Leviticus xxvi. No doubt the chapter speaks of past sorrow and desolation; but the remembrance of Jehovah's covenant and of the land, when Israel repent, is absolutely future.

10. Numbers xxiv. 17—24. Here also I cannot doubt that the Star's smiting Moab and Edom refers to the great future epoch, not to any bygone period, though

there may be a past application of "the ships from Chittim" &c.

11. Deuteronomy xxxii. 7—43. I see nothing properly to be styled a history of Israel in their own land in verses 7—20 extending over a long period, but rather Jehovah's blessing, Israel's rebellion, and then His judgment, morally pronounced, followed by its execution; then the day when Jehovah's hand will take hold on judgment to render vengeance to His enemies. Is not this crisis rather than the continuous range of events regulated by providence?

12. Deuteronomy xxxiii. 5—11. Past discipline appears here and there, but the prophecy points to the known and final crisis. What we see in the Pentateuch is abundantly confirmed in the rest of the Old Testament. Hence we may conclude that, with few exceptions, the nature of prophecy is to deal in crisis rather than to occupy a continuous range of providence.

At another season we may look into the symbolical and detailed visions of Daniel and John in detail.

(II.)—It is supposed that a full induction of facts proves that the writers of the primitive church agree with the Protestant interpreters on the following points:—

1. That the head of gold denotes the Babylonian empire, not the person of Nebuchadnezzar, or Babylon and Persia in one.

2. That the silver denotes the Medo-Persian empire.

3. That the brass denotes the Greek empire.

4. That the iron denotes the Roman empire.

5. That the clay mingled with the iron denotes the intermixture of barbarous nations in the Roman empire.

6. That the mingling with the seed of men relates to intermarriages among the kings of the divided empire.

7. That the lion denotes the Babylonian empire.

8. That the eagle wings relate to Nebuchadnezzar's ambition.

9. That the bear denotes the Medo-Persian empire.

10. That the rising on one side signifies the later supremacy of the Persians.

11. That the leopard relates to the Macedonian empire.

12. That the four wings denote the rapidity of Alexander's conquests.

13. That the fourth beast is the Roman empire.

14. That the ten horns denote a tenfold division of that empire, which was then future.

15. That the division began in the fourth and fifth centuries.

16. That the rise of the ten horns is later than the rise of the beast.

17. That the vision of the ram and he-goat begins from the time of the prophecy.

18. That the higher horn of the ram denotes the Persian dynasty beginning with Cyrus.

19. That the first horn of the he-goat is Alexander the Great.

20. That the breaking of the horn, when strong, relates to the sudden death of Alexander in the height of his power.

21. That the four horns denote four main kingdoms into which the Macedonian empire was divided.

22. That the three kings (Dan. xi. 2) are Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius.

23. That the expedition against Greece is that of Xerxes, B.C. 485.

24. That the mighty king (ver. 3) is Alexander the Great.

25. That the king's daughter of the south is Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

26. That the one from the branch of her roots is Ptolemy Euergetes.

27. That the sons of the king of the north are Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great.

28. That the battle (ver. 11) is that of Raphia.

29. That the battle (ver. 15) is that of Panium.

30. That the daughter of women (ver. 17) is Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus the Great.

31. That the expedition (ver. 18) is that of Antiochus against Greece.

32. That the prince (ver. 18) denotes the Roman power.

33. That the death of Antiochus is predicted in verse 19.

34. That the raiser of taxes is Seleucus Philopator.

35. That the letting person or thing (2 Thess. ii.) is the imperial power of Rome.

36. That the Apocalypse begins from the time of St. John.

37. That the first seal (Rev. vi.) relates to the early triumphs of the gospel.

On the other hand it is allowed that the early Chris-

tian writers are opposed to the Protestant school as to the following weighty points:—

1. That the ten toes denote individual persons.
2. That the ten horns denote the same.
3. That the little horn (Dan. vii.) is an individual king.
4. That the times, time, and a half of Daniel are three and a half years.
5. That the period of Daniel viii. consists of literal days.
6. That the 1290 days, and 1335 days in Daniel xii. are to be taken literally.
7. That the man of sin (2 Thess. ii.) is an individual.
- *8. That the 42 months are three and a half years literally.
- *9. That the 1260 days are literal.
- *10. That the two witnesses are individuals.
11. That the beast and the false prophet are two individuals.
12. That the ten kings (Rev. xvii.) are individuals.

The points are marked with asterisks where concurrence is but partial. Thus some at least of the ancients apply the toes of iron and clay, or divisions of the empire, not to the barbarian kingdoms which sprang up in the 4th and 5th centuries, but to the kings of it at the very end, whom the Lord will find and crush at His second advent; as they also interpreted the little horn in Daniel viii. of Antiochus rather than of Antichrist, and some of the periods indefinitely.

But it is a total mistake that any, save a few extreme futurists who never exercised influence on serious souls in general, differ from the former list, save as to 35 and 36 in part. Thus the letting power is, I believe, the Spirit

of God, and this not merely as dwelling in the church, but yet more distinctly as acting governmentally in divine providence. Hence the ancient reference was imperfect rather than false. Corrupt as Babylon is, it is not yet the apostasy nor the man of sin revealed. He who letteth acts still, though imperial Rome is long gone. The Holy Spirit is that power and person who hinders as yet the display and working of the lawless one, whatever governmental means He is pleased to employ for the world's good order. Again, I do not doubt a general application of the Revelation since the time of St. John, viewing the seven churches as past, instead of as "the things which are" followed by the rest of the book as converging on the great future crisis. Of 37 the less may be said, as almost every person of intelligence has now abandoned the old fancy of early gospel triumph and among them (if I mistake not) the very person who first drew up this list.

But it must also be repeated, that among sober christian inquirers the long first list is accepted on all sides; so that the second tells against the historical interpreters with unbroken force. This demonstrates how far any are justified in affirming that the Protestants have the warrant from antiquity tenfold on their side. The truth is that in all their distinctive features they stand wholly unsupported, yea opposed.

Yet one must frankly allow that no importance whatever should be attached to early tradition. Scripture, and scripture alone, is the only sure arbiter, the sole reliable source of the pure truth of God; and the children of God should be the more jealous on this score, as we see around us the unmistakeable results of recurrence to

tradition in the revived Judaism of our day. It is ridiculously ignorant however to suppose that the mass of Christians who look for the brief future crisis of a personal Antichrist in Jerusalem and a revived Roman empire to be destroyed by Christ in person have ever questioned these thirty and more points any more than the dozen which follow. The representation to the contrary is a mere sleight of hand trick of controversy, unless indeed those who made it knew very little of the real thoughts of those who have most studied prophecy in our day.

(III.) The last head remains to be noticed, the discordance of such men as Drs. Maitland, Todd, and Burgh, of Messrs. Tyso, &c. The believer is in no way concerned in defending the discrepancies of all, any more than the desire on the part of some to palliate Romanism. They were none of them men who took their stand in simple faith on the word and Spirit of God. Nevertheless, faulty and rash as their interpretations may be, and in points of detail often at variance with one another, they did service in recalling attention to the neglected and imminent end of the age, "the time of harvest," as in other senses, so for prophecy also. There would be little edification in occupying the reader with a collation of their mutual contradictions or with those of the Protestant school, which simply shew how far both are from deserving confidence. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (no morning) in them." The Christian has no interest save in God's communications, which are very sure, and make wise the simple. In keeping them there is great reward.

Here too appears the importance of seeing that the manifestation of God's glory in Christ is the proper object of prophecy. Had this been seen and held firmly, men could not have lost themselves in vain efforts to find in the past or the present what answers not to it save in scanty measure. Before Christ God was proving in every form the first man: since His rejection and the accomplishment of redemption on the cross, the Holy Spirit is revealing the mystery hidden from ages to the church, as well as publishing the gospel to every creature. It is of the scenes called the consummation of the age, *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, as well as of the subsequent kingdom when the Son of man is manifested in power and glory, that prophecy treats, whether in the Old Testament or in the New. Rarely does the Spirit touch on any circumstance of guilt on man's part or of judgment on God's, without going on to these solemn times which introduce the days of heaven on the earth; and this is just as true of the symbolic visions of Daniel and St. John as of the rest, although there is no doubt expressed in the last a more systematized series.

But other dealings of God at the time of the prophet were but inchoative and germinant: the crisis is, as the rule and with very few and slight and evident exceptions, the plane of incidence where prophetic words and visions and types meet in Christ, then revealed and no longer hidden as now, the centre of all things in heaven and on earth. To stop short of this, and arrest the mind meanwhile on analogies supposed or even occasionally real, is not only an error fatal to the true understanding of prophecy but bears evidence of a heart not

in accord with the mind and purpose of God in glorifying His Son. For special reasons there might be revealed a chain of comparatively ordinary events in providence, as for instance from the first and through the greater part of Daniel xi., where in scripture historical account fails. But even there it is but introductory, as invariably, to the great principle of crisis. For we are only brought down continuously on the one hand to Antiochus Epiphanes and his iniquitous efforts against the Jews, the temple and the law, with the disastrous issue for himself, his instruments, or his victims, and the Maccabean stand on the other hand. Then follows a vast break, and we are abruptly landed in presence of the last wilful king in the land of Judea, and the final conflicts of the kings of the north and the south, terminated by divine intervention and the deliverance of the chosen people. It is plain to any upright and intelligent mind that, whatever be the importance of every word (and this it is not for me to deny or weaken), the grand point of the Spirit is to direct all hearts to the tremendous catastrophe of the close, which follows, not the merely introductory thread of continuous facts, 2000 years past, but the vast gap, after Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees, till the personal Antichrist reigns in the land, the old jealousies of the north and the south reproduce themselves round devoted Palestine and the Jews, and the power of God interferes to put down all rebels within or without, and establish the wise and holy in peace under the reign of Him who is Ancient of days no less than Son of man, and who must yet be honoured on earth as well as in heaven to the glory of God the Father. "And it shall be said in that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." The risen saints will reign along with Him over the earth, but from their own proper heavenly sphere: He is head to the church *over* all things.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOUR EMPIRES.

It has been already shewn that the clearness or the obscurity of prophecy is independent of its fulfilment, and that Protestants and futurists have been almost equally guilty of mistake as to this. For many among both have assumed its necessary obscurity when unaccomplished and its clearness when fulfilled. Both also have been eager to avoid the objection of novelty against their own system, and anxious to claim the consent of antiquity, not knowing that the Fathers were serious offenders against the truth and particularly ignorant on the subject of prophecy.

Nevertheless it ought to be not a matter of litigation but certain that the Protestant exposition in all its peculiarities is at direct issue with the early ecclesiastical writers who stood on the main foundations of futurism, except indeed as regards the restoration of Israel to their own land, which many Protestants allow no less than futurists. In this at least no instructed mind can agree with the Fathers; and the difference enlarges according to knowledge. Of the other pre-

sumptions for or against their respective systems, enough has been said already. As to such a protracted application as Protestant writers conceive, the Fathers knew nothing, expected nothing, of it. Some of the earliest held with the futurists that the prophecies of scripture are mainly occupied with the grand crisis at the end of the age; but the fact is however that very few appear to have known anything worth notice about these subjects, even in principle, not to speak of details.

We may now enter on a direct examination of prophecy, at least of that portion which is most in debate. And here it may be well to bear in mind its distinctive character. Prophecy is not, like Christianity, the revelation of God's counsels but rather of His kingdom or of His ways in bringing it in. It is occupied, not with heaven and the sovereign grace that gathers to Christ there, but with the earth, and hence with the judgments of God which put down evil in order to the reign of righteousness. No mistake can be more profound than the notion that its main subject is the outline of secret providence during the last two thousand years and more. Daniel in the Old Testament shews us the rise and fall of the four great Gentile empires, the Revelation in the New Testament adding much light on the last phase of the fourth; but this is an episode rather than the direct subject of prophecy, which necessarily has Israel in view as the central people in the plans of God for the government of the world. Only their history branches into two divisions:—Israel under the first covenant, failing at every point to the uttermost; by and by Israel under the new covenant met, delivered and blessed in divine

mercy, and then used for His glory among all nations here below. All turns on Christ. There was idolatrous apostasy of old, which was judged in the Babylonish captivity; but when He was rejected by them as a nation, what could there be but misery and ruin? When He is by grace received, there will be abundant fruits of mercy and goodness. The interval between His rejection and His reception by the Jew is filled by "the times of the Gentiles," under the fourth empire the gospel also going out and the church of God coming in. After this last empire in its last condition is judged at the Lord's appearing from heaven, the regular order of prophecy resumes its course, and Israel becomes the head and centre of all nations, the Gentiles the tail.

The Jews, no doubt, were blindly ignorant, and did perversely distort the word of prophecy; but it was a worse error which brought on their final catastrophe and dispersion. It was their insubjection to God, their self-righteous refusal to repent, their rejection of the Messiah and of the gospel. All through their history they only who looked for the Messiah served God according to His law; and, when the Messiah came, those who received Him not were alien from all His will and ways, no less than from the object of faith that grace then presented to them. So now it is evil to slight prophecy, but it is not wise to exaggerate that evil; for there is one still deeper underneath, the evil that slights Christ and consequently resists the Holy Ghost as well as the authority of the word of God in general. Faith in God is the great want of souls. How solemnly the Lord has the lack of it before His Spirit when anticipating His return to the earth! I see no room for boast-

ing in Protestants against futurists, or in futurists against Protestants. Mede, Vitringa, and Bengel were men of piety, seriousness, and learning; but it is impossible to have the requisite spiritual intelligence for apprehending prophecy, or the word of God generally, till the Christian calling on high is discriminated from the earthly calling of Israel, and this intelligence is equally and conspicuously absent from both schools. It is a mistaken thought that any but a very few futurists ever doubted the ordinary meaning of the four Gentile empires, or of the other prophecies in Daniel viii. ix. xi. The mass of futurists agree with the mass of Protestants as to these elementary outlines. They may differ a little as to Matthew xxiv., and still more as to the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse. On the other hand there is no doubt that, as to an alleged succession of the horns and the little horn of the fourth beast, the abomination of desolation, the man of sin, Babylon, &c., the historical school departs widely from the ancients.

But, as to the four empires in general, there is no real discrepancy among grave and thoughtful Christians. When we come to the details of the fourth or Roman empire, the divergence is considerable. A few eccentric individuals in modern as in ancient times have indulged in doubts and broached strange theories; but all sober persons apply the visions of the great image (Dan. ii.) and of the four beasts (chap. vii.) to the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The broad truth of this is indisputable. They were successive kingdoms, to which God allowed universal supremacy from the ruin of the Jewish state by Nebuchadnezzar till the Messiah. But this advent, as

it was a perplexity to the Jews who looked for His glory and not His sufferings, seems scarcely less enigmatic to *Christendom*, which looks at His sufferings, not at His glory as returning to judge it—one knows not how soon. It is particularly in view of this last point that difficulties are felt and found among interpreters. The soul that does not judge the present state of *Christendom* will no more understand prophecy than the Jew who failed to judge according to God the Jewish condition when Messiah first presented Himself. Without faith it is impossible to understand the word, any more than to please God in our ways. Accurate statement, sound reasoning, gravity and reverence are excellent; but, without the faith which applies the truth with a single eye to judge oneself and all things else in relation to God, they are wholly unavailing.

Further, not only are the four empires acknowledged to be successive in their rule, but they correspond respectively in each vision. The head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream answers to the lion, the breast of silver to the bear, the middle of brass to the winged leopard, the lower extremities of iron and clay to the unnamed ravening beast of the prophet's vision. Only the great image was the more comprehensive of the two, that of the four beasts much the more detailed. The Son of Man's kingdom is evidently that which answers to the vision of the little stone which becomes a great mountain. The doubts of the late Drs. Maitland and Todd, as of Grotius and others before, are mere incredulity. They never exercised the slightest influence among spiritual men. It is as to the course and conclusion of the last of the beasts or empires that we find the greatest

disagreement. But there ought to have been no hesitation that, as the third means the rapidly acquired Macedonian kingdom of Alexander the Great, so the next is the Roman. Its place as the fourth (recognised in the New Testament as then in power), its strength, its subsequent division, its mingling with the seed of men, its sudden and utter destruction at the Lord's second advent, point unanswerably to the same conclusion.

Here the Revelation supplies the most weighty intimations to help us out of difficulties; for it tells us of the fourth beast that "it was, and is not, and shall be present;" and, further, that its future re-appearance is to be "from the pit or abyss." One can understand the ruin of that empire which played its part in the crucifixion of the Lord, and which will revive by diabolical energy in the last days to oppose Him when He returns from heaven to restore the kingdom to Israel.

Here is the statement of the man who did most to lay the foundation of the Protestant school: "Nebuchadnezzar's image points out two states of the kingdom of Christ, the first to be while those times of the kingdoms of the Gentiles yet lasted, typified by a stone hewn out of a mountain without hands, the monarchical statue yet standing upon his feet, the second not to be until the utter destruction and dissipation of the image, when the stone, having smote it upon the feet, should grow into a great mountain which should fill the whole earth. The first may be called, for distinction's sake, *regnum lapidis*, the kingdom of the stone, which is the state of Christ's kingdom which hitherto hath been; the other, *regnum montis*, (that is of the stone grown to a

mountain, &c.) which is the state of His kingdom which hereafter shall be. The intervallum between these two, from the time the stone was first hewn out (that is, the kingdom of Christ was first advanced) until the time it becomes a mountain (that is, when the mystery of God shall be finished), is the subject of the Apocalyptical visions."

"Note here, first, that the stone is expounded by Daniel to be that lasting kingdom which the God of heaven should set up; secondly, that the stone was hewn out of the mountain before it smote the image on the feet and consequently before the image was dissipated; and therefore that the kingdom, typified by the stone while it remained a stone, must needs be within the times of those monarchies, that is, before the last of them (namely the Roman) should expire. Wherefore Daniel interprets that in the days of these kingdoms (not after them, but while some of them were yet in being) the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, nor left (as they were) to another people; but should break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and itself should stand for ever. And all this he speaks as the interpretation of the stone. 'Forasmuch' (saith he) 'that a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold.' Here make the full point; for these words belong not to that which follows (as our Bibles by mis-distinguishing seem to refer them) but to that which went before of their interpretation. But the stone becoming a mountain he expounds not, but leaves to be gathered by what he had already expounded."

(Mede's Works, pp. 743, 744, 4th Edition, London, 1677.)

But the little stone is plainly the kingdom of God in Christ, which was only seen to come after the image was fully out, even to the toes; and its first action was to smite the feet and toes, reducing the whole statue to powder, after which it grows into a mountain and fills the whole earth. That is, the gospel, or the kingdom of God now known to faith, is wholly excluded from the prophet. The vision looks at nothing but the second advent in power and glory, beginning with the judgment of the imperial system in its last form, and then the kingdom of God diffused to the blessing of all the earth and to His own glory for ever. The Protestant idea of a "regnum lapidis" going on from the incarnation of Christ through the whole course of ancient and modern history is a mere interpolation. Even Theodoret had better light. One can have no sympathy with the unbelief which overlooks the solemn place of the Roman empire, past or future; but why should one countenance the fable of a "regnum lapidis" meanwhile? It is possible and the fact that more than one untoward futurist denied the fourth kingdom to be the Roman empire, and this to relieve the Papacy as well as to shake confidence in Protestant views. The truth is that there is no vitality, nor sanctifying power, save in the word received in the Holy Ghost. To slip away from this into the study of the elder commentators, especially of the Fathers, does pave the way for a relapse into the idolatrous embraces of the mystic Babylon, which might well turn to her own account the fable of the "regnum lapidis." For she at least desires to reign

now as a queen without sorrow, instead of being content with the apostles and saints to wait, apart from the world and in present rejection, for the Bridegroom, that we may reign together with Him at His coming.

I am not disposed to deny an application of prophecy, especially of the Apocalypse, throughout the middle ages; but it must be owned by fair minds that the resemblance between the prophetic visions and the historical facts is slight and vague. Who can wonder then that the injudicious efforts of most commentators known as Protestants, who sought to prove the most punctual fulfilment in the past, led to that reaction which is commonly called futurism? The Christian will do well to study the written word in peace, undistracted by controversy, profiting by every real help God vouchsafes him, but holding firmly to dependence on the Lord to open His word to him, whether prophetic or any other. It is the Holy Spirit who alone can, who will do so only where grace makes one true to the glory of Christ. For this He is sent down; and He at least is true to the divine purpose.

But on the other hand one may ask of those zealous for the past application of Daniel ii. vii., where is the complete and exhaustive likeness they profess to find between hordes of barbarians breaking up a long sick and expiring empire into some (say ten) portions in which they establish themselves, in the course of a century and a half, and a power of extraordinary vigour with ten kingdoms as the expression of its strength, swayed by one mind, which gives all unity, whether first to wreak God's vengeance in idolatrous cor-

ruption, or finally to conspire against the Lamb to their own destruction ?

In fact, even when one looks into the prophecies which deal with the times of the Gentiles, it is not true that their object is to enter into the details of succession (Dan. xi. being only in part an exception for peculiar reasons), but the Spirit is content to give the broad general facts with distinct light converging on the solemn crisis when God displays and establishes His kingdom on the rebellious ruin of man's. The reason why people prefer to apply it historically is, because this transfers the mind's attention to what the world has written and gives a certain scope to human ingenuity as well as research. But it weakens the impressive lesson of divine judgment on that which is highly esteemed among men. The true view recalls the conscience to God and His word, concentrating our attention on the evil and ruin of the first man, and on the sure coming and reign of the Second.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISION OF THE RAM AND HE-GOAT.

THE dream of Nebuchadnezzar, as the vision of the prophet in the first year of Belshazzar (Dan. vii. 1), embraced the entire circle of the four world-powers. The vision of Daniel viii. stands strikingly contradistinguished in this that here we have only to do with the second and third of these empires, though (as it will be shewn) we are brought down to the time of the end

in an off-shoot of the third empire. No grave Christian doubts, what every dispassionate reader of the prophet must see, that the ancient Medo-Persian and Macedonian powers are set before us.

It seems surprising that any one should make more than their worth of the singular speculations of the late Dr. Todd. For who can fail to see the unusual distinctness in the interpretation supplied by the Holy Spirit Himself? One need not reason on the date or the scene of the vision: verses 20, 21 are decisive to any simple mind. On the one hand the final superiority of the Persian over the Median is evident when we compare verse 3 with verse 20; the eastern source of it on its course of conquest westward, northward, and southward, being marked in verse 4. On the other hand the Macedonian conqueror and his overthrow of the great king appears most graphically in verses 5—7 as compared with verse 21. History may and does illustrate; but no believer needs more than is here given to have a clear intelligent certainty of conviction as to the prophecy and its application. Verses 8, 22 plainly point to a fourfold division after the death of Alexander the Great (not by defeat or when internal discord dissolved the kingdom, but contrariwise "when he was strong, the great horn was broken"), "four notable horns;" and so there were as is commonly known. It was absurd therefore to argue from verse 17 in Gabriel's explanation that all the vision related to "the time of the end," or that the powers represented by the ram and he-goat are future.

But it is a characteristic and an all but universal error of the historical school that they enfeeble and lose

sight of the truth that the main object and interest of the vision hinges on "the time of the end," the end of the indignation which rests on the Jewish people. There ought to be no need of proof that the end of the divine displeasure with the ancient people is certainly yet future. It is in vain to refer to Daniel ix. 26, or 1 Corinthians x. 11, to turn aside the phrase from its bearing on the end of the age. For the prophet in the one expressly limits the end to the city and the sanctuary, and brings in a definite subsequent period before the way is open for blessing; and the apostle means in the other that the ends of the ages are come, or met, on us, Christians. Matthew xxiv. 14, which is also appealed to, really confirms the future view; for "the end" there spoken of is assuredly not yet come.

It may be added that there is no great difficulty in the way of applying the host of heaven and the stars to the Jewish system and its rulers, though at this time supposed to be subject to the Gentile beasts politically. The people may be Lo-Ammi; but such a designation, though it be not a figure from the day of Jehovah but rather from the night during which they feebly shone, was at any rate a testimony to their hopes whilst it acknowledged their true estate meanwhile. The last king of the north finds himself in collision with Christ, the Prince of princes, and perishes by divine judgment. But this king of the north is as distinct from the wilful king who will reign in Palestine as from the last head of the Roman empire, though all of them daring enemies of the Lord at the same epoch, as will be shewn presently at greater length. Ancients and moderns have generally confounded all three.

Observe again the fact that the very language is changed, which from chapter ii. was Chaldee. Now from chapter vii., as bearing on that which, while connected with the Gentile powers, specially touched the ancient people of God, Hebrew is employed. Were it the design to draw particular attention to Cyrus and the details of that victorious career in which he had just entered when the vision was given, the propriety of this would be by no means apparent. Nor is it at all convincing that the reason for representing the second and third empires by the ram and goat (that is, not beasts of prey, but animals of sacrifice) is their favouring Israel, when both had been represented in the chapter before to the same prophet under the symbol of the bear and the winged leopard; yea, when in this very chapter the grand point is a king mighty, but not by his own power, who shall destroy the Jews, but himself be broken without hand—a vision which affected the seer yet more deeply than that of chapter vii. No one denies the admirable symbols employed to depict the comparatively slow and heavy aggressiveness of the Medo-Persian, and the amazing rapidity and impetuous force of the spirited Greek; also the subsequent division of the Syro-Greek kingdom of the north. But all this, however full of interest, is preparatory to the main design for the latter day, when a mysterious king shall meddle with the Jews to the hurt of many among them, but to his own destruction. That Antiochus Epiphanes answers in part to the little horn in the vision (ver. 10) I do not for a moment doubt.

Only it is well to remark three points: first, the parenthesis consisting of verse 11, and the first half of verse

12, in which "he" takes the place of "it," apparently looking onward to the great personage of the close rather than to the horn of the goat that typified him; secondly, that verses 13, 14, do not necessarily go beyond the defilement which has already taken place; thirdly, that the interpretation concerns itself with the crisis at the end, only linking on the proximate Medo-Persian and Greek empires with that tremendous issue, but with an enormous gap manifestly between the circumstances then at hand and the last end of the indignation of God against Israel. To deny the all-importance of the crisis in order to eke out a case of continuity here would be mere infatuation, the effect of a blinding system.

CHAPTER V.

SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS.

THERE are two matters which it seems desirable briefly to meet before passing on to fresh matter, as the true solution may confirm what has been already urged, and clear the way for what is to come. One is the question as to the identity of the two little horns of Daniel vii., viii.; the other the use of the word "kings" as equivalent to *kingdoms*. These are handled in this order.

THE TWO LITTLE HORNS.

The tendency of ancient as of modern times has been in prophecy, as everywhere else in scripture, to confound things that differ. Thus, on a large scale, the trials and hopes of Israel have been merged in those of the church, to the enormous loss of intelligence in the mind of God as revealed in His word; on a lesser, we see a similar confusion as to the great actors of the latter day, which inevitably narrows the scope of prophecy and spreads a haze over the solemn issues of the final conflicts of good and evil. From this the futurists have never fully emerged, for they in general make the Antichrist of the end to be the last enemy of the church instead of being the head of the Jews and Christendom apostate, and they leave no room for the other foes of the Lord, making all the prophecies of evil powers at the end concentrate in that great adversary. Now though it is natural for us to feel a special

interest in the West, we ought not to lose sight of the East if we would have an adequate view of the field.

The truth is also that obvious uncertainty surrounds every school of interpretation as to the little horn of Daniel viii. Thus, while the ancients with almost one voice conceived that it presents the character and persecutions and end of Antiochus Epiphanes (some also maintaining a future reference to the wicked or lawless one, the Antichrist of St. John), Sir I. Newton (followed by his Episcopal namesake) and not a few others applied it to the Graeco-Roman empire; but far more since view in it the Mahometan power, some of them interpreting it of the Turk. Others refer it, like Daniel vii., to the Papacy. No reader will be surprised to hear that the latter theories were not held of old, but that men, Jews and Christians, held then that Antiochus Epiphanes was meant, though many felt that more was included in the prophecy and regarded that enemy of the Jews as typical of their final adversary. Sir I. N. reasons thus against the view so long prevalent: "This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great; but so did not Antiochus. His kingdom on the contrary was weak and tributary to the Romans, and he did not enlarge it. The horn was a king of fierce countenance, destroyed wonderfully, prospered and practised (that is, he prospered in his practices against the holy people); but Antiochus was frightened out of Egypt by a mere message of the Romans, and afterwards routed and baffled by the Jews.

"The horn was mighty by another's power, Antiochus by his own. The horn stood up against the prince of heaven, the prince of princes; and this is the cha-

racter not of Antiochus but of Antichrist. The horn cast down the sanctuary to the ground, and so did not Antiochus: he left it standing. The sanctuary and the host were to be trampled under foot until two thousand three hundred days, and in Daniel's prophecies days are put for years. But the profanation in the reign of Antiochus did not last so many natural days. They were to last until the time of the end, till the last end of the indignation against the Jews; and this indignation is not yet at an end. They were to last until the sanctuary which had been cast down should be cleansed; and the sanctuary is not yet cleansed." The utmost then which can be allowed is that the prophecy had only a precursive and partial accomplishment in Antiochus. Its proper fulfilment is future.

On the other hand, they are wholly mistaken who, futurist or historical, identify the little horns of the two prophecies. (Dan. vii., viii.) No doubt there are points of resemblance between them, as there are between all men; but how absurd to deny their distinctness! It has been well shewn that there are at least ten particulars predicted of the first horn: its rise from the fourth beast; its co-existence with ten kings, and its subjugation of three; its eyes as of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and its judgment by the Ancient of days; diverseness from the other kings; blasphemy against God; persecution of the saints; changing of times and laws; and continuance for a time, times, and the dividing of time.

Again, at least twelve points are given as to the second horn: its rise from the he-goat or Grecian empire in one of its five divisions; its great increase of size and

power, and the three directions of its conquests; its trampling on the stars of heaven; opposition to the prince of the host; removal of the sacrifice and casting down of the sanctuary; the time (two thousand three hundred days) of continuance or of some related events; its might not by its own power; its fierceness of countenance; its understanding of dark sentences; its triumph by policy; and destruction without hand.

The truth is that the marks of likeness between these two powers are of the most shadowy character, those of difference sharply defined and numerous. They agree in being enemies of the Lord and of His people, as well as in their awful end under His judgment when He appears and reigns; but even here the form, circumstances, and precise epoch differ widely. The question is in no way one between the historical school and futurists, for a few of both see aright, the mass of both indistinctly, and some who reject both see at least not less clearly than any of either party.

THE PROPHEPIC SIGNIFICANCE OF KINGS.

On this one may be brief, as scripture shews that, while "horn" means a kingly person or power, it may according to the context mean a succession and not merely an individual. It cannot be assumed that a succession is always meant, for it more frequently refers to a single person. But in Daniel vii. 17—23 we have the decisive proof that a king may mean morally a kingdom. To treat this however as a licence for so interpreting it universally in these prophecies is unwarrantable.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL IX.

THE main defect in the historical school here is one which vitiates almost every writer pertaining to it—the assumption that the seventieth week terminates, either with the death of the Messiah and its immediate results, or at most with the destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman power. There are not a few varieties of exposition among moderns as among older writers; but the error named has been and is an insuperable hindrance to a real understanding of the vision as a whole.

They all shut out the future from the last seventieth week, which nevertheless can be demonstrated to be in its true force unfulfilled. Most of them deny a break or interval in the chain which nevertheless can be proved to be required on any right view of the prophecy. They thus destroy the analogy between this and all the other visions of Daniel, which from first to last bring us down to the point when the guilty Gentiles vanish under the judgment of God and give place to Him whose is the kingdom, and whose reign shall not pass away.

Further, those who regard every vision in the book of Daniel as going on to the future, that is, to the end of the age (though for this very reason not continuously, but with a broad and in general a well-defined gap), in no way deny truths common to almost all who have studied the prophecy. For instance, it is maintained,

by all save three or four pseudo-literalists of no spiritual weight that the first advent and death of Christ is foretold here, as well as the overthrow of the Jewish polity; secondly, that the weeks or sevens are to be reckoned as of years and not of days; and, thirdly, that $7+62 (= 69)$ such weeks were to elapse from the Persian decree to build Jerusalem before the cutting off of the Messiah. Rightly understood this, like all the visions in Daniel, goes on to the end of the age.

It is interesting by the way to note that the oldest extant exposition of the book approaches more closely to the truth than most of the works written on the prophecy since. For Hippolytus of Rome is distinct in this at least that the last week is occupied exclusively with the future immediately before the appearing of our Lord in judgment of the quick. There is not only mistake as to the starting point but the ordinary confusion of the Antichrist with the two little horns of Daniel vii., viii., the first beast of the sea, and the Assyrian or king of the north. This however need not surprise any one acquainted with the views which have prevailed and still prevail. It is the common state of all, whether historical or futurist. The good bishop's chronology seems defective enough in thinking that sixty-two hebdomads of years (even adding the previous seven) would cover the space since the return from Babylon to Christ's coming; but there can be no doubt that he interpreted the last hebdomad of the future, as indeed Primatius was disposed to do. Compare Hippol. R. Opp. ed. De Lagarde, pp. 23, 104, 108, 114, 166, 187.

There is the manifest and striking difference in this

prophecy from the previous ones, that it is occupied mainly not with the Gentile conquerors so much as with Jerusalem, its sanctuary, and Messiah, with its glory and spiritual blessedness at least at the close, but with disasters and ruin to the last degree, not only during the last week, but for a term unmeasured before it.

From the beginning of the chapter we learn how unfounded it is to wait till a prophecy is fulfilled before profiting by it. This did not Daniel, who understood, not by a special intimation to himself but "by books," the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet. Himself a prophet too, he shews us the importance of weighing the prophetic word already given. Babylon was taken punctually : were not the same seventy years to issue in the return of the Jews from captivity ? No sign of this favour of God had yet been given, save so far as the fall of the captor city might be its earnest. Daniel, not doubting but believing, sets his face to the Lord Jehovah to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Such was the effect on one who judged the present in the light of the word and of prophecy among the rest : not occupation with political speculation, but confession and humiliation and intercession before God. Daniel identifies himself with all Israel. "And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him; and to them that keep his commandments, we have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by de-

parting from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land." There is thorough vindication of the Lord and condemnation of all Israel. (Vers. 7, 8.) There is a pleading of His mercy and forgiveness (ver. 9), but a renewed acknowledgment of disobedience and transgression on the part of all Israel, to which the curse written in Moses, under which they were groaning, is imputed. (Ver. 10—12.) It is owned that, though the Lord had smitten them, they had not entreated His face that they might turn from their iniquities and understand His truth (impossible otherwise); and therefore the Lord could but watch to inflict more and more. (Vers. 13, 14.) Reminding the Lord of His mighty dealings for Israel from the beginning, the prophet renews his confession but beseeches that His anger and fury be turned away from Jerusalem, and this to the removal of the burden and reproach of their sins (vers. 15, 16), and begs in answer to his own prayer that His face may shine on that long desolate sanctuary, and His eyes may behold their desolations and the city called by His name for His great mercies' sake (vers. 17, 18), winding all up with a succession of most brief and earnest appeals. "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." (Ver. 19.)

Nor did the answer tarry. But it was strictly and exclusively in reference to what the holy prophet had besought the Lord—Jerusalem and the Jews. "And

whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God ; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee ; for thou art greatly beloved : therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." (Ver. 20—23.)

Then follows the prophecy, "Seventy weeks have been set [divided] upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish [or close] the transgression, and to make an end of [or seal up] sins, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies." This is the consummation of grace—the establishment of Israel at the end of the seventy hebdomads specified ; for it will be observed that it is not simply the accomplishment of the efficacious work of propitiation and its consequences, but its application to the Jewish people, which alone can meet the prophet's desires and God's message in reply. Chiefly then to provide for the steps in the fulfilment of the prediction, and to mark where the interruption comes in, and to warn of the awful trouble which precedes the final blessing, we have the seventy weeks, not only summarised or viewed in their completion in verse 24, but next also broken into portions in the verses following.

“ Know therefore and understand : from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [shall be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks : the street and wall shall be again built, and in times of pressure. And after the sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing ; and the city and the sanctuary shall the people of the coming prince destroy ; but the end thereof shall be with the flood ; and until the end war [and] desolations [are] decreed.”

If interpreters had looked into scripture for the decree which exactly answers to that which the prophecy describes, it is hard to see how there could have been hesitation or even delay. At least it is plain enough that it was neither Cyrus nor Darius, but Artaxerxes who issued such a command first in his seventh year, and then later in his twentieth year. But of the two a close comparison will soon shew that the first, like the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, had regard to the temple, theirs for its rebuilding, his for providing its due order and service ; and this was naturally entrusted to Ezra the priest. (Ezra vii.) But the later one was just as characteristically entrusted to Nehemiah the Thirshatha, and it is patent that his commission, as it grew out of his complaint that the city of his fathers' sepulchres lay ruined and its gates consumed by fire, so was distinctly for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and its restoration in general.

It would seem that most have been turned aside through their adopting the vulgar reckoning (B.C. 445) of the date of Artaxerxes' accession, and consequently of the twentieth year of his reign. But the fact is, that

Bishop Lloyd here departed from Archbishop Ussher's correction, who very deliberately records it as his judgment that the common reckoning places the first year of Artaxerxes nine years too late. The grounds of this the reader may see in his *Ann. Vet. Test. A. M. 3531* (Whole Works, viii. 292). People could not reconcile the dates of the prophecy with those ordinarily current, and hence have been disposed to adopt the seventh year instead of the twentieth. But I shall presently shew that this view does violence to the sacred text and therefore must be discarded, for it brings in the last week wholly, or in part, to eke out the reckoning, whereas it is certain that the last week remains to be fulfilled.

It is plain on the face of Gabriel's message that the division into seven weeks and sixty-two weeks had a special meaning: as otherwise such an arrangement would never be made, especially where the style is so singularly concise and pointed. The seven weeks or forty-nine years, then, embrace the restoration of Jerusalem; and the book of Nehemiah shews us in what times of trouble the work was begun and continued. To these add the sixty-two weeks of years already named, and the next announcement after that term is one of the strangest sound and most solemn import, not the birth, nor the reign, but the cutting off of Messiah. No wonder that Jews wince, and avoid or wrest such a prophecy. Yet was it no Christian who wrote the startling prediction but their own prophet Daniel, a man greatly beloved. Why should the Talmudists or others slight the writings of one so singularly honoured by his inspired contemporary Ezekiel? If it be the fruit

of an evil conscience, it is intelligible. For nothing can be plainer than that he who predicted without a date the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, when it is a question of His kingdom in power and glory, predicts here, after a chain of sixty-nine weeks of years, the Messiah cut off and having nothing (that is, of the kingdom that should have been His among the Jews). It is just as in Isaiah xlix. Christ had spent His strength for nought and laboured in vain, as far as His ancient people were concerned. Only the earlier prophet shews His confidence that His cause was with Jehovah and the recompence of His work with His God ; and the answer is, that it is a light thing to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel : Jehovah appoints His rejected but accepted Messiah for a light to the Gentiles that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth, as the gospel now testifies. Whereas the later prophet abides the herald of captivity and of sorrow for the returned captives, who should know a flood of desolations after Messiah was to be cut off.

The Vulgate understands the clause following to mean, "and shall not have his people who should deny him." This is not only an intolerable paraphrase, rather than a version, but it narrows the sense unduly of לֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ to His people as no more His; whereas it means very simply "there is not (or shall not be) to him." Its object is to shew that, as the consequence of excision, He was to have nothing of all that might have been looked for according to promise. Every Jew would naturally anticipate all blessing to themselves, all glory to Messiah, at His coming. Who could have foreseen

that He should be cut off and have nothing? Yet the spiritual man feels that it could not be otherwise; for sin was there as everywhere, and not even adequately confessed, still less judged according to God. Here (ver. 26) it is not the efficacy of His death for others that is taught, as our English translators seem to have conceived, but the guilt of it on those who cut Him off out of the land of the living.

Hence follows a flood of sorrow and overwhelming desolation, at first and precisely under the Roman people who should destroy the city and the sanctuary. But this was not the end; for a vista opens of war and desolations to the end, and that by God's determinate decree. (Compare Isa. x.) The indignation of Jehovah against His people is not yet complete. How amazing that men, pious men too, should have overlooked the broad and plain signification of a timeless interruption after this, including the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and all the long line of humiliating trouble on the Jew since, especially on Jerusalem and its temple! For beyond controversy the chain of weeks is here broken, as (to be exact as well as just) it ought to be. The series was unbroken from the Persian decree to restore Jerusalem till the sixty-ninth ran out, after which Messiah was cut off. How could this bring aught from God righteously but a breach and woes on those who by lawless hands had slain such a prince?

It is in vain to drag out of verse 27 the cessation of sacrifice in order to put it into verse 26. The true connection is thus destroyed, and a meaning is given by such a transposition to that suppression of Jewish worship which differs wholly as we shall see from that

which is really attached to it where God has put it. And this also disturbs the true chronology by bringing in the last week, wholly or in part, and tacking it on to the sixty-nine weeks. Not that the cutting off of Messiah is said to be *at* but *after* the sixty-ninth week. This leaves the date somewhat open; it could not be before, it might be a little after. But with the seventieth week, as far as the prophecy teaches, it has absolutely no connection. On the contrary, events are named as posterior and evidently judicial consequences, although different in character, at the hand of Gentile oppressors, which are by no fair means within the course of the seventy weeks, but rather when the gap came following the cutting off of Messiah.

How long that interruption was to last, Gabriel had not come to declare. But the picture disclosed in the latter part of verse 26 naturally includes all the woes of Jerusalem since the Romans took away their place and nation. The disastrous end is not yet come. For it is remarkable in more respects than one that the destruction here is attributed not to the coming prince but to his people, the Roman people; and so it was beyond controversy. They came and destroyed. But their prince did not yet come—I add, is not even yet come. We shall hear of him in the verse following when the seventieth week begins.

For on all just principles of exposition the last week remains till the Jews are once more back in Jerusalem and their sanctuary rebuilt. This is implied in what follows, however it may grate on those who slight the prophetic word through their confidence in present appearances. Alas! the Jews will be again there, the

mass, not many only, of them (for this too the last verse teaches, as in many another word of the prophet elsewhere) in unbelief and ready to apostatize. And herein is found the true bearing of him who strengthens a covenant with the many for the one week. (Ver. 27.) It is the coming prince, a prince of that people which after the death of Messiah destroyed the city and the sanctuary. It is the Roman chief, the little horn of the revived fourth empire, who is to confirm a covenant with the multitude of the Jews at the end of this age.

This is the simplest reference grammatically, as none can deny, not to the cut-off Messiah, who in no sense ever did or will make a covenant with any for one week, still less with "the many" or mass of the Jews, in this book bearing no good character (compare with this verse 27; chaps. xi. 33, 39; xii. 3: the more strikingly because of a different sense in chapters xi. 34, 44; xii. 2, 4, 10, where the article is not used). It is in no way *the* covenant, still less the everlasting covenant, but a covenant. It is mere assumption to say (what the context explodes) that it must be a covenant with God. Have men never read Isaiah xxviii. 15, 18, that they so pertinaciously cling to the violent perversion of this verse to Messiah, overlooking the explicit teaching that Messiah had long before come and been cut off, and that we were told afterwards of a coming foreign prince, whose people destroyed Jerusalem? It is a future Roman prince who is to confirm a covenant for seven years, not with the godly remnant but with the mass of the Jews, before the new age arrives when Messiah, even Jehovah of hosts, shall reign gloriously in Zion.

But the strongest hopes of man are weakness itself

if God sanctions not. And how could He sustain what put His people into alliance with death and hell (Sheol)? The confirmation of the Roman empire no more stands for the Jews than its seal of old could hinder the resurrection of the buried Messiah. Hence we read that in the half or midst of the week he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease. This suggests the scope of the covenant named. It appears that it will be a solemn engagement to permit the Jews to carry on their temple ritual. This he now terminates. But there is far more than this shewn us. "And because of the protection [literally, "wing"] of abominations, a desolator [shall be]." So I understand this phrase. No one can dispute that it is quite as good a rendering as the unmeaning "on the *pinnacle* of abominations a desolator." For the Hebrew word is used for a wing and hence protection as decidedly as for a wing or pinnacle of a building.

The desolator is sent retributively by God because this Roman prince breaking covenant with the mass of the Jews is allowed to suspend their legal worship and enforce idolatry. (Compare Matt. xii. 43—45 and xxiv. 15 with Dan. xi. 36—39 and Rev. xiii.) So we saw in Isaiah xxviii. 18. The overflowing scourge there is the desolator here, who will tread down the Jews once more for their guilty yielding to Satan's wicked triumph in the latter day. No doubt the Jews would scorn the imputation and count such a concession to the Gentile who once destroyed them an impossibility. So would they have said beforehand of the rejection of their own Messiah. But unbelief of danger is the path of ruin, not of preservation. And those who refused the Christ

who came in the Father's name are yet to receive him who comes in his own name, that is, the Antichrist, the wilful king of the Jews, who, in league with the Roman beast, alike wicked instruments of the idolatry and evil still worse in the temple of God at Jerusalem, shall bring down the overflowing scourge or last desolator, the Assyrian of Old Testament prophecy, "and that until decreed desolation be poured on the desolate," that is, on Jerusalem thus righteously wasted till He come and reign whose right it is.

It is no wonder then to my mind that the confusion of verse 27 with 26, common to most of the christian commentators, should expose their interpretation to the lawless attacks of rationalism. The view here presented however maintains all that is certain as to the past (whether in the restoring of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, or in the cutting off of Messiah, as in the subsequent though undated destruction of the city by the Romans, with its disastrous history up to the present), whilst it preserves the natural meaning of the last week for the end of the age, when the Roman chief of that day will meddle with the Jews again in Jerusalem and their worship, to his and their destruction under the Lord's judgment when He appears and we with Him in glory. Other scriptures shew that a righteous remnant will be kept, and that they will become the nucleus of restored Israel who are to be gathered into the land from all the countries of their dispersion, and blessed under the Messiah reigning in glory over the earth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH. DANIEL X.—XII.

THIS prophecy differs from all the preceding visions in the minute consecutiveness with which it presents to us, not so much the succession of the Persian empire down to the struggle with Greece, as the conflicts of the Syro-Macedonian kingdom with Egypt. But even here the historical thread is interrupted, partially in the prefatory part as we shall see, still more conspicuously at the epoch of Antiochus Epiphanes, the close of whom furnishes the point of transition where an immense gap occurs, and we soon after find ourselves in presence of the wilful king in the holy land, with the last embroilment of the last kings of the north and south. If the futurists are inexcusable in cavilling against the fulfilment of Daniel xi. 1—32, they of the historical school may find it convenient to slip out of all reference to verses 36—45, not to speak of chapter xii. where their own erroneous interpretations are no less palpable, though in the opposite direction of applying to the past what is wholly unaccomplished because future.

The barest outline must here suffice to set forth the true object of the Spirit, how far the prediction has been fulfilled and what remains for the great crisis at the end of the age; for this will be found to be the common issue and meeting-place of the great closing scenes in the book of Daniel, and we may say in the prophets generally. The revealing angel declares (x. 14) that this vision refers to the Jew and the latter day—not of

course its starting-point of sorrow and trial, of weakness and shame, but its bright end when God will bless His people and land with power and glory.

Very briefly is the Persian sketched in the three successors to Cyrus, Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes, till the fourth, Xerxes, famous for his "riches," attacks the realm of Grecia. The "mighty king" that stands up is Alexander, the great horn of the Grecian goat of chapter viii. 5—8, 21, whose sole kingdom breaks up, followed by four notable horns, two of which are thenceforth described in these wars, intrigues, alliances, with Palestine between them, often their field of battle, oftener an object of their strife. Here we see Ptolemy Soter and Seleucus Nicator; Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus, and the tragic end of that business; Ptolemy Energetes and his successes over Seleucus Callinicus, who afterwards came against the kingdom of the south; then, after the death of his brother Seleucus Ceraunus, the antagonism of Antiochus the Great and Ptolemy Philopator at considerable length, as the Jews figure in it; the failure of his policy in giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy Epiphanes, and his defeat by the Romans; then the tax-burdened reign of his son Seleucus Philopator, murdered by his treasurer Heliodorus; and lastly Antiochus IV. his brother, surnamed Epiphanes but called Epimanes by his own subjects in derisive resentment. The Maccabees record his impious and sacrilegious madness.

But need we dwell here on the details of the Lagidae and Seleucidae? No sober Christian doubts the application of these continuous predictions from verse 5 to 32. Even the infidel is compelled to take refuge in the hope-

less theory that they must have been written after the event! being as perspicuous as the histories of Justin and Diodorus. One might go farther and affirm that no history contains so exact, concise, and clear account of that period, the Spirit of God dwelling with especial fulness (ver. 21—32) on the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, as the last of these kings in the past; and this, because he defiled the sanctuary and sought the apostasy of the Jews, thus becoming of all these the only remarkable type of their enemy at the end of the age.

It is here that historicalism betrays its inherent weakness, especially when it forces scripture to comply with its presumed law of unbroken continuance. Every other vision in the book refutes this presumption; and if there be in this chapter an unusual and double line of kings traced, even here the beginning and the close protest against those systematizers who refuse to learn from the chapter itself its own contents. Verse 2 leaps over several kings from Xerxes to Alexander the Macedonian, who overthrew the Persian empire in the person of Darius Codomanus. But a far greater gap is apparent at verse 35. In the former there is no intimation of it; in the latter room is left expressly and indefinitely for all intended. Indeed it is evident that the transition extends through two or three verses, "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, [many] days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time

of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed." (Ver. 33—35.)

The last clauses of the quotation can leave no doubt that here we are transported from the Maccabean struggle to "the time of the end," wholly passing over the first appearing of the Lord and the gospel state of things. Suddenly in verse 36 we look on the wilful king of the last days in the holy land, with the kings of the north and south once more. Of this there can be no question for any intelligent and unbiassed mind. In the course of the description of the conflict it is positively declared to be "at the time of the end," and the connection with the succeeding chapter ("at that time") is alone consistent with such an epoch and character of events; but it is the end of the age, not of the world save in that sense. It is immediately before the time of reward for the righteous on earth, the time when waiting melts into blessed enjoyment for the saints in the kingdom of God.

Evidently therefore the effort to find here the Papacy or even Mahometanism is a delusion; as also still more the old empire of Rome in the east. It is a feeble interpretation that finds in the Gospels and Acts "such as do wickedly against the covenant," or in the language of the chief priests to Pilate, the promise of Pilate to release whom they would, the address of Tertullus to Felix, and the wish of Felix and Festus to do pleasure to the Jews, examples of corrupting "with flatteries." And we need to look in quite another direction, beyond the Acts and the Epistles, for the just application of the words "the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." It is the glory of the Chris-

tian to suffer; the Maccabees really did exploits. So too the Maskilim were among the people, the Jews; and "the many" in verse 33, not in 34, is a technical phrase meaning the mass of that nation. Their troubles are plainly set forth, and a persecution which was to have a sifting effect then, and up to the time of the end. And I have little doubt that there will be an analogous state among the Jews in the land when the time of the end comes—*analogous*, not in heroism, but in tribulation. The mistake is in applying all this to the intermediate Christian state.

Once "the king" is introduced on the scene, we recognize the great personal rival and usurper of the rights of Christ in the holy land. So interpreted, and only so, the prophecy flows on clearly and smoothly. It is St. Paul's Man of Sin, as opposed to "Jesus Christ the righteous," who according to 2 Thessalonians ii. is to sit in the temple of God shewing himself that he is God; it is he who coming in his own name is to be received by the Jews that rejected Him who came in His Father's, the Antichrist of St. John. Here he is "the king," an expression borrowed apparently from Isaiah xxx. 33, (cf. lvii. 9,) where he is really distinguished from the Assyrian, as here from the king of the north. The article does not necessarily imply a reference to some person or power already revealed in the context, but one so familiar to the Jewish mind that they at least should be in no danger of mistake who believe the prophets.

We have seen that it is not Antiochus Epiphanes, but a king *after* the great gap and in the time of the end. No doubt it will be before the judgment of the fourth or Roman beast, which is to revive once more by a sort of

resurrection power of Satan before going into perdition. (Rev. xiii. 2, 3, 5; xvii. 8.) But the wilful king's rule is in the land of Israel, as his blasphemous self-exaltation is pre-eminently in the temple of Jerusalem, and his prosperity is till God's indignation against Israel is accomplished. It is arbitrary, yea contrary to the scope of the passage, to transport the wilful king to Rome, or to conceive that the proper seat of his power is in the west or anywhere but in Palestine: verse 39 is as decisive for this as verse 37 that he is a Jew, though apostate; and this is confirmed by verses 41, 45, though the subject be no longer the wilful king, but his enemy the last king of the north. Everything however fixes the scene as in the holy land just before the final deliverance of the Jews. This king of the north is the little horn of Daniel viii., the king of fierce countenance, who shall stand up against the Prince of princes but be broken without hand. So here he comes to his end, and none shall help him.

Chapter xii. repudiates every effort to turn away any of its parts from the last great crisis for Israel. Daniel's people shall then know the tribulation that is without parallel even for them; and they have tasted bitter times enough under Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and Titus. But after the future and worst they shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. God will make it a means and occasion of purging them. It is true that the resurrection in verse 2 is figuratively spoken, but it is of the Israelites, and not confined to those "of a clean heart," who now lie as it were dead and buried among the Gentiles, but who then shall come forward, some to everlasting life, others to shame and

everlasting contempt. It is the time of the judgment of the quick, when evil men are no longer tolerated, and intelligence and zeal for the Lord meets its recompense. (Ver. 3.)

Again, the sealing of the book (ver. 49) points to the end of the age among Jews, in contrast with the portion of the Christian in the truths now revealed, as we see in Revelation xxii. 10. So too the three years and a-half (ver. 5—7): apply as people may to others after a protracted scale, there can be no doubt that it is expressly said of the Jews at the end. A fuller revelation comes by John to us, not to Daniel. (Ver. 8, 9.)

The brief period of the crisis is strongly confirmed by verses 11, 12, in the former of which it may be observed we have the true source of the Lord's reference in Matthew xxiv. 15: not Daniel xi. 31, which is exclusively past in the days of Antiochus, but Daniel xii. 11, which is wholly future and speaks of Antichrist only though no doubt sustained in it by the fourth beast or Roman empire. Compare Daniel ix. 27, and xi. 36—39.

We have thus taken, not a collection of extreme views, but what is set forth by an advocate of historicalism who is more than ordinarily alive to the future, in order to shew that the system in its best shape fails in representing the true scope of prophecy. The main error is pre-occupation with ourselves, instead of seeing that Christ's glory is the true object of God in scripture, which accordingly shews us Him in heavenly places as the head of the church, but Him also about to appear as the King of Israel and as the Son of man to reign over all nations.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

MAXIMS have been drawn from traditional views of Old Testament prophecy, applied to Daniel in particular, which it seems well to notice before passing on to those of the New Testament.

I. The law of departure, which has been thus stated: every detailed prophecy must be viewed as commencing with the chief present or next preceding event at the time when it is given, unless direct proof to the contrary can be brought forward.

II. The law of continuity, which supposes that each prophecy is to be viewed as continuous, unless when there can be assigned some strong internal proof that the continuity is broken.

III. The law of progressive development, which conceives each prophecy that is added to give a fuller expansion of what was seen more briefly before.

IV. The law of prophetic perspective, or the notion that distant events are described more briefly in comparison with those near at hand.

1. Now no sober believer will be disposed to doubt the general truth of the first principle, though he might not think it reverent to treat the word of God as one speaks of creation around us, and to formulate canons of interpretation in prophecy as theologians have done to the great detriment of revealed truth in general. As the rule prophecy, especially detailed prophecy, starts from facts present or imminent. It supposes failure in what is actually before us, the

judgment of which God pronounces, in order to make way for "some better thing." But herein lies the fatal defect of the first "law," that it is a mere intellectual deduction, even if true, which is not always apparent, leaving out man's sin and God's judgment, as well as His intervention another day. The moral side is thus overlooked, as well as the divine glory ; that is, all that is of chief moment for God or man. But it is plain that in this cold, scientific, dissection of the prophetic word the alleged law cannot be justly applied to the famous Seventy Weeks. If the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was only in the days of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the *terminus a quo* of the series, this can scarcely be said, without extreme harshness, to have been either the chief present event, or one preceding the prophecy which followed immediately after the fall of Babylon. The object of all this is mainly to involve the reader in a preconceived theory of the Apocalypse, as well as of the Lord's prediction on Mount Olivet, which evidently are each as distinct from one another, as both are from the book of Daniel with its distinct visions going down from each respective starting-point to the end of the age.

The Apocalypse alone contemplates not only the millennial reign from first to last, but the events which follow, and even the eternal state. How groundless then to frame laws from the book of Daniel for what is so obviously different !

2. Then we have seen that, though there may be a measure of continuous order, every vision of Daniel from which the law is avowedly drawn shews a break more or less distinct; and the same principle is cer-

tainly true of the Lord's prophecy. It is confessed that there is one apparent break in the last. It would be truer to say that they all exhibit, after a certain continuity, a distinct gap, before resuming the connection of each with its results in divine judgment at the end of the age.

3. If it be merely meant that each successive prophecy adds more light to what was already vouchsafed, the third maxim would be true enough, and almost a truism.

4. The alleged "prophetical perspective" seems to be as purely imaginary as can be conceived. The fourth empire has far more details than any of its predecessors in Nebuchadnezzar's reign, as it has also in Daniel's vision of the beasts. So have the little horns in Daniel vii., viii. On the Seventy Weeks the law does not in the least bear ; and it is reversed by the enormous disproportion given to Antiochus Epiphanes in the last vision, and still more by the space occupied by the final struggle. (Dan. xi. 36—45 ; xii.)

But further, to reason from the state before Christ to the eighteen centuries under the gospel, to assume that now we ought very plainly to expect a peculiar fulness of prophetic revelation, and this respecting the ordinary events of God's providence, proves nothing but the extreme pre-occupation of a special pleader. We must weigh the predictions of the New Testament themselves, without drawing rules from the visions of Daniel, so obviously different, in order to control their application as men desire. It is as true in prophecy as in the truth as a whole, and in practical conduct, that "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LORD'S GREAT PROPHECIES IN THE GOSPELS.

Matthew xxiv., xxv. ; Mark xiv. ; Luke xxi.

It is allowed by the historical school that there is a real difficulty in every hypothesis, so as to make caution peculiarly needful in treating of this prophecy ; and indeed that many who differ from the futurists elsewhere seem almost ready to adopt their exposition here. The prophecy begins with troubles in the apostolic age ; it closes with the second advent of our Lord ; yet there are express words in it, besides the apparent connection of its parts, which seem to confine it within the limits of one generation. But these considerations being inconsistent with each other, which of them must be modified or abandoned ?

Three answers, it is alleged, have been given. That of Bishop Newton and others, who adopt a figurative construction of the closing scene, and thus cut it off from all immediate or direct reference to the Lord's personal return ; that of the futurists (Burgh, McCausland, Tyso, &c.), who sever its beginning from apostolic times, and regard all as converging on the end of the age ; that of Bengel, Horsley, &c., who would trace a continuation from the siege of Titus to the second advent. As the moderns confess the untenableness of the first view, which chiefly rests on an unfounded restriction of "this generation" to the apostolic age, we must look a little more closely into the other two.

The truth really is, that Luke xxi. furnishes, not a parallel to Matthew xxiv. or Mark xiii., but a most important supplement. This is lost, if one regards his verses 20 et seqq. as an inspired paraphrase of the two other Gospels, and thus miss the true force of "the abomination of desolation" on one side, and of "the days of the vengeance" on the other. The parallelism of the prophecy is admitted; but this is perfectly consistent with the belief that the Lord uttered truths, some of which the Spirit led one to omit and another to record, and *vice versa*. No parallel in the Gospels is absolute, nor indeed in any part of scripture. The measure of correspondence depends on the degree in which the divine design in each permits or opposes it. It was the same occasion, and substantially the same discourse; but the design of the Holy Spirit working by each writer, accounts for the difference in each reproduction of the prophecy. Inspiration is characterized by the Spirit's selection in accordance with His special object by each instrument. This is the true key, not the notion that Luke xvii. is the real parallel to Matthew xxiv.

Again, the point of departure in no way decides this question. Granted that in all three Gospels the prediction starts from times close at hand, instead of pointing at once to the end of the age; but how does it hinder the Spirit from vouchsafing the true link of transition in one Gospel, while the other two pass this and converge on what precedes the close which it omitted? It is the less reasonable to reject this solution; as it is confessed that between the first and second Gospels there is a very general agreement in the words of the

prediction, while in the third there are much more numerous deviations. To assume that a marked deviation in Luke is a comment on Matthew and Mark is of all explanations the least satisfactory; that it should supply what is lacking in the others, because in accordance with its own design, is as simple as sure, and worthy of the God who gave them all. The meaning of "the abomination," &c., in Matthew or Mark is not therefore to be explained away by the compassing "with armies," any more than "the holy place" points to the mountain on the east, or the "desolation" is that which has now lasted almost eighteen hundred years.

But it is a total misconception that the denial of the absolute parallelism of Luke with Matthew and Mark involves the thought that no part of the prophecy relates to that destruction of the temple which was then imminent, for this never should have been a matter of hesitation to any believer. Further, it is puerile to say that the abomination [or idol] of desolation corresponds in identity with our Saviour's words a little before, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This is no better than verbal trifling. Nor does the historical fulfilment of Luke xxi. 20 afford the least evidence as to the true and proper meaning of Matthew xxiv. 15; for this is the question—its meaning rather than its fulfilment.

It is a plain error that our Lord's prophecy is professedly an answer to the specific inquiry about the destruction of the temple; for they say, "Tell us, when shall these things be, and what the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" For larger and more remote events were thus in question. It is not a choice

therefore between the views which look only at the next ensuing generation, or at the last generation before the second advent ; for the truth is that, while all three Gospels start from events at hand, and all close with the presence of the Son of man in power and glory, only Luke xxi. 24 gives us the transitional "times of the Gentiles," during which Jerusalem is trodden down by them.

Again, it appears to me demonstrable that, as Daniel xi. 31 refers to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, long passed when our Lord prophesied on Mount Olivet, so the reference in Matthew xxiv. 15, Mark xiii. 14, is exclusively, as well as certainly, to Daniel xii. 11, and therefore an event not only not accomplished at the siege of Titus, but wholly future and bound up with the final tribulation and deliverance of Israel. It is ridiculous to identify, as some of the historicalists do, Daniel xi. 31, xii. 11, for one is wholly past, and the other absolutely future, and neither of them in any way connected with Titus. It is allowed that the phrase, "in a holy place" (ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ), is not so precise as those in Acts vi. 13, xxi. 28 ; but the other part of the clause is not "an," but "*the*, abomination of desolation," and means that idol which brings desolation on the Jews, their city and temple.

The true place of transition is then indicated in Luke xxi. 24, but this is an added statement, owing to the peculiar design of his Gospel, and in no way a comment on one word in Matthew or Mark. But the great and unparalleled tribulation in these two Gospels is clearly proved by Daniel xii. 1 to be not a past but a future event, just before Israel's blessing at the end of

the age, and far more precise than the mere "days of vengeance" in Luke xxi. 22. His comparatively moderate terms, in verse 23, "there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people," were historically verified, and are in the clearest contradistinction from the statements of Matthew xxiv. 21, 29 and Daniel xii. 1, which, beyond doubt, are future, and as yet unfulfilled.

It has not been adequately considered how completely Luke xxi. 32 settles the real bearing of those much-debated words, "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." As long as they were regarded only in the light of Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii., there remained room for doubt; and certainly there could not but be doubt without a just and sure understanding of their context; and this was the very thing most contested. Those who restrained the chapters to the apostolic period, or to the end of the age, interpreted the clause according to their respective theory. But the truth is larger than either of these human views; and when its extent and precision withal are seen, the light which flows from these words of our Lord is no longer hindered or perverted. To this end the third Gospel contributes invaluable help, not certainly by swamping the other two, but by the fresh wisdom of God communicated by Luke, making us understand each so much the better because we have all, and thus furnishing a more comprehensive perception and enjoyment of the entire truth.

Here then God has taken care for the first time to introduce "the times of the Gentiles" still going on, after the Roman siege of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. Then from verse 25 we have the signs of

the last days, and finally the Son of man seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory, proving the futility of the scheme which would confound Titus capturing Jerusalem (ver. 20—24) with the Son of man appearing in verse 27. But it is after this that we read in verse 32: "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." It is not till they "begin to come to pass," of which we do read in verse 28, and a call to the faithful when they see it to "look up and lift up their heads." This generation is not to pass till ALL be fulfilled (γέννηται). No language can be more accurate. This Christ-rejecting, unbelieving, stubborn and rebellious generation of the Jews should not pass away till then. A new generation will follow. The expression has a moral, and not a mere chronological, sense. Compare Ps. xii. 7 (Heb. 8) in contrast with the generation to come. See Ps. xxii. 30 (31), 31, (32). The clause therefore seems to be meant in its unlimited strength, and so put by the third Evangelist as to render all other applications impossible. Nor is there the least ground for taking it otherwise in the corresponding places of Matthew and Mark; but Luke demonstrates this.

The case then stands thus. On the one hand Matthew and Mark do not notice the times of the Gentiles, which Luke was inspired to present very distinctly as well as the successes of the Gentiles, not only when their armies conquered Jerusalem, and led the people captive into all nations, but also during their continued occupation of that city as in fact has been the case for 1800 years. On the other hand Matthew and Mark, but not Luke, notice distinctly the setting up of the

abomination of desolation and the unequalled time of trouble just before the Son of man comes for the deliverance of the elect in Israel at the end of the age, passing at once from the early troubles in the land (while Jerusalem was still an object of testimony) to the last days, when it re-appears with its temple and the Jews there, but alas! the deceived of Satan and his instruments till the Lord appears in judgment. Hence it will be observed that there is no question in Luke xxi. as to "the sign of His coming and of the end of the age." In all this I see not confusion, but the perfect mind of God giving what was exactly suited to each Gospel. It is the comment which confuses the truth, instead of learning from each and all. In Matthew and Mark the future crisis follows a preliminary sketch of troubles put so generally as to apply both to the apostolic times and to the earlier epoch when the Jews return and rebuild their city and temple in unbelief before the age ends: Matthew xxiv. 4—14 (Mark xiii. 5—13) being the general sketch, and verses 15—31 (Mark xiii. 14—27) the crisis at the close or last half-week of Daniel's unfulfilled seventieth week. Luke alone gives us anything like continuity in the very brief words of chapter xxi. 24, as he alone gives us distinctly in this prophecy the past destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, as he does also in chapter xix. 43, 44. Chapter xvii. 22—37, I do not doubt, also refers to Jerusalem, but exclusively in the latter day, when the Son of man is revealed, not when Titus sacked it. In that day there will be a perfect discrimination of persons in the judgment, which proves it to be divine, not a mere providential event however awful.

CHAPTER X.

THE GENERAL DESIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE.— OBJECTIONS MET.

FROM early times scarce any consent has been more general than to view the Revelation as a comprehensive prophecy which extends from the days of the apostle to the end of time. A few, chiefly since the Reformation, would confine most of it to the fall of Jerusalem; a few more began to apply it to the end of the age, as the early fathers did. It seems desirable however to examine the question afresh with all brevity. There can be no doubt that faith in the future application has spread much of late years. It is the more incumbent therefore to examine what is urged by such as plead for the more extensive range of the prophecy throughout the times of the Gentiles since the days of the apostle. The objections usually pressed against historicalism appear to me of little weight.

I. The variety and even discordance of the popular expositors I have already allowed to be a feeble disproof. The truth might be in a few without being apprehended by most men or even by all true Christians. Spirituality of mind is needed to discern truth, nor is it difficult to muster objections to that which is most certain. How many saints are cloudy in their views even of grace as well as righteousness! How many fail to see intelligently the return and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus! Besides, the variety is not small among the futurists themselves. To be distracted by such clashing of

opinions on either side is really to give up certainty as to all truth.

II. The adherence to a literal interpretation is necessarily absurd where the language of the book is beyond doubt figurative or symbolic. Now of all books of scripture, certainly in the New Testament, none so abounds in symbols as the Revelation. To insist upon a rigid literalism here must end in continual straining, disappointment, and error.

III. The same exaggeration is apt to appear in looking for events of a character wholly transcending the past. That such wonders do appear in certain parts of the Revelation is clear. It is unfounded to expect them everywhere.

IV. The attempt, not to run merely a parallel, but to assume identity between the prophecy on the mount and the seals, &c., of the Revelation, is unfounded. An analogy may be allowed, but no more. Such reasoning altogether fails to fix the time when the Revelation will be fulfilled.

But there are weightier grounds of a wholly different nature which may be now advanced. The Lord Himself in opening the book to John distinguishes "the things which are" from "those which must be hereafter" (or "after these things"). "The things which are" comprise the messages to the seven churches. It is the church-period. "The things which shall be after these" are the visions of God's dealings and judgments on man's ways in the world which follow that period till the end of all things. But "the things which are" may be viewed in two ways. They are either the churches viewed as exclusively in John's time, and hence now past

—after which would begin to apply the prophetic visions of the rest of the book. In this point of view the historical school of interpretation ought not to be discarded as untrue or unprofitable. On the contrary I believe that God was pleased to use the book for the comfort of His saints both in their early trials from the hostility of heathen Rome and in mediæval as well as later times from the persecutions of Babylon, the meretricious anti-church of the Apocalypse. But in this point of view the prophetic visions must be allowed to be vague; and no wonder should be felt that discord abounds among the interpreters.

But there is a second point from which we may view “the things that are,” or the messages to the seven churches. They have a prolonged and successive application whilst God owns anything of a church condition on earth. This He clearly does as yet; and according to this view chapters ii., iii., of the Revelation give the things that are still, and are not passed but rather fulfilling before our eyes. Till they are past, “the things which must be after these” cannot even begin to be accomplished. Then only will commence the making good of the prophetic visions in their full sense and application to the crisis which closes this age and introduces the kingdom. Of these seven, the first indicates the declension from first love which characterized the day when John saw the visions of the book; the second, the outbreak of heathen persecution which followed not long after; the third, the exaltation of the church in the empire under Constantine and his successors. Thyatira is marked by more tokens than one which prove that this state, which was fully out in mediæval times, is the

first of those which thenceforward go on not merely successively but contemporaneously from their rise to the Lord's coming. As Popery, though far from Popery alone, was therein found, so Sardis presents Protestantism; as Philadelphia, the reviving not only of the brotherhood with its love but of separateness to Christ's name and word, while waiting for Him, so Laodicea concludes the seven with the self-complacent latitudinarianism of our day which takes shape and position more and more as time goes on.

But it is all-important to the understanding of the general scope and design of the Revelation to see that after these there is nothing of a church character recognised in the book. "The things that *are*" will be then terminated. An entirely new state of things follows, visions chiefly of judgments on earth, or saints suffering, with testimonies and warnings from God, but never in any instance assemblies or churches here below.

Indeed the case is far stronger than this. For "the things which must be after these things" (that is, after the church-state) open with a prefatory scene of the deepest interest in heaven, wherein is seen round the throne of God (which is neither that of grace as now, nor that of millennial glory, but of a judicial character suited to a transitional space between the two, the end of the age) the symbolic circle of the crowned elders in heaven, and this in their full complement, which is never added to till the heavenly hosts follow Christ from heaven when the day of Jehovah dawns on the earth and the reign for a thousand years is begun. That is, the elders thus seen above shew us the heavenly saints translated and enthroned round the throne of God, evidently corrob-

orating and following up the previous fact that the church-state was done with and a new condition entered on, preparatorily to the kingdom of God in power and glory.

Entirely in keeping with this we hear henceforth of thousands sealed from the tribes of Israel, and, separately from these, of countless Gentiles brought out of *the* great tribulation (for so it is, not out of great tribulation as a general fact or principle, but out of that special time of trouble which we know from many scriptures will be at the close of the age). There is no gathering more from among Jews and Gentiles into the church where these distinctions vanish. The seven churches in their protracted application had given that condition up to their last seen on earth. God thenceforward works among Jews or Gentiles as distinct and with a view to putting the habitable earth under the rule of the glorified Son of man, the risen saints being on high, and some from Israel and the nations spared to enjoy the blessings of that day on earth; as He executes judgments first preparatorily though with increasing intensity under the seals, trumpets, and vials, till Christ with the translated saints appears in glory and reigns, judging the quick first, then the dead, after which is the eternal scene. Such is the general outline of the Revelation. In anything like a clear and comprehensive view of the book the futurists seem to be scarcely better than the historicalists. Neither party knows what to make of the vision in chapters iv., v., which follows the seven churches and introduces the strictly prophetic unfoldings of coming dealings with the world. Hence their views are almost equally uncertain. The key to the intelligence of the book lies in a right apprehension of this vision.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GENERAL DESIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE.— DIRECT ARGUMENTS.

It must be owned that the actual state of Apocalyptic interpretation is humiliating. The book has been treated with silent slight or turned into an arena for busy conjecture rather than found to be a rich source of blessing according to the promise of the Lord. Not that God's grace or truth have failed, but that most had lost the blessing through mis-reading it. In the midst of unbelief, however, God has vindicated the value of His own word for those who have clung to it, eschewing either historicalism or mere futurism. They have read it in faith, using not only the lamp of prophecy but the still brighter light to which the Christian is entitled as blessed in heavenly places in Christ. It is well then to bring to the test what men allege as to its character, and to examine fairly and fully whatever evidence scripture affords for a decisive judgment. It will be found impossible to have either a comprehensive view of its scope or a correct application of its parts, without a solid establishment in the gospel and an adequate understanding of our own special relationship as Christians individually or as the church of God. As being the closing book of the New Testament canon it naturally supposes acquaintance with the rest of revealed truth. None can truly appreciate the Apocalypse who has been used to misapply the Old Testament prophecies of

Zion and Israel to christian subjects, any more than such as fail to see the entirely new character of the body of Christ, now that redemption is accomplished and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Every one knows that the Fathers, so-called, entirely broke down, and most of them in this way, both in the mass of the older catholic bodies and in those which followed in their wake. No less have Protestants in general failed to recover the true character of the church, in consequence of confining their attention for the most part, even when orthodox, to truth for the individual, such as justification by faith and ordinary christian practice.

Let us turn then to certain arguments which are supposed to determine the true direction of the book. Does it spread over the entire period since the apostles in its prophetic visions? or does it bear most strictly and fully on the closing crisis before the Lord appears in power and glory, though embracing this too and carrying us forward even into the eternal state?

I. The title of the prophecy, it is thought, points to the right conclusion—"The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Some have imagined that these words denote simply the second coming of Christ, and would therefore limit the book to that great event, its antecedents and consequences. But this view is not more erroneous than to interpret the words as a removal, for the instruction of the church, of the veil which conceals the Lord now that He is ascended to heaven. Nay, of the two, the latter is much the most misleading; for the characteristic truth of the apostle Paul even as a part of God's righteousness is that the Christian sees His glory with unveiled face. It was no insignificant fact that at His

death on the cross the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. The Christian walks in the light even as God is in the light. He is brought nigh by the blood of the cross; and God looks for the fruits of light in all goodness and righteousness and truth. To make the Revelation therefore to be the unveiling of Jesus Christ in person would really be to deny that the veil was completely gone and known to be so ever since the cross and His ascension to heaven. The title then does not mean the removing of the veil from His person, but rather that unveiling of what is coming which God gave to Him, and which He communicated to His servant John and through him to us. But this leaves the question of the time still to be solved, save indeed that the closing words of the preface declare that "the time is *at hand*," and not in course of fulfilment. The examination of the prophetic visions too confirms this; for each of them presents to us some distinct view of our Lord in heaven, and some fresh aspect of God's providential dealings here below, but wholly different from what is found in the rest of the New Testament which directly applies to the church in its passage through the world. Further, we have already seen that Revelation ii., iii., does not suppose a chasm between the apostle's day and the future crisis of the world, but rather bridges it over by a most instructive transition which furnishes light increasingly as God lengthens out "the things which are"—that is, the seven churches or the epistles to them. They are not yet past.

II. The analogy of Old Testament prophecy tends rather to mislead than to fix the true character of the Apocalypse, for the people of God then had to do with

times and seasons in a way wholly different from us. There is contrast therefore really, rather than analogy, though one would not deny, as often remarked, the bearing of principles and help from them for christian sufferers from the Apocalypse. But the fact that the Lord has accomplished redemption, sent down the Spirit, and is ready to judge the quick and the dead, shews the total difference from the state of things before His first advent. The analogy therefore wholly fails instead of being full or complete.

It is easy to assert that the church has derived such light from the Apocalypse as the early triumphs of the gospel, the downfall of Rome, the troubles and temptations which intervened to the church, and the final triumph of Christ's kingdom. But such instances as these rather disprove than demonstrate the assertion. He who could apply to gospel triumphs the first seal, for instance (the white horse with its rider going forth conquering and to conquer), has certainly derived little true light from the Apocalypse. And as to Rome, though Babylon be unquestionably its symbol, there is much to try and exercise the heart for those who are occupied with outward circumstances ; for that "great city" is far from fallen yet, though fall it must in due time. One has no wish to doubt that more or less may have been gathered from the book as to intervening troubles and temptation in principle at least ; but I fear that those who drew from it the final triumph of Christ's kingdom have fallen into interpretations as unworthy as those of Eusebius, and this as time advanced, no less than in earlier ages. It would be easy, in fact, to shew that the effort to apply the book, in its prophetic visions,

to the course of the church on earth has led to little more than mistake in detail as well as wholesale. The church of God *was* meant to be from day to day expecting Christ. "Known to God are all his works from the beginning;" but He has carefully abstained from revealing to us that which might set aside the constancy of our hope. This was not at all the case before redemption. Even the rejection of the Messiah was a matter of prophetic date. Those who overcome during the various stages of the church on earth are seen translated to heaven and glorified there in Revelation iv., v., before the properly prophetic visions begin to apply.

III. The special analogy of the visions of Daniel breaks down when examined closely. For though there be in his visions a scarcely broken succession from his day to the first advent, it does not follow that the visions of St. John must reach from the apostolic age without break. In none is this more conspicuous than in the seventy weeks, where we have continuity up to the death of Christ, but a distinct gap after it. The destruction of the city and sanctuary no doubt is recorded as subsequent, and a vista of desolation and war follows to the end; but otherwise it is all vague and unconnected with any date whatever. That it is after the sixty-nine weeks, and before the seventieth, is all one can learn from Daniel ix. There is no hint of time between; the last week remains to be fulfilled. Eighteen hundred years have already elapsed within that gap.

So it is with the Apocalypse. Its prophetic visions converge on the great future crisis, the accomplishment of the seventieth week, within which fall also "the time, times, and half a time" of Daniel. The resem-

blance between the Revelation and Daniel is found here only. That is, they do not resemble where the visions of Daniel are continuous, but coalesce after the gap for the end of the age. The analogy is that, while Daniel only gave succession up to Christ, both converge on "the time of the end."

IV. The prophecy of our Lord must be perverted in order to apply the Apocalypse continuously from the apostles' day on to His coming. For in Matthew xxiv. the grand question is as to the consummation of the age and not the sequence of events before it. And in Luke xxi., where alone we hear of the "times of the Gentiles," we have no more information than the general fact of Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles till then. We are next plunged into the signs external and moral which mark the end of the age—"signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." It is after revealing all these events that our Lord solemnly declares, "This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." This generation therefore lasts till after the second advent no less than the fall of the temple. It is a mistake that there is a twofold affirmation with regard to the times: the first, that all the events predicted concerning the fall of the temple should certainly be fulfilled in that very generation; and the other, that the day and hour of the second advent was at that time purposely.

concealed. One has only to read carefully our Lord's own words in order to see that there is no such distinction and that the Christ-rejecting generation of the Jews was not to pass till *all* was fulfilled, including the second advent—not merely till the temple fell. Scripture teaches nowhere that that day and hour are now revealed.

1. Hence there is no continuity in the Lord's prophecy, any more than in the visions of Daniel, which justifies the name of a "law" and affords a presumption that the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse must stretch over the last 1800 years.

2. The Lord's prophecy in Matthew xxiv., xxv. consists of three main divisions: first, the Jewish part in chapter xxiv. 4–44; secondly, the christian part in chapter xxiv. 45 to xxv. 30; and, thirdly, the Gentile part in chapter xxv. 31–46. The disciples who were then instructed by the Lord could fittingly represent the future Jewish remnant, as this they were at that time themselves before they were brought into church standing by known redemption and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Hence the argument founded on their christian character to insinuate the propriety of prophecy about Christians and their circumstances all through entirely fails.

3. The mention of the "times of the Gentiles" in Luke xxi. seems a slender ground for assigning to the Apocalypse an application to so many centuries instead of to the last week of Daniel.

4. Nor does the resemblance between Revelation xi. 2 and Luke xxi. 24 blot out their differences, still less warrant the conclusion that the Apocalyptic visions are the expansion of the earlier prophecy.

V. The presumption from the prophetic notices in the Epistles is equally slight. Thus, though the mystery of lawlessness already wrought, there was nothing in 2 Thessalonians ii. to indicate that either the apostasy or the manifestation of the lawless one will be before the time of the end; other scriptures prove that they will be *then* exclusively; with which the notices of this chapter quite agree. Still less force is there in 1 Corinthians x. 1-10, where we have Old Testament facts used as types, which no doubt might apply then or at any time. But this is moral admonition, not continuous prophecy. Again, 1 Timothy iv. speaks only of "some" and "in latter times." It is no more the end of the age than a prediction ranging over all the times of the gospel. Solemnly true and needed as is the warning of 2 Peter ii. 1-12, there is nothing here to decide the application of the Apocalypse all through.

VI. The distinctive character of St. John's writings is alleged to point to the wider application rather than to the crisis. Undoubtedly the choice of the penman was in the fullest harmony with the message to be conveyed; but there is also variety as well as a common principle. The Gospel, the Epistles, and the Revelation do not only come from the same writer, but manifest a character of truth peculiar to themselves. To call his the spiritual Gospel (as by the Greek Christians of old τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ κατὰ πνεῦμα), as contradistinguished from Luke's, Mark's, or Matthew's, seems far from precision and rather derogatory to the others; quite as much so to contrast his Epistles with those of Paul. The Gospel of John shews us really eternal life in the Son of God, the glory of the Only-begotten who reveals the Father;

the Epistles shew us the effect of this revelation where faith received Him, "which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness passeth and the true light already shineth;" the Revelation, the results not only in the overcoming and glory of those who are His but in the iniquity, lawlessness, and judgment of those who believe not, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Hence it is that, while He is God and man in one person throughout all John's writings, He is more prominent as Son of God in the Gospels and Epistles, as Son of man in the Revelation. Authority to execute judgment is therefore given to Him on those who would not come to Him that they might have life; and thus there are two resurrections, of life for those that practised good, of judgment for those that did evil, the turning-point being faith or unbelief in His person who is the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. The crisis therefore falls in far more with this, the evident object of the Revelation, than any mere course of providential judgments spread over the continuous history of Christendom.

The opening verses of the book correspond with this; for if John is said to bear "witness of the word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ," it is qualified by "whatsoever things he saw." That is, it is not the person of the Son as in the Gospel nor our possession and manifestation of the life that is in Him as in the Epistles, but visions. And when in the course of the prophecy Christ is named The Word of God (Rev. xix.), it is evidently in destructive judgment whilst in the Gospel we see Him in the fulness of grace. With such marked distinctness does the Spirit guard us against

wrong inference from the rest of John's writings, and condemn those who would foist in the miscalled spiritualizing of the Revelation. Details only confirm this, if we bring each distinctive mark of the Gospels and Epistles to test the prophecy.

1. To argue that, because the Gospel and Epistles dwell not on the external and transient and earthly but on eternal truth, therefore the Apocalypse cannot disclose outward signs and wonders from the end of the age onwards till eternity, is to fly in the face of the evident scope and contents of the book. It has been already pointed out that its character is *judicial* (not the revelation of life in Christ), and this also enjoyed by and manifested in the saints. In the Revelation we have first the churches judged by the Son of man ; and this state of things being closed, the world judged first preparatorily and with increasing intensity till (with the risen saints) Christ appears to judge in person, first the quick in the reign for a thousand years, then the wicked dead at the end before the new heavens and earth in the final and fullest sense. It is admitted however that, as in 1 John ii. we hear of many antichrists even now, the forerunners of the Antichrist of the close, so the Apocalypse may afford light in a general way now, while it shines most distinctly on the great future crisis ; and thus it is larger, as well as more exact, than either historicalists or futurists can see.

2. If both Gospel and Revelation open with the Lamb, each strikingly employs a different word, though it be about the same person : the Gospel, *ἀμνός* as expressive of God's grace in all its extent and in relation to sacrifice ; the Revelation, *ἀρνίον* as the holy earth-

rejected Sufferer, whose blood indeed has bought believers to God, but whose wrath is about to fall on a guilty world and the still guiltier apostates at His appearing till Satan himself perishes for ever.

3. The Gospel and the Epistles do suppose the Jews disowned for a new work of God; but even so not without distinct pledges both in type (John i. 45 to ii. 21; xxi. 24-29) and in direct terms of mercy reserved for them. (Chap. xi. 51, 52.) The Revelation unveils the fresh working of God on their behalf when the church-state is done with; and this both in Israel (chap. vii.) and in Jews. (Chap. xiv.) It is as false to restrict it with the futurists to the narrow limits of Judæa as to efface the Jews from a distinct and precious portion in its predictions, as most historicalists do.

VII. The date and place of the prophecy are supposed to yield further and very distinct signs of its true meaning. It was revealed to the last of the twelve apostles, as the fullest evidence shews, under the last of the twelve Cæsars. The first century was closing, the temple and city of Jerusalem destroyed, the Jews dispersed. The gospel was in all the world, bringing forth fruit, and growing. The church gave its testimony to Christ in the various lands and tongues of the known habitable world. The Old Testament had borne witness to the rebellious iniquity of Israel and Judah, not merely in the worship of idols, but in the rejection of the Anointed of Jehovah, and had pointed out sufficiently the consequences, not only to the chosen people in judgment, but to the Gentiles in grace. The time was now come for a final revelation, which, first of all shewing that Christendom would be equally faithless

to its responsibility, next hides not the dealings of God which should succeed, whether preliminary and partial before Christ appears, or completed when He executes judgment in person ; and this, not only on the quick throughout the thousand years' reign, but on the dead who had not shared the holy and blessed "first resurrection," the wicked dead raised after it. That John stood in a relation toward the church similar to that of Daniel toward the Jews is plain, the latter having been a captive of the first Gentile empire, as the former of the fourth, neither of them occupied himself with the details of providence, both with the end of the age, as ushering in the rule of the heavens wielded by the glorious Son of man. Only as Daniel was given to predict the ways of God consequent on the ruin of the Jew, so John what was to follow Christ's spuing out of His mouth the last of the seven churches. As the privileges of the church far transcended Israel's, and the testimony for which the Christian is responsible was limited to no race, land, or tongue, instead of being cooped up in one narrow country and people, so doubtless the issues from God's hand are incomparably graver, and proportionably extended ; and these, therefore, it fell to John's lot to have unrolled before his wondering and aggrieved gaze.

If all the circumstances indicate a reference to the new economy rather than to those special Jewish relations which had been suspended, no less do they suppose that God is judging the failure of man under the gospel, and disclosing how He will take up all under Him, the second Man, who never failed. The prophecy therefore no more shews us Christendom the

direct object of God's dealing, than its Jewish prototype did the Jews. It points out what will follow, and as the future crisis was the main aim of Daniel, so it is yet more effectually and fully of John; only John expands, as Daniel does not, not only into an incomparably vaster sphere, but also into the endless ages which follow the Lord's return. Such in fact was the uniform character of prophecy in the Old Testament. There was a series undoubtedly, and each wrote from his own time as the starting-point; but not one of them was limited in his predictions either to events which occurred during his lifetime, or to the next main event of Jewish history. They all looked onward to the coming of Messiah, and most fully indeed to His coming in power and glory. So did our Lord at the close of His own ministry. It is a total mistake that He merely took up the end of their thread, and prolonged it to the fall of Jerusalem, leaving it for John to carry it on continuously throughout the centuries which have elapsed since. One can understand such theories where the heart is in the world as it is, and man therefore as he is possesses our admiration and our interest. Doubtless there is light for the faithful at all times, and especially in an hour of ruin, through the Spirit of prophecy; but being the witness of Jesus, that Spirit hastens on to the grand consummation when evil shall be judged righteously, according to the light given but despised, and the Lord Himself shall take the reins. If Christianity superseded the finally proved antagonism of the Jews to their Messiah, the corruption of Christianity gives occasion for God to indicate how He will replace the apostasy and man of sin by His kingdom at Christ's

coming, and the eternal state, when God shall be all in all. This widely differs from the Protestant scheme of the Apocalypse.

VIII. A guide or mark to determine the general scope of the Revelation has been drawn from the parties to whom it was first sent. It was given to John, and through him the seven churches of Asia were addressed. It has been argued therefore that, if the Apocalypse records the history of the church, the address to the Asiatic churches is most suitable, and in full harmony with the precedents of scripture ; but it is equally incongruous if the main reference of the work be to a Jewish remnant alone during a few years at the end of this dispensation. The truth is, however, that the epistles to the seven churches are but introductory to the strictly prophetic part of the book, or "the things which shall be after" the things which are ; and "the things which are" exhibit the churches coming under the judgment of the Son of man. Thenceforward we have visions of the world judged, and the most conspicuous absence of a church ; nay more, the presence of Jews and Gentiles objects of divine grace, and this separately, instead of being united in one body. That is, the book, as a whole, in its predictions contemplates an entirely new state of things, as the result of the faithlessness of Christendom, and the removal of the faithful to heaven, paving the way for the reign of the Lord and the glorified saints. That state, however, is no return to a mere Jewish remnant, though such a remnant be one of its elements ; but on the proved ruin of Christendom, as of Judaism, the visions shew us God's measures for investing the Lord with the world

as His inheritance. We hear the first church threatened with the removal of its candlestick, we see in the last its setting aside with abhorrence as the Lord's resolve; and this in order to make way for the visions of woe, not without testimonies of mercy, the process which introduces the First-born in judgment of the whole earth. Clearly it was meant that those in the churches, or a church position, should profit by all the communications of the book; but the book itself is the strongest proof that churches, or even Christians properly so-called, are nowhere contemplated in the scenes of its predictions. Its object is to reveal what follows in the world when those that overcame in the church-state are no longer on earth.

IX. The direct statements with regard to the time which begin and close the prophecy are another evidence of its true application. It was sent to shew God's servants "things that must shortly come to pass." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." The motive is neither that the things are in course of fulfilment, nor that they are about the church. Compare Revelation xxii. 10. And this last is the more striking, because Daniel was told to seal his book even to the time of the end; whereas John, receiving still further and deeper details, was told *not* to seal the sayings of the prophecy of his book. The true inference is, not that there was a merely human or ordinary scale of time applied to either, but that since redemption and Christ's session at God's right hand, ready to judge the quick and the dead, the end of all things is at hand to

John and the Christian, as it was not to Daniel and the Jew. Having the Spirit meanwhile, the Christian has divine capacity to understand all that the word, prophetic or not, reveals. It is no question of comparative distance or nearness merely, but of the immense change effected by Christ, who has brought all things to a point before God; so that the same apostle, John, could say, "it is the last time," or "hour." This was neither manifest nor true when Daniel lived. A revealed series of events necessarily intervened. It was otherwise when John wrote. In both prophecies the Spirit had the crisis in view. None can conceive that the earlier events predicted by Daniel belong to the time of the end, or were for many days. "The last end of the indignation" has no reference to the siege of Titus, nor will it fall within the limits of the so-called christian dispensation. "The indignation," it appears from Isaiah x., &c., is evidently God's anger against idolatrous Israel; and "the abomination of desolation," in Matthew xxiv. and Daniel xii., will not be till the end of the age in the sanctuary of Jerusalem. These allusions are demonstrably outside the times of the gospel; but the Christian is entitled to comprehend what the Jew must wait for. To us, therefore, it is always morally "the time of the end;" and nothing, accordingly, is sealed or shut up from us. It is an evident mistake that 1 Peter i. 10-12 refers to these texts in Daniel, but rather to such as Daniel ii. 34, 35; vii. 13; ix. 26, "the sufferings respecting Christ, and the glories after these," which are now reported more fully still in the gospel, as some of them will be fulfilled only at the revelation of our Lord. Thus the contrast of

the words in Revelation with Daniel's lends no support to the hypothesis that even the seals apply to gospel times from John's day.

X. The character of the opening benediction bespeaks the true references. It is not from God, as such, or from the Father, as such, His special revelation in grace and relationship which we know as Christians. It is rather His name of Jehovah, hitherto made known to the children of Israel, now for the first time translated from the Old Testament idiom into Greek, but Hebraistically. This surely suits a prophetic book which was intended to unfold, not christian privilege or duty, but judgment on a world guilty of rejecting as well as corrupting Christianity, where God begins to prepare an earthly nucleus for the returning Lord, and this from Israel, as well as all nations, but expressly distinct from each other. There is a difference between the form of the name in Revelation i. and in Revelation iv. ; but on this we need not enter, as being beside the present argument and purpose. It is undeniable, however, that He is not in either revealed in christian or church relationship, but in a form and character suited to One who is to act thenceforward as governor, not merely of Israel, but of the nations. In accordance with this, we do not hear of the "one Spirit," as in 1 Corinthians or Ephesians, nor yet as the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, but with a difference no less striking, "the seven Spirits which are before the throne"—a phrase which suggests His fulness governmentally, and refers to Isaiah xi., but is never used when Christian standing is in question. So the characters of Christ Himself pointedly leave out what is heavenly and in church connec-

tion. It is neither priesthood nor headship ; but what He was on earth, and there in resurrection, and will be when He returns. What He is displaying now on high is left out. Continuity is not in the least expressed ; but rather a break from His resurrection, till He takes His great power and reigns. So with the associated title, "I am Alpha and Omega ;" it may be of Gentile source, joined with one familiar to Jewish ears, and thus together most suitable to a prophecy which lifts the veil from the future crisis, when it is no longer that body wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile, but Christ is all and in all. Here we have only Jews and Gentiles after Revelation vi.

As to Revelation i. 7, it is in no way to be limited to Jews, whatever the resemblance to the Septuagint version of the words in Zechariah xii. Indeed this is but one case of the general principle, that the Revelation, like the New Testament as a whole (save in application of fulfilled prophecy) enlarges the sphere, and deepens the character, of what is borrowed from the older oracles of God. But allowing that "all the tribes of the earth" should be here meant, rather than "of the *land*" merely, and as distinguished from "those who pierced Him," it seems strange that the bearing of "every eye shall see Him" should be overlooked. For if the object had been to guard the reader from the vague providential line of interpretation, and to fix our attention on the Lord's coming again to the earth, it could hardly be secured more plainly than by such a text. There is a larger and more comprehensive scope than in Old Testament prophecy ; but it is in relation to the world, not to the church, and to the visible display

of glory, not to the kingdom of God viewed spiritually. *We* walk by faith, not by sight. The book is for, but not all about, the church.

XI. The special occasion when these visions were revealed is supposed to be very significant of their bearing on the church rather than the Jews. For the apostle "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." Domitian was persecuting; the conflict was begun between the witnesses of Christ and the idolatrous power of Rome; John's exile exemplified the warfare and suffering which was to continue for ages; as Rome is seen, near the close of the prophecy, drunk with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. Thus the book traces the moral war from first to last without token of any abrupt transition. Such is the reasoning. If the extremes are fixed, and the intermediate links many and various, what reasonable doubt of the continuity of the whole?

The truth, however, is that John is seen throughout as "a servant," rather than a son or "child," as in his Gospel and Epistles; and the word of God and testimony of Jesus are narrowed to visions ("all that he saw," Revelation i. 2) to prepare the way for taking in as servants those saints who could not be placed on the same ground as the members of Christ's body. They will follow us on the earth, and will be His servants, having the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, when the Lord will have taken us to heaven. The Christian, like John himself, should seek to read the Revelation from his own stand-point of association with Christ risen; but the book clearly makes known other saints on a quite different footing throughout the

prophetic periods. The inference drawn is therefore unsound. Revelation iv., v. shew us the church as a whole, glorified; and Revelation vi.-xviii. others on earth who, though saints, are quite distinct from the church.

Doubtless the attempt to interpret "the Lord's day" as the day of the Lord is mere ignorance, though men of learning have so argued. The force of that day really is, that, though John was speaking as a prophet of what is coming on the world, he did not forfeit his proper portion as a Christian. He was in the Spirit, and saw the visions "on the Lord's day," as the first day of the week was now called in virtue of Christ's resurrection. But is it not almost equal ignorance to apply the sabbath in Matthew xxiv. to the past? It clearly refers to the future crisis, when Jewish saints must pray that their flight be not on that day nor in the winter. At that time the abomination of desolation will be their signal to escape from Jerusalem, according to the Lord's warning.

XII. The emblems of the opening vision are supposed to be a further key to the nature of the prophecy. The first, expounded by our Lord Himself, is the seven golden candlesticks, denoting the seven churches of Asia: a type borrowed from the Jewish sanctuary, but without a local centre or a visible head, so as to suit the wider character and greater liberty of the church. If the candlesticks be symbolic, why restrain the ark, altar, and temple, with its outer and inner courts, to an outward sense? And so with the stars in Revelation i. If used to denote living intelligent persons, why should the star of the third trumpet, for instance, denote merely

a meteoric stone? Why not those spiritual realities which belong to the whole church of God?

The answer is plain and decisive. The Lord Himself draws, in Revelation i. 19, the line of demarcation between the opening vision, with the connected "things that are," and the "things which are about to be after these." Hence it is a rash assumption, at the very least, to say that the symbols abide the same in parts of the book so distinguished. If churches and their angels are found only in Revelation i.-iii., disappearing absolutely from the prophetic visions which follow, it is natural that so vast a change must modify in a corresponding way the application of the symbols, though of course the essential idea remains. They cannot describe these spiritual realities which belong to the church of God, when it, as a whole, is no longer seen on earth. And, confessedly, quite different symbols denote the church in heaven. But we are not driven to the pseudo-literal alternative of two Levitical candlesticks in Revelation xi., any more than to one meteor in Revelation viii. We must interpret them in congruity with their context, not therefore in reference to the church, which is gone, but to the world, with which God is then dealing, whether among Gentiles or Jews. The star here means a fallen ruler, and in the western Roman earth, not supreme, like the sun, but subordinate; as the two candlesticks may be an adequate testimony to Christ's priesthood and royalty among the Jews. But one need not dwell on details.

XIII. A similar remark is true of the allusion to the "Jews" in the first chapters when used to govern the application in the rest of the Revelation. Certainly the

seven churches (viewed either literally as the past assemblies in proconsular Asia or as foreshadowing so many phases of Christendom till the faithful are caught and the Lord utterly disowns the last outward state) suppose the title of Jews ("those that say they are Jews but do lie") misused by those in Christendom who boast of antiquity and not present power in the Spirit, of succession and not grace, and of ordinances and not Christ; and just as certainly such a phrase could only be used during the Lo-ammi time of Israel's rejection. But it is a hasty inference thence to interpret the prophetic visions when God begins to seal a people out of the twelve tribes of Israel, after the church is withdrawn from the earth.

XIV. It is in vain for the same reason to argue from the general character of the Epistles to the seven churches, for they stand in evident contrast as "the things that are" or church-state with the succeeding visions of the future, though no doubt a moral preparative for them of the highest value. Thus the season of trial in the epistle to Smyrna might be blessed to the saints similarly tried during the prophetic periods later on; but there is the strongest possible internal reason why we should not apply these as the true meaning of prophecies which suppose the church no longer existing on earth, and new witnesses, Jews or Gentiles, succeeding who are expressly in a different relationship.

2. As little does the reference first to "the doctrine of Balaam" in Revelation ii., compared with the false prophet in Revelation xiii. 14-17; xvi. 13; xix. 29, warrant the conclusion that the marks of a regular connection and sequence are herein given. Similar evil, though

modified in form, is all that can be fairly drawn from the earliest and later passages. So it is with the types of the wilderness. It applies to us now ; it will be as true, though in greatly altered circumstances, of others after we join the Lord above, before the kingdom be established in power and glory. 3. The mention of Jezebel in Revelation ii. and of her great counterpart in the prophetic vision (Rev. xiv., xvi., xvii., xviii.) stands on just the same ground. 4. So does the local fulfilment of the opening predictions. They may be of profit at all times ; but we cannot intelligently apply to the church what God predicted of His government of the world, or of witnesses raised up for that state of things.

XV. The nature of the prophetic scenery as described in the following chapters (Rev. iv., v.) yields abundant and irrefutable disproof of the notion that the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse contemplate the church or its history on earth. For the purpose in hand there is no need of entering into the details of specific interpretation ; but a few broad features may be briefly pointed out which are decisive against the notion in question—a notion entertained by not a few futurists as well as by the Protestant school generally.

1. It is perfectly true that the opening of the visions is eminently symbolical. The living creatures, the lamps of fire, the elders, the Lamb and the sealed book, the vials and the odours, all have this character, not to speak of the voice of thunder, the four horsemen, &c., in what follows. But it is a mistake that either the heavenly calling of the Christian claims especially such a veiled or emblematic mode of instruction, or that the

end of the age must through all its extent see the cessation of silent mystery and the commencement of visible and material wonders. It is plainly enough revealed that it will merge gradually into a brief period in which the western powers will adopt a peculiar political order and partition with its suited chief, the north-eastern will advance for a final struggle, the Jews in their land and under their king be a main object of defence and attack, and Satan avail himself of the apostasy he has effected to reveal the lawless one in all power and signs and wonders of lying, God Himself sending those who believed not the truth a working of error that they should believe the lie. But these horrors do not begin at once, and the worst of them will steal over men by degrees. There is no such abrupt change as is conceived by such as oppose. On the one hand Jerusalem and the temple will be the scene not only of renewed and strange idolatry but of man arrogating the glory of God ; on the other God will not leave man throughout the world without suited testimony and solemn judgment, increasing in intensity till the Lord appears in glory.

Let the reader remark the total change of scenery at this point. It is no longer the Son of man in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, nor the successive messages to the angels of these churches, but a throne in heaven, the prophet being called up to see and hear. The actual or church state exists no more, giving place to "things which must be after these." It is a question of government from heaven, and the throne one of judicial glory, not of grace as we know now ; and hence out of it lightnings and voices and thunders, not the message of peace and salvation ; and the saints now glorified sur-

round it as the heads of the royal priesthood, no longer on earth as in Revelation i. 5, 6. It is a company, be it noted, complete from first to last (Rev. iv.—xix.), so that for this as well as other reasons it cannot be separate spirits but glorified men. The seven Spirits of God, or the fulness of the Spirit in attributive power, are seen as seven lamps or torches of fire burning before the throne. There is no altar, as it is no longer a question of coming to God ; and, instead of a laver with water to cleanse the defilements contracted by the way, there is a sea of glass in witness of perfect and fixed purity. The cherubim, or living creatures, are no longer two but four, and seraphic as well as cherubic, characterizing the throne in executory judgment according to the holiness of God. If the aim were to reveal a new state wholly distinct from the present, and a transitional relationship, before Christ and the risen saints come out of heaven to reign over the millennial earth, it would be hard to say how it could be made more apparent or unquestionable. In full keeping with this Christ is seen after a new sort as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David : the holy earth-rejected sufferer, slain for God's glory, who had bought a people to God by His blood, who alone could and does open the otherwise sealed book of divine purposes and plans for the deliverance of the world and reign of God ; and the elders fall before the Lamb with vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints, clearly not their own but of others on earth in a different position from themselves in glory, as the visions that follow will confirm.

2. Equally true is it that the action of the prophecy

is derived from the opening of the sealed book ; and that the taking and opening of it is grounded on the personal power, worth, and victory of the slain Lamb. But on the face of the scripture the scene does not follow His ascension. It rather awaits the close of the church-state and our translation to heaven, when the present work of gathering the heavenly co-heirs with Christ is finished. This in no way treats the atonement of our Lord as for eighteen centuries idle and powerless, unless the forming of the bride of the Lamb be nothing ; it shews on the contrary, that, so far from exhausting the virtues of His blood, fresh counsels of God, to us long revealed, are all in His hand and for His glory who will take the earth as well as heavens under His headship, and who, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed, will take all peoples and nations and tongues as well as Israel in chief under His sway. No Christian doubts the truth and importance of Matthew xxviii. 18 or Philippians ii. 8, 9 ; but the character or time of application is another question. And we may well doubt that these or any other texts determine that the Revelation sets forth in its visions the triumphs of the cross while the church is on earth, called as she is now to be the follower of Christ in His earthly shame and suffering.

3. Further, it is said that there is no event between the ascension of our Lord with His solemn inauguration in heaven and His visible return in glory, and especially now in the last days, which can claim to be the true commencement. But this leaves out the vision of Revelation iv., v. in its evident import, especially as following up the sevenfold message to the angels of the Asiatic

churches or the mystery of the seven golden candlesticks, and as introducing the predicted dealings of God with the world in the rest of the book. The throne of God assumes a relation notably distinct from that of grace as we know it, and even from that of glory as in the millennial day ; it is clothed with a judicial character akin to that which Ezekiel beheld when Israel was judged and carried into captivity, but with special features as must be in view of Christendom's ruin and God's judgment of the earth generally, and in particular of what had been faithless after such unexampled favours. And the absolutely new object seen on high is neither God's throne with the cherubim or seraphim nor yet the Son of man long before ascended, but the twenty-four crowned and enthroned elders. It is strange that men should have all but universally overlooked so patent and grave a fact corroborated by circumstances already pointed out, which furnish a very defined starting-point from which the succeeding visions begin. To neglect this is to act the part of a voyager who should take his departure not from the main shore but from a floating bank of mist into uninterrupted fog.

For what worthy point of departure follows the seven churches of John's day ? It is wholly incorrect, as is thought, that till the return of our Lord (that is, to reign) all is one continuous dispensation—one ceaseless progression of Divine providence. The translation of the saints to meet the Lord and be presented to the Father in His house before they appear with Him in glory for the government of the world is assuredly a fact and change of amazing interest. It had been not only disclosed by our Lord, but fully opened out by the apostle of the Gentiles in his earliest Epistles ; and it is

now put into its relative place by John in the grand systematic prophecy which winds up the New Testament.

. The peculiar mode in which the Spirit here records it is worthy of all note as flowing from His own consummate wisdom ; for there is no vision of the actual rapture of the saints to heaven when the Bridegroom meets them, as if it were one of many prophetic events like those under the seals, trumpets, or vials. It is the accomplishment of the Christian's hopes, and in no way confounded with the subject-matter of prophecy, such as the appearing or return is, when every eye shall see the Lord and them in glory. It is a preliminary vision of the saints already in heaven after the church-state on earth is ended, and before the special judgments and transitional testimonies begin which terminate in the Lord's coming out of heaven followed by the saints (Rev. xvii. 14 ; xix. 14) already there since the end of chapter iii. as proved by chapter iv. His "coming" or presence (*παρουσία*) thus embraces and overlaps the day of the Lord, as it leaves room for the gathering of the saints risen or changed to Him with an interval in heaven, which the Apocalypse shews to be filled up by solemn dealings of God on earth mainly judicial but not without special mercy to saints on earth, both Jewish and Gentile, some of whom suffer to death as others are preserved for the kingdom when Christ and the glorified ones appear in His "day" to execute judgment and reign over the earth for a thousand years.

If "the second advent" be restricted, as it commonly is by almost all schools, to the day of the Lord, it leaves the fact of our seeing the heavenly redeemed under the complete symbol of the twenty-four royal

priests from Revelation iv. entirely unaccounted for. Distinguish His coming for His saints and His coming with them, and all is so far plain ; though it is easy to see difficulties and conjure up objections to the surest truth of revelation, or even of our being, and of the world around us. But the word of the Lord abides for ever. One may add too that the prophecy nowhere describes near its close (that is, in chap. xix. or xx.) the removal of the saints to heaven : they follow Christ to the judgment of earth ; but how they got there so as to be in His suite in His day is not described.

It is evident then that the translation to heaven of the co-heirs, witnessed as a fact from the beginning of Revelation iv. is a fixed and clear point of departure, which the ordinary schemes of Apocalyptic students, Protestant or futurist alike, have failed to observe. It becomes then not only possible but easy to test the alleged fulfilment of the book. Before the seals or trumpets which prepare for the investiture of Christ with the inheritance, there must be in heaven an adequate answer to the plain facts, that churches are thenceforward seen no more on earth, and that a new company appear in heaven, never before seen there, under the symbol of the twenty-four elders. If men explain away or pass over so important an introduction as Revelation iv., v. to the strictly prophetic portion of the book, they naturally confound our gathering to the Lord on high with the day of the Lord on the earth, and a moral or partial application of its contents with its proper meaning, to the utter lowering of the church's calling, place, and walk, as well as hope.

XVI. The oath of the mighty angel is imagined to

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furnish another not less decisive mark of the historical acceptance of the prophecy : " in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be finished." What it really says is that there should be no more delay, but under the last trumpet, which ushers in the end of man's day, God would bear with evil no longer in the grace which works meanwhile for higher purposes. He would bring in the manifested kingdom of the Lord forthwith. Israel's rejection and the times of the Gentiles may fall within " the mystery of God," as well as the calling of the church ; but not a word implies that the church was still on earth during the trumpets. Doubtless the trumpets are accomplished before Israel's restoration, but not before Jews return to their land in unbelief, set up their king, and other awful scenes of the latter-day wickedness ensue. Nor is there anything to intimate that the seals and trumpets measure the mystery of God, but simply that it closes with the seventh trumpet, as one sees in the latter part of Revelation xi. The world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is come. It is no question of secret providence then, as it was during, and had been before, the Apocalyptic period.

XVII. Concurrence for sixteen centuries, even if universal, is but human opinion ; and what is this worth in divine things ? It is but the recent tradition of the multitude ; and in these ages of declension, what can the maximum of such agreement yield but the minimum of truth ? It is the refuge of unbelief at all times, and can never be right since Christendom went wrong. One need not wonder at lack of intelligence during many a century when even saints had lost the sense of eternal

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life, of accomplished redemption, of standing in Christ, and the varied energy of the Holy Ghost, not to speak of the church as the body of Christ and the house of God. The notion of a continued advance, slow at first but afterwards steady and discernible, is a dream, more worthy of a mere humanitarian progressionist than of one who looks for Christ to receive the saints and judge the world and above all favoured but guilty Christendom. A symbolical history of the church on earth might be founded with some show of truth on Revelation ii., iii., not on what follows, which is expressly *not* "the things that are" or church-state, but what must be after these things, when the overcomers are all and "ever with the Lord."

If people only saw the special calling and heavenly character of the church, the Apocalypse from chapter vi. (and indeed iv., v.) to chapter xix. never could have been supposed to predict its course or circumstances on earth. Men have not distinguished the various dealings of God; and hence, as some scrupled not to apply Israel and Judah, Zion and Jerusalem, in the Old Testament prophets to Christianity or the church, so still more fell into the kindred error of tracing it here below throughout the prophetic visions of John. But it is hard to conceive a fuller combination of evidence than that which the book itself has just afforded us against the common hypothesis, and in confirmation of our being on high while the providential judgments of the seals, trumpets, and vials intervene, till we follow the Lord from heaven to reign with Him over the earth.

Its preface and its conclusion; the analogy of former prophecy and, most of all, of that book which it resembles:

so closely ; the season and the place and the writer ; the churches to whose angels messages were sent ; the repeated declaration of the nearness of the time ; the whole character of its introduction repeated often and in the most various forms ; the plain contrast between the churches as " the things that are " with those " which must be after these things ; " and the intermediate vision of the elders in Revelation iv., v., respecting the heavenly redeemed in their complete and glorified state around the throne above, seem to leave little question as to its scope to the believer, unless he sacrifice the authority of scripture to the general consent of Christendom during the very centuries when it had lost even a clear and full gospel for the world and forgotten its own privileges as well as responsibility to the grief of the Holy Spirit. In truth no one is fit to form a sound and spiritually intelligent judgment of the bearing of the Apocalypse who is not clear as to salvation and the church, as well as prophecy ; and where were such to be found since the second-century remains disclosed the early and utter ruin of the christian profession ? Neither antiquity nor consent, if universal, can sanctify error, though they may expose to the charge of rashness or even innovation such as go back to the once-revealed truth. But wisdom is justified of her children. Far from being self-evident, the mind of God in His word cannot be severed from our practical state in fellowship with Him. " If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light, " is a principle as true in scripture study as in walk ; nor could one wish it otherwise : it would be a premium to unspirituality.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE YEAR-DAY THEORY.

It has now been shewn that, though there may be special characteristics in the symbolical visions of Daniel and the Revelation, there is no ground for the notion that they relate to gospel times, still less that they present the church's predicted history on earth from the close of the Jewish dispensation to the second coming of our Lord. There is a transition of the greatest importance on which the details of these visions converge—an interval which has for its main object to disclose the consequences, on the one hand of Israel's evil and ruin, and on the other of Christendom's. God has taken care that the church should not be without divine light on its path, but He has done so with perfect wisdom so as not to interfere with its own proper and peculiar privileges; whereas the interpreters of almost every school have sacrificed them to their theories, overlooking the true scope of the book.

It is quite true then that the difficulty is due, not so much to the various and complex nature of the symbols themselves, as to the spiritual condition of the readers and the moral character of scripture itself, judging as it does the degeneracy and corruption of Christendom. It carries the war at once into the strongest fortresses of ecclesiastical pride and christian worldliness. The scriptures, predictive or not, which reveal Christ rejected on earth and glorified in heaven, are as obnoxious to pro-

fessing Gentiles as those of His humiliation and cross were to the unbelieving Jews. In either case faith in God is called for; in the gospel especially unsparing judgment of self and separateness from the world. This is so distasteful to flesh that one need not wonder if souls shrink back from the truth which exposes their unfaithfulness, and either neglect the Apocalypse or take up schemes which allow more room, for human energy and distinction on the one hand, or for earthly ease on the other. If Christ's glory were the one object, there would be more simple subjection to the truth; and it would soon be seen that, as Daniel unfolds the times of the Gentiles on the proved downfall of the Jews, so John gives us the judgment first of Christendom, next of the world, though not without dealings of rich mercy toward the faithful at all times, to His glory who was cast out from the earth, and is now in heaven.

I. Let us proceed however to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the hypothesis called popularly the year-day theory, as one not only long held by Protestants but claiming of late to have its basis made sure and simple by scripture proof. It is supposed to rest on these maxims:—

1. That the church was intended to be kept in the lively expectation that Christ who had ascended would speedily come again.

2. That in the divine counsels a long period of near 2000 years was to intervene between the first and second advents and to be marked by a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles.

3. That, in order to strengthen the faith and hope of the church under the long delay, a large part of the

whole interval was prophetically announced, but in such a manner that its true length might not be understood till its own close seemed to be drawing near.

4. That in the symbolical prophecies of Daniel and St. John other times were revealed along with this, and included under one common maxim of interpretation.

5. That the periods thus figuratively revealed are exclusively those in Daniel and St. John, which relate to the general history of the church between the time of the prophet and the second advent.

6. That in these predictions each day represents a natural year, as in the vision of Ezekiel; that a month denotes 30, and a time 360 years.

Such is the general nature of the theory and of its foundations. Its statement is supposed to remove at once the main difficulties that have been felt; as for example concealing the length of the delay when the knowledge might have been injurious, and revealing it when once it became a help to the church that it should be known.

The answer however is that, as Daniel contemplates manifestly only the Gentile powers of the world and Jewish saints, with the mass of the people apostate, so the Revelation does provide for the church's direct instruction as such in the seven epistles of Revelation ii., iii.—epistles which applied at once to the seven literally addressed assemblies of St. John's day in proconsular Asia, but surely also meant in a mystery to embrace the successive need of saints on earth as long as the Lord has any here below possessed of similar privileges and with like responsibilities. It is only when these seven states could be looked back on as fairly developed that

God permitted the evidence to be at all distinct and complete ; that is, when the light derived from the messages would strengthen rather than weaken our waiting for Christ day by day. In this point of view we see that the direct bearing of the prophetic visions is on the same elements as in Daniel, Israel and the nations, with the aggravated guilt of having despised the grace proclaimed in the gospel as well as exemplified in Christ and even in the church while here below. The times and the seasons are or ought to be well known to us, but about the earth and the earthly people. Those who belong to heaven are not so regulated. The prophetic dates therefore are about suffering Jewish or their Gentile oppressors. Those who apply them to the church ignore its heavenly title, and the fact that, when they apply, the heavenly redeemed are demonstratively on high, not here below. We may dismiss the clashing of swords between Mr. Mede or Dr. Maitland, their defenders or their assailants. Protestant or Romaniser, neither of them really understood the nature of the church as distinct from the Jew and the Gentile, and consequently they are almost equally dark as to the prophetic word.

II. On the nature of the evidence to be expected we need not dwell. It is freely granted that there may be a literality in interpreting no less spurious than the so-called spiritualising. We have to weigh on the one hand whether the form be simple or symbolic ; but we have to discern on the other whether a particular part belong to the vision or its divinely given interpretation, bearing in mind the fundamental fallacy of expecting no more from the words of God than from the writings of

any man as such. Whatever is conveyed in a specially mysterious form should be weighed proportionately. The least change in scripture intimates an adequate design on God's part.

III. The general character of the passages themselves has next to be considered. Do they occur in the explanation or in the vision to be explained? Are they worded in the most simple, equal, and natural terms; or do they bear plain marks of a singular, uncommon, and peculiar phraseology, perhaps even prefaced by words importing concealment?

The following are all the passages in Daniel and St. John to which the year-day principle has usually been applied:—

(1.) Daniel vii. 24–26. (2.) Daniel viii. 13, 14, 26. (3.) Daniel ix. 24–27. (4.) Daniel xii. 5–9. (5.) Daniel xii. 10–13. (6.) Revelation ii. 10. (7.) Revelation ix. 5, 10. (8.) Revelation ix. 15. (9.) Revelation xi. 2, 3. (10.) Revelation xi. 9–11. (11.) Revelation xii. 6. (12.) Revelation xii. 14. (13.) Revelation xiii. 6.

That a mysterious character attaches to all or almost all these expressions of time naturally insinuates something more than the barely literal dates. The general application then of the longer computation may be allowed; but one must not thereby set aside the brief and definite periods of the closing crisis.

IV. The general symmetry of the sacred prophecies is supposed to yield a presumption as strong against the shorter acceptance of these numbers as in favour of the longer view. It is urged that, when a declaration of future events is attended also with one of definite

seasons, one expects some degree of correspondence between the two parts of the revelation; and that scripture precedent confirms this; as in the one hundred and twenty years' delay of the flood, the four hundred years and four generations of sojourn in Egypt, the forty years in the wilderness, the sixty-five years before Ephraim's captivity, the seventy years' captivity of Judah, the forty years of Egypt's desolation, the seventy weeks before Messiah's kingdom with its minor terms, the three days of our Lord's burial, and the seven years to follow on Israel's restoration. (Ezek. xxxix.) In these an evident proportion is held to exist between the time predicted and the event announced; whereas it is argued that in the twelve or more specified seasons which extend from Cyrus to the second advent, on the shorter reckoning all proportion is lost between the range of the events and the periods entering into the predictions: especially as features even on the surface suggest more than the letter. The answer is that, besides the principle of the break or interruption already seen to obtain in Daniel regularly, which leaves us free to take the times in their strictest force at the end of the age, there is no need to deny the Christian's title to gather help all through from the great prophecies of Daniel and John which contain them.

V. The presumption drawn from the symbolical nature of the books is of a similar kind. Since the prophetic dates are found exclusively in those two books which possess, also exclusively, a symbolical and mysterious character, it is a sufficiently natural inference that those dates have themselves a covert meaning. This may be allowed if one do not get rid of the short

reckoning which finds its limits within the last or seventieth week of Daniel. The reserve of that period (seven years) is surely significant.

VI. Again the dispensation as being one of mystery is pleaded. But the comparison of Daniel xii. with 1 Peter i. 10-12 conveys no thought of the peculiar reference of the times to us. "Prophets that prophesied of the grace toward us sought out and searched out concerning salvation, searching what or what manner of season the Spirit of Christ which was in them was declaring, while testifying beforehand the sufferings as to Christ and the glories after these; to whom it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they were ministering the things which now have been announced to you by those who preached the gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven." Here is no distinct assertion whatever that the times fall within our lines. As often noticed, there are three things: the predictions of old; the gospel now preached in the power of the Spirit; and the future manifestation of the Lord Jesus, when the promises shall be accomplished. It was revealed to them, not that the prophetic dates belong to our day, but that to us, Christians, they were ministering the things now announced by the gospel, not yet the glory in which Christ and we shall be manifested together.

To confound the mystery of God in Revelation x. with Ephesians iii. or even Romans xi. is to display singular lack of discrimination; and this confusion is the reason for the hasty conclusion that the six trumpets and all the numbers connected with them must be contained within the limits of this dispensation.

VII. Their mysterious introduction is the last of the presumptions that the various forms of date in Daniel and the Revelation are not designed for the shorter periods, but in some analogical meaning which may restore their harmony with the wider range of the prophecies they belong to. But we have already conceded that a larger reference may be admitted if the distinct application to the future crisis be kept intact.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YEAR-DAY THEORY CONTINUED.

THE general indications of a figurative meaning having been briefly discussed, let us now as briefly notice the special evidence for the year-day system.

I. The prophecy of "the Seventy Weeks" has always held the foremost place in the direct arguments for that view. It is clear that the Weeks in this case are not of days but of years; and it is hence inferred that, since all such predictions of time bear one common character, occur in the same prophets, and have the same general object, they ought to be explained by one common rule. But theoretic consistency has its snares as much as the inordinate love of variety; and it is dangerous in the revelations of God to reason from a special prophecy to others before and after wholly distinct from it. Were the supposed key given in the first of Daniel's prophecies where dates occur, there might seem reason for it: or if it were given at the close, where dates abound, as an appendix of instruction. Whereas it is plain, on the face of the visions, that Daniel ix. has a remarkable isolation in its nature, and might therefore have a special form in this respect, as it certainly has in others. Were the time, times, and half a time, expressed in that way, the argument would be more plausible. It is rash to draw an analogy of sameness, from a single instance differently situated and characterized, to all that precede or follow. There are grounds in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks which forbid the shorter reckon-

ing; but this is not at all the case in any of the others. Hence the resemblance fails, and the reasons which determine in the case of Daniel ix. do not appear elsewhere.

II. The sentence of Israel in the wilderness is habitually cited as another testimony. (Num. xiii. 25; xiv. 33, 34.) It is plain that a retributive dealing with Israel in the desert is a slender ground for interpreting symbolic prophecies given many centuries after.

III. The typical siege of Ezekiel is another witness called to sustain the system. (Ezek. iv. 4-9.) Here again we have to note that an argument is based on this, not for the dates in Ezekiel's prophecy, where it is recorded, but for Daniel and John, where it is not. From such special instances, so carefully explained, it would seem safe to conclude that a day not so applied was to be taken literally, especially if given in the explanation and not in the symbolic form only.

IV. Another argument has been drawn from the words of our Lord given in Luke xiii. 31-33. But it must be owned that the colour for giving this the definite meaning of three years is slight indeed.

Let us turn to the prophetic dates themselves which are in question.

V. The "time, times, and dividing of time" (Dan. vii. 25), may be first considered, as it is thought to contain many distinct proofs to confirm the year-day theory, and to refute the shorter reckoning. The peculiarity of form is due to the prophetic style, which loves to arrest the attention of the reader, and to suggest matter for reflection, instead of limiting itself to the phrases customary in common life. The comparison of the different phrases for the same period in Revela-

tion makes it perfectly certain that three years and a half were meant, even if there could have been a doubt before, which there was not : Jews and Christians alike accepted the phrase as comprehending that space. It has been already intimated however, that there is no objection to allow of a protracted application in a general way, provided that the crisis be not set aside, as is done almost always by the historical school. And it may be that such a twofold reference accounts for the enigmatic appearance of this date.

VI. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar stands on exactly similar grounds. The seven times were assuredly accomplished in the seven years' humiliation of the great Babylonian chief. It is possible that there may be a prolonged application figuratively to the times of the Gentiles from the beginning to the end of the four great empires.

VII. Without doubt the phraseology is unusual ; but Mr. Mede, the greatest advocate of the year-day system, here allows that the vision applies to Antiochus Ep., and consequently views the date as a brief period only. It seems scarcely worth while to dwell on such assumptions as that the vision is of the restored sacrifice ! before a fresh desolation !! including several centuries !!! not only without scripture but against the text commented on. Such proofs might be multiplied, but where is their worth ? I believe myself that the "many days" are not before, but *after*, the numeral period, and that here, as elsewhere, the vision concentrates on the close, though not without the accomplishment of grave facts comparatively close at hand.

VIII. The oath of the angel in the last vision, and

all the attendant circumstances, are supposed to be in favour of the mystic view of the historical school, and against the brief crisis at the end of the age.

But why the solemnity of the oath should require the lengthy application to the past, and not the awful lawlessness of the future, seems hard to understand. That the deepest interest should converge on the outburst of evil which brings the Lord judicially and in glory into the scene is most intelligible, and the desire be expressed to know how long such horrors are to last before the end come. To the prophet, intensely feeling for the Jews in their sorrow, and wholly ignorant of the present calling from among the Gentiles (not to speak of the one body wherein is neither Jew nor Greek but Christ is all), can anything be conceived more suitable? We may rest assured that 1 Peter i. 12 does not refer to this passage, for the apostle speaks about inquiry among the prophets, not, as here, the celestial beings whom Daniel saw and heard. Nothing can be clearer or more certain than the convergence of the thought here on the end. It is of this only that Daniel inquires, and learns that the words are sealed till then. The point is not the immediate history.

IX. The supplementary dates have been pressed into the same service, and with as little result in favour of application to the past. For, however sorrowful it is to see men so occupied with the world's doings and sayings as to overlook the abyss that is opening, not only for the Jews but for Christendom, the Lord Himself directed attention to this part of Daniel in such a way as to make argument of small moment to the believer. Compare Matthew xxiv. 15, &c., with Daniel xii. 11. What-

ever Antiochus Ep. may have done similarly (Dan. xi. 31), it is certain that there is to be a future abomination of desolation set up in Jerusalem's sanctuary, that a brief but unexampled tribulation will ensue, and that the Son of man will immediately after appear to the deliverance of His elect. The Lord does thus supply the amplest proof that the theory which shuts out the crisis is false, and that the end of the age is precisely the era when these things are to be fulfilled.

X. Of the cyclical character of the prophetic times I would rather avoid speaking. The truth needs no support from science. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Even the sturdiest advocates of the protracted and intervening application have to own here the literality of the specified times, where explanation too had been sought. The mention of so many days does not convey any necessary thought of a prolonged period, but of God's gracious counting up the daily sorrow that must befall those who bore His name, and of the dishonour put on His own sanctuary and sacrifice, after they had too hastily assumed that He could own them as they will be then. The wicked will not care for this, but hail the abominations then to follow; the wise will understand and confide in the word of God which deigns to reckon up the time before deliverance comes day by day. An immense series of years would be cold comfort at such a time.

No doubt the two periods of thirty days, and of forty-five added to the thirty, are a supplement to the times already mentioned, but they are really connected directly with the date in Daniel vii., without any refer-

ence to Daniel ix. (though less obviously, I presume there is a bond between all, namely, the last half week of the seventieth, which is identical with the time, times, and an half, overlapped doubly by the supplemented twelve hundred and ninety and three hundred and thirty-five days, as we have seen). But there is no hint of a long period when these dates proceed, whatever the interval before they begin. Indeed our Lord appears to intimate the express contrary, when He says, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened;" and it is in reference to the same period that, in the Revelation, the devil is represented as come down in great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Does this look like more than a thousand years? Finally, the assurance that the prophet should stand in his lot in the end of those days does not imply that those days are themselves of a longer continuance than might appear from the letter of the prophecy. The long delay was before the days commence, not in their long continuance. The prophet knew well that he lived (then a very old man) at the beginning of the second of those four empires, though he might have no knowledge of the strange vicissitudes of the fourth, and of the mysteries which the New Testament would reveal in due season during its continuance and disappearance, before its revival, and the portentous crisis, terminating in its judgment, when these days have run their course, after which the prophet should stand in his lot.

Thus, even in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, the point is not at all the course of

secret providence in history of which men love to weave systems, but the announcement of divine judgment, when the overt unrestrained blasphemy of the powers makes it morally imperative on God's part. This is the reason why scripture passes so curtly over the long periods of which the natural mind is so boastful, in order to fix attention on the closing scene when the responsible holders of authority come into collision with the God who originally delegated the authority. No one doubts the importance of what God works secretly ; yet it is not of this that prophecy treats, but of His public inflictions when man's evil becomes intolerable by openly denying God and setting up himself instead. And as secret providence is thus excluded from prophecy, still more is the church, whereby God now displays His manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. (Eph. iii. 10.) Even when He does deign to furnish light as to His working in the church during a day of decay, till the spuing out of its last form, He chooses seven existing assemblies, "the things that *are*," as the means of it, so as not to falsify His own principles in the Christian's constant waiting for Christ, and in our having a heavenly position in Him, instead of being an object of prophecy on earth. When the properly prophetic part of the Revelation commences, "the things which must be after these," those who had enjoyed the church's relationship with Christ are seen already glorified on high, and we return to Jews or Gentiles, unjust or righteous, filthy or holy, on earth. The bride is above during the visions of judgment, or at least their execution.

It is no question then of speculating about God's

ways, but of submission in thankfulness, to His word who tells us the end from the beginning, and dwells not on the mere intervening stages which are noticed—if at all—in the most passing way, but concentrates our gaze on the closing conflict between good and evil, when Satan fights out his last campaign against the Lord and His Anointed, and we can the better discern by such an issue the frightful character of wiles which looked specious at an earlier day. The real difficulty to a spiritual mind would be to conceive the Spirit of God occupying, not merely the Christian now but even the godly Jew of old or by-and-by with Gentile politics and the details of their godless history. It is quite simple to understand that all the blessing is not introduced, when judgment intervenes first to destroy the beast and the false prophet, other enemies needing to be put down, other measures necessary to clear away evil and its effects, and that two or three months more beyond the three and a half years are added in this way. But that so seventy-five, or even thirty, years should follow the destruction of the beast and the anti-christ, before the full blessing of the millennium comes in, is a most unnatural supposition; yet it seems inseparable from, and therefore destructive of, the system which interprets these days as so many years.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE APOCALYPTIC NUMBERS.

HAVING briefly examined the reasoning of the historical school as to the numbers in Daniel, we may now consider those contained in the Book of Revelation. The same principle really applies to both; but it may be more satisfactory if we notice what is attempted to be drawn from them in detail.

I. The ten days' tribulation in the message to the Smyranean angel comes first in order. Here it is felt that caution is needed; for men like the late Mr. E. B. Elliott* would carefully eschew such evidence. It is well known that they deny the seven Apocalyptic as-

* The protracted view of the seven churches neutralises Mr. E.'s primary objection to futurism—the supposed instant plunge of the Apocalyptic prophecy into the distant future of the consummation. For the seven churches are believed to bridge the space between the last apostle and the last or unfulfilled week of Daniel's seventy. They fill up the gap between the vision of St. John and the removal of the saints to heaven, where they are seen in Revelation iv., v., followed by the prophecies of God's dealings with men, Israel, and the nations on earth (*but never the church*), in Revelation vi.—xviii., till the Lord and His already glorified ones come forth from heaven to judge the quick, and reign over the earth for a thousand years (Rev. xix., xx.), and the eternal state succeeds the judgment of the dead. The other objections of Mr. E. are of no force; for as many whom he would have called futurists do not identify the Apocalyptic seals with the early predictions of Matthew xxiv., so not a few historicalists allow the literal Israel in the Apocalypse as well as a future personal Antichrist.

assemblies to be types of the main varying phases of the church on earth till the Lord takes His own on high. Here therefore is a rent among both futurists and historicalists, some on the two sides owning, many rejecting, the larger view of these churches. Yet there are those even of the latter school who, in accordance with the acknowledgment of their application to distinct stages in the church's history, interpret these ten days of the ten years' persecution under Diocletian, the most remarkable in the early times of the church. So, after speaking of the Seventy Weeks, the late Mr. G. S. Faber says: "We find likewise that the Apocalyptic ten days' persecution of the church of Smyrna has been similarly proved by the event to mean, not a persecution of ten literal days, but a persecution of ten mystical days; that is to say, the persecution of ten years which is recorded by Eusebius, and Lactantius, and Orosius." (Sacred Calendar, i. 45, 46.) Homogeneity is supposed to require a similar construction of the various other numbers of these two prophets. It is notorious however that many, even in early times, interpreted the ten days of the ten persecutions down to Diocletian, as others recently in more general terms. The real thought appears to give the persecuted the comfort of knowing that it was limited, a meaning familiar to the reader of scripture from Genesis to Daniel. But on the prolonged scheme one need not set aside the general facts more than this.

II. The time of the locust-woe has next to be examined. Here the most natural allusion appears to be the ordinary period during which locusts live to ravage: so should the scourge symbolized by them last, and no

such space as to wear men out. It is but a preliminary infliction, tormenting but not prolonged excessively. Greater judgments must follow: this is the first woe.

III. The time of the second woe, or Euphratean horsemen, is thought to afford another proof, though involved in greater difficulties from the various readings or versions.

The true text is that attested by the Alexandrian and Porphyrian uncials, supported by many cursives, versions, and patristic quotations: *καὶ ἡμέραν*. But **N** and the cursive Cod. Reuchl. omit these words, as does the Complut. Pol., most probably by oversight. The Basilian uncial however, and more than twenty cursives, before *ἡμέραν* intercalate *εἰς τήν*, and six cursives (28, 38, 49, 79, 91, 96) *τήν* only.

Hence Mr. Faber says in a note to page 420 of his Sacred Calendar, ii., "The many erroneous versions of this passage have arisen entirely from improper punctuation. I read the original Greek, pointed as follows: *Καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι, οἱ ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν, καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν, ἵνα κ. τ. λ.* The accusatives, *ἡμέραν* and *μῆνα* and *ἐνιαυτὸν*, I consider as denoting continuance of time, and as depending, not upon the preposition *εἰς*, but upon the verb *ἐλύθησαν*." Hence he would render, "And the four angels, who had been prepared unto the appointed season [which would require, rather *καιρόν* than *ὥραν*] were loosed during both a day, and a month, and a year, in order," &c. Another author of the same school prefers Matthaei's text, framed on the comparatively later, or Constantinopolitan, authorities, and would translate, "the angels prepared for that hour, and (for) that day,

were loosed both a month and a year," evidently to fit in to the supposed period, so as to agree with the three hundred and ninety days of Ezekiel. However it is the less needful to refute this fanciful analogy, as the author himself appears to have abandoned it, and in a more recent work returned to the ordinary text and the common rendering. But it will be observed that all this shews the extreme precariousness of the historical application, and of the effort to extract a chronological period for the Turkman woe, as we may see in the former case, where the school divides into the classes which see either one period of a hundred and fifty years, or two such periods in the same Saracenic woe.

The truth appears to be that in the vision the angels were loosed that were prepared against the hour, day, month, year fixed of God—that is, it is an epoch rather than a period; and this is secured by a single article, which brackets all together. As another remarks, had the article been repeated before each, the ideas of the appointed hour, day, month, and year would have been separated, not, as now, united; had there been no article, we might have understood that the four were to be added together to make up the time, though even thus the *eis* occurring once only would have made some difficulty; for the natural way of expressing such a meaning would be *eis ὥραν, καὶ eis ἡμέραν, καὶ eis μῆνα, καὶ eis ἐνιαυτόν*. If this be so, we must conclude that this phrase in the second woe has no more bearing on the year-day question than the five months in the first. It may be added that, if an aggregated period had been meant, the natural order would have been the inverse

of the actual one, for a year, and for a month, and for a day, and for an hour.

IV. The treading down of the holy city, and the related numbers, we have next to consider. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." (Rev. xi. 2, 3.)

1. It is true that two distinct phrases are used to denote the time, and that neither is the usual phrase in common life. But that this points to the mystical interpretation desired, or accords with it only, is more than should be affirmed. One can understand the time presented in a different light from spiritual motives, and wholly apart from any question of disguising continuance of time. Indeed, if the object were simply the acting on the year-day principle, it would seem more natural to adhere solely to so many days, which is exactly what the Holy Spirit avoids. The variety of forms is therefore adverse to what is sought as evidence. Whether one apprehends justly or not the aim that underlies each variety may be questioned; but it is not a sound judgment that any, or all, of them can be counted inconsistent with the space of three and a half years. The usage depends on other and higher considerations than concealing a long space under an apparently brief one, though this be not absolutely denied. But who does not feel the propriety of telling us how His witnesses prophesied in sackcloth "a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days?" and so of feeding the

mother of the male of might in a place prepared of God in the wilderness, though it be the same space which is styled "a time, times, and half a time" when she is said to flee there, and be fed, away from the face of the serpent? Within these extremes we have the forty-two months, during which it is given to the Gentiles to tread down the holy city, and to the beast to practise or pursue its career.

2. Again, what is there, in the comparison of Revelation xi. 2 with Luke xxi. 24, to prove, or even insinuate, that, because the treading down of Jerusalem stretches over the times of the Gentiles, therefore the treading down of the holy city in the Apocalypse must be equally spun out? It would seem more pertinent, on the contrary, to infer, from the limited terms of the Revelation, that the latter must be a brief space as compared with the former. The historical treading is as long as the times of the Gentiles, the symbolic and future is restricted to forty-two months.

3. Is it not weak to argue from the allusion to Elias, in the account of the witnesses, that the period is presumably twelve hundred and sixty years? Undoubtedly the time of famine in that prophet's day is twice mentioned in the New Testament as lasting "three years and six months;" but the same term need not be used in a prophetic book if the time here were identical: other reasons, as we have seen, might operate to modify the expression. And, granting the typical character of his history, it is straining matters to infer that the time of the witnesses must be an immensely larger, as well as analogous, period.

4. In the Gospel of Matthew three days and three

nights are predicated of the Lord's burial. This style of speech was according to Jewish reckoning, which counted even a small fraction of a day before sunset, or another after it, as a night and day respectively. The principle involved was that of a full witness to His death. In the Revelation it was no longer a question of this, but of such a computation as suits and is intelligible to men at large.

V. The wilderness abode is of the mother, not of the bride; of Israel, not of the church. (Rev. x. 12.)

1. The symbolical teaching therefore points away from the church to the ancient people of God, when they once more enter the field of divine dealing in the latter day; and thus the presumption is rather against, than for, the year-day.

2. The woman is no doubt a *miniature*, but of Israel at the end of this age; and thus the plainest consistency with facts demands that the time should be taken in its literal import. See Daniel vii., xii.

3. The distinctness of the phrases denoting the same time in no way betokens a prolonged mystical period, their unusual form being due to reasons of a spiritual, and not merely a chronological, character.

4. Further, there is a most express intimation in Revelation xii. 12, which seems to forbid the lengthening out of the times into a very considerable portion of the world's history. The reason for the great wrath of the dragon is said to be because, when cast down, he knows that he has "but a short time." It would require strong proof to shew that this means, not three years and a half, but twelve hundred and sixty.

There is nothing in the Old Testament predictions

about Israel which could lead us to gather that there will be again a delay of even forty years, as of old, in the wilderness, though we know from Ezekiel xx. and Hosea ii. that God will plead with them there once more. There is quite a different object in such scriptures as 1 Corinthians x. and Hebrews iv., which refer to the Christians apart from time, and not to Israel in the future crisis (as in Rev. xii.), subject to times and seasons. To say that there is a designed coincidence between this chapter and the texts in Numbers, Ezekiel, and Daniel ix., usually cited for the year-day, shews a warm imagination in quest of constructive evidence: what else? It is in vain to eke out an appearance of proof by alleging that, as the unbelief of Israel turned the forty days of search into forty years of wandering, so the similar unbelief and corruption of the church has turned the twelve hundred and sixty days expressed on the surface of the prophecy into those twelve hundred and sixty years of actual delay and desolation which lay couched beneath the expression, and have been slowly fulfilling into the course of divine Providence. This is rhetoric, not even logic, still less scripture. For the woman, mother of the glorified Man in Revelation xii., is beyond doubt not the church but the Jewish people — first, as seen in God's mind and purpose; then in the latter-day trouble through which she must pass, though strong and rapid means of escape from Satan's murderous malice be provided of God. In short, the argumentative or rather fanciful application to the church is the merest and most fatal mistake, not of details merely, but of the entire object of the chapter.

VI. The close of the mystery of God, and the oath that announces it in Daniel x. 5-7, are supposed to supply another proof, less evident perhaps at first sight, but which on examination is said to be of the strongest kind, when compared with the parallel text in Daniel xii. 5-8.

1. It is true that this oath, in the most general view of its meaning, denotes the shortness of the delay, and the impending close of the mystery of God. "There shall be delay no longer." But it is a mistake to think that this implies the *six trumpets* to have been really a time of long-suffering, still more that the previous delay in the course of those trumpets had been of long continuance, and, most of all, that this of itself can accord only with the larger interpretation of the times. Nothing hinders our believing that the time of long-suffering preceded the Apocalyptic judgments, that these follow in quick succession, but that the last introduces the reign of God when evil is set aside for the world finally.

2. The oath in Revelation x. unquestionably resembles that in Daniel xii., though each has its points of grave distinction. But the more august and peremptory is that in the Apocalypse, the less does it lend itself to affording evidence of a chronological sort.

3. This conclusion is refuted by the words themselves. It is well known that the Authorized Version of the clause is untenable, suggesting an unfounded contrast of "time" with eternity as if instantly to follow, whereas a whole millennium and more must intervene. Besides, *χρόνος* is not used in this abstract way, but for a long, or short space, a lapse or interval, and hence delay ;

and this as pointedly is contrasted with *καίρος* in Daniel, which means not mere duration of time, but a set time and hence "a year." It is in evident allusion to Revelation vi. 11, where it was told the earlier martyr-band that they must rest *ἐν χρόνῳ* [μικρὸν], a while, or space "longer;" whereas the oath now runs that *χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται*, "there should be no longer delay." It is strange that Dean Alford, who agreed in this correction, should nevertheless have given, even in the third edition of his Greek Testament (1866), the same erroneous version as the Authorized; but he sets it right in his small Testament, compared with the Greek (1870), "there shall be delay no longer." It has been objected indeed, that this does not convey the full meaning of the oath, and for two reasons: first, that the narrative in the following chapter implies some measure of delay, even after this announcement; and, secondly, that the analogy with the oath in Daniel is almost entirely destroyed. But the answer is, first, that the *terminus a quo* of no delay is the days of the voice of the *seventh* angel when he should sound the trumpet, as he was about to do, whereas the main part of the following chapter *precedes* the third woe, as any one can see by inspection; and thereon, when the second is past, follows quickly the seventh trumpet, which does introduce the closing scene forthwith; secondly, general scope and minute phraseology stand here in marked contrast, not analogy, with the oath in Daniel, as already noticed. A more correct and consistent version therefore cannot be looked for.

4. With these convictions we cannot but discard the strange rendering of "A TIME no longer," a version

which is contrary to all scriptural usage, and satisfies not a single condition of the text.

5. The use of the word in Luke i. 57; Acts i. 7, iii. 21, vii. 17; Galatians iv. 4; 1 Thessalonians v. 1, is too obviously different to require detailed argument. Nor can any words either sanction or disguise the confusion of it with *καίρὸς*, as if they could equally bear the same interpretation. Even the very few who contend for the interchange evidently feel the difficulty, which is in no way removed by their reasoning. For the contrast with the Apocalypse is evident in what follows: compare Daniel xii. 9 with Revelation xxii. 10. And the comparatively narrow compass of the oath in the Old Testament prophet is as noticeable as the breadth and depth of that in the New. The strict correspondence of the two oaths is therefore fallacy, so transparent that perhaps overzeal in controversy can alone account for the assertion. Nor again is it true that *χρόνος* and *καίρὸς* are so nearly allied in their meaning that the difference vanishes in a correct version. It is only to deceive oneself if one reasons from the four places in the New Testament where our translators have loosely given *season* for *χρόνος*, as in every one it should be while, or time, or space; equally so to infer from the sixty places where they translate *κ.* by *time*, that the distinction between them is evanescent. No scholar who has weighed this usage would deny their distinctive propriety in every instance, as the Christian ought to believe it, because he is certain of God's wisdom in every word He has written. It is only a lax rendering therefore which seems to assimilate the two words.

6. But the absurdity of the effort will be made appa-

rent if one were to give to Revelation vi. 11 the sense sought to be imported into Revelation x. 6; and the instance ought to be the fairer test, inasmuch as the one may be justly reckoned to refer to the other. What would be thought, then, of imposing on the earlier text the meaning of resting longer for a year, be it of days or years, until both their fellow-bondmen and their brethren, who were about to be killed as they, should be fulfilled? Every intelligent mind would scout such a sense of Revelation vi. 11; yet there is as much, or as little, ground for so understanding Revelation x. 6. Not a single instance of *χρόνος* occurs in scripture approaching the desired meaning. The demonstration is complete therefore, that *χρόνος* lends no help to the scheme which denies the future crisis of three and a half years, and makes of it an interval of many centuries.

VII. The duration of the sixth, or rather seventh, head of the beast (Rev. xvii. 6–11) has long been thought to furnish another reason for the longer reckoning. But the argument is a mistake. The sixth king, or form of Roman government, was the then existing imperial, as distinguished from the five already fallen; the seventh, when he came, was to remain but a little while, that is, as compared with the previous state. The eighth, who is also of the seven, is characterized, not by remaining a little while, but by going into perdition; let his remaining be ever so short is not the point, but his coming out of the abyss and going into perdition in a way altogether characteristic. What is there, then, in this really to confirm the year-day theory? The seventh head has a brief continuance, as compared with the preceding heads, and certainly the

sixth or imperial; or with the eighth, and its awful source and end peculiar to itself! There is not a word implying that the time of the last must be greater than a few natural years.

This may suffice to shew how little real ground there is to boast that the evidences for the year-day theory are full, clear, and unambiguous. The presumption is arbitrary that the dates have some secret meaning; and there is no such thing as a plain and certain key of interpretation appointed of God, which explains the transactions of modern history. When we proceed to look more closely into the particular passages where the dates occur, they appear to yield decisive opposition to the system which denies the brief crisis at the end of the age, and sees only the protracted history of Christendom, in their occurrence.

CHAPTER XV.

THE YEAR-DAY THEORY CONCLUDED.

THE direct arguments for the denial of the future crisis, in order to make out the protracted historical reckoning of prophetic times as the true meaning of scripture, have now been briefly met; and many of the usual pleas have been shewn to be groundless. But there are a few others, differing from those we have just noticed, which call for a short examination, especially as one cannot but reject the pseudo-literal narrowness of the futurists quite as much as the vagueness of their adversaries.

There is no need to dwell minutely on the conflicting theories on either side, which owe their rise to ignorance of scripture and of the power of God. A few remarks may suffice for the review of what remains to be noticed.

I. The uncertainty about the ten kingdoms does not seem so small a matter as the historicalists like to think, but the allegation against it of their adversaries is not an objection of much weight. It is plain and has been reasoned out, that the prophecy itself points to temporary changes by marriage or alliance in Daniel ii., and by uprooting of no less than three horns before the little horn which came up among the ten in chapter vii.

There is a far graver obstacle to the providential scheme in the fact that, in the prophecy, the ten horns compose the instruments of the power of the fourth

beast in its last phase ; whereas in the history, which some regard as its fulfilment, they are the separate kingdoms which the barbarians, enemies and destroyers of the Roman empire, erected on the ruins. This is strengthened by the intimation of Revelation xvii. 12, that the ten horns of the close receive authority as kings one hour with the beast—not especially *at*, or merely so, which would require the dative, but the accusative, *for* one hour (*μίαὺν ὥραν*). They have received no kingdom as yet : when the beast or Roman empire revives, they will. When the beast originally had its way, there was no such division. The Cæsars governed an undivided empire. When the Germanic and other kindred hordes broke up the empire, they may have formed some ten kingdoms, less or more, in the West ; but the empire was gone, save in name. There was no such thing as the co-existence of an imperial system with its head, and of these ten kings animated with the one policy and purpose of giving their kingdom to the beast. It will be so when “the beast that was and is not” “shall be present,” before he goes to destruction, God putting it into the heart of the no longer jealous Western powers to do His mind, and to do one mind, till His words shall be finished.

But this future condition is as far from the present or mediæval division into separate kingdoms as the old undivided Roman empire differs from both. Now the Spirit of God in Daniel clearly contemplates as the full meaning of the prophecy the same state of things as John does in the Revelation, where there is an imperial chief directing the united energies of the ten kingdoms of the West, which, in any proper or full sense, is in

neither the pagan times nor the papal, but in the future only. The utmost which can be allowed is, that the papacy may have shadowed in part the enormities of the little horn in Daniel, and of the beast in John ; but assuredly the complete fulfilment awaits the final crisis, when that empire, which smote the Lord Jesus of old in humiliation, will rise again from the abyss to oppose Him as He comes again in glory, but must go into perdition. This is a far more serious objection to the system which sees only an immense web of providence in past history, and it is riveted, not removed, by the most exact review of the prophetic word. Nothing that has already been exhausts the vision.

II. Much has been said of late for and against the true *terminus a quo* of the twelve hundred and sixty years. But some, who reasoned from its uncertainty to overthrow the historical school, seem to have misunderstood the meaning of the prediction. Thus, if the saints have been for ages given over to the blasphemous little horn of Daniel vii., it was thought incredible that the church should be at a loss *when* and *how* the change happened. Many, it was urged, assert that it is ; others are as fully convinced that it is not ; and nine-tenths stand silent, avowedly unable to give any opinion on the subject. “ They may, or may not, be in the hands of the little horn, and he may, or may not, be wearing them out, for anything they know. They hope and believe that they are the saints, but whether the beast is making war with, and has overcome, them, they cannot tell ; it is a deep, curious, and litigated question, and one on which, among so many conflicting opinions, they never pretended to form a judgment for them-

selves." Dr. Maitland's retort has embarrassed not a few. The fact, however, is, that the prophet means that not the saints, but the times and laws, were to be given into the hand of the little horn. God does not let His people out of His own hand. On the other hand, the giving of the times and laws into the hand of the little horn is a very different thing from the pope's perversion of the prophecies, and wresting the promises of the future glory of the kingdom to the present grandeur and dominion of Romanism. And, whatever be the guilt of forbidding marriage to the clergy, or, yet more, of annulling the rebellious sin of idolatry by what we may call christening images, of heterodoxy and lying pretension in the Mass, of refusing the cup to or shutting up the Bible from the laity, and of sanctioning troops of false mediators in the worship of saints and angels and Virgin, it is not true that every feature of the prophecy finds its counterpart in the Roman papacy. It is in vain to say that the little horn claims the office of a *seer*, who has full insight into divine mysteries; and of a *prophet*, as infallible interpreter of the divine will. This is a true description of the pope, not of the little horn, which symbolizes a king, or rather emperor, not a bishop—a king, small at first, but not always, before whom three of the ten fell, and who wields the force of all the rest, rising up to the greatest height of his power before he is cast down for ever by divine judgment, and the beast given to the burning flame. "Eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things," in this horn, do not warrant the notion of an episcopal any more than of a prophetic dignitary. The symbol attributes high intelli-

gence to this Roman chief, as well as audacity of speech, which takes the character of blasphemous pride against the Most High. (Cf. Dan. vii. 11, 25.) He assumes the power of changing times and laws, like Jeroboam. (1 Kings xii.) Only this will be done by the emperor of Rome dictating to the Jews in Jerusalem, and changing the divinely-enjoined feasts and institutions given to that people. One may compare with this the last verse of Daniel ix., where he is said to cause sacrifice and oblation to cease "in the midst of the week," which would coalesce with the beginning of "a time, and times, and the dividing of time."

Nor is it faith to plead the superior reasonableness of giving these predictions for many generations, rather than for one only. This is to make the actual circumstance outweigh the communication and enjoyment of God's mind, and is opposed to all that is really spiritual. Our notion of utility is apt to mislead, guided as it ever is by mere reason. The question for a believer is the true meaning of the word, the intention of God Himself, which the Holy Spirit will surely unfold to those whose eye is, by grace, single to the glory of Christ. It does not commend itself to the ear of faith, when the effort is not to vindicate the prophecies from the guesses of men, but to reduce them to the same uncertainty as the twelve hundred and sixty days among historical commentators. Such reasoning ought to warn souls that it is the spirit of man which is at work, and not the Holy Ghost.

III. Of the repeated failures in the predicted close of the twelve hundred and sixty year-day system others have said enough. They are notorious. Yet they

have found an apologist, who argues that these successive interpretations, mistaken as they were, are just what it was reasonable to expect. This might be, if prophecy were no such thing as God's word, or if we had not the Holy Spirit of God to give us the truth of it. In human things man progresses gradually, and the sense of past failure stimulates to future success: is it so in divine things? Is it true that, only by such failure and men's gradual approach to a correct view of the times and seasons, could the two main purposes have been fulfilled—growing knowledge of the prophecy, with a constant and unbroken expectation of the Lord's coming? To the Christian who repudiates the jarring schools of men it does seem no light instance of the irony observable here below, that Protestants should boast of a year-day theory, as applied to the time, times, and a half, which confessedly appeared about the year 1200; that they should avow the uncertainty of the ten kingdoms; and that they should cry up a few apparent successes, spite of a thousand mistakes, in their application.

The effort to retort failure on those who, from apostolic times, have been awaiting the Son of God from heaven, is as unworthy as it is baseless. For, while the apostle Paul, for instance, taught the saints to be with himself ever looking for Christ, there was the most complete care never to connect Christ's coming for us with a single date. The times and seasons are, without exception, bound up with the trials and deliverance of the Jews, never with the church.

This, it will be seen and felt, goes to the root of the year-day system, when it takes the place of being the

true and full aim of the Spirit in the prophetic visions. Hence, the more closely Daniel is searched, the more it will appear certain that the church is never contemplated as the object directly concerned in the scenes there disclosed to the view of faith. Again, the Apocalypse affords still more positive instruction, because therein we have a protracted scheme of the churches here below as "the things which are;" after which no such state is known any more, but a new company is seen for the first time in heaven, and the old distinction of only Jews and Gentiles follows on earth, with the most marked absence of the churches. Yet, singular to say, total failure in apprehending this, the broadest and weightiest lesson of the Revelation, pervades the opposing parties of futurists and historicalists alike.

Nor is it here only that they are almost equally mistaken, but also in confounding the christian hope with the prophetic word, a distinction which runs through the New Testament, from John's Gospel, and before it, to the Revelation, but formally distinguished in 2 Peter i., as in fact the apostle Paul does in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1, 2; for he beseeches the Thessalonians by the coming of our Lord, which is to gather the saints on high, not to be soon troubled, as though the day of the Lord were present—that day of solemn judgment for the earth, and men on it, of which the prophets had very fully spoken. So the apostle of the circumcision reminds his brethren that we have the prophetic word more firm (that is, confirmed) by the scene witnessed on the holy mount of transfiguration, to which they were doing well in paying heed, as to a lamp or candle shining in a dusky place, till day dawn and the day-star

rise in their hearts. Those who knew Old Testament prophecy were thus encouraged in holding it fast ; but it was at best a light for this scene, now wrapped up in gloom, but soon to enjoy the reign of Him whose right it is ; and they should desire another light, as much brighter as that of day exceeds a lamp however excellent, and that too shining from, and centring in, Christ above, the day-star, whom we look for from heaven before the terrible day of the Lord come upon the world. The heavenly hope rising in the heart is thus wholly distinct from prophecy which tells us of the judgments which usher in the day of Jehovah on the earth. But of this most sure distinction, momentous as it is, not only for the affections but also for true intelligence, it would be hard to say which of the two contending schools is farthest from the truth. In general they are on the same ground of confusion in this respect, though most evidently wrong are they who are the boldest in saying, My Lord delayeth His coming. May neither of them say it in the heart, whatever be the faultiness of their systems!

Where is the scriptural intimation of gradually increasing light from prophecy to sustain the lively expectation of the Bridegroom's coming for us? The analogy of providence has nothing to do with what is a matter of His word addressed to hearts animated with divine love and hope. To unbelief, no doubt, this may seem general and vague ; not so to those who, with bridal affections, have the Spirit prompting the cry, Come. If it is a mere question of reasoning from a literal sense of the words, hope must wane away, and each succeeding generation feel less and less warrant

for inferring the nearness of the advent. Hence the theory is that prophetic dates must dawn with a gradually increasing light in order to quicken the church's hope, which had otherwise lapsed into more and more indifference; and it is confidently affirmed as a fact, that ever since the Reformation those who have most studied the prophetic dates, as an actual chronology of sacred times, have been the main instruments in awakening the church to a lively expectation of the coming of Christ.

Very different is our Lord's own representation. The virgins who at first went out with their lamps to meet the Bridegroom, while He tarried, all slumber and sleep. Surely this condition of slumber, as regards the hope of our Lord's return, characterized Christendom long after the Reformation, and down till our own times. However this may be, at length follows (not prophetic research, but) a cry at midnight, Behold the Bridegroom! go ye out to meet Him. It is this really which accounts for the present activity of wise, and even foolish, virgins. The cry is gone forth, but it is at midnight, not the flattering notion of a time of increased light gradually bringing in the day.

Certainly the prophetic word, when studied in faith, gives one to judge principles now at work, it may be hiddenly, by God's revelation of their full fruit and of His public dealings at the end. The effect is to separate one to Himself from the scene ripening for judgment. But the coming of the Lord for His own is associated with His love, and the highest enjoyment of His glory with Him in the Father's house, with moral feelings and practical effects of another character, higher

and more intimate, far above the prophetic word and its solemn announcements, however right and glorious. To confound the Christian's hope with prophecy, to supplement the state of the apostolic church with the fuller light of the present, to assert that the history of the year-day expositions accords in the closest way with these truths, like successive steps towards the just apprehension of the course of divine Providence, seems as distressing in its ignorance as in its presumption. It was a false alarm as to the day of the Lord, not excitement about His coming, which shook the Thessalonians. There is in scripture no protraction of His coming, always and only a lively anticipation of it contemplated, and this up to the last chapter of the Revelation, though we have there plenty of times and seasons revealed before His day. It is the year-day theory which tries to conciliate errors and simply misses the truth.

The supposed successes of Protestant interpreters call for few remarks here, though open to not a little assuredly. Suffice it then to say, that the chosen anticipations drawn from prophecy, which have proved so singularly correct in their main features, are these :

First, about the year A.D. 1600 Brightman calculated in his commentary that the overthrow of the Turkish power would occur A.D. 1696. In the year 1687 Dr. Cressener renewed the prediction, placing the time a year earlier, but restricting it to the close of the year of the "Turkish encroachments," or the last end of their "hostilities." This is caught up as in almost exact accordance with history, because the year 1697 was marked by that most signal victory of Prince

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Eugene over the Turks, which has proved the final limit to their aggressions upon western Europe. Bengel and Fleming are brought in to swell the train.

Here are the words of Brightman (p. 171, ed. Amst. 1611): "The execution of the commandment lighting upon the year 1800, by due consent of all history-writers; when their domesticall dissensions being appeased, and all consenting to the empire of the Ottomans, they might freely bende themselves with all their power to enlarge their borders, and some time at length creape out of their narrow straightes. How long time this power given to the Turks should continue is declared in the next words, *prepared at an houre, and a day, and a month, and a yeere*, which so exact description pertaineth to the comfort of the godly whom the Spirit would have to know, that this most grievous calamity hath her set boundes, even to the last moment, beyond which it shall not be continued. Which indeed seemeth to be the space of three hundred ninety and six yeeres, every several day being taken for a yeere, after that manner which was interpreted the monthes before." Thus he makes it out: from A.D. 1800+396 A.D. 1696; or as he says on Revelation xx. 3 (p. 650), "if we follow the reckening of the Julian yeeres, the impious kingdom shall not be prolonged beyond seven yeeres; *then utterly* to be abolished without so much as the footsteps of his name after him." It will be judged hence how far it is candid to say that Brightman's anticipation was verified. Was there indeed such an extirpation of the Turkish name (not to speak of 1696, but) in 1697? Was it singularly correct in its main features?

The fact is that Brightman taught that the thousand years' reign began in the year A.D. 180, and that the first resurrection belonged to the nations of Europe (p. 656); that three hundred years had then passed since that resurrection (p. 657). "We must also yet tarry some short space before that our brethren the Jews shall come to the faith. But after that they are come, and Christ shall have reigned some ages most gloriously on earth by His servants in advancing His church to most high honour above all empire,* then also all nations shall embrace true godliness," &c. (*ib.*) Hence Brightman was expecting the papacy and the Turk to be utterly abolished shortly. "Untill this victory be gotten, the church yet is in warre, liveth in tents, and sigheth with many adversaries. But after this warre is finished, she shall keep a most joyful triumph, and shall rejoice with perpetual mirth. . . . The truth shall yet raigne among the Gentiles for seven hundred yeeres: how long afterwards among the Jews no declaration doth declare" (p. 658). Is this the Protestant way of keeping the expectation of Christ's coming lively? It may be added in illustration of this chosen expositor's skill in prophecy, that he interprets the destruction of Gog and Magog in Revelation xx. of the overthrow spoken of in Daniel xi. 45; xii. 12; Ezekiel xxxviii. 8, "when the

* One sees by this the worthlessness of Protestant pretensions to spiritual intelligence, or to the least right apprehension of the church's calling here below. Instead of being content down here to suffer with Christ, waiting to be glorified with Him by-and-by, Brightman covets for Protestantism what the popes won for Romanism. And is it to such blind guides as these in prophecy or the church's hopes that some would lead back our souls under cover of attacking futurism?

houre, day, monthe, and yeere of the Turks' tyranny shal come out, to weet, at the yeere a thousand sixe hundred ninetith more or less." Finally, Brightman held that the rising of the dead small and great for judgment before the great white throne means "the full restoring of the Jewish nation" (p. 664).

But the strangest thing of all is that the very advocate who cites Brightman's deduction from Revelation ix. 15, as a conclusive answer to such as have declaimed on the total failure of these prophetic times, had himself rejected the reading, and of course the translation, of the text on which this anticipation was based. Thus while Brightman adopted the common text in that verse, which is essential to his calculations, his advocate, at the time when he commended this calculation as an instance of a distinct and accurate insight into what was coming on the earth, adopted as preferable *Matthæi's* reading. This ought to have made no small difference if it was a date. But we have already shewn that it is not, Brightman and his advocate being alike wrong.

Further, Dr. Cressener, like Brightman, looked not merely for a grave check or severe defeat of the Turks, but their then total overthrow, or as Cressener says in the preface to his *Demonstration* (p. xx., London, 1690), "the last end of all Turkish wars." Was this a just estimate of the battle of Zenta?

Secondly, Cressener in 1687 anticipated "that the true religion will revive again in some very considerable kingdom before the general peace with the Turks or eight years at furthest." "The next year seems in all probability to be a year of wonders for the recovery of

the church." Will the christian reader believe that all this is thought to have proved singularly correct in the revolution of England, A.D. 1688, and the peace of Carlowitz, 1698? Again, Cressener conjectured that before 1800 Rome would be destroyed, and soon after its chief supports, ecclesiastical and civil? Is this correct too?

Further, R. Fleming, jun., in 1700 predicted that the French monarchy, after having scorched others, would itself consume before 1794; as Bengel thought that the papacy would close its chief dominance in 1809. But surely, whatever the coincidence in appearance, our minds must feel that the grounds were as weak as the fulfilment was imperfect.

His Apocalyptical Key, or "Extraordinary Discourse on the Rise and Fall of the Papacy" (my copy is the reprint in 1793 of the original published in 1701) pretends to no more than "*some conjectural thoughts* on this head; for I am far from the presumption of some men to give them any higher character." It may be added that in the same work the author conjectured that a divine judgment to be poured on the dominions belonging to the Roman See would begin probably about 1794, and expire about 1848, which has been regarded as no less strikingly verified than the former thought. But what is the ground of these anticipations? His view of the vials, which, according to him, suppose a struggle and war between the papist and reformed parties, every vial being regarded as the event of some new periodical attack of the former on the latter, but the issue proving at length favourable to the latter against the former.

Hence Fleming considers that the first vial began with the Reformation, and continued about forty years (that is, 1516—1566); that the second ran on thence about fifty years (1566—1617) to the confusion of Spain and partially of France; that the third closed with the peace of Munster in 1648 after Germany was humbled; and that the fourth expired with 1794. "The reason of which conjecture is this; that I find the pope got a new foundation of exaltation when Justinian, upon his conquest of Italy, left it in a great measure to the pope's management, being willing to eclipse his own authority to advance that of this haughty prelate. Now this being in the year 552; this, by the addition of the 1620 [really 1260] years, reaches down to the year 1811, which according to prophetic account is the year 1794." And this involves his idea that the state of Protestantism is what is set out in Revelation xvi. 10; namely, "Atheism, Deism, Socinianism, irreligion, profaneness, scepticism, formality, hatred of godliness, and a bitter persecuting spirit continue and increase among us." But is it really the fact that the French monarchy, after scorching others, did itself consume by doing so, till it exhausted itself towards the end of the eighteenth century, as the Spanish towards the end of the sixteenth?

For my own part I cannot but agree with the more weighty commentators of recent times, that, if we are to apply the vials historically, the scheme of Fleming is a mistake, and that the vials, in a partial way at least, begin with the French Revolution instead of the fourth ending there and then. Napoleon answers thus to the scorching agent, and the blaspheming

sufferers who repented not are chiefly the papal nations of the European continent. Further, it seems superficial to cry up his applying the fifth vial to the years 1794—1848; for unquestionably it is rather since than before that the pope has been so signally ruined in his temporalities, and this by Italy spite of France, of which the conjecturer had not the most distant notion. He had pitched on 1848, reckoning the 1260 years prophetically from 606 when the pope received the title of Supreme Bishop. Then would follow the sixth vial on Mahometanism or the Turks up to 1900, as the seventh up to 2000 by Christ's appearance (though not personally) bringing in the total judgment of Rome, &c., with the millennium afterwards. The first and inevitable result of his system is to set aside the waiting for Christ and to make death the necessary expectation of the Christian. "Though we are not to live to see the great and final destruction of the papacy, the blessed millennium, or Christ's last coming to judge the world, yet seeing death is the equivalent of all these to us," &c. (p. 82.) Is it not strange to hear such a conjecture cited as a witness of the value of the Protestant system by one who avowedly rejects his basis?

Is it right again, to notice the last instance, that one who was perfectly aware of Bengel's chimerical system of Apocalyptic chronology, to which it may be doubted that he converted a single individual of sobriety, should deign to use an example which had no more solid basis than the prognostication of an astrologer?

Pious and learned as the prelate may have been, no one will think that such remarks are too stringent on

his prophetic dates, when it is remembered that he started with the assumption that the famous number of the beast 666 in years=his allotted term of forty-two months.* Hence a *καιρός* is=222 and two ninths years, and of course $3\frac{1}{2}$ *καιροί*=777 and seven ninths; the little time of Revelation xii. 12 (*ὀλίγος χρόνος*)=888 and eight ninths; what he oddly calls the *non-chronus* (or as he thinks in better Latin—which may be doubted—the *ne chronus*) of Revelation x. 6=1111 and one ninth; the *μικρὸς χρόνος* of Revelation xx. 3=half a *καιρός*, strange to say, or 111 and one ninth; the millennium, or *χίλια ἔτη* (though Brightman indeed makes two, the first of Satan bound, the second of the saints reigning)=999 and nine ninths (sic); the *χρόνος*=1111 and one ninth; the *αἰών*=2222 and two ninths, of which he gives $3\frac{1}{2}$ to the world, 7777 and seven ninths or 490 of his prophetic months. As the result, Bengel in his eagerness for dates finds a *chronus* in Revelation vi. 11 (that is, 1111 and one ninth years) from A.D. 98 (a rather early beginning) to 1289 or Innocent III.'s crusade against the Waldenses. The first woe, with its five prophetic months=79 common years, dated from A.D. 510 to 589; the second, with its hour, day, month, and year=nearly 207, from A.D. 634 to 840; the *non-chronus* from A.D. 800 to 1836, within which are placed the interval after the second woe (84—947), the 1260 days

* “*Mensis est pars duodecima anni; annus habet 365 $\frac{27}{80}$ dies; dies habet 24 horas: et huic divisioni naturali respondet prophetica. Porro, cum 42 menses prophetica sint 666 $\frac{2}{3}$ anni communes, longitudo propheti-
corum temporum bene dat sese. In summa, quodvis tempus commune ad tempus propheticum se habet, ut 190 $\frac{1}{2}$ ad 1, sive ut 4000 ad 21.*” Gnomon in Apoc. xiii. 18.

of the woman after the birth of the man-child (864—1521), the third woe (947—1836), the time, times, and half a time, with the beast and his number (1058—1836), the everlasting gospel 1614, the end of the 42 months 1810, the beast from the pit or abyss 1832, the general dates closing with 1836 when the mystery of God is finished, the beast destroyed, and Satan bound.

Apology is due for presenting such a mass of crude and unfounded or rather ill-founded speculation; yet this is the expositor whose opinion that the chief period of papal dominance would close in 1809 is not only cited for the censure of those who objected to the historical system, but said to have *distinct grounds*! The charge of delusion and falsehood brought against these estimates of the prophetic dates, unless advanced with important limitations, is said to be itself false and delusive. This is bold; when it is known that he who thus dogmatizes did not differ from but agreed with his adversaries that Bengel's entire system of Apocalyptic dates has not an atom of truth in it. The Christian will judge from such specimens, which are no doubt the best that could be produced to commend the popular scheme of prophetic chronology, that, if there is little to attract or reward in the expositions of futurists, there is nothing to trust for candour or correctness in the defence of historicalism. One may not look for depth or breadth of truth where the heavenly headship of Christ and the distinctive association of the church with Him are ignored if not denied; but it is painfully instructive to see how special pleading destroys common honesty, and not least in the things of God.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

WE have now briefly examined the leading assumptions of the historical school; we have tested what is peculiar to the system, and have given sufficient evidence to shew its lack of spiritual intelligence, even when, as of late, reasserted with considerable confidence to oppose further light which God has caused to shine afresh from His word. The objections urged by the futurist party may not be always well founded; but a really close search into scripture will prove that they both err by their narrowness: futurism by slighting the prophetic light cast on the past; historicalism by still more serious oversight of what is coming; both by overlooking the heavenly glory of Christ and the church's union with Him in it, as distinct from the past as from the future ways of God on the earth. The extreme advocates on both sides lead equally to unbelief through their one-sidedness. We have seen that the crisis at the end of the age, closed by the Lord's appearing in glory, is the grand point in Daniel and the Apocalypse, as well as our Lord's own prophecy; though there is also a passing notice of the older Gentile empires, to which the world-power was successively assigned by God, when the Jews had proved themselves unworthy by idolatry, as at length by the rejection of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God. Finally, the year-day theory, when applied definitely and in detail

now, we have seen to be as superficial as might be expected from its source in the dark ages.

It is in first or fundamental principles that these schools betray their character. Not only are they narrow, and thus short of the full sphere, but they ignore the divine centre, and fail to distinguish the heavenly circle from the earthly one, the body and bride of Christ on high, from His people and kingdom under the whole heavens, though embracing all peoples and kindreds and tongues. No prophecy of scripture is of its own interpretation; isolate it, as the historical system in general does, from the future coming and kingdom of our Lord, the gathering point of the prophetic word in Old and New Testament, and the Holy Spirit's object is missed, the key lost. You are no longer in harmony with His line and aim who inspired all. Judged by this divine criterion (furnished by the apostle Peter) historicalism is most faulty, though its rival is blamable enough for denying the use of the lamp throughout the night. The spirit of the world, ever magnifying man and the present course of the age, is the main hindrance; as the Spirit of God, who searches all, even the depths of God, alone gives us to know, by and in and with Christ, what has been freely given us of God, and this spoken in words taught, not by human wisdom, but by the Spirit, spiritual things being communicated in spiritual words. Now Christ and His glory are ever before the revealing Spirit; and as His kingdom over (not Israel only, but) all the earth is what all the prophets attest, so the apostles point to His heavenly exaltation and His bride's along with Him.

The obstacle to the truth, then, is far wider and deeper than any party question of polemical divinity; though no doubt, as some few of the futurists have been swayed by the (perhaps unconscious) desire of palliating popery, so many of the historicalists no less by their scarce too strong abhorrence of that soul-en-slaving and idolatrous system. They seem both to have forgotten the maxim which the apostle John impresses on the little children, or the very babes of God's family: "As ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now are there arisen many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour." The futurists think only of the coming antichrist, the historical school are absorbed with the many antichrists. The Christian should not forget, on the one hand, that even now there are many antichrists in being (antiquity being the worst possible disproof of opposition to Christ); on the other, that a great personal antagonist of the Lord is surely coming, of which the many that have been and are should be regarded as signs and precursors, rather than as the fulfilment.

It is confessed, even by the apologist of ordinary views, that there was in the mind of many Christians an exceeding jealousy of all discussion on unfulfilled prophecy. It was thought to be speculative and uncertain, adapted to produce and foster a vain curiosity, and to divert the mind from the duty of practical religion. Hence arose a tendency to dwell only on unfulfilled predictions, to consider evidence as the main benefit to be derived from the study, and to proscribe all investigation of the future as unlawful and pernicious. It is owned that these notions were too de-

fective, and too plainly opposed to the statements of scripture, to endure the test of a prolonged inquiry; and that thoughtful minds, however cautious and devout, could not fail to see that other purposes of equal or greater importance were to be answered by these sacred predictions, warning to the careless, instruction to the faithful, instruction in the nature and outline of coming events, spiritual preparedness, &c., being real objects recognized by scripture itself, and only to be answered by unfulfilled prophecy. Thus evidence was seen to be only a secondary use for the conviction of the incredulous, while the purpose was the help of the believer to enjoy the confidence of Him who revealed all in His love.

Hence, as has been supposed, a natural recoil from the prevalent doctrine which had proscribed the study of unfulfilled prophecy as useless and dangerous, to the opposite extreme, which treated fulfilled prediction as powerless for instruction or profit; and hence also a tendency to transfer as many predictions as possible into the class of unaccomplished prophecies, which might thus be still available for the guidance of the church.

Far from any believer be the thought that the prophetic word has not a decided bearing on the divine side, as revealing God's glory and ways, besides its reference to, or use for, the personal wants of man. All scripture has this twofold character, and prophecy among the rest. But it is not in general seen, whether by futurist or historicalist, that the prophetic word treats of judgments and earthly blessing by God's power and goodness, but does not as such unveil the

depths of God now revealed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (See 1 Cor. ii. ; 1 Pet. i.) It was the prerogative of Christ the Son thus to communicate to His own, in contrast with a prophet or even the greatest born of women, who could not rise above the earth wherein he had his origin, while the Lord Jesus, coming from above, is above all, and testified what He had seen and heard, and the Holy Ghost taught all things about the truth which they could not then bear, besides bringing to remembrance all that Jesus had said. In the communion of this precious and special intimacy stands the Christian and the church ; and hence their exceptional place in relation to the prophetic word, as we have seen in the end of 2 Peter i., where the apostle shews that the believers addressed should heed that word for this dark squalid scene, till daylight dawn and the daystar arise in their heart. Prophecy is an excellent lamp, but there is something yet brighter, the daylight of our heavenly association with Christ Himself on high, source and centre of all (daystar as He is here called), which is far better.

It is this which exempts the Christian from the system of times and seasons, though he is entitled to know them, but to know them as bearing on the earthly people, not on those whose portion is with Him whose light is brighter than the sun at noon. With this accords the fact, that, when we look into the saints contemplated in the details of Daniel, they are found to be Jews, and so are those in the Saviour's prophecy of the dealings with Jerusalem in the end of the age ; only that we hear then of Jews and Gentiles now on earth, but at that crisis not of the church or heavenly

saints, who are previously seen in the Apocalyptic visions glorified, and with Christ above, whence they come with Him in the day of His appearing.

No thoughtful Christian then denies the value of fulfilled prophecy as evidence of revelation. It was really in no small measure the forcing of prophecy to bear on what was not its object, and the popular effort to make it speak of the past and present in gospel times, which largely led to the reaction expressed in Dr. S. R. Maitland's words : " We point the infidel to the captive Jew and the wandering Arab, but who challenges him with the slain witnesses ? We set before him the predicted triumphs of Cyrus ; but do we expect his conversion from the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon ? We send him to muse on the ruined city of David, and to search for the desolated site of Babylon ; but who builds his arguments on the opened seals of the Apocalypse ? And why is this ? I do not speak hastily, and I would not speak uncharitably, but I cannot suppress my conviction that it is because the necessity of filling up a period of twelve hundred and sixty years has led to such forced interpretation of language, and to such a constrained acquiescence in what is unsatisfactory to sound judgment, that we should be afraid, not only of incurring his ridicule, but of his claiming the same license which we have ourselves been obliged to assume. I firmly believe that the error lies in adopting an interpretation which requires us to spread the events predicted respecting three years and a half over more than twelve centuries, and which thus sends us to search the page of history for the accomplishment of prophecies still

unfulfilled." (Enquiry, pp. 84, 85. 1826.) It is not that one cites this futurist leader as laying down principles of sterling value; for his work was much more negative than positive, and he was as much as his adversaries under the idea that the main end of prophecy is to convict unbelievers.

The error lies in two things: first, unbelief of the authority of God's word; and, secondly, ignorance of our privileges as Christians in the perfect favour of God, and unwillingness to accept the truth that the world is awaiting the suspended judgment of God at Christ's return. Those who, justified by faith and in peace with God, stand in His grace and rejoice in hope of His glory, do not need evidence that the word of their God and Father is true, or that the providence of God orders all the varying plans and thoughts of men to the fulfilment of its own deep and wonderful counsels. And for him who knows what it is to walk in the light as He is in the light (the place of every Christian), it is strange doctrine to hear that fulfilled prophecies lend a great help to our thoughts in seeking to attain this holy and divine elevation. It is really by faith of Christ, as possessed of His life and cleansed by His blood. What a descent from His presence thus to history, or the account of all the events of time under the light of the prophetic vision, good as it is; and how painful the effort thus to christen, if one may so say, all the main subjects of classical study and pursuit!

Again, to talk of the sure progress of all history towards its consummation in the kingdom of Christ is very apt to blind men to the fact, that "the times of the Gentiles," under which we live, are really an inter-

ruption in God's ways with men on the earth, a parenthesis rather than the orderly course of things, though a parenthesis since redemption during which a mystery of the deepest grace and richest glory is revealed, a mystery great indeed as to Christ, and as to the church. When our Lord returns, the world will pass under the direct government of God, when Israel and the nations shall be blessed under the glorious Son of man, as of old all fell to ruin which stood on man's responsibility. To blend in such prospects of glory with the whole range of history, to make all the events recorded by profane historians, and by the orators and poets of Greece and Rome, so many pledges to us of the everlasting kingdom, is to confound clean and unclean, and to verge on profanity itself, if it have any definite meaning.

In all this reasoning it is plain that the Protestant is no less dark than the Catholic in seizing the true and special nature of the church. This misleads both the conflicting parties; and it is hard to say which errs most from the truth. Thus we are told by the historicalist that there is in the full provision of divine truth in these fulfilled prophecies an unspeakable exhibition of God's wisdom and love, who, knowing the weakness of our faith as to all the great blessings He has promised, by these connected and continual visions converts every event of providence when fulfilled into a new and fuller pledge of the mercies still only in prospect; and Babylon and Persia, Greece and Rome, Cyrus and Alexander, Antiochus and Titus, the powers that have oppressed or the conquerors that have wasted (not Israel or even saints among the ancient people of God,

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but) *the church!* become tokens of the approach of Messiah's triumphant kingdom. None can be surprised if there be the widest divergence in general doctrine, in worship and walk, in communion and hope, seeing that there is such total ignorance of the church in fact and character. The effect is disastrous in the extreme. As our special relationship to Christ at God's right hand is unknown, so perpetual interest in all the events of past history takes the place avowedly of setting our minds on things above; so too boasting of the whole deposit of revealed wisdom successionaly unfolded from age to age forbids the sense and confession of our actual fallen estate, and the foreboding of the troubles (not of the Jews and Gentiles at the end of the age, but) of the church eclipses the continual looking for the Bridegroom as our proximate hope.

It is indeed solemnly true that there will be a judgment of the quick as well as of the dead, and that the kingdom over the earth covers the space between for a thousand years; that the past is not something extinct and perished for ever, but that every actor shall give account, and every work be manifested before the Lord; but how this teaches us the perpetual interest of the church of God in all the events of past history seems an inference very wide of the premises. The value of Old Testament facts, as well as testimonies, we are best taught in the application of them by the Holy Ghost in the New; but this is a thing very different from our busying ourselves with all the events of past history, or the records of bygone days, as such.

We may notice too that, where the church of God

is relegated to history for its moral lessons, the whole of revealed truth is classed under the law, the gospel, and the word of prophecy, ignoring those writings of the apostles which make known the mystery hidden from ages and from generations. Promises and law, gospel and church, might each and all be distinguished from the displayed kingdom of which the prophetic word speaks so fully. The Old Testament gives us the promises and the law ; the New Testament, consequent on the work of the Son and the mission of the Spirit, gives us the gospel and the church ; while prophecy is found in both, more largely in the Old Testament, when all blessing was future, more profoundly and completely in the New, where what is coming is treated systematically till the eternal day.

As in the New Testament we have the truth in Christ for the individual and the body, so we have not merely this evil or that, but all that opposes itself against the will of God, and this from the first to the last. Hence, whatever be the iniquity of the popish system, the Spirit testifies against all the forms of departure from God and His grace. Thus, in the seven Apocalyptic churches, not to speak of the apostolic epistles, there is a word from the Lord bearing on all which He judged it of special moment to notice ; and the prophecy, strictly so-called, discloses the second beast as distinct from the first, and Babylon so different from the beasts, that she becomes at last the object of destructive hatred to one, if not both. There the varying and opposed evils of men are seen successively, or together, falling under the righteous wrath of God and the Lamb ; while the saints are seen as variously blessed according to the

Father's gracious wisdom, of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named.

Yet will it be found in practice that no one will be found intelligently to profit in any full measure by the Apocalyptic visions as a whole, who is not established in the riches of grace and the counsels of glory, and, above all, in that present sense of association with Christ in heavenly places, which is the central truth of the Pauline testimony. To those who by grace are thus fitted to weigh the book of Revelation, its visions are invaluable, and as instructive as they give solemnity to the spirit and joy to the heart. If the visions were fulfilled, they would be no more effete and worthless than the books of Moses or of the prophetic Judges that followed, which, if read in the Spirit, repay quite as richly, or more so, than the predictions of Isaiah or Ezekiel which remain to be accomplished. But they are, as we have seen, "at hand" in any full sense, not yet accomplished, and so in every way invite and will reward the reader with a double blessing from Him who promised it to such as read, hear, and keep the sayings of that book. To His name be all the praise and glory.

APPENDIX A.

THE prophecies of holy writ may be divided broadly into these two classes: those like Isaiah's, which were addressed to the people of Israel while standing in recognized relation with Jehovah as His people; and those like Daniel's, which suppose the Jews disowned for a season till grace restore them in the latter day, placing them under Messiah's reign and the new covenant. Of old God had governed Israel as His people, and the pavilion of His presence in their midst was its sign. The present interval, humbling to conscience and solemn to faith, is marked by the departure of the Shekinah till its final return never more to leave the city and sanctuary where the eyes of Jehovah rest continually; and during that space imperial authority is confided to four successive and well-known world-powers, the great Gentile empires. This is "the parenthesis," as it has been justly designated; and the term is so suited to maintain a true sense of the peculiarity of the interval, and to hinder forgetfulness of its total difference from the ordinary course of God's direct government of the earth according to the great and regular scheme of prophecy, that it would be most unwise to forego its use because some do not, and others will not, understand it. The "times of the Gentiles" span this remarkable interval, begun by the captivity of Judah under the head of gold, and closed by the destructive blow which the returning Lord, the

Little Stone cut without hands, will inflict on the iron-clay feet, reducing the entire image to powder, before the stone itself expands into a great mountain and fills the whole earth. Then and not before will have come the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. (Rev. xi. 15-18 ; xix. ; xx.)

It is very intelligible that the professing Gentile should revolt at the fact, plainly as scripture reveals it, that, whatever the deep ways and heavenly counsels of grace revealed since Christ came (the whole New Testament indeed), the Gentile empires have merely and precisely the function, under God's sovereign will, of filling up the gap between Israel's fall and their rising again. It is offensive to such as glory in the arts and letters of Greece and Rome, in the sciences and discoveries of modern civilization. Hence wounded feeling proceeds to worse daring, and profanely mocks at this view of the parenthesis, which is the sure representation of God's word, as if it were no more reasonable than a dream of Arabian or Hindoo mythology. But it is foolish to kick against the goad: the fact, humiliating to Gentile conceit and call it as we may, is written indelibly in letters of light.

It is alleged however, in order to reduce the sharpness of the truth and its moral lesson, that, in a sense exactly similar, the whole Mosaic dispensation is itself a parenthesis between the times of the patriarchs and of the christian church; while the millennium is another parenthesis between the dispensation of the Spirit (the reader must overlook so unintelligent a phrase) and the final glory, when the redemption is complete. Now, while in a limited sense this may be

allowed of all economic or mediatorial dealings as compared with the boundless infinitude of eternity, the parenthesis was spoken of as such in respect of God's government of the earth, whether partial or complete, past or future ; which government all the faithful surely believe to be the only normal condition for the world since God deigned to make it His plan. Not only before the deluge but after it, till the call of Israel out of Egypt, God did not govern the earth in this way. Men previously had only to maintain His honour, as we see in Job xxxi. 27, 28 ; but this was soon lost through idolatry, and Abram was called out, the nations being abandoned to walk in their own ways. Hence evidently the patriarch's call was not God's government of the world. On the contrary God, though He left Himself not without witness, as we see in the destruction of the guilty cities of the plain, would not then interfere because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full ; and the wandering patriarchs, so far as they were faithful, had in the land of promise not so much as to set their foot on, though we cannot but discern also, how God suffered no man to do His prophets harm, rebuking kings for their sakes.

But at the Exodus, as is known to all, God judged the nation that oppressed the sons of Israel and brought themselves out of the house of bondage as His people, in whom His government was to be exercised and His ways displayed. And so they were (not merely that secret and ceaseless providence of His which never fails), till by their persistent hopeless apostasy from Himself for idols, subsequently fixed yet more by their rejection of Himself in the person of

His Messiah, they were in the just dealing of God, after unwearied patience, set aside as no longer His people, though still providentially kept apart, until He resumes at length His immediate government of the earth, as He will in Christ returning to reign in the last days.

The gap then, since Israel became Lo-Ammi, till they are restored again and for ever as His people to His land, as the central sphere of His earthly government, is filled up by the four successive beasts or imperial Gentile powers. The regular course of earthly dispensations supposes the throne of Jehovah in Jerusalem; the removal of it when power was committed to the Gentiles is exactly a parenthesis as to His earthly government, which is true of Israel's history neither before nor after these "times of the Gentiles;" for Israel is the exhibition, in the past of failure under law, in the future of power under the Messiah, in respect of God's proper and immediate government of the earth, whereas the intervening Gentile period is its interruption, whatever the wonderful works of God in His grace meanwhile. Yet God has not lost sight of these parenthetical times, abnormal as they are, but inspired Daniel particularly in the Old Testament, and John in the New Testament, to write of them, though in view of the blessing at last of the people still under rejection, as well as of the higher and larger things for which that rejection furnishes occasion. It is our Lord too, who in Luke xxi. vouchsafed to us that very term "times of the Gentiles," which is only another way of describing the parenthesis; though Christians, like the heathen, turn it into pride, overlooking its real nature and denying its importance.

Nothing but this can account for their designating this period "the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy," wholly slighting the fact that far the greater part of the prophetic word bears on the time when God governs the earth immediately from within His people restored and blessed, instead of merely confiding authority meanwhile to powers which from first to last He calls "beasts." The axe may boast against Him that heweth therewith; but saintly minds ought to know better than encourage it.

But it is not true that Daniel ii., any more than chapter vii., contemplates, as the learned J. Mede fancied, a *regnum lapidis*, as well as *regnum montis*. (Works, iv. 743, 744, ed. 1677, folio.) It would be strange indeed if the dream of the heathen monarch had a spiritual view presented which was not vouchsafed to the holy prophet. The idea however is quite unfounded. The first action of the Stone (or in the kingdom of God in Christ) was not to accomplish redemption or to found a spiritual kingdom, but to crush to atoms the imperial Gentile system, especially dealing with the Roman empire in its last shape, after which itself spread and filled the whole earth. Not the gospel but divine judgment effects it. See also Isaiah ii., xi., xxv., lxxv., lxxvi., and a crowd of other scriptures. Does it not seem odd, by the way, to find *Tobit* quoted here as an authority, and at yet greater length in iii. 579, 580?

Within this parenthesis, and inside the bounds of its last clause (the fourth empire of Rome), the gospel or Christianity and the church come in. And just as the ruin of the Jews gave the signal for Daniel's prophecy, so did the failure of the church here below, for the

book of Revelation, which, after its seven epistles and the heavenly episode that follows immediately, shews us judgments on the world summed up at length, in its two chiefs, the apostate first and second beasts, the Roman empire in its last phase, and the false prophet power in the land, with Babylon the great harlot of Christendom.

It is here that men, and even the pious if committed to things as they are, find no little difficulty. Men's will can resist stubbornly, their mind easily raising objections to the truth which condemns them. It is this much more than the symbolical style of the predictions which made Daniel's visions unpalatable to the Jew, and the true scope of the Apocalypse unwelcome to many a Christian. They would like to think present circumstances and that history with which they are most familiar the direct object of God's prophetic survey; they fail to see that its real fulfilment is in the great but brief crisis, after the overcomers (Rev. ii., iii.) are taken to heaven, till Christ and they appear in glory to reign, whatever be the light thence derivable for discerning the principles at work all through our earthly pilgrimage before their full manifestation at the close when judgment comes.

The case was complicated too by a few more or less disposed to palliate Rome, who could detect error in the popular view, and facts as to the future not generally recognized, but who availed themselves of all to undermine truths still more important for their moral bearing on souls as well as on the Lord's glory. With the evil principles of Drs. Maitland, Todd, Burgh, &c., one has far less sympathy than with the honest but imperfect

and, to say the truth, far from intelligent testimony of Mede or Daubuz or their representatives to this day, able and learned as some of them were in other respects. It is forgotten perhaps equally on both sides, that the church, since apostolic days till the Reformation at least, was not in a condition to use the Revelation in general. Certainly the earliest Fathers applied it substantially as the futurists do.

The great pre-requisite for a safe and wholesome study of the prophetic word is a clear apprehension of the difference between the church called by sovereign grace for heavenly places in Christ and the immediate divine government of the world of which the Jews form the nearest circle on earth round the Messiah, according to the purpose and ways of God. (Deut. xxxii. 8.) God has set aside the Jews for their rebellious idolatry and at last their rejection of the Messiah; but He will resume His government of them again, an immediate rule on the earth wholly different in nature, character, and results from the powers that be now, entitled though they are to our submission and honour, however little able to deal with the misery and corruptions of mankind.

Adversaries may talk of wiredrawn abstractions and baseless hypothetical systems; but they are themselves blinded by tradition and self-confidence to a change of the profoundest interest and of incalculable moment, against which no sophistry can prevail for those who bow to scripture. It is the more apt to deceive themselves and others where such unbelief works in men who deny not but hold Christ's future reign over the earth in personal presence and power and glory. For this is

the government of the earth or "the kingdom," of which both Testaments speak, as distinct as possible from the calling of saints from among Jews and Gentiles to be the body of Christ, not of the world even now as He was not, while the anomalous bestial rule still goes on here below.

The truth of the Gentile parenthesis does not make the scheme of God's moral government a piecemeal and fragmentary thing; but a mass of confusion at issue with all scripture they make it who do not discriminate God's calling of the church to heaven from His government by law on earth. Nor can any sentence be worse both in ill construction and violation of truth, than that which assumes one uninterrupted chain of divine government, and ignores the revealed facts of God's rupture of His regular earthly government, of an immense interregnum while the beasts rule, and of God's final resumption of that government at the return of our Lord.

But if we limit ourselves to considering God's moral government, its scheme is perfect. Part of it was to blind Israel, while another work proceeds in the richest mercy to the Gentiles. And prophecy reveals the judgments by which the whole result will be brought about according to God. Meanwhile His providential wisdom and power order all, whatever be the anomalies in the phases of the world's history for nearly 2500 years; and we by His word and Spirit make good His will in the measure of our faith, while evil is not yet put down by the intervention of that power which will bring in the sabbatism that remains for the people of God. The confusion of thought, generally prevalent as

to this, arises from the supposition that God's government has its results now, which it never can have till the manifestation of Christ, in view of whom and for whose glory all has been carried on. To look for its accomplishment in the absence of Christ is a fatal mistake. God's people are not the sun in the solar system of His truth, or of His government; but Christ is. To substitute the first man for the Second is the constant effort and error of the natural mind. It is to prefer guesswork founded on first appearances to demonstrated truth, and to conceive the church to be the centre of movement, instead of knowing it in the true Sun, Christ the Lord.

Undoubtedly the work which God has now at heart in the calling of the church, founded on the accomplished redemption of the Son, and accompanied, nay, effectuated, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, while the gospel goes out to every land and in every tongue, transcends all that ever preceded in His ways. But this in no way interferes with the fact that, as the calling of the church is a heavenly parenthesis, so also are "the times of the Gentiles" a still wider earthly one, which fills the blank in the earth's history since God governed in the midst of His people under law, as He will by-and-by when they are under the new covenant.

This is so true, that we hear of the mystery as to Christ and as to the church, hid from ages and generations—hid in God, not in scripture—not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. It is also said to be made known by prophetic scriptures (Rom. xvi. 25, 26), but these are of the New Testament, and not

of the Old—a notion obscured by the English version —“*the scriptures of the prophets,*” which is unequivocally incorrect, and naturally points to the well-known Old Testament writings and writers,* contrary to the express drift of the context. The apostle constantly cites the Old Testament prophets to vindicate what was not made known there, but what illustrated the truth when the mystery was revealed. Thus proofs of Israel blinded, and of Gentiles called, he does cite as accomplished in the mystery, but in no way as the revelation of it. How do they reveal Christ as the heavenly Head of all creation, and the church, Jews or Gentiles alike, as the one body, His body? But reasoning is needless; scripture is express that the mystery has *now* been manifested.

But it is no slight error that the church is connected with earthly arrangements as Israel was, and self-delusion to confound this, with trials, helps, hindrances, and temptations here below, on the one hand, and on the other hand with preaching the gospel, going out to the heathen, social ties and duties, &c. When and how did God connect His church with the earth? Education and habit may account for such a statement; to faith the word of God never gave it. That historically the church thus fell is true; that Satan so sought, and

* Romans i. 2 does prove that the gospel was promised before by God's prophets; but the difference of phraseology answers to the difference of the subject-matter in chapter xvi. 26. The mystery was hid, not promised, though now manifested by prophetic scriptures, and according to the commandment of the eternal God made known for obedience of faith to all the nations. It is ignorance to confound them.

succeeded in doing so, is plain ; that in a measure of accomplishment it was predicted as the fornication of Babylon with the kings of the earth is not denied ; but is the sufferance of such corruption to be regarded as His sanction ? Is it the form of things produced by His will as that which He would thus make to answer His mind ? The connection of Israel with the earth is God's institution : is Babylon His institution ?

Nor is *our* hope the second advent of the Lord to the earth, as Israel's was His first coming ; it is going up to meet the Lord in the air, and so being ever with Him. To be with Him in the Father's house is no question of dates or prophetic messages. How anyone could mistake the character of Revelation i. 7, for instance, would be a marvel if one did not know the power of prejudice. It is beyond a doubt the coming again of Christ in judgment, His appearing to the world, to the Jews that pierced Him, and to every eye, in contrast with chosen witnesses and the day of faith now ; so that all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn because of Him. Is it not strange to hear so solemn a warning styled the main object and desire ; and that the apostle contemplates His coming as a whole but with especial reference to his own hope and that of his fellow-christians ?

It is an ineffectual effort to reason from an assumed similarity where there is a real contrast. The heavenly character of the Christian and the church is unknown, yet the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Spirit do surely now make that character good to faith. God's providence, though a very different thing from guidance in the Spirit, is most real now, as of old ; but

that secret control of all circumstances, so that all things work together for good, is quite distinct from the public display of His power of which prophecy treats. Some may have blundered as to the true bearing of 1 Peter i. 10-13 ; but it is well to heed the distinction there drawn between the predictions of the prophets, the gospel meanwhile declared in virtue of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the full accomplishment at the appearing of Jesus. Receiving soul-salvation now, we await salvation for our bodies and the fulfilment of the glories predicted when He appears.

And this helps to the right understanding of Luke ii. 32, as little understood by the Protestant as the futurist. It is a question, not of the church, but of the Gentiles, who were of old in the dark, as Israel now are, while Gentiles are brought to light. They have Christ now a light for their revelation, as by-and-by He will be the glory of God's people Israel. He had overlooked the times of ignorance hitherto, but now enjoins men that they should all everywhere repent.

But it is urged that the church has come into the place of Israel, and that as an election was taken out of them, so now from among the nations of Christendom. This idea, however, in both its parts is erroneous. Secretly there was an election, not only from Israel, but from the Gentiles, as Heber, Rahab, Jonadab, &c. ; but Israel was an elect nation governed and owned by God as His people. "My people" never means hidden election; it is the nation in speaking of Israel. But Christendom is not a nation elect or otherwise ; in the greatest part of it it is Babylon, even for Protestant opinion. Is Babylon elect as Israel was ? Whatever

might be the stranger spirit of pious Israelites, the elect people had their home on earth. It is a mischievous error, lowering to all christian life in worship and service, to confound our calling with theirs.

Nor is it the church, but the Gentiles, which are grafted into the tree of promise with the true of Israel. For, first, the church is not the "own olive-tree" of Israel; and, secondly, the believing Jews entered the church (see Eph. ii. ; 1 Cor. xii.), as did the believing Gentiles, whereas they abode in *their own* olive-tree. See Romans xi., a chapter which proves continuance in promise, but parenthesis in government, and quite distinct from the revelation of Christ's body, where all is alike of grace and heaven, and above nature—one new man as new to the Jew as to the Gentile. Blindness in part is happened to Israel *until*—there the parenthesis ends; and so all Israel shall be saved. For there shall come forth a Deliverer out of Zion. *We* look for God's Son from heaven, who will receive us to Himself where He is. For our blessing characteristically is in heavenly places, as we are told in Ephesians i. 3.

Indeed it is vain to reason on prophecy when it is taken as a basis that Christendom is God's covenant people, and therefore that, as the earlier prophecies all centred around Israel, so do the later ones round the visible church among the Gentiles. Israel were then the covenant people, and so long as they thus remained, all divine prophecy clustered around them, from Moses to Malachi; but it is urged that ever since the days of St. John this privilege has been transferred from them to the visible Gentile church. The kingdom of God, as our Lord assured the Jews, has been taken from

them and given to others. Hence the very same principle, which made all Old Testament prophecy centre in the Jewish nation, *requires* that all New Testament prophecy should centre around the Gentile church, the actual people of the covenant, who have been ingrafted in their stead, and the appeal to the Old Testament prophets to support an opposite conclusion must be utterly vain. Setting aside a main principle of God's moral government, and destroying a law of His revelation, to sustain a mere circumstance, it infers that God will leave His covenant people for near two thousand years without any distinct light of prophecy, *because* they always enjoyed that privilege in a dispensation of dimmer light and less abundant grace. Such is the argument in its most plausible shape.

But what proof, what sign, what appearance of truth, is there in such an hypothesis, traditional though it may be? When did God enter into covenant with the Gentiles? God has given Christ, the rejected Christ, for a light to the Gentiles, that He may be His salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. xlix. 6); but He is (ver. 8) a covenant of the people, not peoples. Hence the Gentiles are never said to be grafted instead of the Jews. Generically they are grafted in *with* the Jews left there in the inheritance of promises, of which Abraham was the stock planted by God in the earth; and they are responsible for the maintenance of blessing. But no covenant was made with them. Even if Matthew xxi. 43 be certainly applicable, it is only to fruit-bearing, not to covenant, that it applies. And how can this be said of Christendom, unless Revelation xvii., xviii. be such fruit? But the fact is, that neither

it, nor Deuteronomy xxxi. 21, nor Romans ix. 21-25, nor Romans xi. 11-15, say a word about the church coming into the place of Israel, nor of the church as such at all.

Again, it is beyond controversy that the church-state in the Revelation does not go farther than "the things which are," in contrast with the future visions, or "the things which shall be after these," and that its prophecies therefore do not centre round any church or people of God whatsoever, but are occupied with judgments on the world, whatever may be the pledges of mercy to the sealed of Israel, or to an innumerable crowd out of all nations and tongues. There is no judgment (and the Apocalypse treats of judgment) on a covenant people of God; nor does a people of God on earth, in any case or way, form a centre there. It is absurd to contend that the twelve tribes of Israel in chapter vii. are Gentile, contrasted as they are with a great crowd out of every nation; and it is inadmissible that Christendom is God's covenant people, unless Babylon be such.

Further, not only do Christians possess all the prophetic word, but they have ample and clear and direct light in the Gospels and Epistles (especially 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Jude) supposing the Revelation did not at all apply (which is not affirmed) beyond the wonderful messages of the Lord Himself in the seven Apocalyptic epistles. No one doubts for a moment the sovereign and moral government of God: but to identify this with His ways in Israel, as the popular argument already cited does, is just confusion and ignorance, whatever be the confidence of such as put it forward. "You only have I known of all the families of the

earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.) All agree that Old Testament prophecies not only left room for the parenthetic interval or blank for Israel when they were Lo-ammi and Gentiles are called, but used pregnant phrases, whereby God's ways might be confirmed when this state of things arrived; but they never revealed the mystery, which Paul did, while it was made known to all God's holy apostles and prophets.

And here let me say, though it be only in passing, that the grave point in Ephesians ii. 20, iii. 5, is, not that the apostles and prophets were necessarily the same individuals, but that they are here viewed as one common company, though distinguished in Ephesians iv. 11 and 1 Corinthians xii. 28, 29. The criticism that would separate them here is as erroneous as the interpretation that makes the prophets to be of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New, the one article expressly forbidding the notion of two distinct classes. So far is the church of God from being anterior to redemption, that its foundation is of the New Testament apostles and prophets. The mystery was hid from ages and generations previously. No prophet in Old Testament times revealed it. A blank was left for St. Paul to fill. (Col. i.)

As to the utilitarian argument which has been applied to decide the bearing of the Apocalypse on history since St. John's day, as against the crisis, it hardly deserves the notice of serious men. But as some may be influenced by what appeals to natural feeling, without an atom of spiritual weight, one may reply that, in pleading for a more exact fulfilment in the latter day,

it is not denied that the book has been accomplished partially all through.

It is in vain to deny that in Protestant hands prophecy was valued chiefly as evidence by its fulfilment to convict the unbeliever, and that this disposed men to enlarge as much as possible the field of fulfilled prediction, in order to increase their arms against infidelity. Now no sober Christian denies this to be *an* use of prophecy, or its importance for its own end. The reasoning directed against the use of prophecy after its accomplishment was only against this use exclusively. People used very generally to say, as some do still, that prophecy was mainly, not to say only, useful as proof when fulfilled. This was false ground, injurious to saints, and dishonouring to God. "The design of God was (to cite Sir Isaac Newton's applauded sentence), when He gave this book and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event."

Alas ! how foolish in the things of God are the wise. The vast mass of prophecy warns of God's final judgments as ushering in the reign of the Lord. The event will prove their truth, no doubt; but it will be to the ruin of those who did not foreknow and heed the warning. Thus the antediluvians may have argued, and perished in their unbelief. Not so Noah ; by faith he, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Not so did Jehovah deal when He said, " Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do ? " And if he was the

friend of God, what are we ? and why has Jesus called us His friends ? (See John xv.) Did this include the apostles only, or has not one of these "friends" of Jesus, when treating expressly of the coming of the Lord, of the destruction of the world that now is, and of the new heavens and earth, said to us, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware . . . ?"

The men of those days, who had precious faith, did not wait for the events before believing ; they did not use the prophecy as a mere confirmation of Christianity ; they read, understood, and profited by its warning. The Spirit of truth, according to the Lord's promise, shewed them things to come ; and they found the blessing of that sure word which shines as a lamp in a dark place. Sir Isaac Newton was not the least sagacious or sober of Protestant interpreters ; yet even he asks us to abandon the gracious purpose for which God gave prophecy to His children, for the lowest application for which human incredulity can require it. Unquestionably prophecy is a weapon of divine temper to confound and, if grace work, to convince the sceptic (though we may question such an effect from the jarring notes heard on the seals, trumpets, and vials) ; but surely it is its humblest office, instead of being the only wise and all-absorbing one. May we not ask, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world ?"

Again, when we find Tertullian applying the fifth seal to martyrs, as then in course of slaughter under pagan Rome, surely we may think that he did not understand its full bearing, without saying that such an interpreta-

tion was a delusion, destitute of one particle of real truth. Nor would one question that God honoured the German reformer's testimony against Babylon, founded on a later portion of the Revelation. Does this prove that Luther knew, or that we ought not to learn, a fuller development of the great whore, for which no room is left in the ordinary interpretation?

Singular to say, some who narrow to a single line the Revelation (the deepest and most comprehensive of all prophecies) think it certain that elsewhere, as in Isaiah ii., for instance, the Spirit of God intended one reference as well as the other—first, an incomplete and figurative, then a complete and literal fulfilment; and yet they would repeat for the Apocalypse the error of the Futurists, though in an opposite direction. Thus the soundness of the principle is admitted by some on both sides. Apply it to the Apocalypse, and not only ~~a~~ ^{are} men who stand for the future crisis, without denying the protracted accomplishment, justified by their censors, but the mere Protestant interpretation is condemned by the very reasoning meant to establish it on the ruins of futurism.

Doubtless it is a canon with some whom Mr. G. S. Faber represented, that no single link of a chronological chain of prophecy is capable of receiving its accomplishment in more than a single event or period. But this is not true even of Daniel, who, as almost all antiquity saw clearly, makes Antiochus Epiphanes the type of a still worse personage at the end. And it would be strange indeed to contend that the final prophecy and profoundest of all should have a scope more confined than a Jewish one. Mr. Mede saw at length

that the seven 'churches' had a double reference; he might have learnt to his profit that the prophetic portion is not less significant.

Nor is this the only inconsistency in such special pleading. For if the principal use in all cases is the manifestation of the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God, whether before or after the fulfilment, if the use, whether of warning before, or of evidence after, fulfilment, is always secondary and subordinate, the utilitarian argument sinks into little. On this shewing its grand object was as much attained during the seventeen centuries the book did not apply (if that ground be taken) as when it did. And is it not strange that the manifestation of the divine glory should be lowered to the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God? One might have looked for some regard to His government in such a question, if righteousness and grace were too much to expect. Yet the reason of their absence is evident: they would suppose contrast of dispensation in principle, and intervention in power; and the wisdom of this age likes and bows to neither.

But, granting the divine glory, in an infinitely richer way than has been before alleged, to be the end, as of all God's word and ways, so of prophecy which reveals the result of all and the judgment by which it will be effected, still it is so evident as to need no reasoning for the spiritual mind, that God's direct practical aim in prophecy was the warning, instruction, and comfort of His own before fulfilment; and all Christians should be thankful to be recalled to this precious privilege, of which they had been long deprived. And

assuredly the Futurists, spite of defects and one-sidedness and even errors, contributed to this end incomparably more than the Protestant school, engrossed as it used to be and even now is almost entirely with fulfilled prophecy.

It is plain that, if the early Christians had regarded the twelve hundred and sixty days as so many years, they must have anticipated such a lengthening out of the ages as the Protestant scheme contends for, which it is certain not one did, so far as we know. Does this, as far as it goes, tell in favour of futurism or historicalism? It is no less plain that the times of Daniel in chapters vii. and xii. (taken up in the Revelation) suppose the Jews in their land and carrying on their worship, but hindered by the little horn, that is, not the long ages of their scattering, but when they return, though not yet owned as a nation by God. Confessedly the early writers on prophecy expected two actual witnesses, and a personal Antichrist, an infidel domination and a fiery persecution of at least three and a half years, and this in Jerusalem at the end of the age whenever it might be. The soundness of all this may be questioned; but it is absurd to argue, as some do, that in these points (wherein, more than any others, they agree) the Fathers substantially approximate to the protracted view of the prophecy. The earlier and central chapters, not to speak of the closing ones, they applied in general as the Futurists do. Even if we confine ourselves to the future literal application, one cannot allow that it was useless. Was the blessed hope put before the Philippians, "The Lord is at hand," of no use because it is still unfulfilled? Did the

Christians then expect it not to occur till after so long a time? Has it been wholly useless? or is the imputation deplorably unbelieving?

Assuredly it is a mere reverie that the Apocalypse announced to every age of the church, and to each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand, or that in every later age it also contains many predictions already fulfilled, the fulfilment of which has been more or less clearly discerned by thoughtful Christians. The early writers, we have seen, applied the prophecy to a brief and terrible tribulation *at the end*. Then the whole mass fell into deep and deepening darkness. In the middle ages, when the Apocalypse was used, it was never an intelligent application of earlier parts of it, but, conscience being shocked and alarmed, an imaginative apprehension prevailed that Antichrist was come and the end imminent. It was the dread of being at the consummation which appalled men. That the church used it suitably from age to age, as it was developed into history, is a mere chimera, which can deceive no one acquainted with facts but only those who accept just what they like. If it be meant that the church *ought* to have so discerned the prophecy, it is a circular argument which amounts to something of this sort:—If the church had held my view (which is demonstrably untrue), they would have profited by it as warning from age to age, and as evidence of things past and fulfilled. Since my view is right, it has been at least possible, and indeed highly probable, that many believers in every age should have been warned by it of imminent changes, and have had their faith in God's word confirmed by many glimpses

of its actual fulfilment. Is this serious either as history or as logic ?

Test the facts. If any part of the visions is fulfilled, the seals must have been according to the historic view. Is there a tittle of evidence that the seals announced to any age of the church any one imminent change therein supposed to be predicted ? What single individual correctly interpreted a single seal beforehand ? To this day the utmost variety of thought exists among the leading Protestants themselves, not in detail merely but as to their general bearing. Can none gainsay the conclusions of Mede or Vitringa, of Faber or Cuninghame, of Elliott or Keith ? Can it be said that these men were captious and speculative like the Futurists, who rejected evidence, real and sufficient, if not of that sort which compels assent ? Are they not all among the most trusty and familiar of the historical school, and as notoriously discordant in their views at the threshold ? Yet of all parts of the book one might, on their principles, expect here the most of agreement, if not unanimity.

But enough. The grand fault of the considerations here examined is that, whilst God is at work to help on His children, they are an effort to lead back believers from that knowledge of the church's true relation, as united by the Spirit, to Christ on high, which is the key to real intelligence in the Christian. It is not merely human reasoning to support what is partial at best, and often erroneous ; it is decided antagonism to truth of the deepest moment for God's glory, as well as the blessing of His saints. It is also ignorance of what scripture treats as the proper government of God in the midst of

His people on earth when He will arise and inherit all nations. The importance of such prophecies as those of Daniel and John is great; but they must treat for the most part, even the latter, of the times of the Gentiles, not of the "kingdom" in any sense. To lose sight of this as Fathers and Protestants alike have done is fatal to spiritual intelligence on this subject.

The question here, as everywhere, is to whom the prophetic revelations apply, not to whom they are given. The revelation of what happened to Lot was given to Abraham, whilst the communication was made to Lot in time to deliver him out of the judgment, and this with precision as to the execution of it. So the Revelation says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." The book was given, as all the scriptures, to the church of God, without distinction of Jew or Gentile—there was none such in the body of Christ; and it could be given to none else.

On the other hand, there is this observation to be made respecting Daniel and the Revelation: that they are the revelation of the consequences, the former of Israel's failure, the latter of the church's failure, as witnesses of God here below. Hence we have a far more direct interest and more solemn responsibility, as to the contents of the Apocalypse than as to Old Testament prophecy in general, or even as to Daniel; while, as to times, scenes, and personages, there is doubtless much in common between the two books. But the Babylon on the seven hills, which the apostle saw drunken with the blood of saints, is to us a thing of

nearer and graver import than the great city which Nebuchadnezzar built on the plain of Shinar.

Furthermore, the time is said, and said repeatedly (Rev. i. ; xxii.), to be at hand ; and this as a reason why its sayings were not sealed to John as they were to Daniel. The work of redemption being done, Christ gone on high, and the Spirit sent down to be in the Christian and the church, the time of the end is always near to us, as the Lord is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Still the ground taken from first to last is, not that we are in the scenes of the prophecy, but that "the time is at hand," not present. It is very possible that the prophetic warning it contains may be the divine preservative against the sins which at length draw down the closing strokes of God's wrath on the apostasy of Christendom. Into this worst, this rebellious, corruption the professing mass sink during, if not before, the hour of temptation which is to try them that dwell on the earth. Out of this hour the Lord has pledged Himself to preserve such as keep the word of His patience. The faithful, His church, will not be in that hour or scene. The Lord keep this promise, full of comfort, before our souls !

APPENDIX B.

THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN EXPECTATION OF CHRIST BRIEFLY CONTRASTED.

I AM not without hopes that, under the gracious teaching of the Spirit, the simple statement of the distinction we are going briefly to examine may be blessed to souls. Happy is it when we are brought to ponder on the riches of grace which God has lavished on us, and that in the spirit of children, not desiring to prove our own notions, but to learn the thoughts, purposes, and ways of God; happier still when, in the communion of Him who dwells in us, our delight is to be shewn, and to adore the Lord Jesus Christ in His various glory.

His various glory, I repeat; for this the natural mind relishes not, but it is exactly what the Spirit loves and leads into. (John xvi. 13-15.) Hence it is that to unbeliever the scripture is a blank without heights, without depths. The purity of its sentiments, and the simple grandeur of its style, may be allowed and admired. But there are no landmarks, no chart, no star of Bethlehem to direct and cheer the unbeliever's way. His conscience is not in the presence of God, and therefore there is no true Christ in his heart. The Bible to him may be a very wonderful book, but this is all: if it seem to be owned practically as that which reveals the divine way of salvation, almost everything in it is made to bear on this one point. Warnings, threatenings,

exhortations, invitations, instructions, commands, prayers, ordinances—nearly all that Old and New Testaments utter is made to converge on what, to the flesh, really amounts to this—God helping us by His Son and Spirit to save ourselves. From this quagmire God has mercifully extricated all His people; He has taught all His children, with more or less intelligence, to rest upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it is that the vast field of the written word opens apace, the different displays which God has made of His character, and the effect of these dealings upon believers and unbelievers in the several dispensations, summed up in the person of Christ, whether viewed once here-below, now in heaven, or by-and-by returning again. Thus the child, led of the Spirit, grows in knowledge, and begins to see the revealed past, present, and future, in their just proportions, because he begins to learn all in Christ, whose mind he has. (2 Cor. ii.) In few words, he is learning to prove the things which differ.

Now it may be a narrow, but certainly it is an important, part of the things which differ that is suggested by the title to this paper. Nor would I pretend to sketch minutely the ways in which the estimate formed by a godly Jew respecting Christ's advent is distinguishable from the hope set before the church in His future presence. Let us content ourselves with certain broad essential differences, which are nevertheless often confounded by Christians to the obscuring of their proper portion, and so far to the detriment of their souls. The testimony of scripture is so full and distinct, that little reasoning is necessary; still its importance may well demand ample quotations.

The advent of a glorious Messiah *to the earth* was characteristically a Jewish hope. I speak not of traditional fables, but of the truths which the Jews saw and held fast in their scriptures. To such believing Jews Messiah was the centre and security of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; He was the accomplisher of all righteousness, blessing, and peace in their land—Immanuel's land. By Him they expected to be saved from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hated them ; that so they might serve Jehovah without fear all the days of their life. He was to cut off all the horns of the wicked, and to exalt the righteous ; to save Zion, and build the cities of Judah, that they might dwell there, and have it in possession, and thus the seed of His servants should inherit it, and they that love His name dwell therein. This, as is plain in the Psalms, is the character of the deliverance pleaded by the Jewish remnant—not a rapture *out of the earth*, but a destruction of their enemies *in it* ; a divine vengeance upon their enemies here below, not a gathering to the Lord in heaven. They looked, and will look, for Jehovah to go forth and fight against the nations He will gather at the latter end against Jerusalem ; they will look for His feet to stand upon the Mount of Olives, and Jehovah shall be King over all the earth. There, with David their king over Israel, restored, as it were, from the grave, and Ephraim and Judah united perfectly and for ever under the rule of the true Beloved, they expect to dwell in their land, and the heathen shall know that God Jehovah sanctifies Israel when His sanctuary shall be in their midst for evermore. They might read of a Son of man coming

in the clouds of heaven, but their hope was the presence and reign of the Messiah here below, in special connection with the Jewish nation and land. The following texts will still more plainly shew the truth we have been stating :

“ Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree : Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt *break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*” (Ps. ii. 6-9.) “ For Jehovah most High is terrible ; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.” (Ps. xlvii. 2, 3.) “ Great is Jehovah and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion : on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.” (Pss. xlviii. 1-3 ; lxxv. ; lxxvii. ; lxxviii.) “ He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass ; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The

kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents ; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him ; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence ; and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba ; prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in him ; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things ; and blessed be his glorious name for ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen." (Ps. lxxii. 4-19.)

I need not go more minutely through the Psalms, beyond directing attention to Psalm cxxviii., as evidently in accordance with the remarks already made. So also Psalm cxxxii. 18-18. The inspired praises of Psalms cxlvi.-cl. will then have their literal fulfilment. It is earthly joy under Messiah's dominion, and all is in unison with the thoughts, feelings, associations, hopes, and triumphs of His people Israel.

The prophets are equally explicit. "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely

for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when Jehovah shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." (Is. iv. 2-6.) "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David; and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." (Chap. ix. 6, 7.)

One might transcribe almost all chapter xi. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the

kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek : and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off : Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west ; they shall spoil them of the east together ; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And Jehovah shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea ; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the

remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel, in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." (Vers. 4-16.)

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." (Chap. xxiv. 21-28.) "And in this mountain shall Jehovah of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and Jehovah God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of Jehovah rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill." (Chap. xxv. 6-10.) "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall beat off from the

channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem." (Chap. xxvii. 6, 12, 13.)

"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? Where is the receiver? Where is he that counted the towers? Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king: he will save us." (Chap. xxxii. 17-22.) "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of Jehovah, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart, Be strong, fear not;

behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense ; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing : for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water : in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those : the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there ; but the redeemed shall walk there : and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Chap. xxxv. 1-10.)

The whole of chapters lx.; lxi., lxii. are closely in point, but can only be referred to now. " For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth ; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create : for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people : and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days : for the child shall die an hundred years old ; but the sinner being an hun-

dred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah." (Chap. lxxv. 17-25.)

"Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

For by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh: and the slain of Jehovah shall be many." (Chap. lxvi. 10-16.)

Jeremiah, the prophet of affliction, speaks no otherwise. "And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." (Chap. iii. 16-18.) "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, Jehovah liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but Jehovah liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (Chap. xxiii. 5-8.) To this we may add, as most express, chapters xxxi., xxxii., xxxiii.

For other prophets we need not cite express words: the following selected references may suffice. In Ezekiel the reader may consult chapters xvi., xx., xxxvi., xxxvii., xxxix., xl.-xlviii.; also Daniel vii., viii., ix., xii.; Hosea i., ii., iii.; Joel ii., iii.; Amos ix.; Obadiah; Micah iv., v.; Habakkuk iii.; Zephaniah iii.: Haggai ii.; Zechariah ii., viii., ix., x., xii., xiv.; and Malachi iii., iv.

Another distinction which may be briefly noticed is, that the Jews had the revelation of outward circumstances and ordered dates whereby to regulate their expectations. We need do little more than refer to the communications of God made to Abraham in Genesis xv., as well as others subsequently, for illustrations of this. "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them *four hundred years*. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and *afterwards* shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) Now it will not be disputed that the father of the faithful rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it, and was glad (John ix. 56); but it was through, and at the end of, a long course of years and trying vicissitudes as regarded his seed. Abraham was in no way waiting for that day as if it might happen in his own life, or shortly after. He was perfectly certain that the day of Christ could not come for some centuries at least. Full well he counted upon that day bringing in deliverance to his family, and hence his joy. (See also Gen. xlix. 10.)

Again, passing over intermediate predictions, the

word sent by Gabriel to Daniel is even more detailed, and with chronological points of a very defined character. "Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." (Dan. ix. 25, 26.) Hence it is plain that, if we suppose a godly Jew of that age to have understood the prophecy of the seventy weeks, he *could not expect* Messiah to come and be cut off till the expiry of nearly five hundred years. Ignorance might seek the living among the dead, but no believer with intelligence of this divine prediction could possibly look for the arrival and cutting off of the Christ previously to the revealed epoch. It would have been faith in him to have said, "I expect the Messiah after so many years, not before; for so hath the mouth of the Lord spoken."

With the church, on the contrary, the case is wholly different. Her hope is not the times of restitution of all things, but to be with the Lord in heaven as His bride: and as her hope is unearthly, so is it wholly unconnected with the times and seasons which characterized the expectations of Israel. Not that we are ignorant of these dates and epochs; but we know perfectly that the day of Jehovah so cometh as a thief in the night—a day of destruction whence there is no

escape. But we are not in darkness that the day should overtake us as a thief. We are already children of that day, and when the day arrives we shall come with the Sun of righteousness who ushers it in. We shall have been with Him before the day breaks, for we know Him as the bright, the Morning Star, and the morning star He will give to him that overcomes. Certain times and seasons, we are quite aware, must precede the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. (Acts i.) Thus we know that one week remains out of the seventy of Daniel ix., when the prince that shall come—a Roman prince—shall confirm covenant with the mass of the Jews for seven years. But, like another traitor and son of perdition, he shall put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he shall break his covenant. (Ps. lv. 20.) The covenant with death shall be disannulled. (Is. xxviii.) “In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” This is followed by the abomination of desolation for the allotted term, “even until the consummation.” (Compare with Dan. ix., chap. vii. 19–26.) “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. xxiv. 21.) “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” (Jer. xxx. 7.) “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and *at that time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

(Dan. xii. 1.) The church knows these revealed periods, but knows them as connected, not with herself, but with Jerusalem and the Jewish people, Daniel's people.

The church does not wait to be gathered under a Messiah on earth, but to be caught up to meet Him *in the air*, and be ever with the Lord (1 Thess. iv.) ; with Him in His Father's house ; with Him when the successive judgments (symbolized by the seals, trumpets, and vials) are falling on the earth ; with Him when the marriage-supper of the Lamb is celebrated above ; with Him when He wars with the beast and the false prophet ; with Him when we reign together for a thousand years ; and with Him in the subsequent eternal state. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Surely it is a blessed hope that the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ is to set to rights all things here below which are now out of course. Creation shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, and Israel no longer blinded but seeing. All Israel shall be saved when the Redeemer comes out of Zion, and turns away ungodliness from Jacob. And if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness ? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead ? Yes, and if we look above, the long usurped possession of the air (Eph. ii. 2 ; vi. 12) shall be rescued from Satan and his angels ; no longer shall he be permitted there to accuse the brethren of Christ in the presence of God (Rev. xii.) ; no longer will there be conflict

with wicked spirits there. That old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, shall be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, before the last vain struggle when he is cast into the lake of fire.

But not any nor all these things are our proper hope, which is to be caught up and to meet the Lord Himself in heaven. As it is said in John xiv. : " If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and *receive you unto myself*, that where I am there ye may be also." Is this on earth, or in heaven ? Is it merely the honours of a displayed kingdom ? or is it not nearer and higher intimacy with the Son of God in the home of the Father on high ? The disciples did not ask, nor did the Lord indicate, w *on these* things should be. But in Matthew xxiv. He does give the sign of His coming, and of the consummation of the age. He is meeting the inquiries of the disciples from their own Jewish point of view ; He enters into full particulars respecting Jerusalem, Judea, the temple, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, &c., which were but the beginning of sorrows. The end was not yet, nor should it come before the gospel of *the kingdom* was preached in all the habitable earth for a witness to all the nations. Then He describes minutely the particular marks of the closing crisis, up to His manifestation to all the tribes of the earth or land, and the complete ingathering of His elect (Israel) from the four winds.

Of His elect *earthly* people this gathering must be ; because when Christ, our life, appears, *then* shall we also appear with Him in glory—the church and Christ are manifested at the same time in glory ; whereas the elect described in Matthew xxiv. are only gathered *after*

the Son of man's appearing, and cannot therefore be the church. All the context, the more it is examined, proclaims them to be Jewish disciples, who, at the signal of the setting up of the abomination, flee, and so escape the unparalleled tribulation of these days and scenes of the end ; for their simple trust is in the man of God's right hand, "the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." (Compare Ps. lxxix., lxxx.)

But the passage in John's Gospel has nothing to do with Jerusalem, nor the earth, nor earthly circumstances. John never speaks of a special tribulation for Jewish disciples at a particular time and place, but of the constant tribulation we should count upon in the world at all times. (John xvi. 93.) So the coming is not merely deliverance to a persecuted Jewish remnant on earth, but to receive us to Himself in heaven, without one hint of time, place, or circumstance.

Doubtless the church is to reign over the earth, the bright witness of the Father's love ; for the world shall then know that He loved her as He loved His Son, both being displayed in the same glory. And how blessed the ministry of the church in that day, serving the gladsome earth according to the grace which has called, kept, and glorified herself on high, the bride, the Lamb's wife ! We shall inherit the earth ; we shall judge the world and angels too, in that administration of the fulness of times, when all things shall be gathered together in one in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth ; even in Him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance. Joint-heirs with Him, we share all that He will rule as the exalted Man. And God has put *all things* under His feet. Though

we do not yet *see* all things put under Him, we do see Himself exalted ; and when the day arrives for Him to take the dominion, it will be manifested that He is head over all things *to* the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The Old Testament prophecies are full of the earthly glory. In the New Testament we have the mystery of God's will made known to us, involving the inheritance of things in heaven, as well. as things on earth, and the church co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, as His body and God's children. (Eph. i. 9-14.)

No prophets of ancient times had ever uttered such thoughts. It is not merely that such a portion was not understood, but it was not revealed. It was kept hid in God, and *now* revealed, we are told, unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The old prophets had spoken of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when Israel, or at least a Jewish remnant, repent and are converted ; they had largely depicted the times of the restitution of all things, when Messiah comes from the heavens which now receive Him. (Acts iii.) No doubt they foretold the rule of the heavens (Dan. iv.), and anticipated the joy and peace of the world under that kingdom. But they never predicted, much less did they know, that Christ will have a heavenly body and spouse associated with Him, and enjoying all His love and glory in the heavenly places ; though they did celebrate the time when the land shall be married, and Jehovah shall make Jerusalem a praise *in the earth*. The bride they sing of in the Canticles and the Psalms is an earthly bride. Very different is the church of which Paul speaks in Ephesians v. Very

different the marriage of the Lamb of which John tells in Revelation xix., as far above the espoused one of the Old Testament as the heavenly glory of Christ exceeds His earthly, though all be perfect in its place.

Further, be it noted that, whether it be deliverance in mount Zion and Jerusalem (Joel ii.), whether it be judgment of the Gentiles in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel iii.), with both we find wonders displayed in the heavens, and in the earth blood and fire and pillars of smoke: the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. Nothing of the kind is ever connected in scripture with the catching up of the church, whose only sign is the descent of the Lord Jesus to summon her into His presence in the air. His descent, and her consequent rapture, are nowhere described as events which the world is to behold. *To them that look for Him*, Christ appears, but to none else, so far as scripture shews, until He is revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. His public revelation, in order to judge, is called "the day of the Lord," "the appearing," &c.; and it is certain that many signs will precede that day, and manifestation to every eye. The apostasy must be ripe, and the Lawless One manifested without hindrance; and the great tribulation out of which comes the innumerable Gentile multitude of Revelation vii., as well as the future unparalleled tribulation in Judea.

Outward signs precede. But this is not all. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her

light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 29-81.)

But I would not dwell further upon these points of contrast, only praying that we may remember, day by day, that our place, the church's only right and befitting place, is to wait for Christ 'from heaven. It is not judgments that we expect to be in ; it is not the hour of temptation we have to await and dread (Rev. iii. 10), for we shall be kept out of it in the grace of Christ. Our business is to wait, as a heavenly bride, for our heavenly Bridegroom. Those who link the church with earthly circumstances will be misled in their ways now, and at times pass on miserably disappointed. Not so the hearts which the Spirit directs, animates, and sustains in the longing cry, Come, Lord Jesus. May it be so with us, beloved, increasingly as the moment, unknown to us, draws nearer ! Amen.

APPENDIX C.

As further evidence of the immense importance of rightly seizing the christian hope, not only for the soul's fellowship with the Lord but for the due intelligence of prophecy, I present to the reader two letters I had from the late Mr. E. B. Elliott in 1851. From them it is plain enough how very defective were his views, not merely in detail but fundamentally; yet was he the acknowledged leader of the Protestant school in our day. But the reader will judge for himself, perusing first the paper which was given him to read, and his remarks with my comment; for I regret that I am unable to furnish the answers sent at the time.

REMARKS ON 1 AND 2 THESSALONIANS CONNECTED WITH THE REVELATION.

There are few simple-minded Christians who, in searching into the prophetic word, have not felt the difficulty of reconciling the undoubtedly normal posture of the church in daily waiting for Jesus with the long train of successive events presented in the Revelation. The principle, if not the measure, of the difficulty is the same, whether you understand the Revelation to be fulfilled in a brief eventful crisis, or to extend over a course of many hundred years. In either way, I cannot truthfully expect Jesus from heaven from day to day, if I am looking out for a series of numerous, and

some of them unprecedented, and all of them solemn, incidents to occur on earth, the gradual and accumulative evidence of His approach.

But it is certain that in the apostolic times, when the grace of God was proclaimed in its real power and freshness, when His word was most prized and best understood, and when it produced its loveliest effects, the saints were habitually expecting Jesus to come. In Him they had redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, and they knew it. They were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Were they therefore satisfied? Was not the Spirit Himself, blessed divine Comforter though He be, yet was not He the earnest of still greater blessings? Doubtless they received Him as the Spirit of sonship, and not as a spirit of bondage unto fear (Rom. viii.); but, instead of His leading them into rest and contentedness here below in the absence of Jesus, in the same chapter it is said: "Ourselves also, (besides the groaning creation,) which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body." It is the groaning of those who are justified by faith and have peace with God. It is the groaning of those who have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, and bearing witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. It is the groaning of the adopted, earnestly yearning for the full results of adoption: of those who, because they have known God's grace in redemption forgiving their sins, look for more, for all,—for the redemption of the body in the actual presence of the Saviour, that they may be like Him and with Him for ever.

The aim, however, of these remarks is not to prove that the personal coming of the Lord was the hope of the church—proofs easily found elsewhere. My desire is rather to convince those who know what is and was meant to be the hope of the church, that God by no concurrent or subsequent revelation ever interfered with the practical power of that hope. That He might give fuller details as to the growing iniquity of man, of the Jew and especially of the outward professing body, and as to His own judgments upon each before the millennial reign; that He might describe in greater minuteness the circumstances of that reign and the events that succeed it, is not only possible but that which He has done. But that He, on this or any other theme, corrects in one part of His word what is affirmed in another, is that which every Christian ought surely to repudiate from the bottom of his soul, in whatever modified form it may be insinuated.

The word of our God needs no apologies from man. Unhesitatingly believed, every part of it will be found to be perfectly true, though (from the narrowness and imperfection of our apprehension) patient waiting on God is necessary to avoid the systematizing of the human intellect, and to discover in what order God puts things together. Haste in deciding such questions only leads to forcing scripture, which will not yield; and hence the danger of framing one-sided hypotheses, which are only tenable by shutting the eye to the plainest scripture which contradicts them as hypotheses, though there may be elements of truth in them.

To apply this to the matter in hand, it is undeniable that the apostle Paul (to say nothing of others) invari-

ably speaks of the coming of the Lord to take the church to Himself as that which might be at any moment, however Jesus might tarry; but no necessary detention—no chain of occurrences involving a period virtually—no certain lapse of time—is ever presented to the church as keeping Him in heaven. On the contrary, if he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv.), it is: “Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Admitting that “we” is a representative word, not the persons addressed merely but those standing in the same privileges: still will any one say that the apostle or the Corinthian saints knew that the moment would be deferred till they had fallen asleep? * Was it not calculated, beyond all cavil, to keep them in simple constant expectancy of the Lord? And the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i.), who were trained, from their birth to God, in looking for their Deliverer, were they mistaken enthusiasts? Or did not the blessed work of the Spirit in their case consist in turning them from idols, not only to serve the living and true God, but to wait for His Son from heaven? Did that wise and faithful servant, who knew what it was to mingle the service of a nurse with the affectionate care of a father—did he consider that blessed hope to be unsuited food for such babes? So far from it, that when he writes to them supplying

* Nothing, it has been observed, more strongly proves the church’s constant expectation of the presence of the Lord for it, uncertain when this was to be, than the fact that it needed a *particular revelation to individuals* (such as to Paul and Peter) about their departure first, which so far modified their individual apprehensions. The general expectation of the church was not affected thereby.

some things that were lacking, the Holy Ghost impresses this great doctrine in so repeated and different modes as to demonstrate how cardinal a truth it is in the mind of God, and how influential as regards the walk and communion of His saints. It ramifies both epistles, being not only found at least once in every chapter, but in some chapters occupying the most conspicuous place. (See 1 Thess. i. 8, 10; ii. 19, 20; iii. 18; iv. 18-18; v. 1-10, 23, 24; 2 Thess. i. 5-10; ii. 1-12; iii. 5.) They had rejoiced in this hope of our Lord Jesus Christ from their earliest christian career; they had patiently continued it through the Spirit, and the blessedness of such patience was sweet to the absent apostle, even as their work of faith and labour of love. True, they needed further light as to its circumstances, and the Lord granted it. So immediately were they awaiting the Lord, that the decease of some of their number plunged them into sorrow—not, I apprehend, that they for a moment doubted of the salvation of those who were gone. No one knowing the gospel in word only (much less knowing it in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as it came to them,) could have such a doubt. But they feared that death had severed their departed brethren from the glorious hope they had so brightly burning before them, of being caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. They were gone—doubtless were happy; but would they not be absent from that crowning joy for which they themselves were waiting? Here was the place, if they had been mistaken in so waiting, to have corrected it. Here was the place for the apostle to say: We have been all wrong in living

with our eyes heavenward till the Son of God comes to take us to Himself. He is not coming soon. *We* need not expect Him, for many ages must expire before *He* comes. Besides He has already given you some, and He now adds more signs of His advent. You have not seen these signs yet. You must wait for them, and not for His Son. But there is the exact reverse. The Holy Spirit deliberately keeps them in the same attitude of waiting which He had previously wrought and sanctioned in them, though He gives them a comfort of which they were ignorant as to their brethren who had been put to sleep by Jesus.* “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [that is, go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

But it may be said, If the Holy Ghost did not here correct the excited notions of the Thessalonians, He did in the second chapter of the second epistle. I answer that the true question is, Does the Holy Ghost correct *Himself*? He may supply that which is suited to correct the undue sorrow of the believers in one

* Τους κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. So the Vulgate, eos qui dormierunt per Jesum.

epistle, or their fears in another epistle; but I insist upon it in the strongest manner, that, *if the church is set in the position of waiting for Christ's coming in one part of scripture, no other part can possibly alter such a position.* It is necessarily right, whatever increase of instruction may be given. Let us only be well assured in the perfectness of every word of God, and we shall soon see how little the passage warrants the notion that the apostle Paul, in the second epistle, dissuades them from expecting Him, whom the first epistle had confirmed them in expecting.

In the first place, it is generally assumed that the day of Christ (or "of the Lord," for this is the true reading*) is identical with "the coming (*παρουσία*, presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the verse before. But it is a groundless idea. If it be affirmed, let proofs be adduced. It is quite clear to me that the day of the Lord is a distinct though connected thing. In its full, ultimate sense, and no one disputes that such is its force here, it supposes the presence of the Lord; it is the judgment consequent upon that. But the presence, or the coming of the Lord, by no means necessarily supposes judgment. Is there a word of judgment, or wrath, or destruction, expressed or implied in the full description given in 1 Thessalonians iv. of the Lord's coming for His own? So when the apostle says, "what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

* So all the critical editors known to me, such as Griesbach, Knappe, Scholz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, &c.; and this wholly upon external evidence.

(1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) Where is the word of judgment on evil? On the other hand, when the day of the Lord occurs, it is, whether used in a full or limited application, habitually connected with judgment and its consequences (compare 1 Thess. v. 24; Zeph. i. ii. iii.; Zech. xiv.; Mal. iii. iv.). I conclude therefore that, though the coming of the Lord may include the day of the Lord, as the whole includes a part, the coming of the Lord is in itself presented in an aspect of grace, not of judgment, and that the terms and things are not to be confounded.

In the second place, while it is true that the day of the Lord cannot come before the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin arrive, which are to be judged in that day, yet is there a serious error in the English rendering of the last clause of verse 2, "is at hand." The word usually rendered "at hand," "near," or "nigh," is ἐγγύς or ἐγγίζω, as is known to scholars. The present word ἐνίστημι, on the other hand, is *never so rendered* in the New Testament, save in the passage before us. On the contrary, occurring several times, it is used invariably in a way which excludes the possibility of such a rendering (more especially when it is, as here, in the perfect tense).

Let us briefly examine. The first occurrence is in Romans viii. 38. It is evident that here ἐνεστώτα cannot mean things at hand. It is contrasted with μέλλοντα, that is, "things to come." It signifies only and emphatically "things present," and is so rendered in the common Bible. See the same words and the same contrast in 1 Corinthians iii. 22. Again, in 1 Corinthians vii. 26, διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην is properly translated

“for the *present* distress.” A distress not actually come, but only at hand or coming, would spoil the meaning. The next is Galatians iv., “this *present* evil world,” the only possible meaning of the word here. The next world, or age, will not be evil, and therefore “at hand” or “imminent” is shut out. Compare also Hebrews ix. 9, *εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα* “for the time then *present*,” not “at hand,” which cannot be the true force. All these are instances of the same tense as 2 Thessalonians ii. 2. The only other occurrence is 2 Timothy iii. 1, *ἐνστήσονται*, in the future middle. Here the English version renders it, “shall come.” Still the meaning indubitably is not “shall be at hand,” which could have no point, but “shall be *present*.” To be impending merely was little: the grave thing was, that perilous times should be actually there in the last days.

It may be concluded therefore, from an induction thus complete, that in all the other instances the Authorized Version is right, but in 2 Thessalonians ii. 2 it is wrong. It is not conceivable to uphold both; so that, if right in 2 Thessalonians ii. 2, the version must be wrong everywhere else. But we have seen, from the intrinsic meaning of the word, as well as from the sense imperatively demanded by the context, that in all the other cases the translators are justified. They are therefore mistaken here, and the proper rendering, in conformity with their own translation of the word in the same tense elsewhere, ought to be “as that the day of the Lord *is present*.”*

* Since the above was in print, I have had the opportunity of examining “Le Nouveau Testament de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ,

The Thessalonian saints had from the first known much affliction. They had notoriously suffered from their own countrymen, and this to such a degree that the apostle, in his earnest and watchful interest about them, sent Timothy to establish and to comfort them concerning their faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions. They knew that "we are appointed thereunto." Nevertheless, they needed comfort. The apostle had warned them before, that "we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know." "For this cause when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain." But Timothy brought good tidings of their faith and love, and the apostle could break out into thanks and joy for their sakes before God, and he lets them know it in his first epistle.

The tempter however was not to be discouraged nor diverted from his wiles. They had been already taught that the Lord Himself was to come, and the saints, sleeping or living, were all to be changed, and be caught up together to meet Him in the air, and so to be ever with Him. They also knew that the day of the Lord (or Jehovah) was one of destruction and terror, unlooked for by the world: "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Accordingly he appears to have distracted the saints by the harassing statement that the day of the Lord was actually there, thus seeking to rob them of all

traduit en Suisse, par une Société de Ministres de la Parole de Dieu sur le texte Grec reçu" (seconde édition, &c., 1849), where the original is rendered, "Que le jour du Christ est là."

profit and joy in the persecutions and tribulations which they were then enduring. Nor let any think it strange, if, in a time of perplexity for the world and persecution of the church, the fears of saints might be wrought upon; particularly as they knew that the day of the Lord in the Old Testament by no means necessarily implies the personal presence of the Lord, though it looks onward to that anticipatively. (Compare, for instance, Is. xiii., where God's judgment of Babylon and the Chaldeans is so designated :) "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand;* it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty," &c. (See also Joel i. 15; ii. 1-11. Amos v. 18, 20. Zeph. i. 7, 14, 15, &c.)

In the second epistle, the Holy Ghost conveys the needed instruction. "We ourselves," says the apostle, "glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus

* The words in the LXX are ἐγγὺς γὰρ ἡμέρα Κυρίου. Will men defend a version of 2 Thessalonians ii. 2 which makes the Holy Spirit contradict there what He has unequivocally affirmed in Isaiah xiii. 6? The Septuagint and the Greek Testament are in harmony here. It is the English version which is at fault.

Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe* (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." The time of retribution is not when Jesus comes, but when He is *revealed*. For though at His coming the church is caught up, there is nothing yet of a retributive character. It is favour, not a process of judgment. Whereas the revelation and the day of the Lord are, as is manifest, associated with judgment, and hence there is the *public award of God* then for the first time manifested to the world; "seeing it is a *righteous* thing with God to *recompense* tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed." Doubtless there is a tribulation, and even the great tribulation, in the time of Antichrist, previous to the revelation of Jesus; as obviously there is rest to those who sleep in Jesus now, and there will be rest in a fuller sense when our bodies are changed, and we are caught up to be with Him. But both are wholly distinct from the divine retributive tribulation and the rest here spoken of. It is the day of punishment with everlasting destruction to the adversaries, as it is the day when Christ comes, not to present the faithful to Himself, nor to take them to mansions in the Father's house, but to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believed. For when Christ, our

* It is not one doubly characterized as conveyed in the A. V., but two classes discriminated by the articles repeated in the Greek. It should also be "believed" and not "believe."

life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. It is the public judicial dealing (not the hidden joy or blessedness before then, or afterwards), which here enters into the scene.

Next the apostle turns to the source of their agitation. "We beseech you, brethren, by* the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and† our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled." Assuredly, the consolation administered here is not that Christ's coming was a distant thing! Can it be that theologian upon theologian has desired to make of this fancied long and far-off absence of the Lord a balm for the tried and fearful? Can it be that.

* The authorized version appears to be substantially right in thus translating *ὑπέρ*, when we bear the context in mind. Such is the rendering of the Vulgate, as well as of Luther. Professor Scholefield also, though choosing the sense "concerning," because of his interpretation, admits the sense "by" to be "*an unquestionable one.*" The fact cannot be disputed that "on account of," "for the sake of," are most common renderings: this sense of the word, connected with expressions of prayer and entreaty, being pretty nearly equivalent to our "by." None of the passages, such as Romans ix. 27; 2 Corinthians vii. 4; ix. 3; Philippians i, 7, cited by Rosenmüller, Schleusner, Macknight, Whitby, or Elliott, is apposite, because none occurs after such a verb as *ἐρωτάω*. Let an instance be produced of *ὑπέρ* after a word of beseeching, where it can be rendered in any other way. In certain cases it is used, as Phavorinus says, *δμολῶς τῷ περὶ*, but not I believe, in a connection parallel to the present, where it assimilates to *πρός*, as Stephanus observes, and translates it "*per*:" ut Greg. *ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ δέομαι* rogo te per Christum. Sic. Il. ω. *Καὶ μιν ὑπὲρ πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος ἡυκόμιο· Λίσσεο, καὶ τέκεος.*"

† The "*by*" ought to disappear from our English version, because there is only one article, which unites the two things, Christ's coming and our gathering together to Him as one associated idea, instead of separating them as is done by introducing a second "*by*."

the poor church has but too willingly sipped the cup, and, heedless of His words, cheers herself on the delirious career of worldliness and folly, and of faithlessness to Him? "Lord, how long?"

Not so the Thessalonians. Full well they knew that His coming was to end their sorrows and crown their joys. Under apostolic guidance they had looked, and the Holy Ghost had commended their looking, for Christ. Was it not the part of the evil servant to say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming? But Paul was a blessed faithful servant, and never says anything of the sort. He uses the fact of the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him as a comfort against the anxiety created by the idea that the day of the Lord was already arrived—nay more, as a proof that such an idea was false. His ground of entreaty is twofold. He urges a reason connected with the Lord and heaven, and a reason connected with earth and the man of sin. There must be our gathering above, and the falling away below. In the first place the Lord was to come, and they were to be gathered together unto Him, in order that He and they might bring in the day and appear together from heaven. This had not taken place, and therefore they were not to be disturbed as if that day had come, or could come, previously. In the next place he presses the point that the evil must first be developed completely which that day is to judge. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come the falling away (or the apostasy, ἡ ἀποστασία) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is

called God, or object of worship; so that he^{*} sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." But the apostasy was not then come, nor the man of sin revealed, and therefore the day of the Lord, the day of vengeance upon these evils, is yet to come. "And now [if one may translate the apostle's word a little exactly] ye know what hindereth that he might be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness† doth already work: only there is one that now hindereth till he be taken out of the way. And then shall that lawless† one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the appearing of his coming."

No! the Thessalonian believers were not mistaken in waiting for the Son of God. It is not wrong to believe that "the Lord is at hand," (ἐγγύς,) as the apostle pressed upon the Philippians when drawing to the close of his career. It is not wrong to stablish our hearts because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (ἤγγικε, James v. 8). Nor does the language of the Spirit in the passage before us depict excitement from a too eager anticipation of this glorious event—alas! that Christians should suppose we could too earnestly desire it. The expressions in verse 2 denote fright and agitation. The enemy sought to instil the idea that the day, the judgment, was come, and that they were

* All editors of note omit ὡς Θεόν, that is, "as God."

† There is a link of importance missed by the English translators between the mystery of *lawlessness* already working, and the *lawless* one who is yet to be revealed. The germ was there in the midst of professing Christianity, which was at last to issue in so portentous a conclusion.

obnoxious to its terrors. Where then was their hope to be caught up to the Lord and to come along with Him? Would it have been sorrow and fear if Christ had come and they had been translated to meet Him in the air? Rather would it have been their chiefest joy, as it had been the object nearest their heart since their conversion. Their faith was growing exceedingly, and the love of every one of them all toward each other abounded; and, far from weakening that which he had already taught, the apostle prays for them in the last chapter of the second epistle, that the Lord would direct their heart into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ. That is, he confirms them in their expectancy of the Lord.

But the deceiver had affrighted them, not of course by presenting the coming of the Lord as an imminent thing, which was what the Holy Ghost had done, and which is for the church a hope of unmingled comfort, but by the report that the day of the Lord was actually present—"a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." The apostle had already told them (1 Thess. v.) that they were not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief. The tempter disturbs and confounds them with the thought that, as a thief, it was really come upon them; using it would seem some false spirit, or word, or letter, to give to it the colour of the authority of Paul himself. And how does the apostle defend them from such assaults of others, and fears of their own? For, let it be repeated, it was not high-wrought feeling as though Christ were at hand, but terror arising from their giving heed to the

false representation that *the day of the Lord was present*, and they in tribulation on earth, instead of being caught up to Jesus above. The apostle at once brings them back to the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him as their ground of comfort and protection against the alarms of the day of Jehovah. As if he had said: the Lord Himself is coming, and you will be gathered to Him. When His day comes, you will be with Him. You are the children of the day: you will come along with it, for you will come with Him who ushers it in. You therefore need not be troubled; be rather in peace. That day is not come. You will go to meet Him whom the church knows as the bright, the morning star (Rev. xxii. 16, compared with ii. 28); so that, when the day breaks and the Lord appears, you too will appear with Him in glory. You will introduce the day together—that day of retribution, when those who trouble you shall have trouble, and you, the troubled, shall have rest with us, when Jesus is revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance.

In harmony with this, it is written in verse 8, that the lawless one will be destroyed, not simply by the coming of the Lord, but by a further step of it, by the appearing or manifestation of His coming.* This scene

* The word "coming" here and frequently elsewhere, is *παρουσία* which denotes not barely the arrival (like the verb *ερχομαι* in scripture, and like the substantive *ἔλευσις* in Greek ecclesiastical writers), but the circumstance or state of being present; that is, "presence." Nevertheless, as the *presence* of a person, who is now absent, necessarily supposes his *coming*, the latter is often and fairly enough given as its English equivalent, though the former is the full meaning.

is given at length in Revelation xix. 11-21, where the seer beholds, in the prospective vision, the heaven opened, and the rider, the Word of God, upon the white horse, issuing to judge and make war. "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean"—the righteousnesses, not of angels, but of saints. (Compare verse 8.) The saints are already with Him. They follow Him out of heaven, as His army. Christ therefore must have come before this to take them to Himself, for they have been with Him in heaven and leave it together, preparatory to the battle with the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies. This then is not merely the coming of Christ. It is Christ *appearing*, and we with Him in glory. It is His *revelation* from heaven, taking vengeance. It is *the day* of the Lord, when sudden destruction comes. It is *the shining forth of His presence*, or the brightness of His coming, which destroys that lawless one.*

* If the reader is disposed to investigate further a subject so full of interest, he may derive much instruction, through the grace of God, by examining carefully the following scriptures:—

First as to ἀποκάλυψις, Romans viii. 19; 1 Corinthians i. 7; 2 Thessalonians i. 7; 1 Peter i. 7, 13, and iv. 13, compared with the cognate verb, Luke xvii. 30; 1 Corinthians iii. 13; 1 Peter i. 5, and v. 1.

Next, as to ἐπιφανεῖα, 2 Thessalonians ii. 8; 1 Timothy vi. 14, 2 Timothy iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 13.

Lastly, as to φανερώω, Colossians iii. 4; 1 Peter v. 4; 1 John ii. 28, and iii. 2.

It is only needful to remark that, though (as already proved) we abide not here below till the appearing of Christ, it is only then, and not before, that the result of faithfulness, or the want of it, will be manifested. The labourer is to work patiently, and it may be

Matthew xxiv. 23-31 falls in with this view: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and *shineth* even unto the west, so shall also the coming of *the Son of man* be." It is His coming in connection with His earthly rights. Rejected of this generation as the Christ, He comes as Son of man (in which capacity He is never presented as coming to take the church). "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then *shall appear* the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see the Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The elect, here gathered to-

hiddenly, in view of that day. Though still the *ωαρυσία*, it is more than the presence of the Lord; it is the revelation, the appearing, or manifestation, as the case may be.

Be it noted, further, that *the appearing of Christ is still His coming*, although His coming does not necessarily mean His appearing. Thus, when Christ comes to take the church first of all, it is His coming, but not His appearing, save to them that look for Him. But when afterwards He is revealed in view of the world, vindicating the ways of God, both as to His enemies and His friends, it is still His coming, while, as a distinctive thing, it is His day, or the epiphany of His presence, as it is termed in 2 Thessalonians ii. 8. The recent Swiss version renders the entire verse thus: "Et alors sera révélé l'inique, lui que le Seigneur détruira par l'Esprit de sa bouche, et rendra impuissant par l'apparition de son arrivée (ou présence)."

gether by the angels of the Son of man from the four winds, are demonstrably not the church, because they are gathered subsequent to His appearing.

The church, on the other hand, had been translated before. For *when* Christ, our life, shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Our manifestation in glory cannot be after His manifestation. Christ and the church are manifested together. Hence the signs specified in this chapter are to elect Jewish disciples indices of His appearing. They are not to be regarded therefore as interfering with the posture of the church in continually waiting for the Lord from heaven. They are signs for a remnant in special relation with Judea, who will be awaiting the coming of the Son of man. No signs of this or of any other description were ever put before the church, as such, whereby to judge of the near approach of Christ to take her to Himself. On the contrary, what the Holy Ghost taught the church is, to a simple mind, inconsistent with such indications : she was to be expecting always because she knew not the moment of His coming. The apostle (1 John ii. 18) would have even the babes to know that it is the last time ; and this, not from the spread of the Spirit of Christ, but from the presence of many anti-christs. But, although they had heard that the anti-christ should come, no signs to be seen, no evil to reach its climax, no specific tribulation, are ever put before them, as events necessarily retarding the coming of the Lord to take the church. For the bride, the one heavenly sign is the presence of the Bridegroom Himself. But for a converted remnant of Jews, of whom the Lord has graciously thought in the instruc-

tions of Matthew xxiv., there are signs which will be given before the coming of the Son of man.

Now it is precisely here that the Revelation affords so distinct a light, shewing us the position of the church in heaven, Christ having come and taken her to Himself, and afterwards, during the interval of her absence in heaven before she appears along with Him, God's dealings, testimonies, judgments, and deliverances, on earth. The epistles give us simply the fact of the rapture of the church, but did not inform as to the length of the interval before the appearing and the kingdom. That such an interval existed might have been gathered; but whether long or short, or how filled up, does not appear in the epistles. The Revelation furnishes that which was lacking upon the subject and connects, without confounding, the church caught up to the Lord on high, with certain witnesses to be raised up during the closing term of the age on earth before He appears in judgment.

As for the relative bearings of the different portions of the New Testament, it may be said in general that the Gospels have a character peculiar to themselves. It is not certainly an exclusively Jewish condition, neither is it a proper church condition, but a gradual slide, in John more marked than in the others, from the one to the other. The Lord Jesus, rejected, was with His disciples here below. The Holy Ghost, who of course was then, as ever, the faith-giving quickening agent, was not yet given, that is, in any new unprecedented way, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Hence the disciples, although possessing faith and eternal life,

(John vi. 35, 47, 68, 69,) were not yet baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body. (Compare Acts i. 5 with 1 Cor. xii. 13.) In a word, the church was not yet built nor begun to be built: "Upon this rock," says the Lord, "*I will build my church.*" (Matt. xvi. 18.)

But the Acts historically, and the epistles doctrinally, point to a different state of things as then existing: Jesus absent and glorified in heaven; the Holy Ghost present and dwelling on earth in the saints, who were hereby constituted the body, the church. Christ had taken His place as head of the body above, and the Holy Ghost sent down was gathering into oneness with Him there, into membership of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Such is the mystery of Christ, which it was emphatically given to the apostle Paul fully to make known. And as the Gospels may be regarded as the preparatory transition out of Jewish relations to the blessed elevation on which the church rests, the Revelation answers as the corresponding transition from the church one with Christ in heavenly places, by various steps or stages, down to those Jewish relations which for a time dropt out of sight in consequence of the calling of the heavenly body.

The doctrine of the church is clearly at the root of the ONE HOPE, which is found in the intermediate part of the New Testament. For along with the truth of the peculiar calling of the church, as the body commenced by the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and thenceforward guided and perpetuated by Him—along with this truth, it will be found that the peculiar aspect of the coming of the Lord, for which I have contended, stands or falls.

None of the school of interpreters commonly called "the Protestant school" understood by the church anything more, at best, than the Augustinian notion of an invisible company from the beginning to the end of time. None of them therefore has an adequate idea of the new and heavenly work which God began at Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The consequence is that, if they read of saints in Daniel, in the Psalms, or in the Revelation, they are at once set down as of the church. If they read of "this gospel of the kingdom" in Matthew xxiv., or of "the everlasting gospel,"—it is to their minds the same thing as what Paul calls "my gospel," the gospel of the grace of God preached now. Hence follows, and quite fairly too, a denial of any speciality in the walk and conversation of the saints since Pentecost, and a general Judaizing in doctrine, standing, conduct and hopes. It is also a simple and natural result of this, that all Protestant interpreters, if they admit a personal advent at all to introduce the millennial reign, present as the hope of the church that which is, in fact, the proper expectation of the converted Jewish remnant, namely, the day of Jehovah, the Son of man, seen by all the tribes of the earth, coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Nor is the truth of the church unknown to the Protestant interpreters only; it is equally an object of dislike to many of the Futurist school. And it is my conviction that the two baleful heresies which have brought such shame upon the revival of prophetic study towards the beginning and the close of the last twenty years, are intimately connected with the rejection of

this grand truth. For an error touching the church cannot but affect Him whose personal presence is what is so essential to it; and that which dishonours the Spirit goes far, in the long run, to disfigure or deny the person and work of Him of whom the Spirit is the vicar.

In the epistles, it is beyond doubt that the church is continually addressed, as if there were no understood, and fixed or necessary, hindrances to the rapture at the coming of the Lord. How could this be if the church be the same body as those saints who are described in Daniel, the Psalms, &c., as being destined to certain fiery trials still future from a little horn and his satellites who are yet to appear? How comes it that the apostle Paul, when he speaks of the coming of the Lord, never hints at this tribulation, as one through which the church must pass; but always presents the advent as an immediate thing which might occur from one unknown moment to another? That the apostle Paul understood the just application of these prophecies, better than any since his day, is that which few Christians will question: they were scriptures long revealed and familiar to Jews; and the Lord Jesus, in Matthew xxiv. had very significantly linked His fresh revelations upon that occasion with the predictions of Daniel. Yet the Holy Ghost, in His constant allusions in the writings of the apostles to the anticipations of the church, *never once refers* to these terrible circumstances as a future scene wherein the church is to enact a part: on the contrary, the way in which the coming of the Lord is put before the church, as a thing to be constantly looked for, seems incompatible with it. We have examined

the only statement in the epistles which might appear to interpose such a barrier, and we have seen that, so far from contradicting the thought of immediateness, the apostle seeks to relieve the Thessalonian saints from all uneasiness about the day of the Lord and its troubles, by the blessed hope of His coming and their gathering unto Him, which are in his mind indissolubly bound together : a gathering unto Him which must be before He appears to the world, and judges it, because He and they are to appear together. It is certain, moreover, that there must arrive the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin (not before the coming, but) before *the day* of the Lord.

The prophecy of Daniel had already revealed the leading features of the interval during which "the prince that shall come" plays his terrible rôle. "And he shall confirm a covenant" (see margin and compare Is. xxviii. 14) "with the many" (that is, of Daniel's people, the Jews) for one week : and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations there shall be one desolating, even until the consummation" (or consumption, as in Is. xxviii. 22), "and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate." (Dan. ix. 27.) That this prince is not "the Messiah the prince" is manifest, not only from the fact that the former is described as one "that shall come," after the latter has already come and been cut off, as is plain from verse 26, but also from the certainty that "the prince that shall come" is the prince of the Roman people : *his* people "shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." We know who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple—the

people of this future prince. The latter part of verse 26 does not continue the thread of the history, further than the general expressions "and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." In the last verse we are transported to the epoch of "the prince that shall come," and his actings during the last week of the age. This period is shewn to be broken into two parts, during the former of which, according to covenant, Jewish worship is resumed, but "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

If chapter vii. be consulted, it will be seen that there is a certain little horn rising after the ten horns of the fourth Roman beast, before whom three of the first horns fell—"that horn that had eyes and a mouth, that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." (Ver. 20.) "And he shall speak *great* words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High [or of the high places] and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Ver. 25.) Is it not evident that in chapter vii. is a horn or king whose blasphemous pride brings judgment upon the beast, or Roman empire, and whose interference with times and laws, that is, with Jewish ceremonial order, continues for three years and a half? and that for the same space of time, or the last half week, "the prince that shall come," the Roman prince of chapter ix., overthrows this ceremonial worship?

But the Revelation not only takes up the last half of Daniel's week (Rev. xi., xii., xiii.) but shews what is

the place of the church during this period—a truth which it was not given to the Jewish prophet to reveal, because it was that which supposed and fitly followed the revelation of the mystery hidden from ages and from generations. Paul had shewn us the church waiting for the presence of the Lord. What is it that the Holy Ghost adds by John? What is the great outline given in the Revelation?

After the vision of the Lord Jesus, in chapter i., we have “the things that are,” epistles to the seven churches, so conveyed as to apply not only at that time but as long as the church subsists on earth, and then the properly prophetic part, the things which should be after the church-condition had passed away. *Throughout the prophetic portion of the book the church is never described as being on earth.* At the close of chapter iii., it altogether disappears from earthly view; and, instead of its course being any longer traced here below, a door is opened in heaven and the prophet is called up to see the things which must come to pass after these, that is, after the things which are, or the church regarded in the completeness of its varying phases on earth. Besides other things (the throne and One that sat upon it being the centre of the vision), John sees, not seven candlesticks, but, suited to the new circumstances of heaven, four and twenty thrones, and upon them four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment and upon their heads golden crowns.

Here we have, in vision, the place and functions of the church after it shall have been taken up to meet the Lord, and before its manifestation with Him in glory. And for this simple reason, that the way in

which He and they are here represented emblematically is totally different from what is revealed as connected with either, when the moment comes to leave heaven for the purpose of judgment upon the beast, &c. ; or from what is revealed touching the reign for a thousand years subsequent to that judgment : that is, in Revelation xix. 11 and xx. 4-6. Nor can the scene in Revelation iv., v. be interpreted consistently with any view, save that of the church being actually caught up and completed in the presence of God. It is quite a distinct thing from our sitting in heavenly places in Christ : this is the subject of the epistle to the Ephesians. Neither is it the same thing as the boldness which the partakers of the heavenly calling have even now to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Such is the subject of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the high-priesthood of Jesus is dwelt on at length, and the liberty which we have in consequence to draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith ; for it is still faith, and not actual possession, however it may be, through the power of the Holy Ghost, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The purpose of Revelation is to disclose the dealings of God, whether the facts be expressed or understood, but dealings which involve a certain condition of things, which was future if considered in relation to the circumstances looked at in the epistles, as actually subsisting at the time—the things in short which must be *after these*. Nor can this chapter be supposed to describe the blessedness of the spirits of the saints previous

to the coming of Christ for the church, because the departed who are with Christ could not be symbolized by twenty-four elders ; that is, by an image evidently borrowed from the *full courses* of Jewish priesthood. *The whole church*, and not a part only, is comprehended in the symbol. But this can only be after the dead in Christ rise first, then we which are alive and remain are caught up together with them in the clouds, and so are ever with the Lord. Accordingly here they are represented in heaven, the Lord being also there, and although made kings and priests even when on earth, still the time is not yet come for the exercise of government. In beautiful harmony, therefore, with this peculiar and transitional period during which they are removed from the world, they worship above. But the saints below are not forgotten. Those above have golden harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of *saints*. And they sing a new song, celebrating the worthiness of the Lamb to take the book and open the seals, not only because He was slain and had redeemed themselves, but had made *them*, that is, *these saints*, to their God, kings and priests. They should reign over the earth. The fulfilment is seen in Revelation xx. 4-6: the reigning with Christ not merely of those symbolized by the elders, but of the Apocalyptic saints also.

Moreover, it is clear on the one hand, that the lightnings and thunderings suit neither the day of grace nor the millennial state. Earth is certainly not yet brought under the power of the blood of Christ, when these symbols will find their accomplishment. On the other hand, it is equally clear that there are

saints on earth, while the twenty-four elders are before the throne above. That is, it is neither the millennial nor the present state; but an intermediate period of a peculiar nature, in which we have the throne, not of grace as now, nor of displayed glory as by-and-by, but clothed with what has been justly termed a Sinai character of awful majesty attached to it.

But those above exercise their priesthood in the presence of God as the full completed church. Hence the symbol of twenty-four elders round the throne, at a time when, as all confess, earth is still unreconciled, however there may be, in the next chapter, the anticipative song of every creature. If this be true, it follows that the Lord's coming to meet the saints takes place between Revelation iii. and iv. (if the thought be pursued, which I doubt not, that chapters vi.—xix. will be fulfilled in a rapid crisis), room being left there for the coming described in 1 Thessalonians iv. and elsewhere. Then the main action of the book goes on subsequently to the removal of the church, and after this another character of testimony from that of the church properly is announced, and God Himself is revealed in ways different from those which He is displaying now; that is to say, not as shewing the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus, but in the chastening judgments of the seals, trumpets, and vials, preparatory to the great day of the Lord which Revelation xix. 11 ushers in. On this state of things Daniel compared with the Revelation will be found to cast and to receive much light, for it seems plain that the saints of the Most High, or heavenlies, of whom we read in Daniel

vii., identify themselves with the saints who suffer under the beast, after the rapture of the church and before the Lord's appearing. They keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, which, be it noted, is the spirit of *prophecy*, and though they are not of the twenty-four elders, they will have their blessed and holy part in the first resurrection. And here let it be remarked, that the term has nothing to do with the question whether all are raised at the same time ; it simply describes the condition of those who rise and reign during the thousand years, as distinguished from those who do not rise till that period is ended. How true this is, is manifest from the fact that Christ has part in the first resurrection, who nevertheless rose before the church more than eighteen hundred years at least. Hence the thought is not forbidden of certain saints being raised who stand and suffer after the church is gone.

The symbol of the twenty-four elders continues unchanged throughout the course of the book, till chapter xix. They enter into God's ways and judgments, as interested in whatever affected His glory, as may be seen in Revelation iv., v., vii., xi., xiv., xix.

But in chapter xix. there is a striking change. After the opening scene of the rejoicings over Babylon the elders no longer appear, but the time for the marriage being come (and how evidently the church therefore is still viewed in the Revelation as unmarried), the bride, the Lamb's wife is announced as made ready.

The heavenly joy and the Bridegroom and His bride being thus incidentally glanced at, He takes a new aspect, for the day is about to break upon the world ;

and so do we, for we will have gone long before to be ever with the Lord, and if He is about to appear, so are we along with Him in glory. Hence, in verse 11, the prophet sees heaven opened, and a white horse, and He that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. In unison, therefore, as He thus comes to smite and rule, the armies which are in heaven follow the Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful, which expressions are sufficiently clear to determine who are meant by the armies, if any one should have a doubt. It is the church which was in heaven following Christ in the capacity of His hosts, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Contrasted with the marriage supper of the Lamb, all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven are invited to the great supper of God. The prophet sees the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and His army. The result all know.

Next follows the angelic binding of the dragon for a thousand years, and the parenthetic revelation of the sitting on thrones, or at least, of the living and reigning with Christ during that period, of such as had part in the first resurrection. They will not cease to be priests of God, though their office may be discharged in a different way from what we saw as to some of them in Revelation iv. and v., but they all reign with Christ for a thousand years.

It is a prominent feature of the book, that in it is traced the sovereignty of God, not only in His purposes

regarding the church properly so called, but in His gracious ways with an election from among Jews and Gentiles subsequently. Thus, after the church is seen in its completeness in heaven, under the symbol of the twenty-four crowned elders (chaps. iv. v.), we hear in chapter vi. 9-11 of saints suffering, yet crying for vengeance; and the announcement to them that they should rest yet for a little, until their fellow-servants and brethren, doomed to be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. Vengeance should not arrive till then. These are evidently not the church, but saints on earth after the church is in heaven, whose sufferings and cries to the Lord accord much with the experience detailed in the Psalms. Still, whether Jewish or Gentile, they are not named here.

But in chapter vii. we have distinctly brought before us a *numbered* company out of all the tribes of *Israel* sealed with the seal of the living God, and after this an *innumerable* multitude out of *all nations*, &c., who are characterized as coming out of the great tribulation, and as having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. These bodies are evidently distinguished from, if not contrasted with, each other: and they are still more markedly shewn to be different from the church; for we have the facts not only of a certain defined tribulation out of which these said Gentiles come, but of the elders, that is, the confessed symbol of the glorified being still represented as a *separate party* in the scene* (ver. 11).

* I cannot concur in the view put forth in the most voluminous and elaborate comment of modern times upon this book; namely, that the sealed hundred and forty-four thousand are identical with

Under the trumpets again we find the prayers of saints alluded to, who are of course supposed to be still on earth (compare chap. viii. 3, 4, with v. 8), and an implication of the sealed Jewish remnant being in the sphere, though saved from the effects of the fifth trumpet (chap. ix. 4).

In chapter xi. are seen the two witnesses, prophesying in sackcloth, and killed. In chapter xii. the woman is persecuted by the dragon, who wars with the remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is

the innumerable palm-bearing multitude; the latter embodying the idea of the different generations of the former into a corporate form (for the idea of the church being one body here below by the presence of the Holy Ghost is utterly denied and unceasingly distorted in this system of interpretation). But Mr. Elliott allows that the twenty-four elders represent the church in the character of a royal priesthood. No one denies that the church in different scenes may be set forth by different symbols. But how comes it, not only that these distinct symbols are in the same scene, but that one of the elders is found explaining who, what and whence the multitude are? and that the description is of those who, among other things, come out of a particular tribulation, and thus form a peculiar class? Nor is this denied by Mr. Elliott who connects "the great" with the fifth seal, as the complement of the sufferers there, though another and distinct body. And if Israel, in verse 4, is to be understood symbolically, why not "all nations," in verse 9, which are plainly distinguished from the preceding company? And if the election *out of Jews* be the emblem of Christians, how come *these same persons* immediately after to be characterized as an election *out of Gentiles*? Where is the consistency of treating the former as symbolical, and the latter as literal? and the more so, as it is in the latter picture, that various mystic personages appear, such as the four living creatures and the elders.

accomplished in the beast of chapter xiii., who makes war with the saints and overcomes them.

Chapter xiv. is clearly a sevenfold sketch of the dealings of God, which brings the crisis to a conclusion: the hundred forty and four thousand associated with the Lamb on Mount Sion; the everlasting gospel summoning all to fear and worship God because of the proximity of His judgment; the fall of Babylon; the declaration of torment to the bestial worshippers; the blessedness from henceforth of those dying in the Lord: the harvest of the earth, out of which were redeemed the one hundred and forty-four thousand, as the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb; and lastly, the vintage of the earth. The reader has only to weigh verses 12, 13, in order to have the foregoing remarks confirmed. Even here we have the patience of saints described just before the harvest; the portion, too, not of the church (for *we* shall not all sleep), but of a special class of saints here below, while the church is hidden above.

In chapter xv. (preparatory to chapter xvi., that is, the seven outpoured bowls of the wrath of God), is heard the song of the conquerors of the beast, celebrating the works of the Lord God Almighty and the ways of the King of nations. Compare also Revelation xvi. 5, 6, 15; xvii. 6; xviii. 4-6. To those who kept the word of Christ's patience (Rev. iii. 10) the promise was to be kept (not in or during, but) out of the hour of trial, out of that fearful tribulation which is in store for the dwellers upon earth.

In the preceding scriptures it is clear that after Christ has fulfilled His promise in the translation of the church

to heaven, there are saints on earth, both from among Jews and Gentiles who suffer throughout the tribulation. And these Apocalyptic sufferers are described in Revelation xx. 4, as having part, equally with the church, in the first resurrection. For that text discloses first, the general place of the glorified in the millennial reign, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them ;" secondly, those killed in the earlier persecutions of the book (chap. vi. 9-11), "And *I saw* the souls of those that were beheaded because of the witness of Jesus, and because of the word of God ;" and thirdly, the later witnesses for God, "and those who had not worshipped the beast," &c. (Chap. xv. 2.) Those saints who were called and suffered after the rapture of the glorified, are emphatically mentioned, because it might have appeared that they had lost all by their death. Not members of Christ's body before He comes for the church, they share not in the rapture ; not protected from death during the prevalence of the beast, they cannot be the living nucleus of Jews or of Gentiles, saved to be the holy seed on earth during the reign of Christ. They suffer, are cut off, but are not forgotten. "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Thus the truth brought to light in the epistles to the Thessalonians, is *assumed* in the view which the apostle John was the honoured servant to enunciate, namely, the blessed condition and holy employ of the church round the throne and the Lamb, after the removal from earth, but previous to the appearing with Christ in glory.

The central part of the Revelation then appears to-

corroborate on an irrefragable basis, the truth that the church will be taken away and fulfil the symbols we have been noticing, previous to the day of the Lord, during the same time that other saints are still groaning and shedding their blood like water here below. (Pss. lxxiv. lxxix.)

Such seems to be the main key which unlocks an important portion of the book and confirms the view, so sweet to the renewed mind, of going to meet the Lord, without one earthly obstacle between: keeping unblunted the point and energy of a truth *only revealed in the New Testament*. For the Old Testament spoke of His coming *with* all His saints, not *for* them; of His appearing in glory to the confusion of His enemies, and not of His descending to meet His friends, when we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed and caught up together in the clouds. And hence it would seem, the emphatic language of the apostle, conscious that God was by him revealing a new thing to faith. For in 1 Corinthians xv. he says, "Behold I shew you a mystery;" and in 1 Thessalonians iv., "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord."

How sweetly do the closing appeals tell upon the heart of him who has an ear to hear! "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." It would be to lose the blessedness of keeping the prophetic sayings of this book, to have any other thought than that Jesus is coming quickly. (Chap. xxii. 7.) It is well to read in their light the signs of the times: knowing the closure, we can thus detect the principles now at work.

But it is a mistake and a misuse to construe of such signs obstacles to the coming of the Lord : to say, until I know the arrival of this or that precursor, I cannot in my heart expect Jesus. Blessed be God ! such is not the language of the Spirit. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Are these the words of mere feeling, unguided by spiritual understanding of the mind of God ? As a fact, we know that the Lord has delayed ; but He is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But who will say that it is conceivable to be looking for the Lord, *wholly uncertain* of the time of His advent, and at the same time to have the *revealed certainty* of a number of events which determine the year, or, it may be, the day ?

That Jesus will arise, the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings (Mal. iv.), is clear, and we know that the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Matt. xiii.) But this same Jesus is more than the supreme power of righteous government on earth. He is known to the church, at any rate, as the bright and morning Star. Blessed light of grace, ere the day breaks, to those who watch for Him from heaven during the dark and lonely night ! "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

"He that testifieth these things saith, Yea, I am coming quickly. Amen ! come, Lord Jesus."

Here are the letters with remarks on each :—

LETTER I.

Sept. 1, 1851.

DEAR MR. KELLY,

I have read your paper on 2 Thessalonians ii. I cannot but think that it would be advisable to express your views more simply and plainly for uninitiated readers like myself. If I rightly understand you, the sum and substance of your view and argument is to the effect following :—

The Thessalonian Christians *could not* be distressed or affrighted at the thought of their Lord's coming being at hand. It was the chief object of their hope. Nor does the passage in question imply anything of the kind. First, "the day of the Lord," spoken of in it as *ἐνεστωs*, is not identical in sense with the *παρουσία*, or coming of the Lord, spoken of in the verse preceding, being only that part of the era of His coming which is devoted to *judgment*, a previous epoch and act of it being that of His gathering of His saints to Himself. Secondly, *ἐνεσθηκεν* does not mean, and may not be explained in the sense of *being near*, or *at hand*, but only in the sense it bears elsewhere, of *being actually present*. Hence, and from these two premises, it is to be inferred that the trouble of the Thessalonian Christians arose out of the idea of the latter part of the era of His coming, that of judgment, having come, and consequently of their having not had part in the previous gathering of His saints to Him.

Supposing this to be your meaning, it of course follows that they thought *St. Paul*, as well as them-

selves, to have been similarly overlooked by Christ, and left to the trials of the judgment-day. Is this credible? Is it not enough of itself to set aside the interpretation?

But what, then, of the *ἐνεστηκεν*? Is not its proper meaning, "*is present?*" No doubt, just as *παρεστι*, and such similar words, mean "*is present.*" But they are words which, in every language that I am acquainted with, are susceptible, if the context requires it, of the meaning, *close at hand*. I have little doubt that my friend, Mr. Kelly, when looking out from some height in Guernsey [where we both of us were at the time of the correspondence] for the steamer, in which he was expecting a friend, has sometimes, when he saw her steering into port, made use of the common exclamation, "Here she is!" And what would he have thought, had a friend who heard him looked carefully at every part of the ground within twenty yards of the speaker, and said, "She is *not* here?" "The Master is here" (*παρεστιν*), said Martha to Mary, in John xi. 28; and yet, adds verse 30, "Now Jesus had not yet come into the village," that is, the village where Martha spoke to Mary.

Thus our translators seem to me to have been perfectly right in translating the word *ἐνεστηκεν* as they have in 2 Thessalonians ii. 2, *the day of the Lord* there spoken of being clearly that epoch of time which would be marked by two grand events—one of mercy, one of judgment, the gathering of saints to Himself, and the destruction of the man of sin—as may undoubtedly be inferred from comparison of verses 8 and 1.

As to the words, *σαλευθηναι ἀπο του νεου* and

θροεισθαι, they are surely most naturally to be explained, not as meaning "frightened," but of that agitation of mind and feeling which would indispose them to the calm and proper discharge of the common duties of life. Compare, in Matthew xxiv. 6, the *μη θροεισθε*. I see nothing whatsoever in this inconsistent with the looking unto the coming of the Son of God. And I am sure I should feel somewhat of its indisposing effect to the common routine of daily duty, had I the fixed persuasion that the Lord had appointed to take me to Himself on the morrow of the present day, whether by the stroke of death, or by His own personal advent.

Yours very faithfully,

E. B. ELLIOTT.

Is it not singular that a paper which many comparatively unlettered Christians have found clear and helpful should have been unintelligible to, and misunderstood by, a man of Mr. E.'s calibre and attainments? Why was this? In my opinion his own erroneous system of thought, along with the lack of the habit of expecting in the word of God perfect accuracy and nice shades of difference, apparently made not the style only but the subject and the evidence difficult to his mind. It is well to note this, the blinding effect of error, even on a saint, as I do not doubt my friend was. How many suffer thus, as little as he suspecting the true cause!

If the words of the apostle in the text most under examination are to be accepted simply and fully, it is certain that the source of agitation and trouble for the Thessalonian brethren, alleged by the Holy Spirit, was

the statement, imputed to the apostle himself, not that the Lord's coming was at hand, but that His day was actually there. This is as unequivocally the sense of the apostle's very precise language, as it is the certain truth of God. He is *not* conjuring them by that concerning which he was about to teach them, but, on the contrary, he entreats them, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him (which he presents, not as two distinct objects, but as a united idea before the mind by the one article, $\tau\eta\varsigma$), that they should not be soon shaken in mind ("from their mind" may be literal, but is not idiomatic English), nor yet troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as by us [that is, as if it were by us], as [or to the effect] that the day of the Lord is present. That is, he entreats them, by or for the sake of our blessed hope in Christ, who will gather us to Himself on high, that they should not be soon disturbed, or thrown off their balance, nor yet alarmed by the report, falsely attributed to him and a higher than him, that the day of the Lord, the day of judgment for man and the earth, was actually come.

This I believe to be the only possible sense of the verses, which also maintains the force of each clause and word as precisely as it exhibits a wise and worthy aim in the sentence as a whole. Mr. Elliott's view confounds that hope by which Paul is beseeching the brethren with the dread scene of judgment, which had been misrepresented and misunderstood as already arrived. The true view sustains the Authorized Version of $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho$, "by," which is not only grammatically tenable but exegetically demanded here, if not else-

where, in the New Testament. It was not the *παρουσία* but the *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου*, which had been misused ; and the comfort of the Lord's coming is employed as a motive and means for counteracting the uneasiness created by the false representation that the day was there.

No doubt the preposition may, and does often, mean "in regard to," or "on behalf of," a little stronger than *περί*. But the question is the meaning of *ὑπέρ*, neither in itself, nor in other constructions, but with such words of entreaty as *ἐρωτάω*, as distinguished from *ἐρωτάω περί*, where the sense of "in the place of," or "instead of," is excluded, as here. To me it appears that the precise meaning of *ἐρ. ὑπέρ*, in such a case as the present, can only be "by reason of," or briefly "by," and, if motive be made more prominent, "for the sake of," or briefly "for."

Now the apostle had been setting out in 2 Thessalonians i. that retributive hour of God's righteous judgment, when He will render tribulation to those that trouble the saints, and to the troubled saints repose at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and on those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It is His coming, not to receive the saints, and present them to the Father in His house above, but to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed in that day. It is, beyond question, that day of everlasting destruction from the Lord's presence and the glory of His might, the day of the Lord, which was said (on the Spirit's warrant, and not a revelation only

but a pretended Pauline epistle) to have even then set in, so that the saints in Thessalonica were shaken in mind (which is the true English idiom, as ἀπὸ τοῦ νοός is the Greek), and troubled. Clearly therefore the contradistinction comes out more and more plainly. It was not the excitement of a premature hope, but the agitation and fear produced by the rumour, and on quasi-apostolic authority too, that that terrible day had really begun. The apostle beseeches them, by the comfortable hope of the one, not to be soon shaken and troubled by the false cry that the other, the day of judgment on the quick, was come.

Mr. E. reasons against his supposed necessary but inadmissible consequence, that the Thessalonians must in such a case have thought that they, and Paul too, had been left behind by Christ at the first act of His coming, and exposed to the horrors of the second. But it is entirely a mistake, and his own solely. The Thessalonians had no adequate light up to this second epistle on the relative order of these events. From 1 Thessalonians they knew of Christ's coming (chap. iv.), and of the day (chap. v.); but they may, till they got the second epistle, have thought, as so many Christians do even in our day, and did in all ages, that the tribulation of the last times precedes the translation of the saints, and that His day therefore accompanies, if it too does not precede, His coming. Even Bengel affirms the whimsical idea, refuted by this very chapter, that the appearing of our Lord's coming may happen before His coming itself. Now the nature of the thing, as well as its accompaniments, bear a testimony exactly opposed. For the Lord might come without appearing

to every eye, but He could not appear without coming. Just so we read in the first verse of this chapter that He will come and gather unto Himself the saints; whereas it is not His coming, but the revelation or appearing of His coming, which is to destroy the lawless one or man of sin. Such is the true moral order, and proved by other scriptures also, as Revelation xvii. 14; xix. 14. He first receives His own, His friends, to Himself by His coming or *παρουσία*; He afterwards executes judgment on His enemies by the appearance of His coming, *τῇ ἐπιφάνειᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ*. The glorified saints are with Him when He brings in the day, following Him out of heaven as His hosts or armies (Rev. xix. 14), before the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, instead of being caught up coincidentally with it or after it. Hence, when Christ our life is manifested, it is written that then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory (not translated to heaven then or subsequently).

Plainly then the Thessalonians had not the least suspicion that Christ had come and taken up the apostle or any one else, nor is this at all the delusion which the apostle is refuting, but what was not at all unnatural for any like them ignorant of the mutual relation of His coming and His day. They feared that that day of darkness and clouds had dawned; and the agitating influence of this the false teachers sought to bring on their souls, availing themselves of a pretended communication of the apostle. We can readily understand that the Christians then were troubled by a panic which has often repeated itself since, even to our own day. One sees in the Old Testament the judgment of a city

or land (as in Is. xiii. or xix.) called the day of the Lord on Babylon or Egypt. So might these unscrupulous teachers seek to use the afflictions of the Thessalonians, which even in his former epistle the apostle feared might furnish an occasion to the tempter. And this apparently they did. See (they might have said) what troubles overwhelm us! It is the day of the Lord already begun. The apostle corrects this—first, by the motive of our hope, the Lord's coming to gather us unto Himself; and, secondly, by elaborate proof, not that His "coming" may not be at any time, but that "the day or appearance of His coming cannot be till the apostasy (for it is much more than "*a falling away*") and the man of sin be revealed, which that day is to judge. It was now for the first time to be inferred that the coming precedes the appearance of His coming, as it was afterwards still more manifestly shewn in Revelation iv. compared with chapters xix., xx.

And this is corroborated by every word in detail, as well as by the general issue. See the violent but ineffectual effort to get rid of the force of ἐνέστηκεν, the word so unfaithfully rendered "is at hand" by our translators, and even so inconsistently with their own rendering of it in every other occurrence of the same form. Indeed Mr. E. is obliged to own its proper meaning to be "*is present.*" But, argues he, so it is with πάρεστιν, and such similar words. "They are words which in every language that I am acquainted with are susceptible if the context requires it, of the meaning, *close at hand.*" And then he illustrates the case, with his usual ingenuity, from the language of common life, which he endeavours to confirm by John xi. 28–30.

But it is not true that the meaning of "presence" is interchangeable with mere "nearness" in any language; they are different ideas, and are expressed by distinct words. We have seen that the New Testament occurrences of the word *ἐνέστηκεν* do not sustain this notion; nor do any in the LXX, any more than the instances in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, as the Dean of Rochester has allowed to me. It is wrong therefore to give *pending*, save in the sense of *present*, *begun*, if "pending" will bear it. It is time *present*, not *instant*. And so of all exact versions now, German or of English, as of Meyer, Dean Alford, Bishop Ellicott, &c.

But what strikes one as peculiar is, that Mr. E.'s illustration and use of John xi. proves nothing, save against his argument. For, according to his own shewing, the person or thing had actually removed from the place where either had been, had traversed the space that separated, and had arrived at the place where the person was whom it was proposed to reach, though not to the precise spot on which he stood. To take the case used, my friend would have really steamed from England (or France, as it might be), crossed the sea, and entered Guernsey roads, when one might exclaim of the packet, Here she is! So in the scripture cited: our blessed Lord had left where He staid two days after receiving the message, had traversed the way which constituted the distance thence to Bethany, and had reached the locality or district, though not yet in the village.

Now it was precisely the error of those who were then misleading the Thessalonians to say that the day of the Lord had thus come, *ἐνέστηκεν*. Mr. E. wishes

to shew that they taught it would *soon* be coming, or was impending, a sense in which neither *πάρεστιν* nor *ἐνέστηκεν* is ever used in any correct writing, sacred or profane. A vast change is supposed to have taken place in both cases, which it is his thought and aim to deny. There is therefore not the least ground for his reasoning in the text or the illustration. They destroy his own argument, and leave our translators wholly unjustified in rendering *ἐνέστηκεν*, "is at hand." Even if the laxity of common life allowed of our saying, Here he is! when he had not begun to move from a distant land (which is the true way of stating the question, not when he had come to the immediate neighbourhood though not the exact spot), how strange that such looseness of language should be transferred to an apostle's inspired repudiation of an error!

Nor is there, so far as I am acquainted with the subject, the smallest ground from scripture to affirm that the day of the Lord includes the gathering of the saints to Christ, though Mr. E. ventured to say that clearly it is thus marked. Not so; the day of the Lord brings judgment on man's evil on earth, and is never said to gather saints to Christ in heaven; and the comparison of verses 1 and 8 proves the difference of "the coming" from "the manifestation of the coming" or day of the Lord. *Where are the scriptures which connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord?* I know of none. It is assumption and error.

Again, it is unfounded that *σαλευθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νοοῦ* and *θροεῖσθαι* have the most distant reference to the excitement of hope, as the ordinary misinterpretation implies; they mean just such disturbance of mind as in

Matthew xxiv. 6; Mark xiii. 7. Mr. E. says "not as meaning frightened;" but far better scholars than he say the express contrary. "The verb *θορόω*, derived from *ΘΕΟΜΑΙ*, and connected with *τρέω*; compare Donalds. [*Cratyl.* sec. 272] properly implies '*clamorem tumultuantem edere*' (Schott), and thence by a natural transition that terrified state (*ταραχίζεσθαι* Zonaras), which is associated with, and gives rise to, such kind of outward manifestations." (Bp. Ellicott's Comm. in loc.) To suppose the Christian's joy in the anticipation of meeting the Son of God, the Bridegroom of the bride, to be expressible by the same terms as those of perturbation or alarm which might be produced by hearing of wars and rumours of wars, affliction, tribulation, &c., is not to me the evidence of a sound judgment in divine things, but of the reverse. And I trust the Lord was better to my late friend ere he was called away than to leave him under that lack of peace and happy expectation and rest in His love, which his last sentence discloses. Indeed it is the conviction that this confusion of the day with the coming of the Lord is as destructive to the soul's enjoyment of the Lord, as it is to real intelligence in scripture and notably in the prophetic word, which makes one feel the importance of shewing how it wrought even in so pious a soul as the late Mr. E. B. Elliott. Need there be any delicacy now in using his words for the profit of the living?

LETTER II.

Sept. 5.

DEAR FRIEND,

You ask, with the emphasis of italics to the question, where are "the scriptures which connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord?" I should suppose 1 Corinthians i. 8; 2 Corinthians i. 14; Philippians i. 6, 10; ii. 16, may be regarded as obvious examples in point. It is to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ that the Corinthians are to be preserved blameless. It is at the day of Christ that the Philippian converts are to be the boast of the apostle Paul. And so on.

Thus I see nothing in your remarks to alter my opinion as to the *παρουσία* of Christ, the day of Christ or day of the Lord being used with reference to the same era in 2 Thessalonians ii.

Nor, again, do I see reason from your remarks to doubt of the parallelism of the *παρεστι* and the *ενεστηκεν*, or of the *θροεισθε* in Matthew xxiv. with the same word in 2 Thessalonians ii. 2. And the argument you urge, from the fact of unstable men having been drawn by heretical teachers into heresy, to the fact of faithful believing men, like the Thessalonian Christians, being seduced into grievous heresy, seems to me unmain-
tainable.

Thus, on the whole, I remain in the clear conviction that the usual view of the apostle's meaning in 2 Thessalonians ii. 2 is the correct one.

But, dear friend, I like to dwell on the points in which we agree rather than on those on which we differ.

I trust I may be found united with you in "the day of Christ." And in that hope I beg you to believe me

Yours very sincerely,

E. B. ELLIOTT.

We leave to-morrow morning. I write this, as I may not find you at home when I call to take leave. I return the books you were so kind as to lend me, with my thanks, retaining what I think you kindly allowed me to retain.

My remarks on the second letter need not be long. Not a single word in a single text referred to by Mr. E. connects the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord. We have in 1 and 2 Corinthians i. their manifestation as unimpeachable in that day, and the apostle's joy in them then, whatever the exercises and need of patient grace now. Still less does Philippians i. 6, 10 touch the question, which is rather Paul's confidence in God's completing in them the good work begun unto (or, as we say, for, and even against) that day; but not a hint of "gathering" them to Christ then. Again, Philippians ii. 16 is the earnest desire of the devoted servant of Christ that the saints at Philippi should be a boast for him in Christ's day that he had not run nor laboured in vain. In short, the manifestation of our responsible walk and services, and hence the joy and reward of faithfulness will be in that day; but of our gathering to Christ in these texts (no doubt the most apt Mr. E. could find) not a whisper. To my mind the serious thing is the insensibility of such a man to their force. For the same confusion which

made him imagine that these texts connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord prevented him from even comprehending the bearing of 2 Thessalonians ii. 1, as distinguished from verses 2 and 8.

The argument I urged on Mr. E. from 2 Timothy ii. must have been somewhat to this effect. It is evident that later on Hymenaeus and Philetus, and the like, had, as to the truth, so far missed the mark as to say that the resurrection had taken place already. They probably resolved it into resurrection with Christ (or possibly "higher life") as a present state, denying the true and blessed hope, and so had settled down into a life of ease, a millennium now, instead of awaiting Christ from and for heaven in suffering and testimony meanwhile. Thus was the faith of some overthrown. And so, in all likelihood, it may have been in Thessalonica. The misleaders were really bolder there, since they alleged the Spirit, nay, a word, and even apostolic letter, for the alarming impression that the day of the Lord had arrived. But it is as easy to conceive a quasi-spiritual or figurative force given to that day as to the resurrection, and real believers being upset by either. I can only suppose that Mr. E. did not take in the idea; else he must surely have admitted that the analogy is plain, and not maintainable only but rather irresistible, unless I greatly deceive myself.

One thing is certain, that, even among real scholars, not to speak of enlightened Christians, "the usual view" of the last clause of 2 Thessalonians ii. 2 is now abandoned generally as incorrect and untenable in every point of view, Mr. E. being one of its latest defenders

among men of any weight. The "usual view" had so filled my friend's mind, that he never could get a clear apprehension of the overwhelming weight of proof against it. Another "usual view," endorsed even by Hammond, Bishop Newton, Paley, and others, that the clause before the last means that the Thessalonians were misled through a misconstruction of the first epistle of the apostle is of less consequence but equally mistaken. It was a suppositious epistle, forged to convey the error that the day of the Lord was present. Such is the only meaning fairly deducible from the words, ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι' ἡμῶν; and so even Chrysostom, πεπλασμένην [not πρώτην] ἐπιστολὴν ἐπιδείκνουν ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. (Comment. in Epp. Pauli, Hom. iii., v. 465, ed. Field.) As to this point, the late Mr. G. S. Faber is quite right, I see, in his "Sacred Calendar," iii. 486, 487.

Our proper hope is the Lord's coming to receive us to Himself, and to be with Him in the Father's house. We shall also appear with Him in glory, and reign with Him over the earth. But, in order to appear with Him when He appears in glory, scripture shews that we shall be caught up to join Him above. Then that a very grave work in judgment, but not without mercy, for Jews and Gentiles, proceeds on earth, while we are with Him there, is taught in Revelation iv.-xix., before He appears, and we with Him, in glory and to judgment.



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