

R E M A R K S

ON

THREE TRACTS,

ENTITLED

“SIGNS OF THE COMING OF THE
LORD ;

FOR WHOM ARE THEY GIVEN ?”

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REMARKS,

&c.

I should not I confess have felt it needful, nor under the circumstances of their publication desirable, to answer the three tracts of which the statements are here called in question had they appeared supported only by their intrinsic merit. I understand the effect in an upright mind of an appeal to a righteous jealousy against error, especially error which is stated to shake the foundation of Christian faith. Still the confusion and futility of the statements, I should have hoped, would have sufficed for their refutation in the mind of the reader, but they are in fact the expression of the sentiments and the sanctioned publication, of those whose opinions are looked up to by many, and come with their authority. It is this induces me though reluctantly to publish these remarks, upon them. It is a most wearying thing controversy. And I have had the MS. by me weeks before I could make up my mind to publish it. I do so as owing it to those whose minds are influenced by the tracts, and have asked for an answer. They were mentioned indeed to me originally by a brother to comment on, which led to the form of the answer, a form in general I dislike. Here it was the simple truth of the case, though when written I publish instead of sending it in MS.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have read the tract you mentioned to me. I shall not express to you the effect it produced on my mind, as I should fear to be ungracious or untrue if I attempted it. I should not judge it demanded a comment were it not the expression of a system adopted by many, and that this tract helps to prove on what very slender grounds. I am yet unconvinced by the reasonings I have

heard and read on Matt. xxiv: and, while I recognize, as I have ever done, in this chapter and elsewhere, that the Church may use a great part of it for itself, as general principles, that it would have availed preciously to the disciples in the siege of Jerusalem, though Luke much more, and that all of it belongs (as every thing does) to the Church in general for her instruction,—yet I still believe that it is not occupied with her as such. Nay, with I trust very moderate views, and open to receive every instruction from any brother on the subject, I confess that the more I read the Scripture, and, the more I read the writings of those who so stoutly denounce views which it seems to me, they do not understand at all, the more I am convinced of certain distinctions they seem to me to be unable to appreciate though they loudly condemn: and the more also I see, such inattention to Scripture facts, and contradiction in their own statements, as quite destroys all possibility of what they state having much weight with one who examines calmly any thing before he receives it. Other opportunities will occur of examining the subject more at large. Meanwhile I shall take up this tract on the signs of the coming of the Lord, that we may see, in some very brief remarks, how far the writer is justified, by the solidity of his reasonings or the proofs he affords of their importance, in charging (as others also have done) brethren, of whom some have suffered for Christ, and preached the truth for years before he knew Christ or the truth either, with “subverting the first elements of Christianity.”

First, in attacking the expression of Jews as Jews, he is, it seems to me, saying a great deal about nothing. All his first letter, which treats of this, is a mere *brutum fulmen*. It would have been as much to the purpose when St. Paul says I write to you Gentiles in as much as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, to have shown the dreadfulness of addressing heathens in such a way, seeing heathens were idolaters, and judgment come upon the world and the like, all which, would be entirely beside the mark, and prove only that those who made the remark did not understand the generic or abstract use of

the word Gentile, as the writer of the tract does not that of Jew. A Jew who believed in Jesus might be addressed in his character of Jew, as a Gentile in that of a Gentile. It is possible that some of our brethren have not been as guarded or as perfect in their expressions as the blessed Spirit made St. Paul: but it does not follow that those who attack them are wiser or more correct than those who would have objected to analagous expressions of the Spirit of God Himself.

I still believe that the 24th of Matt. at least to the 31st verse, is addressed to the disciples as Jews, as believing Jews no doubt, but as Jews; and the more I examine it the more I think so: and I do not think it addressed to the Church as the Church. Nothing indeed was addressed to the Church by the Lord in person; because the Church did not yet exist to be addressed; though all was left for the Church to use by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven.*

The writer insists much upon the expression, "this generation," "no sign shall be given to this generation but the sign of Jonas the prophet" connected with the statement "this generation shall not pass away," &c., and that consequently signs were not to be given to the Jews as such. This seems to catch him much. To me it has no weight at all. I admit the moral unity of "this gene-

* It must be remembered that all the gospels were given by subsequent revelation to the Church of God: but it is for the Church of God to discern by the teaching of the Holy Ghost what was for ever and essentially available for itself, what was for the disciples in the state in which they then were, and what was prophetic of some future state of things. This is not to take any thing from the Church. It is not, and cannot be, denied that there are passages which apply to the disciples in their then state, and not to the present state of the Church. So that the principle of some passages not applying is admitted: and therefore to say that the supposition that the Lord speaks prophetically of certain events beyond the Church's history in certain other passages, is taking the gospels from the Church, is quite an unreasonable accusation. It is merely denying spiritual discernment to the Church of God, to say that it cannot judge of what was for the disciples then, what is for itself now, and what may be prophetic of some future state of things.

ration," in Matt. xxiv. It is an interpretation long accepted and taught by those who are blamed in this tract. Still his reasoning is wrong, and contradicts itself. It is clear first as to the passage xii. 38—45 that the Lord was speaking of signs as proofs of His mission, and not of coming judgment. In xvi. 1—4, they are accused of not discerning the signs of the times, they *were* then before them. But no sign could be given them from the Lord, but the sign of the prophet Jonas, for the ground of their faith. But these signs spoken of were still signs as grounds of faith.

Next, the greater part of the signs spoken of in Matt. xxiv. are *not given to the disciples*: the only one that is so given being absolutely inapplicable in any case to the Church in general, or to any but a very small portion indeed, at a particular moment of time, namely, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood at the moment of Anti-christ's open rebellion. The body of the Church must have expected Christ without this, or *not expected him at all*. But believers in Christ, he says, have a series of signs given to them commencing with the one sign refused by the nation, and closed by a host of unprecedented distinctness, immediately preceding, and introducing, the great sign itself, the sign of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven. Now, omitting Jonas and the resurrection, which are not mentioned here, and is entirely another kind of sign, and on another principle, and the unnamed series which is only a flourish, the signs of "unprecedented distinctness" are not given to the disciples as such. Indeed they are already according to *his own system* fled. And I suppose that he does not deny that these terrific signs are seen by, and a sign to, the nation. At any rate the great sign itself is clearly given *as such*. "Then shall appear, &c., and *they* shall see." So that it ends in the apparition of Christ making the tribes of the earth mourn, *Christianity being gone far away three years and a half before.** And the harvest

* See Thoughts on the Apocalypse, p. 135, as to the harvest being ended, p. 207 of the same work.

even over having taken place elsewhere, so that, on his once shewing, in all this he is certainly wrong. That this is a provision for all whom it may concern, who believe and receive the testimony, I do not deny. But, when he says that they, the Jews, are blinded, he seems to forget that it is only in part. And here it is that the system breaks down altogether, as I shall shew more clearly hereafter; for after all that is said about blinded Jews, and the Church only having the signs, if I am to receive the teaching of those most taught in the system, the Church, Christianity will have left Jerusalem, and indeed the whole Roman Empire before the terrific signs appear; and there will be Jews in Jerusalem who will have received the testimony that Jesus was the Son of God, the promise of protection through the tribulation, of acceptance in Jesus after He shall have appeared, but who are not Christians at all.* But further, as to the signs, it is quite clear that the writer has not considered the actual state of the disciples whom Jesus addressed at all. "Any" he says "among that nation who received *that one sign* and so came *into the Church* would indeed be thus introduced where *these many signs* were taught. But *as Jews* they rejected," &c. Now the disciples, when Jesus addressed them, had not received that one sign. They did not believe yet in the resurrection, but when stated to them, and that after Jesus had said, I will build My Church (and in the same chapter on purpose to make the contrast clear), the one most specially taught said, when this sign was proposed, that be far from thee Lord. And afterwards it is said, "they saw and believed, for as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that Christ must rise from the dead." Others said, we thought that it was he that should have delivered Israel; and certain women also of our company made us astonished, saying, that they had seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive. The disciples therefore were not yet of the "any among that nation who received *that one sign*," and consequently were not so *come into the*

* See Thoughts on the Apocalypse, p. 125 and 133.

Church. They reasoned among themselves sometimes, wondering what the rising from among the dead should mean; but, as far as they expressed any thought, they "rejected" it as involving His death. Whether as Jews I leave you to determine. The effect then of the writer's reasoning upon my mind is, to shew me that, theorizing upon our faith who are in the Church of God, and God's judgment on the blinded nation, he has entirely left out what the Scripture actually states of the condition of the disciples: and that he has never taken into consideration, nor seen perhaps, the transitional state in which they were: believing in Christ, and not believing in His resurrection at all. They were in this state when they were addressed, and therefore according to his own statements were not "come into the Church." Nothing of all this, that is, of the actual state of things spoken of in Scripture, comes into his calculation at all.

All his reasoning on Ps. lxxiv. is nothing to the purpose, as there is no question in Matt. xxiv. of "our signs." As in the mouth of a Jew, the words have evidently a *totally different sense*. The truth is he has not understood the question. It is not whether the blinded generation sees the signs or has them;—though *they will have all of them*, but not receive the instruction of the Lord about them (as they had the sign of Jonas just as much as the disciples; and as they will have all that God is pleased to mention here;—I do not say the unnamed series of which the writer is pleased to speak):—the question is: Are there not persons, not in the full privileges of the Church, who may receive and understand these signs? Are there not persons in the condition of, or even more advanced than, the disciples, but who are not, when they receive the instruction, actually in a Church, standing? In a word, are there not those who will be what, he must confess, the disciples then were to whom these instructions were given; for they had not received the one sign, and consequently were not come in the Church?*

* Indeed up to this, as far as they had heard of it, they had

As to the second letter, and expecting the return of Christ:—it seems to me that the coming of Christ, also, is spoken of to the disciples in a way which he has not considered. It is written; “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.” He was *there*, for the secret faith of His disciples; but He does not treat that as the coming of the Son of man: and He speaks to them as exclusively occupied with the cities of Israel, which they could not have time to go over before the Son of man should be come.* And now I beg attention to the chapter in which the passage I have alluded to above is found, as it contains one of those statements of which the use in Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. is particularly referred to in the tract to prove that the Apostles must always be, and actually were, addressed as the Church, or representing the Church; the idea that they could be addressed in a peculiar character as connected with Israel (while many general principles are admitted to be applicable to the Church, at least to those labouring in the work of the ministry during the time of the Church, as well as any other,) such an idea, I say, being treated as subversive of the first elements of Christianity. The passage quoted p. 7, from Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. to prove that Matt. xxiv. is absolutely addressed to the Church as such is: “it is not ye that speak but the Holy Ghost.” In p. 4. will be found a summary of Matt. with the particularities of this chapter x, among others, produced, p. 6, as clear and conclusive evidence of the gospel by Matthew to the character the twelve sustain therein; that is, that the Lord addresses them as the Church.

Now this is the commission in chap. x. Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go ye to the lost sheep of the house of Israel &c. They were to provide nothing

refused it, and were denounced as satan, and savouring the things that be of men.

* In Matt. xxiv. xxv. also he does not speak of his *return* till he speaks of the talents.

for their journey; and shake off the dust of their feet against the *city* that did not receive them; enquiring who was *worthy* where they went. They are then cautioned to beware of men: that they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles: but when delivered up the Spirit of their Father would speak in them. The members of the same family would betray one another; they should be hated of all men for His name's sake, but he that endured to the end the same should be saved. When persecuted in one city they were to flee to another, for they would not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man were come. Now, will any one say that this was addressed to the Church, as the Church: or to the Apostles as representatives of it; when they are forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles, but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And while undergoing persecutions, such as did eventually happen to them in the land of Israel when the Church was formed, they are told, when persecuted in one city, to go to another, for that they would not have got over *the cities of Israel* till the Son of man should be come. Has this to do with Jews as Jews?

Yet they suffer for His name's sake. Nor can it be doubted, on the other hand, that their bringing before kings and rulers was accomplished after Christ's ascension. Yet is it certain they are not here addressed as the Church.

Again we are told, in a note, that, in a *New Testament sense*, only true believers are Jews. This is certainly new. The discussion, be it remembered, turns on the application of passages in *Matt.* Does the writer adopt the idea that *Matt.* is Old Testament Scripture, or is he, in the system he states to be, subversive of Christianity, that in *Matt.* the addresses are not to the Church in the New Testament sense of things? For I suppose Jews are sometimes mentioned in this gospel, and in the three others, and even in the Acts. Yet I do not remember where this word is used in the sense of true believers. So that clearly, according to this statement, in these

books the word has not a New Testament sense. But we have here a palpable proof of the absurdity of the system which assumes that every thing that is said in the New Testament must have reference to the Church viewed in its proper and highest privileges.

I understand what the writer means. That, viewed in the light of New Testament privileges, a carnal Jew is not recognised as the people of God. And who questions that? But to say that in a New Testament sense only true believers are Jews, is merely to say that we have closed our eyes to its use in a great part of the New Testament, because occupied with a theory of our own minds.

Nor can the writer escape by saying he means new covenant, because the use of the word in the gospels remains there as a fact, so that it would be merely asserting that Matt. does not write in a new covenant sense: and further, new covenant thus becomes worse than ambiguous: for, in Jeremiah, Israel and Judah are spoken of in their usual sense in connection with the new covenant: and further, it is a confusion between the Church's blessings and Israel's under the new covenant under the millennium: for all Israel will be saved, and saved as Israel, under the new covenant. Moreover, as to the Jews being cast off, p. 12, Tract III, the Apostle uses the salvation of the believing remnant as a proof that this people, gainsaying and rebellious as they were, were *not* "cast off;" concluding, that blindness in part was happened to them, but, that in result all Israel should be saved. And moreover, those of whom the writer thus speaks as cast off, are not mixed up with the evil and adulterous generation, as Dan. xi., xii. and Isa. lxvi. plainly prove.

The writer states they will have "refused all other testimony till the glory bursts on them like the glory on Saul. Most will perish, though a remnant shall be spared—but those who have believed in Jesus crucified and risen, and who have waited and watched for his appearing, &c. will find the consummation of their redemption."

Yet I find in "Thoughts on the Apocalypse," p. 125, that after *Christianity is withdrawn from Jerusalem*, God raises up a *new testimony*:—a testimony of judgment, and not of salvation, but which will be received by a spared remnant, so that it is clear that there are those who will not have refused all testimony, and yet at a time that Christianity is withdrawn.

Nor can this be contested. For the Lord Himself says, speaking to the nation as such, whose house was left desolate, "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye say blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." So that they certainly will have received some testimony before He comes. I confess it seems to me very clear indeed—that if the writer says that the coming of the Son of man will burst on that rebellious generation which has refused all other testimony, when the Lord says that they will not see Him till they have received other testimony:—"This is to derange and confuse all the order and truth of God concerning these things." I prefer believing in Scripture, that they will not see Christ till they say blessed be He that cometh.

The writer of the tract has clearly lost sight of a body of people, a remnant, of whom the scriptures distinctly speak, and whom God owns; certain wise ones who do understand.

He says, I am simply speaking of the body of Christian people, as the only body amidst which this idea, or hope, of the second advent of Christ could exist, and to which alone therefore, &c., "not entering into this distinction between the professing Church and the true Church."

But, here again, the system built up on one side to condemn all others, is knocked down on the other. Because, after the withdrawal of Christianity from Jerusalem, there is a new testimony raised up, whose grand object will be the coming of Christ. We have therefore instructions* addressed to some one else than the Church about Christ's return.

* See p. 2, Tract III.

But Christ does not, in the passage we are considering, speak of His coming as his return, no more than in the 10th chap. On the contrary, it is spoken of there, and here, as if it were His only coming, though we know He has come. Nor is there a word about his resurrection or departure.

Again, it is stated, that of the three-fold division of Jews, Gentiles, and Church of God, the disciples were the Church. But there was no such division made at that time. Nor could there be, because Christ was not crucified, nor the Church established.

Such classes did not exist, nor could they be addressed therefore as such. They were Apostles, when ordained to be with Jesus and to go only to Jews, as truly, though in another order, as when set to commence the Church.

It is denied that they represented one set of people in Matt. and another in St. John. But St. John himself makes the same distinction as to the difference of the presence of the Comforter; nor does mere denial, nor believing to be very fanciful, prove much. I should think that a person who could not distinguish between the tone of spiritual teaching in the last chapters of John and the 24th of Matt., must be very incapable of explaining either. It seems to me that the difference between, "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you:" and, "but when ye see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains," is very great indeed; and that it is neither fanciful, nor injurious, to perceive that one relates to union with Christ in heaven, and the other to the circumstances of Jerusalem on earth, prophecied of by Daniel the prophet as that in which a Jewish remnant were interested *as such*. We may find the same difference in Matt. and John in the testimony of John the Baptist, in Matt. iii. 12, John i. 29—34. Further, they were not addressed as the Church in John, though many things might regard the Church. So, in Matt. xxiii. they are told to be subject to the Scribes and Pharisees as sitting in Moses' seat. There, clearly, they are not

addressed as the Church. I admit there is a difference between this and Matt. xxiv. But this just proves that the same persons may be addressed almost exactly at the same time, (the circumstances were much more different in John, for there it was after the supper), and yet addressed in a different character. This is the writer's own theory as to Matt. xxiii. & xxiv.; but it is fanciful and injurious when applied to John, where the whole tenor of the gospel is different, and the circumstances much more contrasted. For,—

In one case we have disciples in the temple before it was pronounced desolate, and out of the temple asking about it and looking at it and enquiring of its desolation. This is said to be different, and what is Jewish and of the Church contrasted. Whereas in the other case John speaks of heaven, and union with Christ there; and yet this must be identical with Matt xxiv. Again, it is said, in explaining Matt, "the rock on which the Church is built." But the Lord says *I will* build. Clearly showing He did not address them as if the Church existed then. In chap. xxiii. we are told He directly addresses them "as the heavenly family," as ourselves, for that is the point, for the grand evil alledged is depriving the Church of certain scriptures, consequently, the heavenly family and ourselves ought to obey the Scribes and Pharisees of the evil and adulterous generation, as sitting in Moses's seat, i.e. the Church ought.

The rest of p. 5 is really too bad. The Lord tells us that they would all be offended because of Him that night, and leave Him alone; and this is slurred over by saying: They linger near the cross. This is really shameful.

Apostles to be sure they were. So they were when forbidden to go to the gentiles, as well as when sent to evangelize the nations.

But was it the same thing, or are they instructed on the same ground?

Again, when it is said p. 6, "His heavenly flock." Heavenly or not, the subject that occupied them, and to

which Jesus replies, was Jerusalem, Judæa, and the temple.

But we are told that "hated for my name's sake" proves that it is the Church after his ascension, so they do then in chap. x. : but there, it is confessed, they do not represent the Church. So that it proves nothing here neither. The same remark applies to the expression of : "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit;" and what has been said of the two witnesses also.

And so as to "thirdly" p. 7, we are told in the biggest letters, that, "behold I have told you before, is the proof that He made known to them in confidence every device of the enemy, that they and their brethren might walk safely and confidently though surrounded by snares and terrors innumerable. But alas, they the Church are not to be there. In the elaborate exposition of this view in the Thoughts on the Apocalypse, we are told, at this period, *according to the directions of this chapter*, Christianity will be withdrawn from Jerusalem and Judæa, and even from the Roman Empire: and it is clear from the chapter that those who obeyed the directions here given, would not be in the way of the trials of the last three years and a half.

As regards the history of the Acts, I agree that some of these things had a fulfilment in the Acts. But, it is quite clear, that some of the more important and solemn parts are not touched upon at all in the Acts. Neither the subjects which gave rise to the conversation, nor the time it alluded to, "the end of the age,"* in the remarkable circumstances by which it was to close: so, that, though there was a partial fulfilment in the Acts, yet with the proper subject of the chapter the Acts have nothing to do.

Universal consent, which is appealed to by the writer of the tract, cannot have much weight here: for by "universal consent," the chapter has been applied to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the end of the world. To which universal consent the writer is entirely

* The statement of p. 6, tract III, that the Lord is speaking of the end of the age, from xxiv. 15, to the end of xxv, is quite an inaccurate statement. But it is impossible to notice every thing.

opposed. He does not believe a word of what it teaches, and I know not on what principle he quotes it here.*

That all Christians are taught to watch is clear. But I have no recollection of the moral, or verbal identity of this instruction with the teaching of the Churches in the Epistles, especially the Epistles of St. Paul. This latter is added because it has been affirmed that St. Paul teaches the unity of the Church, out of all reach of the question of Judaism. I put it to the conscience of the reader, whether he remembers the verbal identity of this instruction to "watch" with the teaching of the Epistles of Paul. For my own part I have not trusted my memory, but have searched; and the only passage I find where watching is connected with this subject is 1 Thes. v. Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for ye yourselves know certainly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of light and children of day, we are not of the night nor of darkness. Let us not therefore sleep as the rest, but let us watch and be sober. The more this passage, and what follows, is examined, the more it will be found in contrast with "this instruction." There, Christ "would trace out every device and web of the enemy, even in the day of his fearful power," and gives dates, and seasons, and times to flee. But the apostle had *no need to write* to them of this. They were of the day, and whether they waked or slept they would live together with the Lord.

In Peter, who addresses the circumcision only, we may possibly find something, at least, more analogous.

And now, after all this representing of the Church, it appears that it has no application to the immense body of the Church at all; but, for the most part, only to those located in Judea, &c. But do we therefore pronounce these Jewish scriptures? No, to be sure we do not. But we may consider them as not relating to the Church at large, though given to it as all the Scriptures are. That it was not *addressed* to the Church is clear, for the Church was not yet founded on earth. That it

* See Postscript.

was given to the Church is blessedly clear, for through grace we have it. That is not the question yet. The question is, what it is *about*,—to whom it applies. Well, and what is the writer's own answer? To those located in Judea. Is the Church in its Church standing located in Judea? Are not all the subjects Jewish, as well as the facts, save the one of the gospel of the kingdom going to all nations, and that before the end?

It is stated, that "the peculiar features of such parts of Scripture may have received undue attention." This certainly is a curious charge. I suppose the Holy Ghost put them there to be attended to, and that there cannot be undue attention to any part of Scripture. If it is meant to say too exclusive, I can only say that I apprehend those who have attended to these peculiar features have attended to, and understand, the peculiar privileges of the Church quite as much as those who complain of undue attention to the peculiar features which the Holy Ghost has stamped on this chapter.

The statement, that in John xiv—xvi, these same features are found can prove nothing but the determination not to see, or the spiritual incapacity to distinguish of him who makes it. They were not standing here around Jesus as his heavenly flock; and they were not as yet placed in the position of sons. They were not spoken to as the Church. For the Church did not yet exist in a standing in which it could be addressed as such. He speaks to disciples, not only about what would occur in Jerusalem, but, about what regarded it as such, as foretold by the prophets, though additional light is thrown upon it, and the fact revealed that the gospel of the kingdom would first be preached to the nations before Jerusalem would be finally judged. But it is all the light of Christ's prophetic knowledge, thrown on subjects, already in part treated of by the prophets, and not regarding the Church as such.

Saying that the Church of God is scattered over the world, and that this provides for its sojourn and service on earth, and therefore the Lord speaks to it of things earthly, human, local, is not a true representation of the matter. The Lord does not give, in general, local instructions for the Church. This passage cannot be alleged

for it is the thing in question. The passage treats of local dangers, and local circumstances, and local snares, and of none others, and of which the most important, it is allowed, do not apply to Christians; but none of which, it is clear, apply to the Church at large,—and only to persons in Jewish circumstances to whom false Christs might be a snare as coming on earth (how should that be a snare to those who are to be caught up to meet him in the air), to those who would be embarrassed if they had to flee on a sabbath; and the days are shortened for the elect's sake, which elect are not the Church, they are gathered from the four winds after Christ's appearing. To say that in Matt. xxiv. only two facts are mentioned as to Jerusalem does not deserve really an answer. Is not the whole scene from verse 15 at Jerusalem, or in Judea; and before that connected with the destruction of the temple?

Moreover, the end of the age is the period referred to, not of Christianity, but of the age in which the disciples lived, and which the Jews expected to end by the coming of Messiah.

The reasoning of p. 6 tract 3, is again contradicted by the Thoughts on the Apocalypse. "His beloved church" will not be there at all: and yet, remark here, the 'Ye' and the 'You' are continued just the same. So that either no influence can be drawn from the continuous expression 'Ye' and 'You,' or, it is certain, that it is not as the Church they are addressed. Because it is admitted that at verse 23, it does not apply to Christians, for it applies to the hope of relief from the tribulation from which Christianity is withdrawn.

I do not agree in any particular application of Is. 59,* to the remnant. And, if there be a remnant who abide faithful to God, and to the hope of a Messiah, it is one which is not ignorant of who that Messiah really is. For, on their system, the two witnesses have declared who it is. If therefore their testimony be received they are not unbelieving as regards Christ,† though they may not enjoy present salvation. So that after all according to their

* See p. 7, Tract III.

† See Thoughts on the Apocalypse, p, 124, 133.

own statements, we have a remnant, not christian, and yet represented by the word 'You' in this passage of Matt. xxiv.

And, now, what shall we say to such a passage as this? Those only, who, besides knowing Jesus to be the Christ, find present forgiveness and hope of glory through His blood, and who hold fast His faith and testimony, such only are owned by God in the New Testament.

Now, not to speak of the two witnesses to whom we have so often referred. What shall we say of the gospels? "Present forgiveness and hope of glory through His blood" the disciples clearly did not find during the period embraced in the four Gospels, and consequently were not owned by God. And this monstrous statement is the more remarkable, because the point mainly insisted upon to prove that they represented the Church is, that they were owned by God as safe under the name of Christ. Which according to this statement it is quite clear they were not. But the truth is it is a mass of confusion.

Again, we read, p. 9, Tract III, of the election according to grace of *this present time*—but it was not in Matt. xxiv. this present time, nor were they brought out from their nation by faith in the crucified and risen Son of God.

When it is said, p. 10, the standing and character of believing Jews in the New Testament, is a matter vital to ourselves, for we are grafted in with them—we are fellow-citizens with the saints. The answer is simple, the Lord had not in Matt. xxiv. yet broken down the middle wall of partition; nor reconciled both in one body by the cross. So that to talk of the character of believing Jews in the New Testament, is merely misleading by equivocal words. For the New Testament speaks of believing Jews before, and believing Jews after, the middle wall of partition was broken down.

The standing, therefore, of Peter and his companions on the Mount of Olives was clearly not our standing at all. If any were it was that of Moses and Elias on another mount. When the writer has heard say the Jewish nation, or Jewish remnant, it must be remem-

bered that he has given his account of this remnant, which I believe to be entirely a false one; for I find that those persons who walk in darkness and see no light are called upon to listen to the voice of God's servant. I suppose no one will doubt who that is, Is. li. They are owned of God in Is. lxvi. They are prepared to say blessed be He that cometh, Matt. xxiii. They love the name of the Lord, and take hold of his covenant, Is. lvi. They understand, Dan. xii.* and further, in the New Testament, Rev. xi., they are found, or, at any rate, a remnant is found, after "Christianity is withdrawn," giving a clear distinct testimony which upsets all that is said about this Jewish remnant here.

Again: "The New Testament ground is new ground; none enter thereon save through faith in Jesus as the Saviour, the present Saviour, of sinners." This clearly was not the faith of the disciples. "The cross of Jesus is the line of demarcation between the old things and the new." "A Jew who fears God but who trusts not in the blood of Jesus is still on the old ground. Such may be preserved by God's power from apostacy, but they have *no communion with* the things into which faith in Jesus now introduces."

' In the New Testament they are known as amongst those who are "cast off," those lying under wrath "until the end," as identified with Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children; though if I step without the circle of New Testament ministry, I do find," &c.

After referring to two elections, one suffering from men for confessing Jesus, the other from God for rejecting Him, we are told that if we do not clearly distinguish these two, then we should apply much of the New Testament to "a body, which, perhaps we should, if called on, feel it difficult to define, but which, we should call Jews as distinguished from the Church." "But in Matt. xxiv. I see the Lord leading forth a remnant; *then*—a converted, believing, saved remnant." It is to these he speaks on the Mount of Olives. They are a present, a manifested election—they stand in grace—they had the

* See also Ps. lxxx.

depths of Jesus' love and the Father's opened up to them—they were constantly and only addressed as the Church—they actually preached Christ crucified, and so “to confound these with any yet unmanifested remnant of righteous Jews is to apply a principle to the New Testament which, it may be easily shewn, would subvert the very first elements of Christianity.”

I shall not make any comment on the charge here made against brethren walking for years before the writer was converted, as they still are, in godliness and truth, because it seems to me that such a charge, as, “subverting the first elements of Christianity,” made without any proof at all; but, “it may easily be shewn,” is an immoral thing; it does not demand an answer, and as a personal wrong, forgiveness. Those who would believe it, on such a charge, have only to be prayed for as under the evident influence of party spirit.

But let us consider the matter of these statements, and not the charge.

And here I know not whether to take some of the statements of the writer as proof of the views he *opposes*; or others, in proof of the gross misstatements that are offered as truth; or both together, to shew the contradictions into which he falls; or many, or all of them, to shew that he has overlooked all the real facts of the case in order to follow out his own ideas. Such a mass of confusion and contradiction I never met with.

“All such are still on the dark side of the pillar of testimony—whatever their condition. The cross of Jesus is the line of demarcation between the old things and the new.” On which side of this line of demarcation were the disciples whom Jesus addressed? But it will be said; Oh! but being with Jesus they were the other side of the cross really, though not in knowledge or faith. This itself, as to the dealings of God, is dangerous ground, because it sets aside the difference of the work being accomplished, and the value of faith in it. For, let us remark, that the question is not here were they saved, but on what ground the Saviour made certain communications to them.

But the writer does not leave himself even this plea. He says, a Jew who fears *God*, but who trusts not in the

blood of *Jesus*, is still on the old ground ; . . . they have *no communion with* the things into which faith in Jesus now introduces. Certainly one would suppose that the writer was writing expressly for the views he opposes.

On which side of the cross were the disciples? Did they trust in the blood of Jesus? why they earnestly hoped he would not die; and had no idea whatever, of trusting in the blood of Jesus. It had not been presented to them by the Lord as the object of their faith, and could not be, because he had been presenting himself to the Jews as the Messiah. Obscure intimations, or express statements, of his rejection had been made to them, but nothing about the value of His blood; and even these statements they had repudiated. The last supper itself had not yet intimated it to them, incapable to understand it as they were. One thing is clear, they did not trust in the blood of Jesus, and they had therefore *no communion with* the things into which faith in Jesus now introduces.

And thus they were clearly to be dealt with, not upon the ground of the Church, nor, as having to say to that unto which faith in Jesus now introduces. They were on the dark side of the pillar of testimony, so that they ought to have been addressed, if at all, as a Jewish remnant.

Yet they were, *then*.—The italics all through these citations are the writer's, not mine—they were "*then*—a converted, believing, saved, remnant." They are a present, a manifested election—they stand in grace—they had the depths of Jesus' love and the Father's opened up to them—they were constantly and only addressed as the Church—they actually preached Christ crucified and so gathered the Church.

Can there be a more complete contradiction than that between the principles of demarcation stated, and the statements of the writer as to the condition of the disciples?

Can any thing be a greater perversion, at any rate what is never important, a more light neglect of the most important scriptural truths, than to say the disciples were *then*, &c. in italics, and to go on and say,—“they actually preached Christ crucified;” without noticing the

descent of the Holy Ghost, which changed their whole condition, without which Christ could not tell them many things "into which faith in Jesus now introduces," and without which they were forbidden to preach the gospel, being desired to stay at Jerusalem and wait for it—not to mention that the resurrection of the Lord intervened, which changed their whole position: nay, which was the "line of demarcation between old things and new." What does the writer mean by saying they were *then* a converted, believing, saved remnant, they actually preached Christ crucified? Is it true that they actually did so? To say too they were only addressed as the Church is as already stated, untrue. They were desired to obey the Scribes and Pharisees, and sent out with an order not to go near a Gentile, or a Samaritan; so that they were not always addressed as the Church, I might add they never were. For the Church, of which they afterwards formed the basis, was not formed. And John's gospel, (the teaching of which is taken, very erroneously I think, to explain their position in this) distinguishes very clearly between their then state and their state after receiving the comforter.

Further, the New Testament, instead of treating the Jews as cast off, positively asserts, in the chapter that treats of the rejection of the branches, that as a nation, they are not "cast off," but beloved; and therefore, certainly, the remnant who fear God are not.

Again, they did testify concerning Him, and did hold fast His faith, and are supposed by the Lord not to be received, and so far to suffer for His name's sake, when sent out in His life time, and when they were forbidden to go to any but Jews: consequently the supposition is not strange, nor an error, that such could be without being the Church. For they were not the Church, nor allowed to act on the principle of the Church, nor to preach Christ's blood as the hope, nor his resurrection, when all these things which are supposed impossible took place.

The truth is, the writer has not attended to the facts of Scripture. He has chosen to have two remnants—one, the Church, and only the Church—the other, Jewish lying under wrath, and known as amongst those who are cast off.

Now the Scripture speaks, quite otherwise : and presents other facts which the writer does not think proper to consider.

First, he forgets entirely one thing, very important to remember, and hence a fundamental fallacy runs through all his statements.

Christ died for that *nation*, as well as for the Church, and that, because they were beloved of God according to His counsels of peace, notwithstanding their disobedience; and therefore Christ, and the Holy Ghost too, could and did deal with the nation as such, as well as with the Church as such, And, therefore, the Holy Ghost would not consider them as cast off, even where the branches were broken off.

Neglect of this makes all the writers statements on the subject false, and the language generally used on this subject by those of his school most unscriptural, and painful to a spiritual mind. Next, he has neglected the facts connected with this subject.

“A Jew who fears God but who trusts not in the blood of Jesus is still on the old ground,” may be preserved, but is amongst them who are cast off. Now, if we take this division, we have seen to which class the disciples must belong.

Not to that, clearly, in which the writer places them : and we have seen the contradiction of this with his account of their condition, and the falseness of that account itself. But the fact is his division is wrong too—for I say so for this simple reason,—that the disciples, the very persons in question now, and whom the Lord addressed, were in neither of the cases thus abstractedly stated in order to judge their condition;—a judgment, therefore, completely false as is proved by the facts themselves. The disciples did more than fear God, they believed in Jesus as Messiah. Nay, in Peter’s case, as Son of God, with whatever clearness of light, I think we might say all did. They are not known in the New Testament as amongst these who are cast off. They were not to fear, it was their Father’s good pleasure to give them the kingdom. They were a remnant separated from the nation by faith in the Messiah, and yet they did not trust in the blood of Jesus. They were on

the hither, or dark, side of the line of demarcation, the cross of Jesus. So that they were in neither in one nor the other of the states supposed, but in another, entirely left out of consideration by the writer, and on which the whole question depends: while all the writer's reasonings run on the supposition of two cases, neither of which state the facts which actually existed, and yet unless a person can embrace this mass of contradiction, and carelessness, and substitution of personal views for the patient following of the word of God, he is to be treated as holding opinions which subvert Christianity. Next, we are told that the word *ye shall not see me till ye say blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, points prophetically to that day when the Lord will spare unto Jerusalem a "very small remnant" who shall see Jesus in His glory and be converted unto Him.

Now, if neglect of Scripture be indulged in and an "undue attention to the peculiarities of a passage" is to be avoided, at least Scripture ought not to be changed to make out a system.

It is stated here that they shall see Jesus in glory and be converted, as it was stated before, that that glory should burst upon them who had refused all previous testimony. Now the passage does not say they shall see Jesus and be converted; but that they shall *not* see him till their hearts are changed, so as to say *blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*.

So that the Scripture states the contrary of what is asserted to be its declarations in order to make out a system. Even the 72nd Ps. is entirely mis-quoted and the mis-quotations given as authority.

I know not that I need add any more. My object is not in this short paper to treat the subject fully, but to explain to you why the statements of these three letters have the contrary effect on my mind from what the writer intended: because, the statements he has made seem to me entirely unscriptural; some of them, if taken as truth, to prove, in their application to the disciples, the very contrary of that for which they are alleged.

And finally, that he really has entirely overlooked what is the material point on the subject, so that his

remarks are of no value at all, except to prove on what sort of grounds a system of so much pretention is built.

Affectionately Yours.

POSTSCRIPT.

I am unwilling to pass over a collateral point, confirmed, as it has been, by many like statements which I have heard, and connected with other points of a similar tendency.

It is in p. 3, of the 2nd Tract. "Lastly—Please consider the fact that from the day these chapters were first spoken, there never has been the slightest question raised of their true and exclusive address to the Church, until the last very few years.

You know I am no traditionist; but here at least is "universal consent" on one point.

This statement is not true in the use to which the writer applies it; because "universal consent" took the passage away from all present and future application to the Church, and considered it as accomplished at the seige of Jerusalem. The coming, in any further sense, relating to the end of all things.

But it is not in view of this that I quote it now. It is with reference to the principle, the popish principle, of universal consent. Universal consent has nothing to do with tradition, nor tradition with universal consent. But universal consent is another form of the substitution of man's authority, for the word of God and the teaching of the Spirit of God in and by the word, and the responsibility of each saint to receive that word by such teaching; which alone constitutes faith. Universal consent is a rule of other men for binding to an opinion without Scripture, or in the interpretation of Scripture. In either case it is the judgment of men, be they ever so many, and not the direct responsibility of the soul to God in receiving the word; nor the direct operation of the Spirit of God on the soul in respect of the word; which alone produces Divine faith. It is faith in men. No matter if it is all the saints "from the day these chapters

were spoken." For the mass of saints it must result in faith in the statements of the teacher, which is not faith in God at all. It will always be connected with canons of interpretation made by men, or rather it is the thing itself:—with receiving from teachers what they teach, because God has raised them up, and with ecclesiastical authority, the process of which is connection of teaching with office, the result, office giving authority to all teaching. Now this is Popery, whose force lies in the practical denial of that to which the Apostle appeals in the saints. Ye need not that any one should teach you. Ye have an unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things. He did teach them: but he owned the Holy Ghost in them. The spirit of Popery is the spirit of the age as to religion. Self will soon in divine things, work itself out to nothing, because it cannot hold men together in the things of God. But Popery can in form. Now the first grand principle which introduced Popery, and on which Protestants inclined to it always rest, is that announced here. It was first stated by a "Father" Vincentius Lirinensis in these terms in latin, "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus; and became very famous in the Church. Let the saints be on their guard. Self-will is always evil. Affectionate confidence in those who labour in the Lord is always happy. But "universal consent," and the *authority* of teachers, are the instruments of the enemy for the Church's departure from God. In the perilous times of the last days the known security of the saints is the doctrine of the Apostles themselves, and the written word of God, 2 Tim. iii.—both now concluded in this last,—the sole and sufficient resource available through the teaching of the Spirit to the saints of God. Teachers may aid them in it, but can never take away each man's own direct responsibility as to what he receives. But when "universal consent" is thus publicly appealed to, it is high time to see where we are going.

Let no one suppose I allude here to individuals. On the contrary, I am very anxious to draw attention to a system, a system which has been the bane of the Church for thirteen centuries. The *demon of Popery is the active demon of the day*. Its leading introductory

principle is advanced in the passage on which I comment. I have noticed some of its other elements, because the introduction of this general one shews that the door has not been kept closed against it. Hence the saints will do well to be on their guard, lest they be mixed up with it before they are aware. I would urge them, if need be, to get their minds off individuals, and to watch against the principles every where.

May beloved brethren remember that the WRITTEN WORD OF GOD, and the grace and teaching of the SPIRIT OF GOD, are the only security against error, and the devices of satan: that ascribing authority to teachers, to "universal consent," or any thing else but to the written word of God, is departing from the *only* security of the saints in these dark and evil days. And yet, if dark and evil, blessed in the resources of grace to him that has faith. If the Spirit of God be looked at as residing in the teachers and not in the whole body, it is the full blown principle of Romish Clericalism. If saints do not prove for themselves all they hear, they cannot have faith now, but they cannot help being made answerable for it hereafter; because God has commanded them to do it, and given His Spirit to the whole body, and to each individually to enable them to do it: and they will be held responsible for this whether they will or no.

I fully recognize the blessing of having those who can help us in learning the truth, or apply it in exhortation to the soul. But that does not alter the truth of what I have said. I do not in the least accuse individuals of being popish. But I say that the principle here *printed and published*, and which I have heard elsewhere appealed to, is an important popish principle, well known as such, one especially made use of where there is a tendency among Protestants to it. Always connected historically with the authority of official teachers, and derogatory to the sole authority of the word of God, and the individual responsibility of the saints, and thus a departure from the ground of the faith of God's elect. A very little beginning perhaps, but a beginning of a very great evil.