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THE
TESTIMONY
OF THE
END

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THE END.

BY
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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.  
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WARE.
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY C. FROST.
1854.



101. e. 232.



INTRODUCTION.

§ 1.—THE DESIGN AND PLAN OF THE BOOK.

The design of this Essay is to submit to holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, the results of my researches as to *the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Testimony of the End, and the Everlasting Gospel*, considered in the light of their historical succession, and in the practical influence which the knowledge of the ways of God ought to have on our lives and affections here on earth.

I hope that the result of the communication will be, on the one hand, to induce brethren who have received more light on these subjects than myself to impart it to the children of God; and, on the other, to facilitate in some degree the study of this part of holy prophecy to those who desire to pursue it.

The course I shall follow, with the help of the Lord, will be to bring forward the succession of facts which relate to the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, concentrating upon each point the most light I can, by collecting together the passages of the Word which bear upon it.

This course, I know, offers but little attraction to such as appreciate only a convenient food, in which they are spared all research and labour of their own. The necessity, however, of being brief, imposes it upon me, and above all, the lack of the gifts necessary to satisfy the need of the class of readers of whom I have been speaking.

I commence, therefore, this essay by the sketch of a biblical history of the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, which, however dry it may appear, will serve as my introduction to the subject, which I hope to develop afterwards with a view to edification.

The word sometimes uses indifferently the expression "Reign of Heaven" and "Reign of God."¹ It will begin by the establishment of the authority of God and of His Christ over the Kingdoms of the world, which was a scriptural idea received and well known by the Jews at the time of the Lord's² sojourn on earth.

The Church shares in the reign of Heaven, as joint heir with the Son, as His Bride, because it is composed of the brethren of Jesus, members of His body and of the family of God. In this sense the hope of this Reign is for us a heavenly hope.⁴ The earthly heirs of the reign are the meek, who endure to the end. This little remnant will inherit the millennial earth.⁵ This cannot be applied to the Church but by means of a spiritualising interpretation.

The Psalms xcvi. and xcix. are prophetic songs, the fulfilment of which will take place only after the heavens and the earth, which now are, have been shaken yet once more according to promise. (Comp. Heb. xii. 26, 27; Psalms xcvi. 2, 9; xcix. 1.) In the period now present, until salvation be revealed by the

(1) *Basileia* (Gr.) signifies at the same time "Kingdom" and "Reign;" but more often it would be better for the sense to say, "Reign."

(2) Matt. v. 3; Luke, vi. 20; Matt. xviii. 3; Mark, x. 15; Matt. xix. 14, 23, 24.

(3) Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14. Apoc. xii. 10; xi. 15, 17. Luke, xxiii. 42. Mark ix. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

(4) 1 Cor. xv. 50. Eph. v. 5; Coloss. i. 12, 13. 1 Thess. ii. 12. 2 Thess. i. 5. 2 Tim. iv. 18. Heb. xii. 28. James, ii. 5. 2 Peter, i. 11. Apoc. i. 9.

(5) Psalm. xxxvii. Matt. v. 3, 5, 19, 20; viii. 1; xxv. 34. Luke xii. 27-32.

return of the Son of man, the subject of the heavenly songs is for the rebellious world a mystery ; (Apoc. xii. 10.) " The Lord (*l' Eternel*) reigns," is a prophecy in the mouth of the saints and of the heavenly powers. It is easy to be convinced of this by attentively reading these psalms.

These four things, Salvation and Strength, and the Reign of our God, and the Power (authority) of His Christ, exist, it is true, in the counsel of God ; they are realities for those who believe, but they remain, nevertheless, a mystery, for the world, which can only believe that which belongs to the region of sense. The power of the Spirit of life *which is* in Christ Jesus, acts in the faithful to produce in them the fruits of the Spirit, which are the fruits of the Reign ; for the Reign of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xiv. 17.)

For those who preach the Gospel, this same power is necessary to bring souls to the knowledge of these things, which are mysteries for the world. Such is the value of passages like these ; "For our Gospel came not unto you *in word only*, but also *in power*, and in the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 5.) In order that the ministry of the Gospel be really efficacious, it must be based upon the power of the life, and be sustained by the gifts of the Spirit of Christ risen. I speak of the power of the Spirit given at Pentecost, to the apostles *first*, then *to us all*, to the end of the present dispensation. (Acts i. 8 ; Eph. iii. 20 ; iv. 11, 16.) "For the Reign of God *is not* in word, but in power." (1 Cor. iv. 20.) It is not enough to speak of the things of God in order to edify ; it must be done by the power of Christ ascended on high.

¹ There might be here a very interesting question to examine relative to the gifts of miracles, or the exercise "of the powers of the world (age) to come. I shall confine myself to awakening the attention of it in brethren, by the following questions. Have not those gifts ceased

And this same power acts in the heirs to sanctify them, to enlighten and to sustain them, even as it will hereafter act, in order to raise them, or to change them into the perfect likeness of the second Adam, in order that they may be manifested with Him in glory.

Then only shall be manifested to the world, Salvation, and Strength, and the Reign of God, and the Power, (authority) of His Christ; for it is He, Christ still hidden in the throne, who is the Power and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. i. 24.)

§ 2.—TESTIMONY TO THE GOSPEL OF THE REIGN.

The time fixed in the counsels of God¹ for the fulfilment of the promises made by Himself, or through the prophets, to Abraham and to his successors, being accomplished, John the Baptist came "in the way of righteousness," calling the whole nation to repent and be converted. It was the end of the dispensation of the law and the prophets. The Reign had drawn near without observation in the person of the Son of man. "Repent ye, for the Reign of Heaven is at hand;

with the pure preaching of the Reign? (See I Cor. iv. 20. Mark v. 30; vi. 2. Luke xix. 37. Acts i. 8. I Cor. ii. 4, 5. 2 Cor. xii. 12. Heb. vi. 5.) For this power belongs to the life of the resurrection, or of the age to come. (See Matt. xiv. 1, 2. Mark vi. 2, 5, 14, 16. Luke ix. 7, 9. Heb. vii. 16.) Does not prophecy teach us that these gifts will begin again when this preaching shall be resumed; their nature and their *physical* effects being in connection with the earthly blessings announced as characterising the Reign? (Matt. xxiv. 24. Luke xxi. 11, 25. Acts ii. 19. Apoc. xi.) However this may be, the gift of miracles, of the signs and powers of the age to come, was bestowed on the twelve at first; then on many of those who believed, in order to lead the nations to the obedience of faith, and during the sowing time having the Kingdom in view. (Mark xvi. 17, 18, 20. Luke ix. 1; x. 19. Acts ii. 43; iv. 30; v. 12; vi. 8; xiv 8; xv. 12. Rom. xv. 19. Heb. vi 5; compare ii. 4.)

¹ Mark i. 15. Gal. iv. 4.

FOR this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."¹ The testimony of the Forerunner was not in power, for he did no miracle.² He was that Elias who was to come; but the Jews knew Him not, but did unto Him whatsoever they listed.³

Elias prefigured in many respects John the Baptist; but above all as being the reformer of Israel *by righteousness*. Elias, notwithstanding all his faith, walked after his own heart at a very critical moment of his ministry. The doubts of John the Baptist, when in trial drew down on him a severe though indirect rebuke in the answer which the Lord gave to the messengers he had sent: "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."⁴

Elias, losing courage for a moment, could not understand how the Word of God, confirmed by the acts of power which he wrought, remained without effect for the conversion of Ahab, of Jezebel and of Israel. John the Baptist was not prepared for the interruption of the Reign by the rejection of the anointed of God. The faith of these two holy men was shaken at the sight of the sufferings and dangers to which a ministry, so glorious as was theirs, exposed them.

In every respect, and in contrast with all the prophets of every dispensation, Jesus is the faithful witness; whereas the man who is only "born of a woman" has always failed under the responsibility of every ministry intrusted to him for the service of God. It is in connection with this, that the Lord compares what one of the greatest amongst prophets born of women was *upon the earth*, with what the least of the risen

¹ Matt. iii. 2, 3; xi. 10. Luke i. 76, 77.

² Matt. xiv. 2. Mark vi. 14. John x. 41.

³ Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 12, 13; xxi. 32. Mark ix. 13.

⁴ Kings xix. 3, 9. Matt. xi. 4-6. Luke vii. 19-23.

saints *will be in the Reign of Heaven.* (Math. xi. 11.)

When Jesus, who was the true Prophet and King, was manifested, it was, according to the counsel of God, needful that John the Baptist should decrease, but that He, the Son of man, come down from Heaven, should increase. He it is who, until He left this rebellious world, maintained all the truth and glory of God unsullied, untouched by the malice of Satan, and in spite of the contradiction of sinners.¹

The first discourses of the Lord are identically the same as those of His Forerunner; it is the pure and simple Gospel of the Reign of God.² John the Baptist being rejected, the door remained open by the path of righteousness and self-denial in things present. The grace which imputeth not iniquity was still veiled until the shedding of the blood was accomplished (Heb. ix. 6, 13.) Every enemy is not invisible; we have also to contend with obstacles³ which are external and seen.

Effort and violence were needed from the days of John *until now* to enter into the Kingdom. The pure grace which gives to him that worketh not, but only believes, was not yet openly manifested. (Matt. xvi. 16.)

Hitherto the Lord had brought in the Reign of God amongst His own,⁴ without observation, preaching conversion and repentance. He then added power to the word for the preaching of the Gospel of the Reign; (Matt. ix. 35; Luke ix. 11;) and this it is which rendered the nation without excuse.⁵

1 Luke xxii. 70. John i. 9; x. 25; xviii. 27. Apoc. i. 5; iii. 14.

2 Matt. iv. 17, 23. Luke iv. 43.

3 Matt. vi. 33; vii. 13, 14, 21. Mark ix. 47; x. 23-25. Luke xviii. 24-31.

4 Luke xvii. 0, 21. John v. 14.

5 Mark viii. 12, 13. Luke xi. 29-32. John xv. 22-26.

Little by little the interruption of the Reign, through the death of the King, becomes evident, for Israel is hardening itself against the manifestation of *the powers of the age to come*, intrusted to the labourers whom the Lord sent in *testimony* against the Jews, and whom He thus formed for the work they were to continue.¹ Israel is threatened with being disinherited; and the disciples and the Gentiles are to receive the administration of the Kingdom and access to the Reign.²

Jesus announces that He is going to return on high, in order to come again in power to destroy His enemies,³ and to bring the reward to His own.⁴

During the interregnum which draws near, it becomes necessary to sow the word of the Reign, in order that there may be sons of the Kingdom, for the Heir had found nothing in the vineyard of the Father.⁵

The Kingdom, thus usurped by the enemy, will shelter the rebellious nations; it will be the time of the forbearance of God towards the world.⁶

The time of them that be wise (*des intelligents*, fr tr.*) begins; a new birth is needed, and from that hour, far from its being the violent who enter by force, they are *compelled* to come in by grace.⁷ For during the interregnum no one enters where the King is, but through free grace. It is no longer by righteousness, though there are tribulations to endure.⁸ That is to say, the new era of violence which had

1 Matt x. 8; xii. 25-28. Mark iii. 29, 30. Luke x. 9; xi. 17-20.

2 Matt. xxi. 42, 48. Luke xxii. 29.

3 Matt. xiii 41-43. Luke xix. 11-27.

4 Matt. xviii. 23. . . &c.; xix 28; xxvi. 29. Luke xiii. 29 30.

5 Matt. xiii. 19, 24, 38; xxi. 33-45; xxii. 2-14.

6 Matt. xiii. 31-34; compare Dan. iv. 12 and Ezek. xvii. 23, 24; xxxi.

* The author is not speaking of what is intrinsically necessary, but of the historical development of truth as manifested.—[Tr.]

7 Mark x. 14, 15. Luke xiv. 15-25. John iii. 3-5.

8 Matt. xi. 18, 19; xxi. 31, 32. Acts xiv. 22.

begun with John the Baptist is interrupted from the epoch marked by the words "*until now*;" (Matt. xi. 12;) henceforth it is those who believe and who are born again who enter freely by grace alone.

The disciples of Jesus, faithful remnant of the interrupted Reign, about to be His witnesses, receive the deposit of the Word of the Reign, and Peter receives the administration of the Kingdom. This remains a mystery hidden from the multitude and from the mighty.¹

Everything is now ready for the testimony of the Reign to be continued on earth. The death of the Heir, the rejection of Israel, the indignation of God against His people, are established facts. The abounding of iniquity will bring judgment.² The Reign had been announced in testimony to the Jews, and this continued still for some time after the death of the Lord, because of His intercession for them on the cross. Afterwards this testimony reached unto other nations and all men.³

Jesus, about to leave His disciples thus prepared, commands them to the Father's keeping. (John xvii. 11, 12.) He then gives a last and striking testimony to the truth of His Reign, which is neither of *this world*, nor of *this age*, but of the world and the age to come: "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth..... My reign is not of *this world*... But now is My reign not from hence." (John xix. 36-38; see also Acts i. 3, 6.)

The glorious preaching of the Jewish remnant, left as a testimony by the Lord,⁴ proclaimed the fulfilment of the Scriptures

¹ Matt. xiii. 10, 19, 34-36. Mark iv. 11, 12, 24, 26, 33, 34. Luke viii. 10, 18. Matt. xvi. 19.

² Matt. xiii. 47-50; xxiv. 11, 13. Luke xiii. 25-31; xix. 11-27.

³ Matt. viii. 4; x. 18, &c. Mark i. 44. Luke xxiv. 48. Acts i. 8. Mark xiii. 9, 10. Luke xxi. 13. John xv. 27. Acts xix. 8, xx. 21-26. xxii. 15; xxiii. 11; xxvi. 15-19; xxviii. 23, 30.

⁴ Acts i. 8, 29; iii. 15.

in Jesus—the Christ rejected, crucified, risen, and glorified, and, above all, His permanent right to the Reign and to the Judgment; as well as His return in glory to occupy the throne of David his father.¹ We see the light of the grace that forms the Church, increase in the preaching of these witnesses, in proportion as the things of the reign of God are more and more rejected by the Jews. After the dispersion “Philip was preaching the things concerning the reign of God, and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts viii. 4, 12.)

Little by little the converted Jews were forced to forsake the synagogue. Then, the separation of the disciples having taken place, and the Reign of Christ being finally rejected by the Jews, that is to say, by the heirs, judgments began to fall on the nation, and “the Christians” received, through the ministry of Paul, the full revelation of the glory of the Bride. A gradual fusion took place between the remnant of the interrupted Kingdom and the Church the body of Christ; or rather, this remnant passed out of the first condition into the second, in a manner almost imperceptible. Paul became the apostle of the Gentiles, as a witness of the things *he had seen*, and of those which were revealed to him still later, with regard to the future glories of Christ and of the Church.²

This new light, committed to the Church by the first ministers of the Word, did not remain long before it obscured and even obliterated the notion of the Gospel of the Reign. The Church has utterly failed, and still fails, in the preaching of the Gospel of this Reign. But these glad tidings, distinct from those of the grace³ of which they nevertheless form a part, are (God be praised!) deposited in the Scriptures.

¹ Acts ii. 30, 32; iv. 33; v. 31; x. 36-42; xiii-26-41, xvii. 30, 31.

² Acts ix. 15; xx. 26; xxii. 15-21; xxiii. 11. Gal. i. 12. Eph. iii. 8, 9. 1 Tim. ii. 6, 7.

³ Acts xiv 3 : xx 24, 32.

There it is we again find those things in their place, as Paul, John, and Peter preached them ; and I hope, with the help of the Lord, to prove to my brethren that the Church has forsaken the true and pure preaching of the Reign of God, and that it is time to return to it, without at the same time giving up the preaching of present grace. Preaching, like the apostles, *the Reign of God* and *all the things concerning Jesus*, is what, I think, the Church no longer does, and which the approach of "the time of the end" renders extremely necessary.

The King, absent, calls himself "Him that cometh," but the world does not know him as such. To the Church is the charge committed of God of proclaiming in this very world the rights and the return of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus is not only the risen Witness in Heaven—but He is so still upon the earth, in the Church, by His Spirit. It is as His witnesses also that we break bread in memory of Him, in the midst and in the presence of His murderers, announcing thus His death, His resurrection, and His return, until He comes.¹

Another distinctive character of the testimony of the Church is, that she is not to call for condemnation on those who do not receive immediately the word. The order to shake off the dust of our feet in testimony against the rejector,² was only applicable to the Jews, as being the people and heirs of God.³ An evangelist can well say : I am pure of

¹ Mat. xxvi. 29. 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26.

² Matt. x. 14. Mark vi. 11. Luke ix. 5, for the twelve : and for the seventy, Luke x. 9, 11. This last passage proves that the preaching of the messengers amounted to this : *The Reign of God* is come nigh unto you." This is still the pure and naked preaching of the reign of God, identical with that of the Forerunner and of the Lord Jesus.

³ Acts vii. 52; xviii. 6. This act "*in testimony*" signified that the Jews, having rejected the word, were unworthy of eternal life ; and that it was about to be carried to the nations. Who is the Evangelist today who could say to any one ; "Thou art unworthy of eternal life ?"

the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God* ;” (Acts xx. 36, 27 ;) but would he act in the intelligence of the present grace if he called for the judgments of God upon the nations and individuals who reject the Gospel ? (Romans ii. 4 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5.)

The position of the redeemed at this time is that of enemies, made sons by grace ; but it is no longer that of the violent who take the Reign by force ; for the difficulties which Satan raises to the Church are generally of another kind than those that present themselves to the Jews in the time of John the Baptist. The Jews were, by natural birth, the legitimate heirs of the Reign ; they had, without having yet received the power of the Spirit of Pentecost, to break the heavy yoke of the law and of legal traditions. Outrages, the being forsaken, exclusion and persecutions at the hand of the whole nation, were to be endured ; they had to despise the bitter zeal and hatred of the priests and of the great ones, to pass for execrable ; in a word, it was literally necessary to forsake all in order to enter into the kingdom.

And still, separation from the world must be the result of the activity of faith in testimony as to those who speak and “ those who hear.” But this separation is a fruit of the Spirit, who renews and changes the affections by means of a new creation.* This is a way above and independent of our strength ; and it is by pure grace that we have become partakers of the Reign and members of the body of Christ. If there is violence, it comes from God, and acts against ourselves, without our aid, and in our favour. †

It was a final judgment pronounced on an order of things which was coming to a close.

* It is not meant that man's natural strength enables any one to leave all and follow Christ, but that it was not by an energy which broke through ties which subsisted still, in the way of violence, but from a change of the whole scene itself, into which grace and the manifestation of the new creation brings us.—(Tr.)

† Acts xiii. 48, 49. Luke xiv. 23, 24.

The Church is introduced into the Reign by its faith, but it is not its faith that takes the Reign by force. New-born children cannot be counted as violent men.

§ 3.—THE TESTIMONY OF THE END.

As that which concerns the testimony of the Church with regard to the Gospel of the Reign, has to be treated of further on, I confine myself to the above general reflections on her position, and pass on to the *testimony of the end*.

This testimony, which was interrupted by the rejection of the king and by the formation of the Church, will be resumed towards the consummation of the age, of which, indeed it will be one of the signs.

The Church finds, in the three first chapters of the Apocalypse, the judgment of the Lord on her conduct here below as one that is betrothed, and also the judgments of God upon all that makes an empty profession of Christianity. In the third chapter, 14th verse, Jesus judges professing Christendom according to the title—Church—which it has itself assumed. This Church of Laodicea will be spued out of the mouth of the Lord,¹ because she is a liar in her profession. The things that are to come *after those* which concern the Church² are for ourselves still future.

Besides, then, the three first chapters of the Apocalypse, we find in this book, Jesus presenting himself as the prophet of his own *unveiling* to the eyes of the world, and of the manifestation of all those who belong to Him in Heaven.³ It is

¹ Apoc. iii. 16; compare Jeremiah xv. 19. Jesus, as a Prophet, is "the mouth of God," that separates the impure from the pure; for He must present the Church to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

² Apoc. i. 1. Here is the true sense of the Greek Word *Apocalypse* used in this verse.

³ Apoc. xix. 7, 14. Rom. viii. 18, 19. 1 Peter i. 5; iv. 13. John iii. 2. Col iii. 4.

for this reason that the Holy Ghost calls the book of the Apocalypse "the testimony of Jesus Christ."¹ We have received this precious deposit as being the friends of God, (John xv; Gen. xviii. 17; James ii. 23,) with the commission to transmit it at the proper time to the witnesses, the future preachers of the judgments of God on the Kingdom usurped by Satan, and of the glad tidings of the reign. The contents of this prophecy, which again takes up and closes all preceding prophecies, had to be communicated *to the Churches, and to the servants (esclaves) of God* through the medium of John the beloved, who takes here the character of servant, ministering this testimony as a prisoner, partaker of the tribulation, of the Reign, and of the hope of Jesus Christ.²

From the fourth chapter, the Apocalypse contains the details of the plans of God relative to the resumption of His government "of the Beast."³ When this book speaks of the things of Heaven, it is the book of thrones, of songs, and of crowns; but when it speaks of the ways of God towards *this world*, it is really "*the testimony of the end.*"

In this testimony, as in all the things of God, Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. He is also the centre, or the link which unites the two ends of the chain of the testimony interrupted by the formation of the Church; therefore He calls himself the faithful Witness, the first-born from amongst the dead, the true King of kings, revealing to John the results of the faithfulness of God (*l'Eternel*) to judge the nations and to subject them to His Christ.⁴

1 Apoc. i. 2; xxii. 20.

2 Apoc. i. 5, 9; xiv. 10; xxii. 9, 16-20.

3 Dan. vii.

4 Apoc. i. 5; iii. 14; xii. 5; xix. 15. Is. xi. 5. Ps. ii. 8, 9, xvi. 13 xcvi. 9; cx. 5, &c.

I see two great categories of witnesses after the rapture of the Church. First : The Active Blood-stained Testimony. Secondly : A Passive, and so to speak, Mute Testimony. We find, I think, in Apoc. xx. 4, the two classes of witnesses just named. The passage describes the introduction of the judgment of the living nations, and of those who destroy the habitable earth. (Dan. vii. 9 ; Matt. xxv.)

Besides those who sit on thrones to judge, (1 Cor. vi. 2,) I see in this verse : 1st. The souls of the martyrs of the active and bloodstained testimony—they are *the violent*. They have been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and because of the word of God. They form a body of risen men, for “they lived,” as it is said, further on. 2nd. “and those who had not worshipped the Beast nor his image...” *the patient*—those of the passive testimony. These last form a remnant kept apart on the earth, beyond the reach and pursuit of the Beast during the great tribulation. They are set at the right hand of the King, they live and reign with the former ones, and with Christ.

A—*The Active and Blood-stained Testimony.*

Let us consider for a moment the first category of these witnesses. Their origin goes back as far as John the Baptist, as regards the new covenant. The precursory testimony of John the Baptist appears to me to be of the class of prophecies accomplished at first imperfectly, interrupted because of the malice of Satan and the opposition of man, and afterwards resumed in full. We have seen that the almost fruitless ministry of Elias had been the type of him who was the forerunner of Messiah. But the first coming of John the Baptist has been in its turn a type of the future appearing of Elias towards the time of the end.¹

¹ Of which the Lord gave a specimen in His transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 3. Mark ix. 4. Luke ix. 30.)

John the Baptist is that Elias* of whom the Lord Jesus has announced the coming since the death of His Forerunner: "Elias truly cometh first, and *shall restore* all things."¹ It is also to this second coming that relate, partly at least, the words of the prophecy of the angel Gabriel: "And he shall go before Him (the Lord) in the spirit and *power* of Elias."² For if John came the first time in the spirit of Elias, he did not, however come in the *power* of Elias; moreover he restored nothing at all with regard to the Jewish nation; much less has he restored "*all things*."

A second coming of John the Baptist in power, or of Elias, to restore things, can only explain the easily felt though only apparent contradiction, which exists between the Lord's own words and those of His Forerunner: "And if ye will receive it, *this is* Elias, which was for to come." Nevertheless, John the Baptist has said: "*I am not Elias*."³

I think that the resumption *in power* of the interrupted testimony of John the Baptist is found in Revelation xi. 3, &c., where this prophet is accompanied by Moses. These two wi^l.

* It has not been thought right to change any thing in the translation of this paper. Whilst the importance of the general outline is felt to make it desirable to present it to English brethren, every detail must be, of course, weighed by spiritual judgment, guided by the word.—(Tr.)

1 Matt. xvii. 10, 11.

2 Luke i. 17.

3 Matt. xi. 14. John i. 21-25. In Matt. xi. '4, the Lord says; "And if you will receive," but He says neither whom nor what. I think there is a question here of receiving other things; first the message of John the Baptist; and second, Jesus Christ announcing by him. Elias wrote a letter to Jehoram more than eight years after his transmutation. (2 Chron. xxi. 12.) Nearly a thousand years later, Elias appeared on the holy mount in the glory of Jesus. Malachi wrote his prophecy (v. 5, 6) four hundred years after the transmutation of Elias. Now, it is impossible not to see that this has been fulfilled, either by John the Baptist, or by Elias in the transfiguration, because the hearts of the Jews have not been converted. Now, Elias has come in John the Baptist, *without power*. (displayed at least, John x. 14.) The prophecy of Malachi, therefore, has not been exhausted; John the Baptist will come again *in the exercise of power*, to prepare the way of the Lord of glory. This is what we see in Rev. vi. And this will take place, as Malachi declares, "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and before He shall smite the earth with a curse."

nesses stand at Jerusalem, "centre of the earth," before "*the God of the earth*," an expression which characterises the epoch of their testimony, and which is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

The men who inhabit the earth towards the end of the present age will find themselves in a state of open revolt against the Creator. The Lord shall then renew and give a second time the sign of Jonas. He sends, for the last time, His prophets, two in number, to make straight, this time, the paths of His Son *in His Glory*. It is here only that the prophecy of Malachi is exhausted.¹

John the Baptist is then, as regards the new covenant, the first of the active and blood-stained testimony, whether before or after the epoch of grace which forms and gathers the Bride of Jesus. (comp. Apoc. vi. 9, 10; and xx. 4.) The faith of *the violent* (Matth. xi. 13.) was that of the first witnesses for the kingdom, from John the Baptist, until the time when the mystery of the Church having been manifested, they passed evidently into this new condition. I do not doubt then that many of the members of the body of Christ have been made partakers of this glorious activity. It will surely be a gem added to their crowns in the possession of the glory of Jesus; but I do not consider, at this moment, the testimony to the Gospel of the Reign but as a fact which has been interrupted, and which is to be resumed at the consummation of the age.

The Jewish nation has put to death a multitude of the faithful, besides John the Baptist and Stephen, because of the Gospel of the Messiah, the true David.² The same circumstances will be found again to exist towards the end of the

¹ Compare Exod. vii. 19. 1 Kings xvii. 1; xviii. 15. 2 Kings i. 10; iii. 14. Is. liv. 5. Jer. xv. 1. Micah iv. 13. Zech. iii. 7-9; iv. 10-14. Mal. iv. 5. James iv. 17-18. Apoc. xi. 4.

² Acts vii. 27-vii. 1; xi. 19; xii. 1-4.

age, and for the same cause ; but in the midst of difficulties in finitely more serious, because then, iniquity being multiplied and hearts hardened, God will have given efficacy to error, that the adversaries may believe a lie. I do not doubt but that all the martyrs whose testimony has not gone beyond that of John the Baptist (see John iii. 29), are (with the martyrs of the ancient covenant) ¹ referred to in the passage of the Rev. vi. 9-12. Their language is by no means that of grace, but it is the language of a Jewish remnant.² The impatience under the altar only manifests itself after the rapture and the gathering of the Church into Heaven. The souls not yet clothed, have already been waiting under the altar during the ieterregnum, or rather during usurpation, of the Kingdom by Satan. But they have only *a little longer* to wait ; the death of their brethren and of their companions in service, (*esclavage*), who shall render at the end of the age the same testimony as they did in the beginning, must intervene : the final tribulation, truly the great tribulation, must complete the number of this body of witnesses. It is the subject of this hope that we find fulfilled in Rev. vii. 9-14. The companions in service (*esclavage*) and the brethren of those that were under the altar have come to complete, in Heaven, the number of the martyrs of the Gospel of the Reign. All this class of witnesses is then found gathered before the throne and the Lamb, that is to say, in Heaven. They are not *in the throne*, neither on the throne, with the Bridegroom, but *before the throne* and before the Lamb.

I think that the whole corporation of the martyrs of the Gospel of the Reign is found united to sing the works of the Lord God Almighty, King of nations (Apoc. vii. 15-17 ; comp.

¹ Compare Apoc. xvii. 6 ; xviii. 6-24.

² Deut. xxxii. 35, 42, 43. Ps. lxxix. 5. Is. vi. 11 ; xxvi. 1-10. Matt. xxiii. 35. Luke xi. 49-52 ; xviii. 7, 8. Apoc. xi. 18 ; xix. 1-4.

xv. 1-5). They are on a sea of glass, of which the characteristic "*mingled with fire*" indicates the tribulation in the midst of which their testimony has been given.

I believe also, that this corporation does not include Jews only, but that Gentiles have been associated with them, in virtue of the middle wall of partition having been broken down. (Apoc. vii. 9; Eph. ii. 14.)

Their salvation is like that of Lot: they have passed through a trial, of which the ruin of Judea, under Titus, was only the forerunner.¹ It is of these that it is said: "their blood have they shed like water," for they will perish by a violent death under the cruelty of the Beast.²

The "violent" have an activity peculiar to themselves, which distinguishes them from the Bride of Jesus: for they themselves³ wash and make their robes white in the blood of the Lamb; "*but we have been washed, but we have been sanctified...by Him who has loved us, and who has washed us from our sins in His own blood.....*" (1 Cor. vi. 11; Apoc. i. 6.)

Their reward, also, however blessed it may be, has also a character of its own. It is not in their case to be united with the Lamb, but to be in Heaven, under His care and under His heavenly mediation.³

One of the twenty-four elders (Apoc. vii. 13) explains this mystery to John, that he may communicate it to the

¹ Matt. xxi. 21. Mark xiii. 19. Luke xxi. 32, 36. Ezek. v. 9, 10 vii. Dan. xii. 1. Apoc. iii. 10; vii. 14.

² Compare Ps. lxxix. 3-5, Matt. x. 32-43; xvi. 24-28, Apoc. xii. 11-15; xiii. 11, sqq; compare xi. 7.

* The writer does not speak here of the power or efficacy of redemption, but of the circumstances and manner of the application of its results.—(Tr.)

³ Apoc. vii. 16; xxi. 4.

Churches, for the Bride of Christ is interested in the matter, because it concerns martyrs who have suffered for the name and for the claims of her Bridegroom.

I believe I have given a sufficient outline for brethren who have not yet any settled views on the subject; and I pass over in silence several other characteristic points which make of these witnesses a body entirely distinct from the Bride; because that would lead me beyond the limits of a mere essay.

B—*Passive and Silent Testimony.*

I have pointed out the principal features of that class of witnesses at the end, whose mission I have designated by the title "Active and Blood-stained Testimony." I have a few words to add on the second class, of the Testimony at the end, which I have called the "Passive or Silent Testimony." I find this second class in Apoc. xiv. 1-6, and in the numerous passages of the Old Testament of which I shall only quote a few. The 144,000 Jews mentioned here are absolutely* the same as those in Apoc. vii. 1-9.

I begin by saying, with regard to Apoc. xiv. 5, that it is indispensable to leave out the words "*before the throne of God.*" All authorities agree in this.' This human addition was suffi-

* I doubt that they are *absolutely* the same, even if they are included in the former passage, as I suppose they are.—(Tr.)

I take this opportunity of pressing on the reader one or two points with regard to the passages quoted. First, it is indispensable to read these passages themselves if he desire to follow this essay with any profit; and if the passages are not apparently quoted in a regular order, it is because I rather sought to put in relief the analogy of the ideas than the order of the books of the Bible; I have done so, notwithstanding the rather serious inconvenience to those who study, of turning over the leaves of the Bible without any apparent order. [What follows in the note is omitted, as referring merely to French translations; in lieu of which the translator would add, that when the author

cient of itself to obscure for a long time in my mind the meaning of all that part of the prophecy. I suppose it is the cause why so many brethren have not been able to see in the 144,000 the same body of witnesses in Apoc. vii. 1-8 and xiv. 1-6.

The words "before the throne of God," which are in their proper place in Apoc. vii. 9 and 15, and xiv. 3, cannot stand in Apoc. xiv. 5, without indicating that the 144,000 have been killed by Antichrist, and that they are raised again in Heaven ; which would give them incorrectly, a character quite opposed to that of the 144,000 of Apoc. vii. 1-8. These witnesses are Jewish men, not risen, living on the earth, *redeemed from the earth and from amongst men*, and sealed for preservation.

Whereas, the Church is the first fruits of a new creation, of which Jesus is the Germ, the 144,000 are the earthly first fruits unto God and the Lamb, of whom one can say what Jeremiah (ii. 3) said of the Jewish people. These elect from among the Jews, sealed and marked to live, are kept on the earth apart from the nation whom God no more looks upon as His Israel. (see Rom. xi. 26, 27 ; ix. 27 ; comp. ix. 6.) It is thus that when all is in ruin, God acts always in grace and in mercy, through election. During the epoch of the last development of the malice of the Canaanites, the Amorites and the Egyptians, God separated His people by the blood of the Lamb afterwards He placed them in the desert, where God (*l'Eternel*) kept and nourished them, and where the Rock followed them.

The same will be the case as to this remnant, which I look upon as identical with "the remnant of the seed of the woman,"

finds any thing on a particular translation of his own, it will be given. The author assures his reader, that if he has differed from the translation of Lausanne, it is still after serious examination, as Greek scholar may see.]—(Tr.)

* The word "Germ" is the word used in the French translation for the word translated "Branch," in the English authorised version.—(Tr.)

1 James i. 18.

which will be kept providentially and materially in a desert¹ and away from the temptation² of Antichrist, which would seduce "even the elect, if it were possible," that he could draw them into the sphere of his action.

This true Israel shall be virgin, as becomes the root of the new earthly people of God (comp. Apoc. xiv. 4, and the end of Mat. xix, 12, where a power of will is referred to which is a gift of God.) They have still other characteristics which belong to the meek who are to inherit the earth. They are without spot; above all, I think, in this, that they have not received the mark nor the number of the Beast.³ They are without guile, according to the prophecy of Zephaniah iii. 12, 13. (comp. John i. 47.)

1 Apoc. xii. 6, 13-17.

2 It is such a remnant, that the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," (Matt. vi, 13, literal) suits. This prayer was taught to the disciples who were about to be deprived of their Shepherd, and who had to ask to be kept by the Father particularly while waiting for the sending of the Holy Ghost (John xvii. 11, 12). The patient ones of the end will also want to be kept from the temptation of which we have just been speaking, and of which we shall say a word more further on. The Church prays by the spirit of God, who keeps, teaches, and leads her. She says; "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope" (Rom. v.) and James says: "My brethren, count it all joy *when ye fall into divers temptations*" (i. 2). The temptations which assault us during the period of the Church, may and ought to be overcome by faith, for "there has no temptation taken you but *such as in common to man*," says Paul (1 Cor. x. 13; contrast Matt. xxiv. 24). We do not mean, however, to say that we ought to seek them, and we apply willingly to ourselves the warning of the Lord. "Watch and pray, that *ye enter not into temptation*." Is there not in this a contrast with the position of the remnant of the Reign? When this last prays: "Do not lead us into temptation," it has in view not *any* human temptations, but *the great temptation* of the end, raised by the Devil cast out into the earth and from heaven; it has in view that great tribulation which will precede the coming of the Reign of God, such as "never was, no, nor ever shall be again."

3 Apoc. xx. 4; xiii. 17; xiv. 5, 9, 11. The difference existing in this respect between them and the preceding martyrs, is that these last have been killed because they resisted (xiii. 15; xv. 2), whereas the 144,000 are kept from the temptation and consequently from resisting. In every case "God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation."

The 144,000, in contrast with the preceding martyrs, keep the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, possessing their souls in patience, keeping themselves quiet, lifting up their heads on high whence cometh their salvation; that is to say, "this Jesus, in the same manner as he ascended up."¹ In conclusion, this new Israel will have *on the earth* the same privileges which the risen martyrs will enjoy *in heaven*. They are under the care of the faithful Shepherd. (comp. Apoc. vii. 17; xiv. 4.) They alone can learn on the earth the New Song, sung in heaven, *before the throne*, by the heavenly choirs.²

We find a type of this remnant in Elias fleeing from the anger of the impious Ahab, kept apart far from his people, nourished day by day in the desert, having the testimony of the Lord and the prophetic Spirit, bringing by his return into Judea the bountiful rain of the latter season, in the midst of general apostasy and desolation, and giving subsequently light and abundance to the Gentiles.

I shall not speak here of those who escape from amongst the nations after the great day of God Almighty, (Isaiah xiv 20; lxi. 19, &c.) because I do not consider them exactly as rendering a testimony at the time of the consummation of the age.

As to the everlasting Gospel, some details will be found in what follows this introduction.

¹ 1s. xxvi. 3, 4; xxx. 15; Jer. lli. 22, 23; Matt. x. 22; xxiv. 6, 14 Luke xxi. 9, 19, 28, 31; Apoc. xlii. 10; xiv. 12.

² Compare Apoc. xiv. 2, 3 and xv. 3. I believe this song, which has a character entirely Jewish, is precisely that of Moses and of the Lamb, sung by those in resurrection in heaven, and learned on the earth by the remnant of the patient.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE END.

"The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly."—JEREMIAH, xxiii. 20.

I.

OF THE REIGN BROUGHT ABOUT TO ISRAEL AND REJECTED.

§ I.—*Revelation of Jesus to the Jewish Nation, according to the Prophets of the Old Testament.*

The ancient prophets had proclaimed the revelation of the nations (the Gentiles) through *the light of the Christ*; that is to say, the prophetic spirit had announced at all times that the nations would have part in the promises made to the seed of Abraham, and that they would enter one day into relation with God, so as to become a people before him. ¹ These promises are involved in that of the Reign of Messiah, ² which had been interrupted and put off until the epoch of His personal return to the habitable earth. They will be fulfilled in the millennium, together with those that promise *the dominion on the earth to Israel*. (Micah iv, 5-8.)

¹ Amos ix, 11, 12. Luke ii. 31. Acts xv. 16, 17. Matt. iv. 16. Rom. ix. 25-26; x. 19, 20; xiv. 10; 12. 1 Peter ii. 10.

² Ps. ii. 8; lxxii. 11, 17; lxxxii. 8; lxxxvi. 9; cii. 15. Is. xi. 10; xli. 2; xlii. 1; lv. 5. Jer. iv. 2; xvi. 13. Ezek. xxxvii. 28. Zech. ii. 11; viii. 22. Mal. i. 11.

When the accomplishment of the times fixed in the counsels of God was come, He sent His son to fulfil the promises made to the fathers. Thereon the Holy Ghost rendered testimony to the faithfulness of God in this, by the mouth of many saints of that epoch, such as Zachariah, Simeon, Anna, and Mary.

The angel Gabriel spake thus of Christ in announcing His birth: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of *His father David*, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."¹ Zachariah spoke likewise: God has taken under His protection Israel His servant, to remember His mercy towards Abraham and his seed for ever, according as He spake to our fathers by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began. "Now, O Most High!" said Simeon, "lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light for the revelation of † the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

And already the Spirit of prophecy did not fail to announce clearly the interruption of the epoch of the Reign of Christ by His rejection and death. "Behold" added Simeon, "this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against, . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."²

§ 2.—*The Teaching of Jesus to His Disciples concerning His Reign as Messiah.*

The instruction that Jesus personally gave to the disciples relative to the Kingdom divides itself into two distinct periods:—before His death;—and after His resurrection.

¹ See the note A, at the end,

† The author's translation has been preserved here. It is really the plain and literal one.—Tr.

² Luke i. 32, 33, 34, 35: ii. 29-32, 34, 35.

The bearing and extent of this teaching before His death may be appreciated by His answer to the question the disciples addressed to Him: "What shall be the sign of thy coming and to the end of the age?" (Matt. xxiv. 3.) The thirtieth verse is an answer to the first part of this question, and without defining the nature of the sign, He marks the place where it would be seen—in *heaven*; and the results, the desolation of all the tribes of the earth and the gathering of the scattered elect Jews. It is true that the teaching of the Lord before His death had not entered the souls of the disciples with joy and with hope; since, after His resurrection, He found them still without understanding, and slow of heart to believe the things which the prophets had declared, and that He Himself had explained, confirmed, and unfolded to them during His life. It was necessary that Jesus should open their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. The things concerning the Church were, I suppose, amongst those which the Lord had not told to the twelve, "because they could not bear them then." (John xvi. 12.) The conversation on the mount of Olives, after the resurrection of Jesus, proves to us that He found it right to leave the disciples with a set of ideas fit for a Jewish remnant, heirs of the kingdom.

"He was seen of them during forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God: and being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise which ye have heard (said He) of me. For John truly baptised with water, but He shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."¹ The question which they addressed to Him at that time removes our every doubt as to the extent of the last instruc-

¹ Luke xxxiv. 25-28, 32. Acts i. 3.

tions of the Master: "Lord, wilt thou at this time *restore*¹ again the Kingdom to Israel?" This question was entirely similar to that of Matt. xxiv. 3. Jesus again admits here the fact of His coming personally on the earth to restore the Reign of Israel; for His answer shows that he approves the intelligence of their question in the main. He only reproves the disciples because of their indiscretion on the *subject of the epoch* of the return of the Son of man; but He in nowise reproaches them for unbelief, or for their ignorance as to *the fact* of His personal Reign.

At both the epochs which we are comparing, that is to say, before His death and after His resurrection, the thoughts of the heirs of the kingdom are Jewish, they concern the world and Israel in particular; and the answers of the Lord do not go further. If we connect the last of these answers, with the conversation of the two angels, (Acts i. 7, 11.) it will show us clearly that the disciples had quite apprehended all the bearing of the teaching of the Master, as to the things concerning the Reign of God. The disciples of Emmaüs were consequently also right in looking for Jesus as the Christ, the true David. "As for us," said they, "we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." Their hope was the same as that of the prophets, and of the faithful Jews who hailed the coming of Messiah into the world: it was in conformity with the oracles of the Word of God, according to the Scriptures. This hope also rested on the teaching of Christ Himself, according to what He had announced concerning His return in glory, and the awful judgments which must precede this return: "And when these things begin to

¹ *apokathisemi* (Gr.) in Acts i. 6, signifies literally *restore*; (rendrer;) and that is the more positive, as it is followed by the dative "to Israel." See Heb. xiii. 19. Matt. xii. 13; xvii. 11. Mark iii. 5; viii. 25; ix. 12. Luke vi. 10.

come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption¹ draweth nigh."

There is nothing, therefore, that authorises us to suppose that Jesus taught His disciples, after His resurrection, "all that concerned Him." We have just seen, on the contrary, that this divine Master taught them after His resurrection, as he did before His death, that is to say, from the Scripture of the old covenant, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets." (Luke xxiv. 27.)

§.—3 *Ministry of the Disciples according to the teaching of their Master and His orders concerning His Reign.*

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning;" and the results of them also He knows. Although He well knows that man cannot receive, and still less preserve, under his own responsibility, the promises of grace, God acts towards him as if he was capable of submission and of faithfulness. This is a fact established by the whole Bible; and if God acts thus, it is in order that men may be inexcusable. The manifestation of the children of God will be the occasion when the glory of His grace will be revealed, and then at once shall every man be found a liar, When God leaves man or nations, in order to try them, that He may know what is in their hearts, he does it, not because He is ignorant of the ruin and of the fall of the children of Adam, but rather, because the evil which exists must be made manifest before it is punished, that every mouth may be stopped at the day of judgment. We have seen that Jesus really was manifested to Israel as the promised Messiah. (John v. 39, 40.) But His own having rejected Him, the true David has

¹ *ap. lutoris* (Gr.) Luke xxi. 26, "redemption." See Luke xxiv. 21. quoted above: "He which should have redeemed Israel."

ascended again to heaven, and His Reign will only begin with His return. From that time, the ministry committed to the disciples takes a very special character, which may be summed up in a testimony to the return of Christ. The question about the coming of Gentiles and Jews, as individuals and without any difference, into the Church through faith, was not yet brought forward. The point pressed was, for Israel first to believe that Jesus, the Nazarene, a *man* approved of God among *that nation*, had been made by Him Lord and Christ, having been raised up according to the flesh, as son of David, to sit on His throne.¹ It was to the Jews, according to the Lord's command, that "the Word of God was to be first preached; then, after it had been rejected by them, to the nations. "For thus has the Lord commanded us: I have given thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth," (Is. xlix. 6.)

Now, this blessing cannot be extended to the nations as nations, but, through the channel of Israel, converted and re-established in the possession of the promise: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In *those days* it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all tongues, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 23. Zeph. iii. 20.)

The promises of the Reign of God for the nations will then be fulfilled only after the conversion of Israel, and by the personal return of Christ in judgment against His people and against every people of the prophetic earth.³

¹ Acts ii. 22, 29; iii. 26.

² Acts i. 8; xlii. 46-48; xxviii. 28. Luke xxiv. 46.

³ Compare on this subject, which I shall further unfold by-and-by, Matt. xxv. Zeph. ii. 10; iii. 9, 15-20. Is. xi. 9-11; xxvi. 9-11, 20, 21. Joel iii. Micah v.

The Lord, during His apostleship, had especially communicated the knowledge of the Reign to His disciples, that they might, during His absence, become in their turn missionaries of this Reign, in the midst of the nation that had rejected Messiah. Jesus committed to them these instructions "*in a mystery*," and "as they were able to understand." (Comp. Matt. xiii. 10-18. Mark iv. 10-12, 33. John xvi. 12, 25.) We find the account of the announcement of the Reign of heaven until the exaltation of the Lord, in reading Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17. Deut. xviii. 15-18. Until then, the Lord is only showing Himself as a Prophet, continuator of John the Baptist. Afterwards, the hardness of heart of the nation brings about its rejection. (Matt. xi. 11-13, 22; end of chap. xii. Rom. xi.) Then, when the King is about to ascend, (Luke xix. 11-28,) He gives the keys, or the administration of the Kingdom (not of the Church) to Peter. In fine, we have the confession of the Christ, Son of man, King, not of *this world*, but of the habitable earth to come, a confession proceeding from His own mouth; first, before the representatives of the nation: (Matt. xxvi. 63-65.) afterwards, before Pilate. (John xviii. 33-38.)

The disciples, witnesses of the departure of the Messiah, could not expect His immediate return as the Son of David. They had, on the contrary, received the order from Him not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await there¹ the promise of the Father, or "the power of the Holy Ghost which was to come upon them."² This promise could not be accomplished until after Jesus had been glorified,³ and the event showed

¹ This word is only found once in the original of the New Testament It signifies, to expect some one that is to come, that remains behind.

² Literal; compare Acts i. 8. Luke xxiv. 49. "Until ye be endued with power from on high;" very important expressions on account of John xx. 22.

³ John vii. 39.

that there was still a period of ten days, which was to expire before the return of Messiah in person.

The Lord had further shown to the disciples a second period, which was to precede His personal return in glory to restore the Kingdom to Israel: "And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This last commandment of the Lord reminds us of the prophecy He had made before His death on the same subject: "For verily I say unto you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come;" words which, pronounced by the Son of man standing on the earth, prove evidently that the conversion* of Israel could only take place by the view of Christ returning in His glory. It is important to remark relative to this second period, that it still runs on, and that it is concerning the return of *the Son of man*, which will terminate it, that Jesus has said; "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark xiii. ; comp. 26, 32.)

The book of the Acts shows us that the Apostles did not fail to preach the Reign, such as it had been committed to them. If the Lord had conferred, in any way, on the witnesses, the mission of calling Israel as a nation to be part of the Church of Christ, of the body of the King of Glory, we should have reason to wonder that the preaching of Peter and of the Apostles, until the death of Stephen, should only have presented to the Jewish nation the death, resurrection and personal return of the Messiah *for the age to come*. We

* I have not chosen to change this word, but the reader should remember that the term *conversion*, among French Christians, is used in the sense of the full manifestation of a believer, not of a work begun in the heart.—Tr.

might have a right to doubt the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, which was given to them at Pentecost, if it had not brought to their remembrance, at the fit time, all the things that Jesus had told them before and since His resurrection. (John xii. 16; xiv. 26; xvi. 4.) But these witnesses were faithful to their mission, for they did not cease to cite Moses, the Psalms and the prophets, in support of the testimony they had to render to the return of the King. It is in their own preaching, inspired by the Spirit of God, that we are to look for the nature and extent of their first ministry. Here, at least, one cannot accuse their doctrine of error.

In that last and solemn moment of the long patience of God towards His people, Peter and Stephen were testifying to the *Son of man* risen, seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, which was ready to open itself to give Him back to the earth, if Israel had repented and been converted. Jesus was preached as Prince and Saviour: if the nation received Him as such, He was to come again to bring to Israel salvation, the Reign, and blessings promised to their fathers. (Acts iii. 19-22; v. 32; vii. 56. Luke ii. 30.) "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the time of refreshing *may come*¹ from the

¹ The *hopos an elthosin* (Gr.) cannot possibly be translated by *when* or *shall come*. All the French translations, even that of Lausanne, 1839, have however, committed the same faults, (a) with the exception of Beausobre and Lenfant. All the German Protestant versions have avoided it. The meaning of these words is so incontestable, that the French translators have not once failed to render them elsewhere by "*afin que*." (See Matt. vi. Luke ii. 25. Acts xv. 17; ix. 2. (*eam*.) (Gr.) Rom. iii. 4; of the Ps. li. 4 in the Greek.) These are the only other occurrences.

However, in these passages, as in Acts iii. 19, it is better to render the Greek exactly by *ensorte que*. (b) or *de sort que*. For it is *eis*, (Gr.) or the *eis* to [Gr.] of this same verse 19, which indicates the moving cause or motive of the action in question. But *hopos an* (Gr) indicates the accomplished result of an action that is proposed or required before.

(a) And so has the English; no attentive Greek scholar can a moment doubt of the justice of this criticism. Tr.

(b) That is "so that" not "IN ORDER that." Tr.

presence of the Lord, and that He may send *the Christ Jesus* which was [before preached*] unto you ; whom, *indeed*,† the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things times of which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophet." It was a last respite granted to Israel, while announcing to them the salvation which God had prepared for them before the face of all the nations. But my people would not hearken unto my voice, and Israel would none of me ; so I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts ; and they walked in *their own counsels*..... I would have ransomed them from the power of the grave ; I would have redeemed them from death : O death, I would have been thy plagues, and thy destruction, O sepulchre : but repentance is hid from mine eyes,"‡

Thus it is that God, in His wisdom, always brings out, by the light of His grace, His faithfulness and His kindness, in opposition to the state of complete ruin and condemnation of the natural man ; it is thus that the malice and the corruption of the Jewish nation have been manifested by the gift of Jesus, and that the incorrigible hardness of heart of the people of God has been shown by the ministry of witnesses to the death and resurrection of the Heir, whom this people had in their blindness killed.

We see by what precedes, that the departure of the King has delayed the epoch of the Reign, the making of which good belongs to Him alone, personally and visibly present. God has used the time of this delay, first to offer a respite to the rebellious people ; afterwards, to announce His word to

* For [before preached] *prokekerugmenon*, the author has "prétabli" préparé d'avance, tendu d'avance

† on . . . men. Gr

‡ Read Ps. lxxxi. and Hosea xiii. 14.

every nation. But Israel having rejected the testimony of the Reign, the grace that forms the Church has intervened till the return of the Heir.

§ 4.—*Whence did Jesus set out? How He set out? Whither did He go?*

The place where the scene of the ascension took place is the mount of Olives,¹ distant from Jerusalem about two thousand paces.² Near this mountain were the two little towns of Bethphage and Bethany, the last fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem. "And He led them out *as far as*³ to wards Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted⁴ (separated Himself) from them, and was carried up again towards heaven," or withdrawn or carried on high towards heaven. (Luke xxiv. 51.)

This passage indicates a power proper to Jesus, in virtue of which He could say: I go unto my Father, and when I have gone, I will come again. Whereas Acts, i. 9 indicates rather the power of the Father raising the Son to His right hand, in order to place Him in His glory above His enemies. "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud withdrew Him out of their sight." I see in this last passage the indication of the power which

¹ Luke xxiv. 50; comp. Acts i. 12. Mark xi. 1. Luke xix. 29. Matt. xxi. 1.

² For a Sabbath day's journey, consult Acts i. 12, Exod. xvi. 29, Josh. iii. 4. John xi. 18; xii. 1.

³ *As far as towards*: (*heos pros*;) a reading far preferable and of better authority than that "He led them out as far as Bethany." Luke xxiv. 50. Consult the critical authorities.

⁴ To be removed from, to separate himself from. Acts xxvii. 28.

⁵ *anapheromai*—*eis*, or *pros*;) to cause to go up again, to carry up, to withdraw, to bring back. This word appears always to have an elevated sense in the New Testament, and to apply to things offered to God and accepted by Him. Matt. xvii. 1. Mark ix. 2. Heb. vii. 27, bis; xiii. 15; comp. Heb. ix. 28. 1 Peter ii. 5, 24. James ii. 21.

caught up¹ the Son of the woman, to hide him for a little time in the throne of God. (Gal. iv. 4. Rev. xii. 5.) Jesus then has been received, or gathered up on high² from the mount of Olives, and withdrawn from the eyes of the Apostles by a cloud, which concealed Him from their sight. We find a type of this event in Ezek. xi. 23. Having then gone up on high³ above all heavens and exalted⁴ by the right hand of God (Mark xvi. 19.) in the sanctuary, which is not of this creation. He has seated Himself at the right hand of God. For God has most highly exalted⁵ Him, because of His obedience even to the death of the cross. "Ought not Christ to have suffered and to have entered into *His glory*?" (Luke xxiv. 26.)

NOTE A.

We would rest our interpretation of the passage, and of prophetic assertions in general, on the authority of the two pious and learned men, whose testimony, in an ecclesiastical point of view, will be the less doubted, as they are our very antipodes. Their opinion on prophecy is that of an immense

1 Caught up. (Acts viii. 39. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. Rev. xii. 5.) It is the term employed for the catching up of the saints out of the world. 1 Thess. iv. 17.

2 *analambanomai*. Mark xvi. 19. Acts i. 2, 11, 22. 1 Tim. iii. 16. It has here, I think, the force of *re-establishing, to lift up again, to take up on high, to receive, to gather up*, in order to *re-establish in a better and preceding state*. See further this word in Acts vii. 43, *to erect, to set up*; x. 16; xx. 13, 14; xxiii. 31; *to gather up*; —and 2 Tim. iv. 11, *having again taken Mark*."

3 *anubaino* (*eis hupsos*). Eph. iv. 8-10, contrasted with *katabaino eis ta katotera*. See John xx. 17. Acts ii. 34.

4 *upsoo*. Acts ii. 33; v. 31. John iii. 14; xii. 32, 34. Compare Heb. vii. 26; ix. 11.

5 *hyperupsoo*. Phil. ii. 9. I attach great importance to these different expressions, because they have enlightened and established me in the study of the subject. It is on that account that I have recorded here these remarks for the use of brethren who search the word.

majority of the theologians of Great Britain, as is known to those who are in any degree conversant with the religious literature of this country. We give here the following quotation as that to which we refer. At a General Meeting of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, held at the Rotunda, in Dublin, in 1838, amongst others, the observations of two speakers made a deep impression. What follows is a faithful epitome of these two speeches, taken from a religious journal of that time.

The Rev. Joseph Wolff, a missionary, and an Israelite by birth, related several occurrences in his numerous Journeys: "I have visited Egypt ten times," said he, "but I baptised there only a small number of Jews. The great rabbi was opposed to my labours amongst his countrymen. In my last journey there, I did not go to see him, but he came to me, and, after discoursing on something else, he said to me: 'You have adopted a new plan in order to convert us: you affirm that some of the prophecies, referring to Messiah, have been fulfilled at the first coming of Christ; and you endeavour to prove that the other prophecies, those referring to the glory of the Messiah, will only be fulfilled at His second coming; lastly, you believe in the restoration of the Jews. I have exposed your views to my congregation. We now understand you. You take, for instance, the ninth chapter of Isaiah, and you say to us that the fifth verse; 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,' has been literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Granted. But when we oppose to you the following verse: '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,' you, Joseph Wolff, say to us that these words ought also to be taken literally, and that they shall be fulfilled in Christ's second coming; whilst before Christians told us, that by this throne of David, a *spiritual* throne was to be understood. Is this men-

tioned any where in the New Testament ?—I showed him Luke i. 32, 33 : ‘He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest ; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David,’ &c. I added, ‘He shall be great,’ these words have been literally fulfilled. He has been great, even on the cross, when heaven and earth took part in His sufferings, and a poor thief was looking to Him for his salvation. He has been great in His resurrection, in His ascension. He is great now, sitting at the right hand of God. He has been great, and you yourselves, O Jews, ought to confess it; for, whilst you thought of extinguishing this light in crucifying Him, He has always been since and now is looked at as the Messiah and as the Saviour by a multitude of Gentiles. But let us continue : ‘And He shall be called the Son of the Highest ;’ such is literally His title, such is His name, in spite of all the oppositions of Socinians and Unitarians. ‘And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father.’ This is not yet fulfilled ; but, as the first part of the prophecy has been literally fulfilled, so it will be likewise with the second part. See also Acts ii. 30, and mind these words ‘according to the flesh,’ which do not much indicate a spiritual reign ; and Acts xv. 16, 17,” &c.

The Rev. Hugh Mac Neile, pastor of the church of St. Jude, at Liverpool, in a speech of considerable length, came back again to the important subject already discussed by the missionary. “He is,” said he, amongst others, ‘a fact of which I have been myself a witness and which appears to me to confirm, in a remarkable manner, the arguments in favour of the system of literal interpretation of prophecies. The fact happened in London, after a sermon in a church in the Strand. Amongst the hearers were two Jews. A discussion took place, in the vestry, between them and the preacher, on the subject of a psalm which contained a prophecy referring to the restoration of the Jewish people. The pastor maintained that it could not be understood in the sense of a national restoration. The Jew who spoke, answered him : “How then can you be surprised that we should

deny what you call the incarnation?" "What!" said the clergyman, taking a Bible, "is it not written: 'And behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end!'" The Israelite then asked the minister to take up again with him the different parts of the passage, which he did accordingly, and after having read the two or three first sentences, the Jews were convinced that they were to be interpreted literally; but, when they came to these words: 'And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob,' &c., the pastor said, This signifies that He 'shall reign in the hearts of His people.' "If it is thus," replied the Jew "if it is not in Jerusalem, where David had his throne, where he reigned, then I deny that Mary had a son. I affirm, for my part, that what is said on this subject signifies nothing else, save that the Messiah was to be pure from his birth, and that this is the true meaning of these words 'a virgin having a son.' You see I only follow your mode of interpreting the end of the passage. I apply it to the beginning, and by this means I deny the incarnation." "But," replied the minister, "we admit the literal interpretation of this part of the passage, because the event has proved that it was to be understood thus." I shall never forget with what an air of disdain and contempt the Jew then said: "Oh! you believe this, because it has happened,—as for us, we believe what is written, because God has said it." We ought therefore to take heed in what manner we interpret prophecies; for, you see, if we deny the privileges promised to the Jewish nation, we shake thereby even the foundation of our faith. I take occasion here to observe there is a great difference between figurative language

and a system of spiritual interpretation still too much in vogue. There are facts foretold in figurative language which have been or which will be fulfilled literally. I quote as an instance, this prediction : "smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." We all know that this was fulfilled in the garden Gethsemane ; yet literally, Jesus was not a shepherd, nor were His disciples sheep ; nevertheless the fulfilment of this was literal. This prophecy shows clearly the difference there is between the figurative language of the oracle and a figurative accomplishment. Prophecies describing the future glory of the Jewish people under the emblem of a mountain raised above the hills, and to which all the nations shall resort, are quoted in all catholic catechisms, as proofs of the infallibility of the church of Rome, whose authority, they say, is to extend over the whole world. They say, moreover, that the geographical position of Rome proves that these prophecies really apply to her. And truly, if Jerusalem in the prophets, signifies the Christian Church, it seems that these promises concern the church of Rome, which, alone on the earth has raised these pretensions to infallibility, universality and dominion. Whilst robbing the Jewish nation of those prophecies which belong to her, to apply them to the Christian Church, Christian controversialists can with difficulty contest the pretensions of the church of Rome. But Jerusalem never means the Christian Church—it means Jerusalmen ; Judah means Judah ; Ephraim means Ephraim, and not France or England. Let us call every thing by its proper name. Thus we shall understand better the grand but yet unfinished work of our glorious God, that work which, relatively to the Jews, among others, is not yet fulfilled. It is for divine reasons that the Jews have been preserved in the midst of the nations, as a separate people, waiting for the King. This King, the last King of Israel, is still alive : He has been dead, but He is risen and He is alive ; the Jews are preserved for Him, and He is preserved in the heavens for the Jews until

the restoration of all things. And then this same Jesus, who was raised up into heaven from the Mount of Olives, shall come down again *in like manner*, that is to say, personally and visibly. I can hardly think of these things without remembering a remarkable phenomenon which I saw in going from Geneva to Lyon : I am speaking of the river Rhone, which loses itself completely under ground. You walk upon a fine green turf in the midst of trees, whilst under the soil which bears you, the large river is rolling swiftly away its waters ; it rises again at the distance of about a mile. This subterranean passage is called "*La perte du Rhone*." (The loss of the Rhone.) The Christian dispensation appears to me to be likewise "*la perte Juive* ;" (the loss of the Jews ;) but the time comes when Isrsel, now trodden under foot, will come out of the obscurity that has surrounded it for ages, spread again abroad its healing waters on the earth, and carry with it to the extremities of the world, the name of the King of the Jews, whom these shall recognise as their Great High Priest, as God and man, as Jesus the Saviour.

II.

EPOCH OF THE INDIGNATION OF GOD AGAINST ISRAEL AND OF HIS LONG PATIENCE TOWARDS THE WORLD.

§ 1.—*Of the position of the Church, and of the Testimony which she ought to present to the world during her sojourn here below.*

From the moment of the rejection of the King and the Kingdom, God began to form for Himself a *heavenly* people,¹ taken indifferently, from among Jews and Gentiles, to make of them the body or bride of the Son. It is thus that since

¹ Titus ii. 14. Eph. ii. 10. 1 Peter ii. 9, 10.

the interruption of the Reign, the middle wall or partition has been broken down, (Ep. ii.) and that the course of Jewish and earthly ideas has been replaced by that of a people of risen ones, of first-born, predestinated to be made conformable to the second Adam, and to come again to judge and to reign with Him upon the habitable earth to come. Jesus is the Head and the Bridegroom of the Church of which He is the Saviour; but nowhere in Scripture is it said that He is *King of the Church*, as He is King of Zion, or King of nations, or King of kings. The Church is His spouse,¹ bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh. She has her portion in the King, His Reign, and His Royalty. The only passage that could be brought forward, saying that Jesus is King of the Church, would be Apoc. xv. 3; "Thou King of Saints." But every brother, who studies prophecy, knows that the authorities agree in reading "O King of nations."

Nothing is earthly, in the calling of the Church. The current of the thoughts, affections and hopes, of every believer who is faithful and intelligent in the existing dispensation, may be summed up in three words—*union, communion, reunion* with the Son of God. But Jesus risen, having passed through the heavens,² is entered into the sanctuary not made with hands. He is there on high, the *glorified man*, who has introduced us into the presence of the Father. In Him, our own human nature, without sin, dwells in activity and life, in the heavenly house of God. Jesus has united us to Himself, and has made us partakers of His imperishable life and of the divine nature.

¹ Literally "companion" in the feminine, a French expression used of a wife, and an idiom which cannot be precisely rendered in English.—Tr.

² Heb. x. 12. "Jesus after having offered for sins one sacrifice for ever, sat down," not "set down for ever."—Consult the Greek and 14. Luke xix. 11, 27. Apoc. vi. 16, 17; xi. 18, &c.

The result of this blessed union is the present communion, already here below, with the Father and the Son by one Spirit. When the last member of the body is added, then we shall reap, in our reunion with this dear Saviour, the most precious fruit of faith, fruit which we hold as yet only in hope. (Compare 1 Cor. xiii. 13, 10.)

Such is, in a word the Gospel of grace, and the position (most blessed of all) that He assigns the Church during "the present evil age." This age, which existed when Christ first came, has not yet ended, since we who believe have been taken out of it and set apart by the grace of God and for Him. The Gospel of grace has not changed any thing in the course of this present age, except that God suspends the judgment which are to bring it to an end, until He has gathered to Christ all His redeemed. To desire to reform this age and to make a reign of God out of it, is to deceive the world. We have not to reform, but to come out of it to witness against and to act in energy to bring souls out of it, by preaching the entire truth.

The formation of the Church intermediately is a *mystery* which was nowhere revealed in the Old Testament, unless in types and figures. Although the Church was to be built on the confession of Jesus, Son of the living God, this title seemed, in the mouth of Peter, more an attribute of *the Christ* or of the Messiah, than as a distinct title of the Saviour of the Church.

This comes, I suppose, from Peter's finding himself still in the same position as the prophets of the old covenant. He beforehand witnessed to the death, resurrection, and to the glories which were to follow the sufferings of Christ. But, as to himself, Peter, although speaking by the Spirit, did not as yet know any thing beyond *the mysteries* of the KINGDOM.

Although Jesus had on various occasions given them a glimpse of the future reconciliation to God¹ of Jews and Gentiles in one body, this fact remained nevertheless a hidden *mystery* to the Apostles themselves, until the conversion of Saul. Paul, "*who was born before the due time,*"² saw, *first*, Jesus, as Head, united to the body of which He is the Saviour. The glad tidings of Jesus identified with the Church, was a mystery revealed to Paul first, and it is for this reason that he calls it *his Gospel*. (2 Tim. ii. 8. Rom. xvi. 25.) God taught this to Paul "by revelation," but it had not been given to the sons of men in other generations to know it. Thus, although this mystery was afterwards revealed by the Spirit to the holy Apostles and prophets of God,³ Paul is nevertheless "*the first*" to whom God made it known. (Eph. iii. 1-12. 1 Tim. i. 16. Col. i. 25, 26.)

In fact, Paul, persecuting to extremity the Church of God, was attacking the Bridegroom and the Head of this body; for it was as Bridegroom of the Church, and not as Son of man or as Messiah, that Jesus addressed this reproach to him: "Why persecutest thou *me*? I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Stephen himself, at the time of his martyrdom, saw Jesus only as the *Son of man*, standing in the glory of God, and at His right hand, and Paul, who was assisting as an active witness at the death of this saint, was already there the persecutor of the Church in one of the members of this body not yet revealed. (Acts vii. 55, 56.)

Paul is, at the same time, the first of the Jews, who, in the flesh, shall see Jesus coming again in His glory, and the

¹ Eph. ii. 16.

² 1 Cor. xv. 8. *ektroma*, born too soon. (Pape Diet.)—German Edition of Passow.—Tr.

³ It is probable that, in this sense, Paul, speaking of this Gospel, says elsewhere, *our Gospel*. (1 Thess. i. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 14.)

first member of the Church who received the revelation of the mystery of the union of Jesus with the Church. (See also Rom. xvi. 25-27. 1 Cor ii. 1-10; xv. 8.)

Another proof of the pre-eminence of Paul in what concerns the revelation and the administration of the mystery of the Church, arises from the study of Acts x. 9-20, 47; xi. 4-19. Peter, at first, was doubting within himself as to what the vision could mean, and was meditating on this mystery which had just been pointed out to him, when the Spirit commanded him to go to the Gentiles to announce to them the Word of life. But he only obeyed, in certain sense, reluctantly, without intelligence; he only surrendered himself, so to speak, completely when he saw that the Holy Ghost had been given to these Gentiles after they had believed; this fact became a proof to him that he had no right to refuse water to baptize them. "What was I that I should withstand God?" Peter understood well the fact that Gentiles were to be saved by faith, but he did not then draw from this the idea of the union of believers in one body with Christ, for God. All the authority of the testimony of Peter and the word of James were still needed, in order that the saints at Jerusalem might admit this mystery fourteen years after the conversion of Paul, who, however, had preached it during the whole of this period. (Acts xv. 7-17. Gal. i. 15-17.)

Paul, it is true, although Apostle of the Gentiles and minister of the fulness of the mystery of the Church, ceased not to seek first the sons of Abraham in every fresh locality wherein he found himself. In this he was subserving the commands of the Lord, and the love of God for His people. "It was necessary," he declared to the Jews of Antioch, "that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts xiii. 46.)

God was not yet wearied, [with their unbelief,] but sent His Word unto the very last remnant of the Jews scattered in Rome, the metropolis of the Gentile world, where, already at a very early period, a Church was gathered. He sent Paul there, who set forth to them first the Reign of God, *witnessing* and persuading them of the things concerning Jesus, "*both out of the law of Moses and out of the Prophets,*" (Acts xxviii. 23 ; compare xxiv. 14) When Paul was addressing Jewish remnants, wheresoever he met them, his preaching did not extend itself at first to all the things concerning Jesus ; but as soon as they withdrew, Paul received without distinction "*all those*" who came to him. From that time his preaching assumed a character of complete universality. Paul addressed all men without distinction, and proclaimed to them the fulness of the counsels of God ; preaching always the Reign of God ; but, besides that, the things concerning the Lord Jesus no longer only *both out of the law of Moses and the Prophets*, but according to the unfathomable riches of the ways of God. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the conduct of the apostle Paul at Rome. (Acts xxviii. 30.) The *exclusive* preaching of the Reign of God, as addressed to the Jewish nation in their own land, really ceased at the death of Stephen ; afterwards, this Gospel of the Reign was announced to all men, no longer as the only glad tidings, but conjointly with the Gospel of the grace that forms the Church. This last Gospel goes beyond the things which had been revealed concerning Jesus, in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.

If, therefore, we suppose a well disposed Jew, who had not heard any thing besides the preaching of the twelve Apostles until the death of Stephen, it is clear that he had nothing else to do but to be converted, and to wait in faithfulness for the signs which are to precede the return of the true David to restore the Reign to Israel. (Acts ii. 19-21 ; iii. 19-22 ;

vii. 1. 54.) But if we suppose this same Jew, taught by Paul at Antioch and at Rome, we must think that it was his duty to believe in the union of Jews and faithful Gentiles, so as to form but one body with Christ in God; then to wait for the return of the Lord, Head of that body, to reunite all its members in the glory.

It is good for us, it would have been good for our Jew, to know that God uses the time of His indignation against His earthly people, to create for His Son a heavenly co-heir, partaker of His life and formed after His likeness, whilst waiting to introduce again this Well-Beloved upon (or into) the habitable earth to come.

The Reign of God cannot be established with power on the earth before the reunion of the Bride and the Bridegroom has taken place in heaven, and those are the things revealed in the time of grace, in order to take souls out of the world and of the things which are coming to a close. Would to God that the successors of Paul had continued to preach distinctly both the Gospel of the Reign and that of the union of the Church with Christ! The great ignorance which exists still as to the succession of the dispensation, would not be such as we see it in our days, and have to deplore for ourselves.

After the Apostles had received the revelation of the Church, they had not at any time the thought of giving up the preaching of the Reign of God and of His risen Christ, in order to set forth exclusively the things concerning the Church. They preached strongly the resurrection of Jesus, making use of this truth primarily, to justify His first mission in grace and in humanity; then to establish the certainty of His return in judgment, and the faithfulness of God as to the promises of the reign made to the fathers.¹

¹ Acts xv. 13-20; ii. 24-31, 35 36; iii. 14-22, 25; v. 31; vii. 35; xvii. 7, 31; xx. 25. Rom. v. 17. Heb. i. ii. &c.

Festus, uninterested as he was in this question, to which he was obliged to give all his attention as a judge, thus summed up before king Agrippa the long and violent debate, for which Paul had to appear before him to be judged—"question of their own superstition and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." (Acts xxv. 19.) And the Jews of Thessalonica said to the Roman magistrates: "These all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, *one* Jesus." (Acts xvii. 7; compare John xix. 12, 19-23.)

I think that the preaching of the establishment of the Reign of God by the presence of the Son of man has been very wrongly interrupted in the Church; the only reason one could allege to excuse this culpable negligence would be, to say that the return of the Son of man is a truth less near our conscience, and in some way less dear to our hearts, than the reunion of the Church to her Beloved. But God judges otherwise, since He opens the eyes of His own to these things and teaches them to distinguish that which was confounded together. He acts thus in grace to the Church, that she may separate from the world. He acts thus in grace to the world, that it may be brought to a stand about its conversion, by hearing proclaimed the approach of the times of the end and of the judgments of the Son of man on the mystery of iniquity which goes on increasing.

I shall say a few words on the subject of the mystery of iniquity, because intelligence as to our position depends in a great measure on the intelligence of the ways of God towards the world, and of the condemnation of all that is connected with the present age.

Although the providence of God preserved the nations, He only considered them as a troubled sea, as a mass of confusion, not as people. From the election of the Jewish people until

Jesus, the nations were not revealed.¹ God had given up the Gentiles to the lusts of their hearts, and to the foul course of their shameful passions. But God passed over these times of ignorance; Jesus, the light of the world, came to be the light of the Gentiles, in putting them under the responsibility of free grace. As to the world, this light only serves to demonstrate the progressive rebellion of which the final apostasy will be the last result, and bring on inevitable judgment. The severity of this judgment will be in proportion to the different advantages in grace afforded to every nation who shall have respectively rejected them. For when the judgment of nations placed in the light is in question, God acts towards them as if He only considered the life of one single individual. Faults are accumulating until the cup runs over, and then correction comes.

Another remark, which one cannot repeat too often,—because it destroys an error fatal to the intelligence of the dispensations and of the ways of God,—is, that the Reign of God and of His Christ is not destined to *re-establish* things as they were in the time of Solomon, of David, of Moses, of Abraham, or of Adam, but to introduce, after all the dispensations spoiled by man, a dispensation superior to the preceding ones. It would have been altogether contrary to the views and ways of God to wish to restore Judaism, and to continue it by means of Christianity. Judaism had become, before God, like the earth which, notwithstanding the care of the cultivator, produced only thorns and thistles. Now, such a ground *God does not mend*, but He says that it is fit for *burning*; is no longer good for any thing else. As to Judaism, what withheld God's hand for a time from

¹ Luke ii. 31, (of which the true translation is "for the revelation of."—Tr.) (Acts xv. 16, 17; xiii. 47. Is. xlix., &c.) For although God knew their heart, they were not a people in the sight of God (1 Peter i. 10)

setting fire to such an order of things, is that He was minded still to rescue many souls from it, to introduce them into the succeeding and more excellent dispensations. Thus, when the course of Judaism shall be re-established towards the end of the age, it will not be by God, but by unconverted Jews ; neither will it be for God, but for Anti-Christ. Thus also, when Jesus shall return to reign on the earth, it will not be to re-establish catholicism or protestantism, or for any thing like it ; it will not even be to re-establish man in the earth in the state of innocency and of royalty of the first Adam, but to bring in the mediatorial and heavenly dominion of the risen second Adam. The saints, then, have no other position here on earth but that of strangers and of pilgrims ; their duty is to walk in it with fear, during their short sojourn, bearing witness to grace and to the Reign of God and His Christ, and to the judgments that will precede it, calling souls to come out of a world corrupted and condemned, and hating all the abominations of the present age.

The Israelites were attached to the earth, because they were blessed on the earth. But, now that grace has intervened, judgment on the world is only suspended. it is not set aside ; on the contrary, it is drawing nearer every day, and it will fall like a deluge on all that which has had the light of the cross. The curse that is on the earth will not be removed until the reign of Christ ; (Is. xix. 24) we are therefore, not called to enjoy the earth, since it is already judged with the prince of *this world*. (John xiv. 30.) The prophetic word says thus ; "*He that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still ;*" for, God having set us apart to wait for *His Son*, we are to keep ourselves apart, to worship Him and serve Him in spirit, all the days of our life.

It is also our duty to call on men to lay hold of grace, and we are to remember that it is not by corruptible things, such as silver or gold, that we have been redeemed from our vain conversation, which was handed down to us by our fathers; but by the precious blood, as of a lamb without spot and blemish, by the blood of Christ ... But, alas the Church has lost sight both of her position and her calling, of her duties and her testimony, because she has confounded the Gospel of the Reign with the Gospel of grace, union with Christ by faith and reunion with the Son of God before the consummation of this age.

I think that the labourers of the Lord are particularly responsible for the light which has brought out again both the difference between these two testimonies and the duty of proclaiming distinctly these two truths. If the Church urged by the desire of suiting herself to the world, hides these things, and thus keeps back the truth in fetters, she will have to give account of it; for, far from weakening the testimony of God, her testimony ought to consist, above all, in withdrawing from evil, in avoiding any participation in it, in order to be "kept from the hour of temptation which is coming on the whole habitable earth, to try those who dwell upon the earth."

It is the true Church has retained the fundamental doctrine of free Justification through faith in the Lord Jesus, dead and risen; but, although the power of the resurrection of the Christ is now sought after by a great number of the faithful we are yet, far behind the time when the saints of Thessalonica waited daily for the coming of the Lord to be reunited with him in the air. The goodness of our God has given back this truth to the Church, and we suppose that it has already been received by most of the brethren who will still read this paper. We shall, nevertheless, say a few words in passing about it. The resurrection from *among* the dead, that of the saints or the first and

better resurrection, will take place before the return of the Son of man to judge the living.¹ It is altogether distinct from the resurrection from the dead which will take place *after* the millennium. It is called a resurrection of life, in opposition to the second, which is a resurrection of judgment. (John v. 29.) The Church being justified, and living by the life of Christ risen, resurrection and change are to her only the redemption of the bodies of the saints; it is a consequence of the present resurrection of the souls, which secure us from the judgment of the dead. This opposition between the future portion of *men*, *assinners*, and the hope of *those that are redeemed*, is very striking: (Heb. ix. 27, 28.) "And as it is appointed unto men *once* to die,² but *after this* the judgment; so Christ also was once offered to bare the sins of many: and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

I repeat that I have no intention to establish in detail the doctrine of the rapture of the Church, or of the first resurrection and change of the saints. I suppose that brethren have learned to distinguish clearly between the return of the Lord *for* the Church and His return *with* the Church. It is necessary that the saints should have been reunited in heaven, in order that the Lord may *bring them back with Him*. This return of the

¹ Luke xiv. 14; xx. 35, 36. Phil. i. 11. Heb. xi, 35; compare Acts iv. 2. John xi. 25. Apoc. xx. 5, 6. 1 Cor. xv. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17 &c.

² In order that *hapax* should necessarily signify "once only" it should be accompanied by *monen*. I make this remark, because the necessary end of judgment is the *second* death. (Apoc. ii. 11 x. 6, 14; xxi. 8. See for *hapax*, Heb. vi. 4; ix. 7, 26, 28; x. 2; xii. 26, 27. See also Jude 3, compared with Heb. ix. 27. It is otherwise with *ephapax*, which has mere the force of one time only, Heb. xii. 27; ix. 12; x. 10. Rom. vi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 6. The other words underlined point out the literal force of the Greek, and particularly the opposition which exists between *kathos* and *ohutos*, "as," — "to." (See 1 Thess. ii. 4.)

children of God in glory will be the answer to the groanings of the creation, (Rom. viii. 19, &c,) which, instead of being then destroyed, shall be restored and delivered from the dominion of Satan.

My only desire is to present this hope and this expectation of the saints, as having for its object the nearest of all the things promised to us, but which we do not yet actually possess. The reunion of the Church to her Saviour will be for her the accomplishment of grace, the entrance to glory, and the realisation of the promise, which are beforehand reckoned ours here below, through faith.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians whose faith was spread abroad every where, praises them for "having turned from dumb idols to God, to serve the living and true God and *to wait for His Son* from heaven"...not the Son of man, but "*His Son,*" *the Son of God*,—two titles quite distinct, and which determine the character and value of the word *coming*. Such is a laudable faith. It consists not in waiting for things concerning the world, but only for the return of the Son of God. Now it is a very different thing to wait for the return of the Son of God for the Church, or to wait for the return of the Son of man or the world. When the Lord returns *for the Church*, He will not come upon earth but into the air; for heaven is to contain Him until His coming *on the habitable earth* as the Son of man, accompanied by all His saints, to restore all things and to reign. But when the Lord appears as *Son of man*, with all His saints, He will come back on the earth itself, and not only "into the air." The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, (i. 5-9,) written six years later than that to the Thessalonians, gives the same praise to their faith: "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." "The grace of God.....teaches us *to wait* for that blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,"

Tit. ii. 13.) "for our citizenship is in heaven, whence also *we* look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who *shall change* the body of our humiliation, that it may be *fashioned like* unto the body of His glory." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) It is never the part of the child of God to wait for death, but for *transmutation*, (a sudden change like lightning,) or transformation. It was this that Paul was looking for, eighteen hundred years ago, as well as the saints to whom He then wrote. (See Cor. xv. 51. 55. 1 Thess. iv.) "Therefore," says Peter, "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 13.)

The thought predominating in the two epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians is the immediate and daily expectation of the Lord personally in the air; for the rapture of the saints and for their reunion with Himself in glory. Paul would not first have the brethren be *in ignorance*, then that they might not be *in sorrow* as to brethren that were fallen asleep, and again that they *might comfort* one another with the expectation of the Lord coming to raise the saints that had fallen asleep, to change those that were alive, to gather them up, and to reunite them all in glory.

The duty of waiting for the Lord becomes more and more urgent in proportion as the night is spent, as the evil is increasing, as the hours pass. The word *duty*, which has just escaped me, is in itself a proof of the unfaithfulness of the Bride in this respect, since we are obliged to present, as a responsibility, what constituted the joy, hope and consolation of the saints in happier times.

The Thessalonians and the Corinthians were, as we are, sons of the resurrection and of the light; and hence it is that Paul, putting himself in the same position as these faithful ones, wrote to them in nearly the same terms, although at different epochs: "*We*" (you and I) "that are living, the still remaining

or surviving ones," words repeated with emphasis, with a peculiar stress on them, in the space of six lines: "*We* (believers) shall not all die, but *we* shall all be changed"...

The Apostle John was also an example of the hope of the faithful to the close of his long career. The Lord, after having announced to Peter by what death he should die, had said of John: "If I will that he tarry *till I come*, what is that to thee?" But Jesus had not said expressly that John should not die, and although John be dead, he was necessarily and during all his life placed, by these words, in the position of looking for the Lord Himself, and not for death. John the prophet beloved of Jesus, has received and transmitted to us, in the Apocalypse, the prediction of all the events which are still, from this time, to be accomplished in the world before the return of the Son of man; but it is also in this same book that Jesus announce Himself to the Church always as "*He that cometh*." "Behold, I come quickly." "I am He that is coming."

John was the last of the twelve that remained waiting for the coming of his Lord; we see by his epistles that the expectations of Jesus did not lose its power in the heart of this Apostle more than in that of Paul. The sixty-three years which had elapsed since John had received the precious and last words of his Saviour, did not prevent him expressing with vehemence the desire of the Spirit and the Bride: "Come; come, Lord Jesus!" And John, in writing the Apocalypse, had to repeat often to himself: "If the Lord will that I tarry till He come!"

I think that, after the spiritual intelligence of the heart, which ought always to take the first place, nothing better justifies the priority of the rapture of the Church to every other prophetic event, than the light spread by this truth, thus set in the place that the Word assigns to it, on the ways of God, as a whole.

The gathering of the Church to Jesus is as the key stone which binds all the prophetic truths together. This event will close the existing dispensation of grace, properly

so called. And the present dispensation is intermediate between the interruption and the resumption of the government of God over His Jewish people and on the earth. Therefore I repeat, that no event whatsoever, prophetic or not prophetic, can be placed before the gathering of the Church to the Lord in the air. It seems to me that a heart which is faithful in searching out the thoughts of the Lord in His Word, wants nothing more positive ; but I do believe that the soul, in which these different passages produce any other desire than that of spirit, which cries : "Come Lord Jesus !" would be with difficulty convinced by other still more peremptory declarations, if it were possible to find such. God alone can break the ties which bind us to the earth, and which prevent our going forth to meet our beloved. Whence comes it then, that so small a number of souls let this cry of love be heard ? is it because the words of God is not sufficiently positive, or is it because the Spirit of God no more teaches the faithful on these points, which they call secondary ? As if a subject or hope and of daily expectation could be a secondary thing for the Bride of the Son of God—for the heirs of the glory of God !

The fault, dear brethren, is neither in God, nor in His Word, nor in His Spirit, but in the unfaithfulness of the Church, and I say, blessed is he who recognises it and who is humbled for it, for it is as confessing the sins of their people and in identifying themselves with their guilt, that Ezra, Isaiah Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, and nearly all the holy prophets, were strengthened and taught of God.

The Church is to serve the living and true God, who will that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth. It is for this we have received the mission to call upon the spiritually dead, repeating the cry of, "Behold, the Bridegroom

cometh; go ye out to meet him,"¹ in order to avoid the judgments which shall follow the rapture of the Church, so as to be with the King when He shall sh^ake once more the heaven and the earth. It is not allowed to "him that heareth" to wait till the Church is taken up, in order to say also: "Come." Now, the Apocalypse is the book of Him that cometh, and that book is open, for the time is at hand. The Lord pronounces these solemn words, for him who does not hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches: He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." Awful judgment to those whose heart remains shut against such an appeal: "Let him that heareth, say, Come!"

The Lord Jesus, when on earth, said: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The Church, in her turn, on this same earth, says, by the Spirit of Jesus: "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely."²

The Spirit cries in the Bride, with groanings that cannot be uttered: "Come, Lord Jesus! come." These words are evidently in this place an appeal put by God in the mouth of the saints, in order that "he who heareth may say, Come." If our cry: "Come, Lord!" comes from the heart, it will reach to the

¹ I do not quote here the parable of the virgins, save as an *application*, useful in calling sinners at the present time. As to its *explanation*, I protest, on the contrary, against the opinion which makes, of the retinue of virgins, the Bride herself. The word "then," expressly put in this parable alone, between the xxiv. 31 and the xxv. 31 of Matthew, excludes all spiritualizing explanation. "When the Son of man shall come, (and He will come with a heavenly Bride,) ~~then~~ the Kingdom shall be likened to ten virgins."—[I take the liberty, however, of saying, that up to the present moment I still, notwithstanding the protest, believe what is protested against. The virgins did *go out* to meet the Bridegroom, and came back with Him. The Bride is not named, but I believe it here to allude to Jerusalem on earth. According to the writer himself, it is the Church who is to accompany the Son of man, though that expression is excluded from the best editions.]—Tr.

² John vii. 37. Apoc. xxii. 17.

heart of those who are athirst, but who have not yet found the water which springs up unto life eternal; then they will cry also; "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Dear brethren! appeals generally remain without efficacy in our days, the last days in the midst of a world worn out and withered; however, the voice of the Spirit and of the Bride may still reach more than one heart amongst those who are to be saved. He who traces these lines has known the holy and powerful energy of it; he certainly stands not alone in this position, and may perhaps not be the last efficaciously invited to unite with the Bride in saying; "Even so, come, Lord!"

§ 2.—*Confusion of the Gospel of the Reign with the Reign of the Gospel.*

It is always difficult, and sometimes painful, to put in relief the falseness and the lie of traditional precepts, were it only because one is in danger, while so doing, of hurting the feelings of some pious souls, in thus presenting to them a mirror in which they are forced to recognise the error which the power of habit has endeared to them. However, it is no longer so, in the same degree, when one has begun by establishing the truth destined to take the place of the error pointed out. A heart that is sincere will receive the truth wherever it comes from. What Paul and John preached by the Spirit of God is the truth. From whatever quarter this truth comes to us, we ought to accept it and to seek after it with love, although it might be Caiaphas, Judas, Berodias, or Pilate who present it to us.

I will point out the false hope, which is the fruit of the confusion brought into the Church with regard to the Gospel of the Reign, because this error is become common in our days. The mixture of truth and error which is found in the doctrine of many, concerning the coming of the Lord, appears

to me, at least as dangerous, on account of its subtlety, as the total ignorance into which the Church had fallen formerly on this subject.

The Reign of God will remain a mystery for the world until its accomplishment.¹ It is a thing interrupted, but of which the resumption is rapidly drawing nigh. It has been revealed to the Church, who is charged with the announcement of the establishment of this Reign in power. The fault of the Church consists in that she has come to consider herself as the Kingdom of the Son of man. It is true that she is partaker of that Kingdom, but only as the Bride of the King who is to sit with Him on His throne. Now, the promise of the Reign is neither less positive nor lost, but it is not to be fulfilled while the dispensation of the Church lasts, (and, we may add, the apostasy up to the end of Anti-Christ, and the judgments which follow, of which the particulars are given in the Apocalypse and in the Prophets.)

The appearance of the sign of the Son of man, the shaking of heaven and earth, the harvest and the vintage, and then the re-establishment of all things,—such are the events which are to precede *the consummation of this age*, and the coming of the true David. And since it is so, we ought to understand that the Reign of God will not be realized in any way by the blessed preaching of the glad tidings of the death and resurrection of Christ; but by the personal return of the risen One Himself.

¹ Apoc. x. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 24-28. Apoc. xii. 10; xi. 15-17; xix. 6. John xviii. 36, &c., compare Deut. xxix. 29.

² This confusion between the Reign of Christ, or of the heavens, and the administration of grace, will always give to the Papist an incontestable advantage over the Protestants, in the discussion of the pretensions which they precisely ground on this false interpretation of Matthew xvi. 19.

Is it not dreadful to think that the unconverted world should be taught by Christians to call down upon itself the most awful judgments, in asking God "that His Reign (Kingdom) may come?" For, in order that this Reign may be established, the Son of man must previously send His angels, who shall pluck up out of His Kingdom all offences and those who work iniquity, and throw them into the furnace of fire. (Matt. xiii. See also 2 Thess. i. 7. Apoc. xix. 19-21.)

The hope of the Reign of God and the act of hasting¹ His coming only belong, in the dispensation of grace, to those who, being kings and priests, know the secret of the Lord. (l'Eternel.) We can pray that the counsel of God may be fulfilled, because we have intelligence of it, and because we have been set, through grace, outside of all that is to be judged and condemned. The body of Christ is composed of a people² righteous with the righteousness of its Head, and who will pass neither through the earthly judgment of the living (Matt. xxv.) nor the eternal judgment of the dead, after the final destruction of the heavens and earth that are now. (Apoc. xx. 11-15.)

From the time the Church has considered herself as the Kingdom of God, she has confounded the preaching of the Gospel of the Reign with the preaching of grace: this error has produced the spurious doctrine of the reign of the Gospel,—a doctrine which this very expression condemns. The Word never speaks once of this pretended Reign, but it says *the Gospel of the Reign*, where the Christian world says the Reign of the Gospel. The perversion of the words could not be more characteristic, for it expresses the perversion of the thoughts of God.

¹ This is an allusion to the French, and I suppose the truer translation of *speudontas* in 2 Peter iii.—Tr.

² 1 Thess. iv. 14; iii. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Phil. iii. 20, 21. Rom v. 17; viii. John iii. 18; v. 24.

The Gospel of the Reign is identical with the *everlasting Gospel*,¹ which alone will be preached from the time of the rapture of the Church, and also during the complete apostasy of the Jews and Gentiles. This is the substance of it: "Fear God and give glory to Him, *for the hour of His judgment is come*". . "to judge the habitable earth *in righteousness*, by the man whom He has appointed." I think that this news, although good tidings to those who have the thoughts of Christ, and who, being in Him, are kept by Him, is not (far from it) the Gospel of the grace now presented. The final preaching of the *everlasting Gospel* contains the last period of three "woes" announced in Rev. viii. 13 by the angel, the precursor of the last trumpet. This period is that of the definitive judgments which are to introduce the Reign of God and the authority of His Christ. It is the *Reign* which is *everlasting*; and if the Gospel which announces this Reign is still called everlasting, it is that the thing it announces will have no end. "For in that day" I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, *that they may possess* the remnant of Edom and *all the heathen*." Such, then, is the reign promised to the earthly seed of Abraham. It is a reign of the

¹ Consult, for the value of this expression, Matt. iv. 23. Mark i. 14. Luke iv. 43: viii. 1; xvi. 16. Matt. ix. 35: xxiv. 14. Apoc. xiv. 6. Is. ix. 6, 7. Luke i. 33. Ps. ix. 8. 2 Peter i. 11. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Jer. x. 10. Ps. xxix. 10; x. 16; lxvi. 7. Dan. ii. 44; iv. 3; vi. 26; vii. 14, 22, 27; xii. 3. 2 Sam. vii. 16. Exod. xv. 18. If there is a light shade of difference between the expressions *Gospel of the Reign* and *everlasting Gospel*, it does not bear on the things announced, but on the epoch in which they are announced. In this light, the everlasting Gospel will be the closing announcement of the then present end of the age which now is. (Apoc. xiv. 6. quoted.)

2 Amos, ix. 11, 12; comp. 2 Sam. vii. 11, 16-19, 25-29. The epoch assigned in Amos ix. 11, by "for in that day," is determined in Acts xv. 16, by the words: "After these things." Peter had proved that God had, from all eternity, elected a spiritual people also for His name.

Jews, under the supreme authority of the true David and of His Bride ; but I see nothing in this that answers to a spiritual millennium. "And I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the holy city." "Behold a man whose name is THE BRANCH ; he shall grow up out of His place, (or branch up from under him,) and he shall build the temple of the Lord." Is not this the true David, He who has already shown all His power in raising, after three days, His body—the temple of all the fulness of God ; And does this prophecy admit of a spiritualizing interpretation, that would make of Jerusalem the Church ? "He Himself shall build the temple of the Lord, and He Himself shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne," "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth in that day".....He Himself—over all the earth. Are these the quickening principles of the Gospel or the Holy Ghost ? He that has an ear let him hear ! (Zech. iii. 8 ; vi. 12, 13 ; viii. 6 ; xiv. 9.)

There is not in the Bible one single word that speaks of a *spiritual* millennium, or of a pretended spiritual return of the Lord, either for the Church or the world.

The Holy Ghost has been sent from heaven since the ascension of Jesus, and it was He who testified immediately of the future sending again of the Son of man in person. (Acts ii. iii.) The disciples announced a future restoration of all things, not by the presence of the Holy Ghost, or by what is so improperly called a second Pentecost, but, "by

James is not speaking there of that part of the body of Christ which is taken, not from amongst the Jews, but from amongst the nations. Then "after these things," that is to say, when the last of the elected shall have entered in the Church, and when the heavenly people shall be complete, "after these things I will return"....That is to say, Israel shall enter with God in the relations of the new covenant, which is the free promise made unto Abraham: "That (or, in order that) the residue of men, and all the Gentiles, might seek after the Lord."

the presence *of the Lord.*" The children of God will then be manifested with the Lord, present with Him in the liberty of the glory; not present or manifested in the Spirit, but present corporally in the glory; conformed to Jesus and like Him.¹

Acts iii. 21; When God *shall send Jesus Christ*, He will, no doubt, after the judgment, pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and *His glory* shall then cover the whole earth, but only then. We do not see that the sending and the presence of the Holy Ghost since Pentecost, have restored the least thing in the world, since the Holy Ghost in the Church serves to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," until the epoch of the return of the Son of man. We do not see that the Holy Ghost has subjected all things to Christ; but we see, on the contrary, the Son of man glorified, *waiting*, till all His enemies be made His footstool; *waiting* for the moment when He shall set His foot on this footstool to tread under His feet kings in His wrath, and to break the nations as the earthen vessel of a potter is broken. That is the Gospel of the Reign; but is it a spiritual millennium?

In short, when God shall send Jesus Christ, all flesh shall see Him, even those that have pierced Him; but since the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, the world receives Him not, i.e. because it sees Him not and does not know Him. (John xiv. 17.) To hope for what is called a new and more abundant out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, or to confound the accomplished promise of sending the Holy Ghost with that of the reign of that same Jesus, coming again *in the same manner as He went away*," (Acts i. 11,) is to set aside the glory of Jesus as only begotten Son, as Heir. And

¹ See Psalm lxxviii. 17, and the whole psalm. Rom. viii. 18-23. 1 John iii. 2. Col. iii. 4. Rev. v. 1-10; xix. 7-19. Jude 15. 1 Thess. iii. 13. Deut. xxxiii. 2-3. Dan. 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 22, 26, 27.

further, what is not less grave, it is to set aside His actual presence in the Church in Spirit, since one confounds thereby *the principle on which we are united to Him*, with the act by which we shall take possession of the Kingdom conjointly with Him. If Jesus is present in Spirit in the Church, and this Church is in the world, Jesus cannot *come back* spiritually into the world; for one comes back only there where one has already been but where *one is no more*. In order that a spiritual return of Jesus in the world might take place, it would be necessary that His Spirit, which takes His place in those that are His, should leave the Church, and reascend into heaven; breaking thus the link which unites the Bride to the Son of God. Those then who teach a spiritual millennium or a spiritual return of Christ. deny virtually the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church. They impugn the glorified humanity of Christ and His rights as Messiah and Heir, as the posterity of Abraham. They deny also the personal return, and the manifestation of the redeemed to the whole renewed *creation*.

The force of the text in Acts i. 11, has certainly struck in a particular manner the mind of many powerful teachers at all times. Calvin, while putting off, according to erroneous tradition, the return of the Lord to *the end of the world*, says, however: "That this coming is the hope of the *faithful here below*, and that this hope ought to check the troublesome desire of the flesh." And the same Calvin says, in his commentary on this verse, that "it is a frivolous thing to discuss, as St. Augustin, the question whether the Lord would come back in His own clothes."

Death often serves as a text, in preaching, to call sinners. It seems to me that one might as well, in cases like this, content oneself with the use of passages which go directly to the conscience, like the words of Jesus in Luke xii. 20, or such like. But people prefer to put forward the coming of the Son of man,

which they confound arbitrary with death. It is at least the sense that is generally given, in preaching the Gospel to this warning ; "Be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not *the Son of man* cometh." This applies to the world, and even to the Church warnings which concern the witnesses of the interrupted reign, and the witnesses of the time of the end. Thus Jesus, the Prince of life, becomes the King of terrors, hideous death which deprives us of those we love ; Jesus becomes the wages of sin in the mind of the unbelieving hearers—He who has destroyed the works of the adversary and conquered the Prince of death ! What does one gain in the conscience of unbelievers by such a life ? Nothing, for the natural heart may contemplate very quietly the coming of the Son of man. Every one, and above all those who speak thus, ought to know that a multitude of events come in between the present moment and that coming, so that such a delay, however vague, gives to the hearers time to realise their plans and carnal hopes.

When the saints are addressed with exhortations grounded on such a basis, it is forgotten that *the day of the Son of man* will not overtake us, because, as to the world, it comes as a thief *in the night*, but that we are children *of the day*, children of the light and of the resurrection, and because *in that day* we shall come back with Him, having already been made partakers of the Kingdom which cannot be shaken. And last of all, our Bridegroom is presented to us as a thief, and, instead of being kept vigilant through love and through hope, we are stimulated through fear. (1 Thess. v. 4.)

All those confusions have also led the Church into the hopeful chimera of "*the conversion of the world*," as if the world, for whom Jesus does not pray, was designed to become, some time or other, the Bride of the Lord,—as if the final destruction of heaven and earth could be the reward of this pretended conversion of the world ;—as if this destruction was not to be the fruit of the last revolt of the nations. If what the scripture calls the

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rein of God, was to be established spiritually by the conversion of the world to the Gospel of grace, we should have a *spiritual mellennium*, in which the Lord would not be manifested with His saints to reign in person on the millennial earth. The millennium is to terminate by the destruction of the heavens and of the earth that now are, and after that there will be only one judgment, that of *the dead* before the great white throne or the *eternal judgment*. (Heb. vi. 2 ; Apoch. xx. 11. and the following verses.) If the Church, has many to teach, is to pass through that judgment before she is gathered to Christ to reign with him personally, it is clear that, according to such false principles, the re-union of the saints to the Lord, and ther manifestation in glory to reign with Him, could only take place when the heavens and the earth that now are no longer existed.

I do not think it worth while to contend with such an unscriptural doctrine, otherwise than through the light of the Word, such as I have already presented it in speaking of the rapture of the Church. The only thing that I shall add here with regard to these confused notions, is the following remark on one of the errors which have the most encouraged them. As long as Satan is not bound in the bottomless pit, the reign of God and the authority of His Christ will not be established on the earth. And, as soon as Satan shall be loosed, the reign of the thousand years will be closed. If one retains this truth, this alone will preserve us from many dangerous illusions as to the coming of a spiritual reign.

I have mentioned here the error of those brethren who are expecting a spiritual return of Christ, in order to beseech them to ask of the Lord a clearer knowledge of those things of Jesus, which the Holy Ghost has undertaken to show to us. "But ye, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware.....and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus-Christ." "Hold that fast which thou hast, that

no man take thy crown." (2 Peter iii. 17. 18. Apoc. iii. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. v. 12.)

Many works are undertaken in the vain hope of bringing about the reign of God by converting the world, but alas! the zeal which labours to obtain *the conversion of the world* by the preaching of grace, is founded on an error proceeding from ignorance of prophecy. Such a hope finds itself more and more disappointed by the increasing hardness of heart of the evangelical world. In spite of this, people persist in defiance of the evidence of facts. Instead of turning back and acknowledging that they have made a mistake, they continue in the false road.

It was with a very good intention, no doubt, but with a zeal without knowledge, that David set the ark of God upon a new cart drawn by two oxen, instead of having it carried by the Levites. (Deut. x. 8.) The consequence of these first steps of David in a false path was that Uzzah would sustain a work that God did not approve. Then came judgment. Uzzah died, and David, the chosen of God, lost immediately the greatest blessing that a believer can possess. He was deprived of the sense and enjoyment of the love of his God. (2 Sam. vi. 1 Chron. xiii. 12.)

Our intentions may be quite right, and even rest on a certain measure of truth; but it is only in a simple faith which honours the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, that we shall find the spring of an intelligent activity, that seeks for souls to bring them to God through Jesus Christ, and that calls them wheresoever the Lord sends it, directing, drawing, and blessing it.

Scripture furnishes us with many proofs of the sad consequences which deference to the traditions of persons who are looked up to, the idolatry which consists in believing man rather than the Creator, the love of the world and the thoughts of our own carnal hearts may produce.

When the epoch fixed in the counsel of God came for visiting His people Israel, the Jewish nation expected Emmanuel, but expected Him *without intelligence*, because it was following the traditions of scribes, priests, and great ones who sat in their councils. The people on whom the name of God was invoked no longer knew how to discern either the signs of the times, or the seasons. This people was without faith, although possessing the oracles of God and His promises ; although having prophets whom they no longer listened to. All obeyed commandments and doctrines of men, instead of following God whom they did not know, although they affirmed that He was their God. (John viii. 15.)

It is not surprising that the glad tidings, spread by the poor shepherds and by the wise men from the East, should have had no acceptance amongst a people thus disposed. So when the scribes, the priests and the chiefs, pressed by the questions of king Herod, had pointed out the place where the Christ was to be born, they took care not to go there themselves. As for Herod, he had only inquired *exactly* of the time and of the place, because he wished to put the King of the Jews to death.

Finally, the pride and lust of Herod having induced him to sacrifice John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus found Himself then alone and rejected. No traces were left of the joyful message of the faithful witnesses of His birth ; one would have said that no one amongst God's people had heard the voice of the shepherds and of the magi, or that of Simeon, of Anna, and of John the Baptist.

The result of this state of people's minds is well known. It brought on finally the murder of the Holy and the Just, the rejection of Israel ; and the indignation of the Lord reached its height.

As soon as we rest upon tradition, instead of listening to the teachings of the Spirit of God in His Word, every thing is upset, and Satan triumphs in the Church.

Amongst the Jews, the value of earthly property was in proportion to the distance or nearness of the Jubilee, the year of rest and of liberty. The law said: "According to the number of years, (until the jubilee,) thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years, thou shalt diminish the price of it: for, according to the number of the [years of the] fruits doth he sell unto thee." (Lev. xxv. 16.) It is the same with the Christian: the things that are visible lose their value in his sight in proportion as he believes in this Word: "Yet a little, a very little while, and He who shall come will come, and will not tarry;" and, on the other hand, if the thoughts and the affections of the Christian are attached to the course of this world and to the things of the earth, his heart will be naturally disposed to receive the course of ideas which accord with the still distant return of the Son of man in judgment, rather than His coming quickly to take us into the liberty and repose of heaven.

The prospect of the consummation of the age and of the wrath of the Lamb, however distant it might be, still made the conscience uneasy; it did not leave sufficient latitude for all the plans for establishing oneself, and of aggrandizement and honour, which man likes to form and to set on foot for himself, *for his name*, for his family. And men have succeeded by degrees in putting in the place of this uncomfortable prospect a more vague, more convenient hope, which allows one to establish oneself honorably and pleasantly upon the earth, and to make provision for one's family. And hence all idea of the return of the Lord has been laid aside. Jesus has been dismissed into heaven for ever. Men have invented a spiritual return, a universal conversion, a Reign of the Gospel. All this keeps the Lord at a distance, and one may, provided there is a measure of effort, and of sacrifice for this pretended Reign, live comfortably enough

here on earth. The life and the activity of Jesus lose much of their efficacy on the conscience, as soon as the scriptural and daily hope of His return is laid aside.

I have pointed out the confusion of mind that has been introduced into the Church, and through it also into the world, with regard to the Gospel of the Reign. I have endeavoured to point out the causes of this confusion. I have shown some of its fatal consequences; but on this last point there would be a great deal to say, which the confined limits of this little work force me to leave to the spiritual intelligence of brethren who reflect on these serious subjects. Nor is there indeed need of great penetration to see, in the actual walk of the sheep of Jesus, the fruits of the deplorable tradition which presents death or eternal judgment to them as their nearest interview with the Lord. It is not surprising either that the world, instructed by the Church to expect a mild reign, without a King, and a progressive improvement of humanity through the culture of grace, should be blinded as to the road it is following, and which leads it straight to judgment and to eternal ruin.

I close this in repeating, that in as much as it is true that Scripture often speaks of the *Gospel of the Reign*, so is it untrue to say that it ever speaks of *the Reign of the Gospel*, or of a spiritual reign of Christ by the principles of the Gospel.

III.

OF THE TESTIMONY OF THE END.

§ 1.—*The Consummation of this Age, and the Age to come.*

I know that this subject is surrounded with many difficulties in its details. Far from wishing to force my thoughts on any one, my only desire has been to awaken amongst Christians the feel-

ing of the need of studying this subject, while facilitating to them therein by the general sketch of what I believe to be conformable to the Word, as to the final testimony which is about to be given to the everlasting Gospel.

We shall never know but in part, and here on earth very imperfectly ; this is particularly obvious in our ignorance of holy prophecy. Nevertheless, in studying it, we are obeying God, who says to us : "Quench not the Spirit ; despise not prophecy." ¹ The revelation of hidden things is of grace and a fruit of the love of our God, who would have us to know the future history of the world, the Church and heaven.

The witnesses who shall preach the Reign towards the consummation of the age, will receive in a particular manner, "the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus," (Apoc. xix. 10.) And this spirit will be a powerful help in penetrating into the counsels of God, through the veil, of which only a corner is lifted up for us in the World. These witnesses will stand in a very simple position, because unaccomplished prophecy will then be found disentangled from all the events which are at present still connected with the Church in the world.

The Gospel of the Reign proclaims the resuming of the government of God over men. This Reign is divided into two periods : first the person and mediatorial Reign of the Son in power over the renewed world. This is "the Reign of God and the power (authority) of His Christ," ² an epoch essentially transitory, or the first act of the eternal Reign. (2 Peter iii. 8.) It is with this first period that we are here, in a special manner, occupied as to its introduction and nature, and the

¹ [This is given literally from the French, though others may judge that the ordinary English version is more in accordance with the thought of the Spirit.—Ed.]

² Apoc. x. 7 ; xi. 15-18 ; xv. 1-5 ; xii. 10 ; xix. 1-7. Eph. v. 5. 1 Cor. xv. 24-26. John xviii. 36. Heb. i. 6 ; ii. 5. Luke i. 33. Matt. xiii. 19 ; xix. 28. Dan. ii. 44 ; iv. 3 ; vii. 4.

testimony which proclaims the glad tidings of it. Secondly, after all things shall have been either reconciled or subdued, and after the judgment of the dead and of the rebellious, (all things being made new,) the Reign of God will continue over the new creation, which alone will remain. In this new creation, come forth then from its state of birth, God, without mediator, shall be all in all."¹

At the first coming of Jesus, He brought with him the deliverance of the people Israel; "glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will toward men." When the Lord shall have trodden under foot the earth and His enemies in judgment, when His inheritance shall be purified from all that offends, the throne of God will be established at Jerusalem. Then the Jews, converted² by the sight of Christ, will inherit the spiritual and earthly promises made to Abraham. They will have dominion over the whole earth. For if the diminishing of them has been the riches of the nations, how much more their fulness? The re-establishment of the people of God will be for the nations a resurrection from amongst the dead. The return of the Son of man will bring in the Reign of glory and of righteousness on the earth. Justice will take cognizance of evil to cut it off.³ Satan being thus bound, the irremediable corruption of man will be fully demonstrated by this last test. The flesh which had turned away from God, which had prospered under the law, and which, during eighteen centuries, had hardened itself against grace, glory and righteousness. To close all, Satan having been loosed,⁴

¹ Col. i. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 26-29. Apoc. xxi. 1-7. 2 Peter iii. 13. Heb. xii. 22-24.

² See note to page 28.—Tr.

³ Ps. xciv. 15; cl. 5-8. Apoc. ii. 26; xii. 5; xix. 15. Isaiah xi. 5; xxviii. 17.

⁴ Ps. xlvii. The five first verses give the description of the millennium and of the submission of every people to the Jewish nation. This has never yet taken place. The sixth verse has for its types Gen. xviii.

the nations will revolt against the empire of the meditorial Lamb, against the earthly metropolis of God, and against the camp of the saints. Apoc. xx. 7-11.)

What Jesus calls *the regeneration*, that is to say, the re-establishment of all things, by the presence of the Son of man, seated on the throne of David His Father, will be preceded by all the signs described in Matthew xxiv., and by the judgment of the living nations. (Matt. xxv.) Although perhaps some of the events predicted by the Lord have had a partial fulfilment at the time of the ruin of Jerusalem, nevertheless these things have never yet been fully accomplished; never has the sign of the Son of man yet appeared to the remnant in distress; never yet has the remnant been delivered; never has the Son of man come in his glory. (Luke xxi. 28, 36. Matt. xxiv. 23-32.) If besides the passages quoted on this subject, any one studies 1 Thess. v. 1-6, 2 Thess. ii., and the numerous parallel passages, he will see that many important events are to take place before the return of the Son of man. The Apocalypse, from the fourth chapter, presents a detailed development of the signs announced by the Lord: it supposes every where the Jews re-established in Judea as at the time of the Saviour, the temple rebuilt, and all the course of Judaism resumed. The Apocalypse was written more than twenty-six years *after* the ruin of Jerusalem by Titus, that is to

33, xix. 13. 21. "The Lord is gone up with a shout of joy. The Lord is gone up with the sound of the trumpet." The 10th verse indicates, I think the assembling of the camp of the saints around the beloved city, which is Jerusalem. (Apoc. xx. 19.) "The princes of the people are gathered together near the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God. He is greatly exalted." (Ps. vii. 7.) "Let the assembling of the people surround thee, and then return thou to a place elevated far above it." (De Wette, Calvin, Diodati.)

I see in this a last manifestation of the truth of John v. 19. There will be yet at that time two marked by separate camps—the saints and the adversaries. The Lord will give up the wicked to their wickedness. He goes up on high to draw thither the faithful after their separation on earth, and before its destruction and that of the adversaries.

say, after the present dispersion of the Jews. Now, the Spirit of God calls the prophetic contents of the Apocalypse : "The things which shall be after these," that is to say, after the things which concern the Church. (Apoc. i. 19; iv. 1.) "The great tribulation," the unparalleled temptation which is to come up upon all the habitable earth, or on all the monarchy of the fourth beast; (the Roman empire :) afterwards, the final and complete gathering of the elect people of God, now dispersed to the four winds of heaven : none of these things has yet taken place. All this is connected with the resuming of government towards Israel by God. These things will take their course when the seventieth week in Daniel shall come of which the accomplishment is postponed until the administration of grace and the exercise of the indignation of God against His people. (Hosea. iii. 4 Daniel. ix. 25, 26; xi. 33.) As for the Church, her rapture will be, for those "that are wise" of the end, a true sign of the times. (Apoc. iii. 10.)

"The end," or "the consummation of the present evil age," will not come before all these things have been fulfilled. (Luke. xxi. 9, 28. Matt. xxiv. 3, 6, 13, 14; xxviii. 30.) "The Reign of God and the authority of His Christ," instead of being established before "*the end*," can only be so after "the end." The consummation of the age is quite a different thing from "*the end of the world*"—an expression which is also the fruit of theological confusion, and which is found nowhere in the Word. The heavens and the earth, renewed for the millennium, will only pass away *after* the meditorial Reign of the Son of man; and before this Reign comes, the existing age must be finished. "The times of the nations (Gentiles) must be fulfilled. I understand by this expression that the dominion of the fourth beast, or of the Roman empire over Jerusalem and over the prophetic earth, ceases at the coming of the wicked one. Anti-Christ shall be a

new beast, grafted on the Roman beast, and which will take its place by containing it under a theocratic form. (Rom. viii. 21; xi. 25. Acts. xiii. 47-50. Matt. xxiv. 14; x. 22. Mark xiii. 7, 8, 13. Ps. x. 16.)

Amongst the signs of the end of the age which are to precede the return of the Son of man, I put, in the first place, after the rapture of the Church, the pure preaching of the Gospel of the Reign. (Matt. xxiv. 14.) When this preaching shall be resumed "*as a witness*," it will then be a sign of the times, and the time of signs will come. (Apoc. xiv. 6.) I insist on the force of the very remarkable expression, "*as a witness*," or "*for a witness*," or "*for witness*."

This expression always includes the idea of stopping a person's mouth, of taking away all excuse from those who, having seen or heard a truth, have rejected it: (Heb. iii. 5.) "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a *testimony*, (witness,) of those things which were to be spoken after." Now, Moses bore witness to the future Reign of Christ, and to the law which condemns transgressors: (James v. 3.) *The rust* (Fr. *venin*, venom) of riches will stand "*as a witness*" against the avaricious, and shall devour their flesh like a fire.

(Luke v. 14. Mark. i. 44. Matt. viii. 4): The Word of the Lord having been rejected, His miracles remained silent witnesses, which attested that "the powers of the age to come"¹ acted through Jesus. The generation which saw those things and rejected the sent One of God, and those whom He established after Him, shall never be forgiven. (Mark iii. 30; Luke xi. 13-15. Matt. iv. 34. Mark iii. 21, 22. Matt. xxi. 23.) These acts of power were granted to the Jews as a corroboration of the presence and word of the Son of God, and they shall be remembered against them "*as a witness*" and in condemnation in the day of their judgment.

¹ Heb. vi. 5. Luke xix. 37. Mark vi. 2, 5. 14. Matt. xiv. 2, &c.

The first essay at evangelisation, made by the witness of the remnant of the Kingdom, consisted, as to preaching, in a call to conversion and to the reception of the Reign of God in the person of Christ. The evangelists of the Reign of God, sent by the Master with the power of working miracles, received this order: "And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear you, when ye depart *thence*, shake off the dust from your feet for a *testimony* against them." (Mark vi. 11. 12. Luke ix. 2, 5.)

Now, the cities of Israel, peopled by the children of Abraham, are not yet gone through; they were not converted by this first testimony of the faithful remnant. The testimony to Jesus of Nazareth will not be received there before the return of Christ in person; for they will not be converted or, repent, as a nation, until their eyes shall see Him.¹

After that first essay of evangelisation in testimony, the disciples learnt from Jesus, that before coming in His Reign, He must suffer and enter into His glory. They expected and preached the time of the regeneration,² when they shall be seated on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew x. 13. Mark xiii. 9, Luke xxi. 13, have had a beginning of accomplishment in the persons of the first witnesses after the ascension of the Lord, that is evident; but all is not yet accomplished of them, looked at in that light. Although Paul and John have also been witnesses before many kings, people and tongues, to declare to the nations all the counsel of God,³ I repeat that the Gospel of the Reign of God, *solely as such*, will be resumed "for a witness" before the consummation of the age by a special remnant, which will be found again in the position of one who heard the prediction of these things out of the mouth of the Lord himself. (Matt

¹ Luke xiii. 35, &c.

² Matt. xix. 28. 1s. i. 26. Ps. cxii. 5. Is. lxxv. 17; lxxvi. 22.

³ Acts xx. 26; ix. 16. Apoc. x. 11. Ezek. iii. 6.

xxiv. 14. Apoc. xiv. 6.) "*And this Gospel of the Reign shall be preached in all the habitable earth for a witness unto all nations; and THEN shall the end come.*"

I believe that it is with this powerful testimony, borne solely to the eternal Gospel, that the wise (les intelligents) of Daniel (Dan. xi. 33, 35; xii. 3, 10. Jer. xxiii. 20) will be occupied "in the latter days." (Ps. xcvi. &c.)

When in the days of Noah the wickedness of men was nearly reaching its height, God made of this holy patriarch a *preacher of righteousness*, charged to announce the awful judgments which were about to fall on a rebellious and corrupted world. The voice and the example of Noah were lost in the desert of the world; the family of the witness alone was saved, "So shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." The voice of God will make itself heard in the midst of heaven,¹ and in all creation, by means of the messengers whom He has set apart for this office: "Fear God, for the hour of *His judgment* is come." Behold, the great day of the wrath² of the Lamb has come, and who can stand? Woe! woe! woe! to those whose affections are on the earth! Behold, the day of the Lord is drawing near, burning as an oven! A day of darkness and of gloominess! The great and terrible day which the Lord has made!³ And this will be the result of the testimonies of the end. "And the rest of the men which were killed by these plagues yet repented not..... and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail." (Apoc. ix. 20; xvi. 20.) Now, these plagues are

¹ Mesouranema Rev. viii. 13; xiv. 6; xix. 17, properly *meridian*, or the *midst of heaven*, in the sense of the space which is between heaven and earth.

² This last is only accommodated, because these are the words of the kings, &c., in chapter vi.—Tr.

³ It is not necessary to say that I do not at all doubt of the reality of the special and *heavenly messenger* announced in the Apoc. xiv. 6; and perhaps he is connected with the sign of the Son of man; (Matt. xxiv. 30.) but this would lead me beyond the limits I have prescribed to myself.

announced by the Spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus in the Apocalypse, and I think that the preaching of the witness of the end will be particularly based on the written *Revelation*, although with a more extensive intelligence of its contents than that which we at present have. Peter (not taking into account here his reception into the body of Christ) was in a position very analogous to that of the active witnesses who will be established towards the end of the age, to announce the return of the Son of man and the resumption of the Reign of God and of the authority of His Christ on the earth. Notwithstanding all his protestations, (Luke xxii. 33,) Peter had not been capable of following the Son of God in His death; none was to taste that cup before His lips had changed into sweetness for the saints the bitterness with which it was filled for Him alone. But afterwards this same Peter received from the risen Lord the command to follow Him. (John xiii. 37; xxi. 20.) The way opened by Jesus on earth and from the earth to heaven, had become the way for Peter. "Follow me, said Jesus to him, to signify] by what death he should glorify God." (John xxi. 19; compare xviii. 32)

I see then, as I have explained in the introduction, three distinct classes in the testimony borne to the Reign in general: the Church who waits for the Bridegroom, and ought to proclaim the King; the violent, who take the Kingdom by force through difficulties and persecutions; and the remnant of patient ones, who will wait for the signs of the end and the return of the King.

2.—*In what character and in what manner Jesus will be manifested to the World—in what manner He will come back—where and when He will come back.*

What is Jesus our Saviour now doing? He is praying for His own, and *He waits* till the Father sends Him as the

Lamb, the King of Kings of the earth, as Heir, as **THE SON**. What is the faith that looks to Jesus to do? Faith is *to wait* also, for it is governed by [its object—that is] its author and finisher. The Church waits for its reunion to Jesus, in order to be brought back with Him, when God “*shall again bring in the first-begotten into the habitable earth to come, of which we speak.*” (Heb. i. 6; ii. 5 Greek.)

Jesus shall then come back as a Conqueror and as a Judge, no longer distinctively in grace. For “God has given Him authority to execute judgment also, *because He is a Son of man, or Son of man,*”¹ whereas, at His first coming, Jesus had not been sent *either to judge, or reign in power. but to save.*² This subject has already been treated of in several parts of this essay, but it is well to establish the force of the passage in Acts i. 11: “*This Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall, so come*”..... The text has almost the strength of *this same Jesus*,³ which has been taken up from you into heaven, shall come *so—in the same manner—as you have seen Him go into heaven.* “And every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him.” That return will then be personal and visible to the eyes of the flesh. Jesus will be borne “on the clouds,” accompanied with all His saints who are in ten thousands, and with the angels of His power.⁴

¹ John v. 27. Compare Luke ix. 56. John iv. 42; iv. 33, 51. 1 Tim. i. 4. 1 John ii. 2; iv. 14.

² John iii. 17: v. 22, 25; xii. 31, 47, 48; xviii. 36. Acts x. 42; xvii. 31. Apoc. xix. 13.

³ The English reader knows it is so translated in the English version. I have left the passage as it stands, as shewing the author's view.—Tr.

⁴ I only cite here a few passages, on account of the richness of the subject, but the reader may further consult, among others, Rev. i. 4 7. Zech. xii. 10. Matt xxiv. 30; xxv. 31; xxvi. 64. Mark ix. 7; xiv. 62. Luke xxi. 27. John xix. 34, 37. Dan. vii. 13. Is. xl. 5. Jude 15. Rev. xix. 6 16. 2 Thess. i. 7-11; ii. 8, and the parallel passages.

The mode of the return of Jesus on the earth, at the beginning "*of the age to come,*" will be quite the opposite of that of His first coming in grace. When the Word came among His own, bringing grace and truth, Jesus could say to the Pharisees: "The Reign of God *cometh* not¹ with observation; it shall not be said, Lo, (he is) *here* or *there*; for the Reign of God is *in the midst*² of you." And afterwards to Pilate: "I am a King; to that end was I born;" "*but now* my Reign is not of this world." The pride of the Jews could not accept of a King coming to them, "meek and lowly, and sitting upon an ass, and upon *the colt of a beast of burden,*" in feebleness, as the despised and the rejected of men.

But this very Word of God shall come again to earth, full of majesty, having on His head many diadems, mounted on a white horse, as a sign of victory and triumph. It is the Faithful and the True who *judges* and makes war *in righteousness*. Jesus will come back to the mount of Olivet from which He went up. (Is. iii. 13, and the whole of the iv. Zech. xiv. 3, 4. Acts i. 11. Joel iii. 2, 12. Deut. xxxiii. 2. Habak. iii. 3, shall come. Zeph. iii. 8, 19. Zech. xii. Micah v. 4.)

"And His feet shall stand on that day on the mount of Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, on the east." "Let the nations come forth, and go up in the valley of Jehoshaphat, (at the foot of mount Olivet) for then will I *sit to judge* the nations round about." For the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." "And before Him shall be gathered all the nations." (Matt. xxv. 3, 2.)

The epoch of this return unknown and sealed to the disciples. The words "the time is at hand," are addressed in the Apocalypse rather, I think, to the Bride is waiting for her

1 Not "*shall* not come."

2 On the sense of the word *entos*, see Note B, at the end.

Beloved, than to the faithful remnant of "the end." The time will be at hand then for the witnesses of the Kingdom, who will nevertheless always, in His own Word, have a light by which to recognize their path, and the signs of times will not overtake unawares those who have "the Spirit of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus." "But of *that day* and of *that hour* knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father." "It is not *for you* to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His *own power*."¹

The words were addressed to the remnant of the Kingdom, not only with a view of suppressing an idle curiosity, but, above all, with a view of maintaining the disciples in vigilance, in prayer, and in activity of the mission which was entrusted to them.

NOTE B.

The word *entos* is not found, as a preposition, except in Luke xvii. 21; and, preceded by the article, *to entos*, Matt. xxiii. 26. Wahl quotes the LXX. to support the translation "*among you*" "*in the midst of you*." Pape says *drinnen, innerhalb*, "*in the midst of*."

I do not deny that the word also signifies *within*, but I say that in this it is quite similar to *en*, which ought to be translated, and which has been frequently rendered "*among*."

entos gegnesthai, to come *within*; *entos teichous*..... *machesthai*, to fight *within its walls*, *within the space* described by the walls...of the city.

But I go further, and I translate here: "For behold the Reign of God is *within your reach*."

¹ Acts i. 7. Matt. xxiv. 36; xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 32. Luke xxi. 34-36; xvii. 26, 31. Read 1. Thess. v. 1-12.

E. g. *entos belon* ; *within the reach* of the arrows ; *in reach* of the arrows. *entos toxematon in the circuit, in the empire,—in reach* of the arrows of the bow.

entos ton eauton meteron trephesthai, to be trained up *among* the mothers at home.

As to the meaning of Luke xvii. 21, it coincides with Matt. xii. 28, Luke xi. 20, *ephthasen eph' humas*. "The Reign of God is come unto you *first*." The verb *phthano*, signifies literally "to reach first," "to come at first," "to anticipate, to go before-hand." And this force of the verb *ephthasen* suits here, if you compare Acts iii. 26 ; xiii. 46 ; i. 8. Luke xxiv. 46. Rom. i. 16 ; ii. 9, &c., and all the passages which prove that the Reign and the salvation had been brought, *in Jesus the Messiah*, to the Jews *first*.

One cannot overlook, in Luke xvii. 21, the persons whom the Lord addresses. The Pharisees had seen the Reign of God which had come nigh to the Jewish nation first, that Reign which, in the person of Messiah, was in the midst of them "*without observation*." But the Pharisees stand there as adversaries, and because of their unbelief one was not to say, at that time, at His first coming : "Behold, He is here ; or, Behold He is there " Whereas, later, if any comes to those adversaries in his own name, seeking for the glory of man, him they will receive.

It is then because He speaks to Pharisees that are blind, that Jesus says to them in the present tense : "The Reign of God *cometh* not with observation." Now and because of your wickedness, "it shall not be said, Behold, He is here, or He is there. For behold, the Reign of God is *among* you, or is within your reach." But you reject it, as your own question proves.

There is a very strong opposition between these reproaches addressed to adversaries, grounded upon their present obstinacy and its consequences, and the warnings which the Lord

gives immediately after "to the disciples" in turning to them. This faithful remnant had received the King, and had been made worthy and capable of inheriting the Reign and of testifying against the adversaries until the return of the Christ. "Then He says to the disciples:" Jesus here speaks no more in the present tense, but He prophesies to them that are wise: "The days *will come* when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, but ye shall not see it." You will desire to see Him who speaks to you, but you shall not see Him any more. Whilst these Pharisees prevent as a present thing that one should say the truth, in crying aloud; "Behold, He is here," they themselves will cry "*then*," in the time of Anti-Christ, when you shall be in the tribulation at the end. "And *they shall say unto you*," to you who are the faithful witnesses, they shall say unto you, that which they refuse to say as a present thing: "Behold, He is here." "But do not go out then, and do not follow them." (Compare verses 21, 23.)

It is then on account of the grammatical sense, and the prophetic sense, and the context, that I insist strongly on the literal translation: "For behold, the Reign of God is in your reach, or among you."

§ 3.—*The Intelligent Hope.*

THE hope of the "coming" of the Lord, suddenly to take away the Church, is entirely foreign to all that interests the hearts of those whose affections are engaged with the things that perish. Since Pentecost, Jesus, though invisible, is present with His own, as the raiser* of their souls, and in this

1 *Parousia* literally "the presence" the act of being there.

* Rather *Quickener*.—Ed.

sense. He will be with them also to the end. But He is only present in the Church in spirit. In order that His personal presence be realised with regard to the Church, we are waiting here till we hear His shout¹ and His archangel voice in the air. The result of the rapture of the Church and of the marriage in heaven which will follow it, will be our return in glory with the King of heaven and earth.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring with Him*. (1 Thess. iv. 14.) The presence of the Lord in the air concerns, then, only those who are of faith, and we have reason to believe that the world will in nowise see the Lord then. I am led to think this by the comparison of John xiv. 19, 21, 22, with 1 Thess. iv. 17. I see in John xiv. 22, Jude asking Jesus: "Lord, how is it that thou *wilt make thyself visible*² unto us and not unto the world?" As Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, made himself visible to His disciples only, and not to the world; so, when He comes again to take those that are of faith, He will not then make of the earth His footstool; and I presume that that arrival will be known only "*unto them that look for Him unto salvation.*"

This event, I repeat, is entirely apart from the things which are in connection with the senses; it is a matter of faith in opposition to those of sight, (John xiv. 17,) and concerns only *those who are "of faith."*³ It is no where

¹ *Keleusma* (1 Thess. iv. 16.) is only found here. It is a naval term which refers to the cry of a commander, as, for example, that of the admiral of the fleet.—[I apprehend it is equally applicable to the shout of a general to his troops to assemble them.—Tr.]

² *Emphanizo*, Matt. xxvii. 53. Acts xxiii. *to discover*. Heb. xi. 14, *to appear, show manifestly, properly to make visible, with heauton. to shew one's thoughts.*

³ Rom. iii. 25; iv. 16. Gal. iii. 7, 9; vi. 10; compare 2 Thess. iii 2.

said that the world shall see the rapture of the Church. So there stood no witness between God and Moses¹ at the time of his death and of his burial.

Enoch, who *walked with God* in the midst of apostasy, "*was no more seen*, because God took him." The privilege of seeing Elias² ascend up into heaven was granted to Elisha alone and on his reiterated request, because he was of the faith, and had to continue the testimony of Elias against the apostasy. I believe that the rapture of the last is a type of what will take place at the time of the rapture of the Church.

We see, in these various examples, a proof of what we have just said, viz. that the things of faith are quite foreign to the world. And, if we study these types in the light of their moral effect upon the world and upon Israel, we see that evil increased rapidly after the disappearing of each of these men of God. Prophecy announces to us that like results will be produced by the absence of the Church. (2 Thess. ii. 7 ; compare 1 Tim. iii. 15.) This absence, in removing the obstacle which now opposes itself to the full development of the mystery of iniquity, will hasten, in one sense, the coming of the Son of man to destroy the wicked one, whom He shall consume by the breath of His lips.

The history of the first coming of the Lord presents us with some remarkable instances of the intelligent hope of the saints of that period, and of the blessed fruits which the simplicity of their faith produced in them.

God, in His faithfulness towards Israel, who although rebellious, was always beloved for the fathers' sake, made choice of some poor and simple shepherds, who slept in the

¹ Matt. xvii. 3. Moses, type of the risen Church ; Elias, type of the Church "changed."

² Consult 1 Kings xix, 16, and 2 Kings xii, 1.

fields, to announce to them the peace and good will which His Son came to publish on earth, as well as Israel's deliverance. According to the mind of God, this would be a great subject of joy *for all the people*. These men went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the Saviour of the world, lying in a manger. We do not see any hesitation in these simple and unprejudiced people; nor were they confounded in their joyful reception of the word of the angels. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

The Magi, representatives of the nations, came afterwards to the manger of the Son of God, because they had resolutely followed the light and the word of God; there was amongst them more wisdom than amongst all the wise men, rulers and rabbis, whom the people of God took for their conductors and guides.

In following the course of events, we see Simeon and Anna succeed Zacharias in testimony. Here again, God glorifies His faithfulness in separating a little Jewish remnant, who wait for *the consolation of Israel*, and who, obeying the Spirit of revelation, keep their hearts in communion with God.

The faith of Anna and Simeon rested neither on the traditional teachings of the scribes, levites, priests or high priests, nor on the opinion of king Herod and of his court, but on Moses and the Prophets, and what the Spirit said to the remnant conformably to the words of the Scripture.

Yet how little and despised was this faithful remnant! How utterly was its testimony depreciated and descried by the religious of that time! But how blessed to these faithful ones was the result of their submission to God alone! Simeon sings the song of redemption, and departs in peace according

to the promise of his God; Anna, for her part, speaks of Jesus to all those who, in Jerusalem, waited for deliverance.

John the Baptist, brought up in the desert, was at last manifested to Israel as the forerunner of the Lamb of God, but already at that epoch we cease to find any trace of the preceeding testimonies; the activity of Satan had once more buried the truth of God under the tradition and authority of men. It was necessary, when Jesus presented himself, that God should create the beginning of a new people to be given to the Heir. The twelve, as afterwards the seventy, evangelised in vain the cities of Israel; for tradition and idolatry, under the mask of religion, prevailed against the presence of the Son of God. The angels had announced "PEACE ON EARTH." But that peace, sent to the earth and rejected by the great of the world, was going to reascend "INTO HEAVEN."¹ Little children and the poor alone gave a beginning of fulfilment to the promise sung of by Anna thirty-three years before; (Luke ii. 38. Matt. xxi 9; xxiii. 39. Ps. cxviii. 26.) and here again God glorified His faithfulness by means of things vile and despised, and if "these had held their peace, the stones themselves would have cried out." God calls the things that are not as though they were. Even a beast of burden can be chosen by the Lord to put to shame the ingratitude and unfaithfulness of human pride and folly.

The end of this succession of humble and faithful witnesses was brought about by the hardening of the hearts of the chief priests who while declaring "*the people accursed*" knew how, nevertheless, to render them docile to *their law*, and extinguished at last this feeble testimony by the cross.

The Church being, like the varied bodies of witnesses which

¹ Luke ii. 38, and xix. 38.

preceded, a remnant taken out of the world to be a light to it, it can only bear a blessed testimony by living in the hope of deliverance. Its principle responsibility lies in not rejecting the knowledge and light designed to direct its zeal and to make its testimony shine. (2 Peter i. 19.) The union of *zeal* and *knowledge* is indispensable, in order to bring forth fruits abounding to the glory of God. And, now, more than ever, the activity of a true service in love flows from a state of intelligent expectation, and not from a state of expectation built up on the traditional knowledge of this age. The knowledge of the love of God and of His purpose towards the Church and towards the world is not *science*, in the human sense, still less is it that knowledge without love, which puffs up or destroys. If we are desirous to distinguish "the good works which God has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them,"¹ we must not cease to "return* the Word of life.....to shine as lights in the world." Peace and joy will always be the assured portion of those who keep the Word of God and who are waiting on Him, not according to the current of ideas of the religious world, but with a simple faith in the eternal promises: "blessed is he *that readeth*, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and who keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." God announces His judgments to those "whom He had called and who did not answer, to whom He had spoken and who did not hear;" but He is attentive to those who hearken to the Lord, who fear Him and who speak of Him, one to another. (Jer. xxxv. 17. Mal. iii. 16.) Let the Lord show forth His glory, He shall be seen to your joy, but they shall be ashamed." (Is. lxvi.)

¹ Eph. ii. 10; compare for the word Rom. ix. 23, "prepare beforehand."

* English translation "hold forth;" but the word being capable of the other sense, I leave it as in French, as it is connected with the exhortation,—Tr.

Jeremiah also suffered reproach for the Lord ; he was persecuted and ill-treated by his brethren, because of the Word which he kept before him ; but here was his consolation : "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jer. xv.) Prophecy is worm-wood to the flesh, because it annihilates all hope, and pours confusion upon all attachment to the things of the world, but it is like honey to the mouth of him who is nourished thereby and who tasted how good the Lord is, how faithful and how mighty. In vain one would stir up oneself "with good resolutions," to self-denial and separation from the world ; these affections proceed from the heart,—resolutions can avail nothing here ; for, without a *better* hope, without a living hope, no separation of heart from it is possible. "We are strangers and pilgrims on earth," and God has placed us here for a little while in order that we may glorify Him. For this it is necessary that we should, by the power of the Word, be put in a condition to begin each day in a hope of getting to heaven, avoiding in our journey every halt that would make us forget its end.

Such was, at the first coming of Emmanuel, the practical testimony of Simeon, a just and devout man ; such was the testimony of the daughter of Phanuel ; such ought to be now that of the brethren of Jesus.

The joy and union of the children of God in common hope here below, were always the precious fruits of waiting for the Lord. The apostle John saw nothing of more moment for the brethren than that their life should be pure, holy, and separated from the life of the world, and that they should abide closely united here below, in hope of being soon reunited in the glory. "And now, little children, abide in Him ; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John ii. 28.) We may fall asleep, no doubt, we know it ; but we

know also that, if the Lord will, we shall remain till He comes, waiting always, not for death, but to be changed; not for tomorrow, but for the Lord, personally. "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." In comparing Col. iii. 4 and 1 John iii. 2, 3, one is struck with the analogy between the language of Paul and John.¹ Their hearts also were united in the same sentiments, in the same hope of reigning and of glorious felicity. Is this the case amongst us, dear bretheren! Alas! how many of the redeemed say, or act as if they said: "What do I care for the rest, provided I be saved!" And is not such language insulting to the grace of God, who has revealed to us all His purposes of love?

When Paul repeatedly pressed the exhortation: "Rejoice always; be careful for nothing; rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice," he did not fail to present at the same time the subject, the cause, the marrow of the joy, if I may venture so to speak. "Rejoice always...*the Lord is at hand.*"

Yes, the Lord, the Bridegroom is at hand; and we, poor exiles in a hostile land, we who are brethren and citizens of the same country with the Lord, shall we not unite together to get ready to set off? We who are about to return together to our country shall we not walk together to the haven, that we may perhaps reach to-day under the guidance of our Leader? "His left hand shall be under our head, and His right hand shall embrace us," "Who is this, (say they in heaven,) who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the

¹ I am anxious also to arrest the attention of brethren on the accuracy of the language of the Holy Ghost on these matters. The two passages in 1 John iii. 2, 3, and of Col. iii. 4, say absolutely the same thing, and the most ancient editions of Calvin translate them the same: "When the Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye be manifested, with Him in glory." Col. iii. 4. "We know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

* The English translation is faithful in this case; only it uses the word "appear" instead of "shall be manifested." Tr.

sun, terrible as an army with banners?" "My beloved is mine and I am His." "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was *love*." * (Cant.)

The Apostles always presented the doctrine of the first resurrection and of reunion of the saints in glory, with a view to influence the walk of the Church, in filling the heart of the redeemed with joy by the energising hope of soon being made partakers of the fulness of our acceptance and of a divine life without sin in the presence of God, our Father.

I have been obliged to act differently, and to separate for the most part the doctrine itself from its blessed consequences, in order to point out the confusion introduced into the Church between the coming of the Lord as the Bridegroom and His coming as the Son of man. It is always with a certain grief of heart that one writes on this subject, because one knows that many of those one would so much like to see enjoy these things, do not seek after them with love. Nevertheless, the examples of Paul ought not to be lost upon us; and when we think of the sluggishness of the Church, we ought to repeat with the Apostle Paul; "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, *God shall reveal even this unto you*."

I point out yet a few more passages, which, joined to the preceding ones, will show to us that the daily hope of the Lord's return and of our reigning with Him, is always presented to us in the Word as the Source of all sanctification, of all power, of all assurance, and of all joy.

1 Thess. i. 3, the perseverance of your hope of our Lord Jesus Christ (ii. 12; iii. 13; v. 23; iv. 3, 4, 7, 18, ii. 19.

* For my own part, I doubt of the application of the Canticles to the Church prophetically. In principle, it may of course be applied, as also to an individual.—Tr.

James v. 7, 8. 2 Tim. ii. 6, 11, 12. 1 Thess. iv. 13. Rom. xii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 6. Rom v. 17) "in life," (livingly) "in power of life." (Apoc. v. 10.)

Faith has saved us, and the power of God keeps us in the faith and in Jesus Christ; but hope makes us grow and go forward and heavenward. Whilst the world hastens on to judgment in the pursuit of corruptible things, the Church, on the contrary, goes on towards glory. We ought, therefore, to attach ourselves every day more firmly to heavenly and imperishable things, which we find only in Jesus, living and coming again to introduce us into the mansions which He has prepared for us. If we pursue this end, we shall in this walk with those whom Scripture calls the "perfect," and our conduct here on earth will be consistent with what the conduct of the children of God ought to be, in proportion to the strength of our expectation of the Lord. It is, therefore, necessary that the hope of glory, consequent on our justification and adoption, should be vivid and built up on the Word of God, in order that our testimony may be that of the heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God, or "Christ in us the hope of glory," is at the same time the seal of redemption, the unction which instructs us as to it, and gives us the enjoyment of it, and also the earnest of the glory and of the inheritance itself. The Spirit, as earnest of the inheritance, constitutes a true hereditary portion given beforehand to the Bride of the Lord. Every time the Spirit acts in the redeemed, He stamps on their thoughts, on their affections, and on their lives, that heavenly character which constitutes real separation from earthly things. The eye that habitually contemplates the sun, finds nothing but darkness when it is turned towards the earth.

Our heart living in this firm expectation, we shall be comforted *when we fall into* divers temptations, and such a hope will not deceive us, for it is grounded on the Word of our God

and Father, who rejoices in those to whom He can say: "I remember without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹ The strength, the joy, the activity, the consolation of the Church, her deliverance, all her hope, the end of her pilgrimage on earth, is the expectation of the Lord *Jesus Christ Himself*.

The truth of our position before God consists in the perseverance with which we ought to wait for our Bridegroom Himself, or for His presence or for His coming. It was thus that faith made Mary act; this holy woman would not remain in the tomb of her Lord; her faith desired the Lord living; she must needs see Him again, adore Him; she wished to possess Him, to hear Him: this is the living faith which God loves to see in the Church. Such was also the truth according to God in the position of Anna² and Simeon, who were waiting, not for a consolation without Jesus, but for the person of *Jesus, the consolation of Israel*.

Beloved of the Lord! it is turning back in heart into Egypt to wait for any thing else whatsoever save Jesus in

1 1 Thess. i. 5. I believe that the translation ought to render the original and peculiar force of these three consecutive genitives. The question is not about hoping in Jesus Christ, but of hoping for the presence of Jesus Christ.

2 The daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Assur, left a widow, after having been married seven years, aged about eighty-four years, appears to me as belonging to the former dispensation, capable of being taken as a type of the earthly remnant, spared and sealed from amongst the tribes of Israel, and redeemed out of the earth and from amongst men. (Apoc. vii. 10; xiv. 1-6.) This remnant is to survive the actual state of death of the nation, and after long waiting will hear the cry of "Behold, the King cometh!" The testimony of the Jewish remnant, spared on the earth while the second half week of years lasts under Anti-Christ, will be, in many respects, like that of Anna and of the faithful who waited for the Christ. These witnesses represent to the eyes of God "all Israel;" they live apart, praying, fasting, and persevering, *through patience*, in waiting for the consolation of their widowhood.

In another sense, a testimony analogous to that of Anna is committed actually to the Church, although she has not, as we have seen already, *that testimony only to bear*.

person; but if our heart is in heaven, our testimony will be a living testimony and our service intelligent, because our hope will be grounded on the truth of God. Now, *in practice*, we cannot maintain our holiness, we cannot be sanctified but by the Word of God, which is the truth. (John xvii. 15-20.) May the Lord give us to understand more and more what the holiness of His grace is which has set us apart for Jesus!

CONCLUSION.

Before Paul's conversion, the disciples of Jesus had no positive knowledge of the formation of the Church, the body of Christ, nor of the coming of the Lord to gather the Church and to receive it into heaven.

Until the disciples had received the knowledge of the things concerning the Church, they had borne testimony to the resurrection and return of Christ, the true David, author of the salvation of those who should be converted and believe in Him.

This testimony, so far as it is viewed as proclaimed alone and separate from that of the union of Christ and the Church, has been interrupted, and will only be resumed as such, that is to say, as the testimony of the Reign, only after the rapture of the Church.

The time of the interruption which I have just referred to, is occupied with the formation of the body or Bride of Christ.

To the Church "the testimony of Jesus" is committed, such as John has transmitted it to her, for the testimony of Jesus is to her also "the Spirit of prophecy."¹

The preaching of the Gospel of grace that forms and gathers the Church, ought then never to have gone alone, still less to

¹ Apoc. i. 2, 9; xix. 10.

be confounded with the Gospel of the Reign. In this the Church has totally failed ; it is to this that God, in His grace, will bring her back again.

The Church ought to expect her rapture at every moment. The expectation of death, that of the Reign of the Gospel, that of the Son of man, are to the Church, under the present dispensation, so many things opposed to the daily and scriptural hope of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

No event whatever, no, not even one of those which the Word of God announces as being still future, can be placed between the present moment and the rapture of the Church.

This, like every other truth, ought not to be limited to a mere barren knowledge only, but must be a living truth in our hearts, in order that we may reap, either for ourselves, or for the edification of the body, or for the glory of God in the eyes of men, the fruits which every truth of God, present to the conscience of the faithful, ought to produce.

**IF HE TARRIES, wait for Him, for He will surely come—
HE WILL NOT TARRY. Amen.**



