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An Examination Of The Statements Made In The “Thoughts On The Apocalypse,”

By B. W. Newton J And An Enquiry How Far They Accord With Scripture

Preface

A book which professes to examine another is sufficiently definite in its object not to need much preface. I shall add, therefore, but few words. My judgment distinctly is, that the whole system maintained in the “Thoughts” is untenable and worthless as a system. I do not expect to persuade everybody of this, nor that everybody will be sufficiently willing to be persuaded to read the examination. But such is the testimony I feel bound to give about it.

The reader will be surprised to learn that since the year 1833 or 1834 I have been inclined to believe in the renewed existence of Babylon. Nay, I believe, though this is of very little importance, that I was the first person who thought so. The result, however, of the examination to which I have been led by my present occupation, has left me much more doubtful of it than before. But however this may be, I judge the use made of it here to be wholly without foundation, and most mischievous—the more mischeivous because of the plausibility of some points at first sight. The reader, with the Spirit’s help, will judge when he has read. That which I think evil in the book, and of which I am the more convinced by all the discussion there has been, is the setting aside the proper standing, position, and

blessing of the church of God. Of this, after the fullest examination, I have not the least doubt. It is possible the author of the “Thoughts” may be quite unconscious of it; but the saints of God are to be thought of in such a case; and therefore the teaching fully judged.

As to the mass of statements, and that of the most extraordinary kind, with which the “Thoughts” abound, without any scripture to warrant them, the “Examination” itself must satisfy the reader.

I will add here in a few words, because it will assist in judging the whole system, that, on a comparison with Matthew 13, the author’s system subverts itself. There the wheat is taken up in the end of the then existing age — “this age.” According to Mr. Newton’s system, the moment Christ rises up from the Father’s throne the new age begins and this dispensation ends. It is therefore clear that the wheat is caught up before Christ rises from the throne at all to receive them. But this no one can believe. The whole system therefore is a fallacy. It is in vain to say that it closes in heaven and not on earth. First, it is giving up the whole principle of its closure by the act of Christ’s rising up from the throne. Secondly, the whole principle of government in heaven and earth is changed at once on the author’s system. Till Christ rises up, God is acting for Him; when He is risen up, He acts in His own immediate government. So that in heaven and earth at once, in an instant, the age and the nature of the government is changed. But, further, the distinction is wholly inapplicable here; because the first result is on earth, or in hades (the wheat being in one or other, though it be taken up to heaven). So that the distinction of its ending in heaven, not on earth, is a mere attempt to get out of the palpable confusion. The

first act that takes place on Christ's rising is on earth:—the wheat is changed and caught up. The system is confusion—that is the truth. But a very important point is brought into relief by the discussion of this subject:—the rapture of the church is in this age. The new age will not begin till after this is done. This Matthew 13 positively teaches.

Preface To The Second Edition

In reprinting this "Examination," I have been comforted at the thought of the earnest opposition made to the views contained in the "Thoughts on the Apocalypse." After more than twenty years, when of course one can judge more coolly than in the warmth of controversy, my judgment of the evil of Mr. N.'s book is far more deep than it was then. And I am surprised that what I believe now to be the truth was so fully matured in my mind then. In some points my mind has naturally made progress. I accepted then, with all students of prophecy, the beast being Antichrist, which now I rather take the second beast to be. But the former being the Roman empire in general is justly insisted on. I have drawn attention to this question in the notes when needed. Further, it is to me more than doubtful that there are two half-weeks referred to in the Apocalypse. But this does not affect the general argument. The question is nothing less than, What is the Christian's place? Is it a heavenly one? And is there, as a distinctive thing, a church of God? In these days especially no question can be more important for Christians. I believe Mr. N.'s views to be antagonistic to all that is vital in this respect.

Introduction

I do not as yet make any general remarks as to the system contained in the book here examined. It is a very elaborate one, and extends to many points. It is not stated connectedly in the book itself, though every occasion is seized to make good all that appears to sustain it, and undermine all that may have been advanced by any one elsewhere that might overthrow it. But I have felt that the best thing to do was, not to give my judgment on the system, but first to examine the statements here made, which are used to support it, and to enquire how far they are borne out by Scripture consistently with it, or with each other. Various circumstances, and above all my own occupations, induce me to do it in parts, of which this first will be proportionably by far the longest, on account of the many important general topics which the introductory chapters suggested. It will be really an “Examination of the Thoughts,” etc., etc. It will be seen that, even when there are contradictions which I have shewn to exist, I have done no more than state them; I have not reasoned as a controversialist thereupon; I leave that to the reader. He will judge the contradiction itself, and its bearing on a system maintained with so much condemnation of everything else. I do not expect that partisans of that system will be content with my statements, or convinced by them: but I do believe that many unprejudiced brethren will be enabled to judge a great many of the assertions made, which they have not the leisure to examine (perhaps not the habit of examining), as they are examined here. In the long run, under the Lord’s mercy, the sentiments of such persons have their weight, and it is such that it is really of value

to convince, and to whom investigation is due. Their minds, at any rate, arrested by what may be said, will be free to examine the whole for themselves.

Examination

“The Revelation treats mainly of the present dispensation.” The subjects involved in this book are quite as serious as those of which it directly treats: the true meaning of the heavenly calling; the earthly, or unearthly character of the church’s position and associations; the true character and form of evil, against which we have to be on our guard; but above all, what the portion and calling of the church is. These are questions that give importance to its statements, and demand that their accuracy should be examined, and their proofs enquired into.

The title of this chapter is of importance. No explanation is given in the chapter itself of what is meant by the present dispensation; but from the previous chapter it seems very evident that it means the church, or, as there expressed, the church dispensation, or Christianity. (See page 8.) The statement in page 13, is merely the writer’s view of what characterises the dispensation, the justice of which is exactly the point in question.1 This statement will come before us in its place. For the present I enquire merely what “the present dispensation “means: and, I repeat, it seems clear from the preceding chapter that it is “the church dispensation.” The other expressions employed are, “the dispensation to which the New Testament belongs”—a very ambiguous expression, but one which is meant, I apprehend, to convey a good deal more to the reader than he is aware of at the time he adopts it, and to involve him in most

important conclusions before he is aware of what they are. The third expression is “the present period.” These, taken together, clearly designate the present church dispensation, of which we form part as Christians. I am thus particular, because, with the very great pretensions to accuracy which this book sets up, it behoves us to know of what we are treating, especially as at bottom much turns on the question contained in this chapter, which the writer has thus very naturally put as a sort of frontispiece to the whole book.

It may be remarked that the writer defines very distinctly his idea of the limits and character of the two dispensations which he has in his mind;2 “that in which Christ is seated at the right hand of God, secretly exercising the power of God’s throne”; and, “that in which He will come forth in the exercise of the power of His own pecuhar kingdom.” The first of these two is to him identical with “the church dispensation.”

I must beg the reader’s pardon, if I often take notice of statements which appear to me inaccurate, even when they are not very important, because in the questions to which these statements have given rise accuracy of statement and the maintenance of the integrity of scripture are much relied on— we shall see, as we proceed, whether, on good ground*

We are told that when the Lord Jesus returned to the Father, “Jehovah said unto him, Sit thou at my right hand, until I shall have set thy foes a footstool for thy feet.” Here we have the ordinary translation changed, without, as it seems to me, any reason;3 but from the way the verse is introduced here, and the importance attached to it, with some object or other, though neither

the reasons for the change, nor the interpretation in view, which give it importance, are stated.

Still it is pretty clear that one object is to make it appear that Jehovah is acting meanwhile for Christ, and it is expressly stated that the fact is so (“it speaks of the power of the throne as acting in His behalf”). And when this is coupled with the fact, admitted on all hands, that Revelation up to chapter 19, does represent God acting for Christ before His appearing; and that Psalm 110 is stated to be characteristic of this dispensation, and the Revelation is declared to treat mainly of this dispensation—I say, putting all these statements together, it is clear that the changed version is given with a view of presenting God in it as so acting for Christ during this dispensation, and characteristically of it. But then, so important an interpretation of the psalm ought to have been plainly stated and proved. That is, that what verse 1 of that psalm means is, that God was acting for Christ, in setting His foes to be His footstool during this dispensation, and that such acting was characteristic of this dispensation. This is what the statements amount to: for it is stated that this verse speaks of the power of the throne acting on Christ’s behalf, and that it is characteristic of this dispensation. Now the only acting in the verse is setting foes for a footstool. Hence, the setting of foes for Christ’s footstool by God the Father is what characterises all this dispensation; Psalm no is the acting of God all through to this effect, not His sovereign word and power putting them at a given time Under Christ’s feet for Him to subdue; and the Revelation treats mainly of this dispensation, because it speaks of God’s so acting.

But I apprehend, if it had been fairly and plainly stated that this verse describes God's actually putting down the foes of Christ all through this dispensation, the church dispensation, such an interpretation would at once have been rejected by every intelligent Christian, who knows well that the foes of Christ only rise up more and more to a head of rebellion until God gives them up, when patience can no longer have any hope, to be trampled upon by Christ.

And this becomes the more important because, according to the author, instead of seeing Christ the royal man, exalted and hid there until a certain period, it is Christ Himself, as God, that thus exercises power—"the power of the throne of God which He exercises."

And it is stated (page 15) that the book of Revelation "especially refers to the period during which Christ is hidden with God": and these things are spoken of as His present relation to, and as we have seen, exercise of power upon the nations, hidden in the throne. And yet we are told with strange inconsistency that, while (page 37) "our dispensation is still, as it then was, under the throne as it was then seen by John," yet (page 37) "the sixth chapter and all that follows [that is, all that is stated of God's actings in it] are altogether future, even at this present hour."

So that while we are introduced to the Revelation as treating mainly of the present dispensation, of a period during which Christ is sitting in God's throne according to Psalm no, His present relation to the nations, not one word of the actings which are spoken of have taken place during the eighteen hundred years of the present dispensation. The Revelation treats of no part of the

present dispensation which is yet fulfilled, though the things spoken of be distinctively characteristic of it; and that which thus distinctively characterises it is altogether future.

But after all, the truth is, the psalm does not speak of God's actings during this period, but of Christ's position, until God does set His foes to be His footstool; and this, though in very strange language—language which just betrays the intellectual road travelled—is admitted by Mr. N. himself.

Pages 12, 13: "The footstool has not yet been formed" — consequently not set under Christ's feet, which is the only acting of the throne spoken of in the psalm; and the Revelation "treats of events which precede the mission of Christ, and the setting of the footstool." "It leads on" to that: that "forms the conclusion, not the subject, of the book." How then, since this is the only act of God spoken of in Psalm 110, can Psalm no be so distinctly characteristic of the dispensation of which the Revelation mainly treats? There is no characteristic of the present period so especially distinctive as this acting of Jehovah's throne spoken of in Psalm no, and yet the Revelation, which treats of the present dispensation, of the present period, treats of events which precede this acting, which is not the subject of the book! For this setting of the footstool is the only acting of the throne spoken of in Psalm no. The simple fact is, it was settled that the Revelation should apply to the present dispensation. It was settled that any statements declaring its applying to the government of the earth merely should not affect its application to "the church dispensation"; and therefore Psalm no is treated as God's actings on the throne while Christ was sitting

there, and thus the Revelation and the psalm are brought in together, and the contradictions which affect the whole substance of the statements are left to be found out by those that have the patience to investigate the soundness of what is stated.

There is another and yet more important object in this translation which is not avowed neither. Christ's sitting till God shall have made His foes His footstool involves the church's remaining here till Antichrist be set to be the footstool of Christ's feet. If Christ's foes are to be made the footstool of Christ before He leaves the throne, and that He leaves God's throne before He receives up the church, it is clear that the church is not received up till His foes are made His footstool, and this by God's actings—of course, effectual actings. This goes too far, indeed, for it would suppose Antichrist, for example, made by the actings of God's power the footstool of Christ before His rising up from the throne to receive the church.

This may go to prove the unsoundness of the whole system. But I only ask, Is it legitimate, in reasoning on Scripture, to give a translation which silently involves the whole principle which is attempted to be taught, without giving the least proof that the new translation is correct? I do not agree with the sense given to "setting." The contradictions in which it involves the writer have been shewn; but I take it on his own ground now.

The verse states no actings of God's power for Christ at all, much less Christ's own actings as God. He is called to sit on Jehovah's right hand till Jehovah set His enemies for His footstool. It is not secret providential actings which form the subject of the psalm, but ruling

in the midst of His enemies, when Jehovah has placed them under His feet. It is receiving the rejected One there, and not acting while He is there, but telling Him to sit there till a given epoch when His enemies shall be put under Him, and He will act upon them. And this is so much the case, that, when the apostle comments on it, he states, not that God is acting, much less that Christ is acting as God, but that He is expecting till something be done (to wit, His enemies be made His footstool).

And indeed setting as a footstool supposes the placing them simply in a certain position under Him, and that He should exercise power over them—not the prolonged actings of power in His behalf, for Him during a whole dispensation. During that time we have seen He was to sit till this particular act was done. And see the extraordinary statements into which the system of the writer throws him on this point.

“The footstool has not yet been formed.”4 …” But everything is tending thereunto. The preparation of the footstool is the end to which all the superintending power of the throne of God is directed.” It is true, it may be said, that God hath made all things for Himself—the wicked for the day of evil. But is all the superintending power of God’s throne directed to the preparing of the wicked to be the footstool of Christ, to forming and preparing these enemies for His power to trample on? Is this the meaning of setting them for a footstool? That it is a regular preparation of this kind, which is meant in these statements, is clear; for it is said “as soon as it is prepared, Christ will quit the throne of the majesty in the heavens, and will return in glory.” So that it is not the fact of placing them under His feet, to be judged as an act of authority, but of positive previous preparation

of them for this position, in order that He may rise up, and come and take it. This verse is always interpreted in Scripture, not as the divine power in Jesus, but as His exaltation by God.

“Therefore,” says Peter, commenting on this verse, “let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” And Christ puts it Himself as the puzzling question to the Jews who rejected Him, that David’s Son was David’s Lord, whom Jehovah called to sit on His throne. So, in Hebrews 1:13, it is said, “unto which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?” And, as He is here addressed as one whom another was setting in a glorious place, so, in Hebrews 10:13, He is presented as expecting till another does a certain act. He is made Lord and Christ, and He is expecting till the next thing is done (to wit, His enemies made His footstool). We may know, and we do, blessed be God, what qualifies that blessed One for such a place, where none but He could sit. Still it is not this that is spoken of in the passage: and it is as important to see the title to exaltation which He has acquired down here, as the nature which could alone capacitate Him for acquiring the title, or holding the place itself.

It presents Messiah exalted to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, when He had accomplished redemption and the purging of sins, until Jehovah should give His enemies into His hand to be trampled upon. It is an interval during which Messiah is quiescent and expecting, not an acting of power.

And indeed God's actings in the Revelation are either the patience of chastisement, if so be the wicked should not have to be given up, or an execution of judgment which left no foe to be trampled upon, as Babylon. It has no connection with the Psalm, save the fact that it is only at the end that Christ tramples on His earthly enemies. But there are other most serious objections to the statements of this chapter.

This verse is quoted so often, "because so distinctively characteristic of the dispensation to which the New Testament belongs." I have two remarks to make on this. First, what is the meaning of the "New Testament belongs"? If merely that it has been given to this dispensation, to the church, that is clear. They had it not before. But, if it be meant to involve (silently, yet again), that all in the New Testament applies to this dispensation, then it is positively false. Witness the title of the chapter we are writing on. "The Revelation treats mainly of the present dispensation." The New Testament does not then (save as given to the saints, and all things are theirs) belong entirely to this dispensation. "Mainly," no doubt, it does." The writer may put his limits, others theirs; but he cannot assert it qualifiedly in the title to the chapter, and unqualifiedly in the body of it, and expect the assertion to be received of any reasonable man. I should put another most decided limitation to it. Christ died for the nation, as well as to gather the church. This, being God's counsel, followed up by Christ's act, I apprehend is (might not I say, must be?) the subject of the Spirit's testimony. This testimony does not belong properly to the church dispensation, even when synchronic in its presentation. Besides, there is the testimony which preceded in the midst of the nation,

which is given historically. These limitations cannot be denied, for I naturally leave out the disputed ground of certain prophetic parts as being in question. But it is not legitimate to state ambiguously that the New Testament belongs to this dispensation, in order to prove that these disputed parts do, where it is necessarily admitted that very important parts do not. And while no one denies that the great body of it applies to us (belongs, if you please, to us), we cannot forget that two very important subjects indeed are treated, and others mentioned, which do not belong to our dispensation—to wit, the testimony to the Jews, and the millennium which comes after it, besides the judgment of the dead, and the post-millennial state. It should be remembered that we may be given to know many things which do not belong to the dispensation to which we belong. This is silently confounded here. Compare Abraham and Lot, and Ephesians 1:9.

But my second remark is yet more important. This verse of Psalm no characterises distinctively the dispensation. “There is no characteristic of the present period so essentially distinctive as this.” Is then the throne, acting on the wicked to prepare them for Christ’s judgment, the essentially distinctive characteristic of the “church dispensation”? It is this statement that is at the root of the questions raised on this subject. All that is most blessed to the church—her relationship to the Father, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven so that she should be the tabernacle of God through the Spirit, her union with Christ actually exalted as her Head—none of these things enter even into the field of view when what characterises the dispensation is spoken of by the writer. What essentially characterises it has nothing to

do with the church, with the Holy Ghost, with the Father, with union or joy of communion, no, not even with Christ, save so far as governing the earth on the throne as God, or Jehovah's acting for Him on it. Would this be believed, if another had stated of the writer or his book, that not one spiritual thought or privilege, not the presence of the Comforter, nor anything that regards the church, is distinctively characteristic of the present church dispensation? But I may be told that this is said "in contrast with the period when Christ will assume the exercise of the authority of His own kingdom." If is stated absolutely that no characteristic is so essentially distinctive. But, admitting what is replied, it is this that is so strong, that nothing but a difference of governmental order is essentially distinctive of the present period.

We have seen that it is not Jehovah's throne acting for Christ, but Christ sitting on it till He does. Were it otherwise, surely a difference in the manner of governing the world is not what distinguishes to a saint this dispensation. This is so clearly the writer's mind, that it is only as a consequence which we might naturally expect that, during this period, Christ's relation to the church, as a kingdom He immediately governs, is brought in; and after all, only in relation to the churches, not to the church. A very serious consequence is connected with this, that Christianity, or the church dispensation, is treated as an age, and the new age as beginning when it ends. "As soon as this verse ceases to apply, i.e., whenever the Lord Jesus quits His present place on the throne of God, our dispensation ends, and the new age begins." (Page 11.)

Moreover, this is only assuming again quietly the whole point in question. First, a new translation is given without proof; then, an interpretation quite contrary to the plain statement of the verse; and then, every spiritual privilege being entirely and totally forgotten, our dispensation is declared to end when that ends, of which the verse does not speak at all, namely, Jehovah acting for Christ on His throne.

The other part of the statement is an assertion, without any attempt at proof; namely, when Christ quits God's throne, the new age begins. An assertion moreover which is clearly not true, because the new age cannot begin while Antichrist is here in power—in a word, until he is judged. Now, however short the interval may be, this shews that it is not Christ's quitting God's throne which begins the new age. The end of the age is not an instant; it applies moreover to the world here below. And, further, the saints of Christendom are gathered up in the harvest, at the end of the age, by the Son of man's sending forth His angels. So thus our dispensation is ended before ever the new age begins, or that He has quitted the throne; or He has quitted it, and the harvest goes on, which harvest is the end of that age, which consequently has not closed by His quitting it. The length of the interval is not here the question: but the fact of His quitting the throne does not close the age, called our dispensation, and begin the new age (unless the saints are up5 before He quits it), because the harvest which gathers them is the end of the (former) age. But, besides, the truth is that Christianity is not properly an age at all. "This age "belongs to this world, not to the church. The Lord and the disciples were in the age— "this age"—when on earth, before even Christ was

on the throne at all. And there is a clear earthly period running on, which it is admitted is not yet accomplished, and in which a gap takes place, to let in the event spoken of in this psalm—that is, the seventy weeks of Daniel. It is admitted that, at any rate, half a week is yet unfulfilled, which must close before the new age comes in.

The present age subsisted, in a word, before the state of things spoken of in this psalm, and, moreover, must subsist after the rapture of the church: because, first, the harvest in which they are taken up belongs to the old age; and secondly, the new age cannot begin until after the destruction of Antichrist, since, to give no other reason, Daniel's weeks (which clearly do not belong to the new age) are not closed till he be destroyed. So that neither Christianity, nor the church dispensation, nor Psalm no, gives any date for the beginning or ending of the age at all. The age, or this age, very clearly relates, in the passages which thus speak of it, to an earthly state of things closed, and another begun. Christianity may find its epoch in the prolonging of the age; but it is not by it that it is begun, nor ended, as a precise date of time: so that "our dispensation ends and the new age begins" is in the face of it a confusion of terms and things too; for it assumes that our dispensation is the old age, which it clearly is not. Nor can this be escaped from by alleging that spiritually the disciples, who spoke of the age, belonged to this dispensation; because the psalm we are treating of specifies the actual sitting of Christ at God's right hand.

It may be asked, How do you take then Psalm no? Does not, even in the old translation, the psalm suppose that

Christ rests on the throne, and consequently the church down here till the enemies are prepared for the trampling of Christ? I answer, No. The question supposes that God is acting through the course of the period: but the psalm has no such sense. Were it indeed so, God would have subdued all Christ's foes before Christ Himself took the kingdom. He would have none left to subdue or trample upon. But Jehovah does nothing in the psalm at all. He places the enemies of Christ under His feet—gives them up to Him to trample on. Thereon Christ begins to act in power; but what the process is, or how soon He gets to earth to begin a new age in the judgments (or rather after the judgments at Jerusalem), this psalm says nothing of.

Indeed the psalm seems to go to prove that the new age does not begin till after Christ has quitted the Father's throne. The Lord is to send the rod of His power out of Zion. He is to rule among His enemies, so that all things that offend are not cleared out of His kingdom. But that is the end of the former age. He has not the rod of His power in Zion while Antichrist is there, and therefore it is not yet the new age. The truth is, all this is transitional, whether in the heavens or in the earth, just as was Christ's life on earth. It was not the law, yet the law subsisted, and He was under it. It was not the gospel, as we have it; for His death could not be preached. It was a transitional period from John Baptist till the final rejection of Christ by the Jews. So will this be. We can speak of Christ's leaving the throne, then first gathering together the tares; then, the wheat; and after all this, on the writer's own statement, Antichrist is not yet destroyed: so that the end of the age is not yet fully come. In a. word, the precise order, and the

principle on which it is founded in this chapter, are entirely wrong.

I have said, Christ's leaving the throne, then first gathering the tares, etc.; because, if this be not so, the gathering up of the saints is altogether before the end of the age, according to the writer himself, and, moreover, before Christ's coming to receive them at all. I take it now on his own interpretation of His sitting on Jehovah's throne, and quitting it to begin the new age. Still there is a transitional period. On any ground, his statements cannot hang together, because he has got off Scripture, and formed a system; and Scripture (and blessed be God for it!) will not suffer itself to be so moulded. It is drawn from a system deeper than our thoughts, and we must believe and understand what is given to us "in part," and not frame a whole after our wisdom. It will always be false, and put to the rout by Scripture—by some single text that will not bend (I repeat, blessed be God!) to it.

The last paragraph of this chapter first states, as already noticed, without any proof at all, that there are just exactly the two things: Christ secretly exercising the power of God's throne; or coming forth in the exercise of the power of His own peculiar kingdom, without any transitional state or other condition of things, the one beginning in the instant the other ends. Whereas it is certain that the immensely important fact of the rapture of the church takes place between the two, whatever the interval, and that Christ cannot receive the power of His own peculiar kingdom below, till this has taken place. Nor can this rapture take place till after He has left the throne, from whence it is evident the harvest cannot either (at any rate an important part of it). Then he applies the Revelation exclusively to the first (omitting

the chapters at the end which the book conducts to, but which are not its subject), and affirms the characteristics of the Revelation to be the characteristics of our dispensation. This is natural, and necessary to the writer's point of view. But is it the fact? These are the characteristics: "Christ hidden with God, Israel blinded, the Gentiles supreme and glorious, the Church suffering."

The first expression is simply a mistake. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. This is clearly another thing than the mere fact of Christ's absence, and His being hidden with God. It expresses a condition, not an outward fact. And where do we find Christ in the Revelation? As the Son of man walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. I do not believe this is at all contradictory to His being hidden in God. It is another point of view altogether. And this is what is often overlooked in this book, that one statement (complete to man's mind, and by which he would shut out consequently everything else) opens in God's mind to let in a multitude of things. Christ, according to Scripture, is absent, and hid in God. Yet He is present, and manifests Himself to His people. Both these are true at the same time. As an outward worldly fact, Christ is absent; spiritually, He is present. The littleness of man's mind, occupied about material things, and judging from them, negatives readily one thing from the existence of another, as if all were material; while divine power makes true together what to us is impossible. How can a spiritual body eat, and have flesh and bones? or how can flesh and bones go through a shut door? How then can we close the door on the wildest imaginations and all kinds of notions? Not by drawing conclusions by man's

reasoning. We have no door to close or open, but to believe all God has said, and nothing else.

But in the prophetic part of the book is Christ thus hid in God? Is it in this way He is presented? He is seen as a Lamb slain in the throne. He comes forth and receives the book—is celebrated as worthy to take it; He opens the seals. In a word, whatever the effect may be, He is presented as acting j not, perhaps, as visible on earth, but as a Person worshipped and acting in heaven, and yet previously to His mission and kingdom; for He is opening the seals, which reveal what precedes it, before He comes forth. It is then a misquotation to say hid with God, which entirely alters the sense; and He is not presented as hid in God, but as coming forth from the throne, the object of special attention, to receive the book from God's hand.6 Next we have, "The Gentiles supreme and glorious." Are wars, famines, death, crying out to the rocks to cover them, "the Gentiles supreme and glorious?" They may have been so; but it is not what is characteristic of the book. Nor is there anything in the book which shews it to be characteristic of the period of which it treats. "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth" is not a presentation of Gentiles supreme and glorious, that I can see—a time, too, when men are seeking death and cannot find it. The Revelation treats of certain judicial actings of God. The Gentiles, till then supreme and glorious, may be their object. But it can hardly be said that the execution of judgments on any one is characteristic of their supremacy and glory. We are told that they are characteristic of the period. But how are they so? It may be proved, perhaps from elsewhere, that they are so in spite of these chastening judgments; but the period of which the Revelation treats

cannot be characterised by things contrary to what is found in the Revelation. The statement is made to prove that our dispensation and the period of which the Revelation treats are the same, not perhaps in limits of time, but in nature. But the proofs of this, as to the period of which the Revelation treats, must be drawn from the Revelation itself. But the fact is, that the Revelation speaks of quite other things, namely, the judgment of God on the Gentiles. This may suppose them supreme and glorious, when the judgment overtakes them, and that the abuse of their supremacy may have been the occasion of these chastisements and their final judgment: but then these chastisements and this judgment can hardly be called the period of their supremacy and glory.

It may be alleged that the time of the beast's reign is clearly a time of supremacy and glory, for power is given him over all nations, etc. But then this cannot be said to be characteristic of our dispensation; because, according to the writer, Christianity and Christians, unless a few inattentive ones, are beyond the limits of his power, and a new testimony is set up, namely, the two witnesses. So that this can hardly, I suppose, be called our dispensation; unless the government of the world be so exclusively the subject of it, that our dispensation, the church dispensation, has nothing to do with Christianity at all, but that it is just as much ours when a new testimony is raised up on its withdrawal.

And here I would add a remark as to this final power of Antichrist. It is by no means properly a continuation of the Gentile imperial power. That this imperial power is extraordinarily in his hands, I admit; but it is not a continuance of it. It is a resurrection of it. And the

difference is very great indeed—nothing less than this, that the throne of the Gentiles was set up by God (however abused); whereas it is Satan gives this last power, his throne, and great authority. That the kings of the earth give him their authority is quite true, but it is the dragon that has given him his throne. The statement of the chapter thus seems altogether unsustainable and objectionable—the most objectionable thing of all, to my mind, being, that everything spiritual is totally excluded from what is said to be essentially distinctive as a characteristic of the present period. Nothing properly belonging to the church enters into this at all. It is entirely dropped from the statement of the writer. The government of the world is all that is in his mind.

But I feel that a godly mind may say, though sensible of this, and rejecting the statement of the writer as spiritually evil, Well, but what is this Psalm no? how do you explain it?

First, I recall the remark that the new translation is unproved, and, as it seems to me, unwarranted. If it were so, it would alter the whole meaning of the passage in the most important way; because God would have subjugated all Christ's foes, in order that they should be His footstool. If God were making them such by the actings of the power of His throne, they would be subdued by the actings of power, before Christ began to act at all. The whole judicial reign of Christ, and the millennial scheme would be false. But making His enemies His footstool is merely by the authority of His power giving them up to be trampled upon by Him. Next, it is connected with the rejection of Messiah on earth, whereon Jehovah calls Him up to sit at the right hand of power, until His enemies should be given up to

Him. The chief enemies actually in view in the psalm are His enemies, amongst whom He will rule down here—"rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" — earthly enemies, when the rod of His power will be sent out of Zion. This is all that is actually spoken of in this psalm.

But, as in the analogous Psalm 8, where though the subjection of earthly creatures is mentioned, yet from a general (there a universal) term, the apostle applies it to everything but God the Father; so here, I apprehend, anything that takes the place of adversary or enemy will be given into His hand. Thus, in a passage which I do not doubt to be an allusion to this, the apostle makes it universal: "He [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet": and thus the apostle makes it universal, although the psalm speaks specifically only of His rod of power sent out of Zion. The time at which God puts His enemies thus generally under the hand of Christ, or what passes until He actually takes the rod of His power in Zion, the psalm is totally silent upon. It is not (save the broad general fact, that He is to be at the right hand of power, expecting till that time, and seated as having nothing more to do for His friends7) occupied with what passes until the rod of power is in Zion. We know that all that regards the church will have happened before that moment, so that we are sure the silence of the psalm must leave space for it. How much, the psalm will say nothing about; but the statement that there is none is clearly false; for the church is caught up, the marriage of the Lamb takes place, before Antichrist is destroyed; and Antichrist must be destroyed before the rod of His power goes out of Zion. The heavenly part of Christ's actings is omitted in the psalm. These must be sought elsewhere. But there are

such actings: and thus the interpretation which confines to the instant of His rising up from the throne the closing of the age, and His assuming His power in the new age, is altogether untenable. It is clear, for example, that the whole of the harvest is before the new age, yet it is die Son of man that sends forth His angels.

If it be alleged that all this happens before He leaves His throne, then the whole reasoning and system of the author fails; because the church would be taken away before He left the throne and before Christ came to receive it. Yet it is to meet Him in the air; and, if this be not inconsistent with His sitting on His throne at that time, it is quite clear that the reasoning from the psalm comes to nothing; because its force lies in this, that He is on that throne till His enemies are put under Him, and consequently the church is here, and our dispensation continues: whereas in the other case, the church would be gone before what the writer calls the end of our dispensation on His rising up. If He has risen up before He receives the church, there is some interval passed over in the psalm: so that the argument as to the instantaneous closing is false in that case also. In either case the using it as a proof of exact synchronism is good for nothing.

No: the psalm speaks at length of the Jewish part of the subject, to wit, the rod of power in Zion—the Messiah part. It states in general terms Messiah’s place till Jehovah does a certain act of authority, but leaves all open as to interval of time, and manner of accomplishment, by which Christ enters upon the earthly part of this power spoken of in the psalm. We know that, whatever be the manner of it, an immensely important fact takes place at least three years and a half

before the establishment of Christ's power in Zion, namely, the destruction of Satan's heavenly power, or his casting out of heaven. I know that the writer seeks elsewhere to distinguish between his power in the air and his being in the presence of God: the former continuing after his casting out from the latter. But this is mere gratuitous statement: for in the passage which is interpreted in the latter way, he is cast down to the earth, and his place found no more in heaven.

If this be so, it is clear the Revelation treats of this peculiar time, a time yet future, when God is occupied with bringing in the Firstbegotten into the world (the habitable world), but before He is so brought in, up to chapter 19 where He is introduced."8 If it be future, as the author states, and an acting of God which He has not yet begun at all, it cannot be our dispensation; because, otherwise, our dispensation would exist without what characterises it. It is not the world to come till after chapter 19, nor Psalm no after verse 2 of that psalm. It embraces a peculiar period, then, occupied with transitional events, from the time God is introducing the Firstbegotten till the time of His giving up the kingdom, including (but only in description, not historically) the time of the reign of the Son. It is the history of judgment, not of grace, though saints may be preserved in it and their security and joy celebrated. The church properly belongs to the time of patient grace, the acceptable time, the day of salvation.

"Christ In His Relation To The Churches"

We are here arrived at a most important subject, where, if ever, we may find something of the spiritual and heavenly character of the church of God during this

dispensation. But I would draw at once attention to the title—Christ's relation to the churches. Is that all? Has He no relation to the church? Is there nothing during this dispensation of what is special in Christ's relationship to the church? This book "especially refers to the period during which Christ is hidden with God" — "the church being a body chosen out of the nations and separated to God." The church, then, is spoken of as regards this period. "We might expect in a book treating of this period [though all the actings of God spoken of in it are, according to the author, future] that His excellent relation to such a body would be distinctly marked." Now let the reader examine this chapter, and say what this excellent relation is, or see whether he finds nothing about it at all. The very title betrays the fact, and what is in the writer's mind. It is," Christ in His relation to the churches," not to the church.

"Accordingly" (page 15), "the very first chapter reveals Christ in His relation to the churches." His excellent relation to the church during the period He is hidden with God is His walking in judgment in the midst of the churches. There it is His excellent relation is "distinctly marked." Nor can there be any doubt of its being the full object of the writer's contemplation; for it is said, "It is a kingdom set to confess Him thus—to own union with Him in glory, and seek likeness to Him in suffering obedience here." And all His excellent relation to such a body (a kingdom) is that He is walking in the midst of the candlesticks of gold. In respect to "union with Him in glory," this is all which "His excellent relation to such a body" amounts to—that by which it is "distinctly marked."

Let us come- to some particulars, and we shall see the entire confusion of the statements in detail. The Revelation treats, we are told, of the period during which Christ is hidden with God. Hence His relation to the church would be marked. Its chief subject is the relation of the throne of God to the nations, but it has another object in relation to the churches; it reveals the present relation of Christ to them, but the Gentiles supreme and glorious, and the church suffering. This characterises our dispensation, and the period of which the Revelation treats.

But is it merely another object during this period? Why is it concealed that the period is distinguished, as well as the object? And therefore if this account of the churches reveals the present relation of Christ to them—the prophetic part, which treats of the Gentiles, is after the close of the present relation of Christ to the churches. The apostle is directed to write “the things which he had seen,” “the things which are,” and “the things which are after these.” Now “the things which are” are the seven churches; and then the apostle is caught up to see the things which are “after these.” So that “the things that are” are closed before the prophetic part begins; or else the things which come after certain others, whose history has been ended, are at the same time with them. Yet this is what the chapter leaves us to suppose.

Next, it is stated that “He hath made it a kingdom, even a priestly kingdom.” It is never said, He has made “it” a kingdom. He has made us a kingdom, supposing the new reading right. And this makes all the difference; because it is then, not a sphere of government, but a term of personal dignity, just as priest is. And though this is

sought to be eked out by the terms “a kingdom of priests, and a kingdom of kings,” yet it is clearly a sphere of government; for it is added “His, and His only, to govern.” And if so, there is no warrant to say “of kings”; because kingdom means a thing governed, not governing, according to the author himself. This is merely saving appearances, in order to avoid the idea of taking away the glory of the saints. In chapter 5 the term kings is applied to Israel. If the church be a kingdom in the midst of kingdoms, and that this is its present relation, surely we do not reign now, even if we be reigned over by Christ. And it is a mere delusion to confound Christ’s reigning over us now (and therefore our being a kingdom), and our reigning with Him hereafter, as being expressed by the same word kingdom. It is when Christ’s present relation to the churches will have quite closed, that we shall be kings in that sense, as reigning with Him.

Next, to make the church merely a kingdom lowers it altogether from the proper scriptural idea of His excellent relation to such a body. And what is meant here by such a body? “It is a kingdom in the midst of kingdoms.” It is not, though the word body is used, His—Christ’s—body. It is a kingdom which He governs which He orders by His own peculiar laws. It is true the author speaks of giving it life, but this only increases the confusion, and reduces life-giving union to the idea of a governed body. Accordingly (as we have seen) it is accomplished in relation to the churches among which He walks, which churches, we may further remark, exist no longer. “We cannot hear” the Lord’s addresses “as churches, for churches have ceased to be.” (Page 31.) All idea of the unity of the body of Christ as the state

and portion of the church, as sitting in heavenly places in Him, is altogether lost. His excellent relation to such a body is to a kingdom governed upon earth, and that is all. Indeed more than all: for that which is addressed in the Revelation directly exists no more. It is in vain to say, that this is the way it is treated in the Revelation; because what is sought to be proved is, that the Revelation treats of our dispensation—the church dispensation. If it does not, and that the Revelation does not speak of our dispensation, of the church in its proper relation to Christ, but merely of churches as once existing, but which exist no longer, and of certain prophetic subjects which come after churches have ceased to exist, then the whole system falls which makes it treat of the church dispensation, and places us in its prophetic statements. If it do treat of it, then, I repeat, the writer lowers the distinct marking of Christ's excellent relation to such a body, to churches, and to the government of a kingdom in the midst of kingdoms, setting aside the proper relation of the church to Christ.

But to proceed. It is alleged that candlesticks of gold lead to the candlestick of the tabernacle, and then, that "every thing that typified the person or attributes of Christ, as seen in heaven, was of gold." That the gold may shew that the candlesticks or churches are viewed in a divine or heavenly character, may be very true. But it is not Christ's Person, or attributes, which are seen here, nor is He seen in heaven. The Spirit speaks of churches, and of Christ upon earth walking amongst them. Lights in the holy place was not the proper place of churches, but lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, presenting divine excellency among men. But John turned, and saw seven golden candlesticks. He

did not see the sanctuary, nor candlesticks in it. To say he was for a season withdrawn from the sphere of mere human thought and action is merely confounding with words. Of course he was, when he had a vision; but he was in the isle called Patmos, and turned, and saw the candlesticks. Afterwards, “after these things,” he is taken out of the sphere of earth, and it is said to him “Come up hither”; but this he saw on earth—a vision no doubt; but John was not yet for a season out of earthly connection, unless the isle called Patmos be so. There was no hidden and separated sanctuary, no secret holy place. All this statement is merely added and contrary to the statements of the chapter. That he saw them in vision, according to the abstract or divine idea, of what they should be, or were, according to that idea, and not in the ordinary exercise of apostolic care, is quite true; but the vision was not what it is represented here to be. Moreover, Christ is seen with a golden girdle, it is true; but His feet were like fine brass, not of gold, which is stated to be His heavenly character. The author states that He walked among the candlesticks, not the churches; but it is explained by the word itself, that the candlesticks were the churches.

And if He was walking among the candlesticks judging, it was clear it was not the candlesticks as the divine type of what they were in God’s mind that He would judge. The candlesticks were God’s idea of them. The report is of things that are—what man had actually made of them here below. Christ judicially brought what the Spirit saw to bear on what man had produced. I would only add that, while the judgment was priestly as well as divine, yet I do not (whatever His capacity to give) find grace in anything characterise His dealings here— i.e., His

activity in priestly grace: for patience in judgment is grace. But the next chapter will give us further matter on what is most important in this.

“Seven Candlesticks of Gold”

They instruct us “respecting the order of the Gentile churches.” “When the Lord Jesus was personally on earth, the church was not yet ordered,” etc.—nor (I apprehend) built, nor the foundation laid. That in the purpose of God the disciples were to be of it is true. That they had life as all saints have it true too.9 But to say that the church was not ordered according to the form which He intended it to assume among men—that He was collecting, not arranging the materials, preparing the living stones, not building them together; is not a scriptural representation of the matter. It puts Christ’s death, Christ’s resurrection, the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, the presence of the Holy Ghost as the power of unity, the assertion that if He did not die He would abide alone, that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—all that is stated in Scripture of the church—entirely aside. He died to gather together into one the children of God which were scattered abroad. Without His death, and the presence of the Holy Ghost, this could not be. Till His death He would have set aside without warrant God’s order in abandoning Israel for another body. The first husband, the law, was not dead, and Christ came in His infinite grace under it. Its curse was not borne yet. Nothing that could set aside Israel, or set up the church, was done—not the first foundation stone laid. It was not mere ordering. He had not done the work on which it was to be built. Nor was He collecting materials for it, though

they were formed into it afterwards. In God's counsels so it was to be; but He could not act publicly about it, till He was rejected and crucified. On what should the church be based? Nor could He teach His death even to His disciples, but as His rejection by His own nation and delivery to the Gentiles.

Nor is it ever said that they were quickened with heavenly life: unless we use it in the vague sense, that everything that is from above is heavenly. But it is never said, unless we cite the passage, "Born again," as from above (Greek, anothen), which I do not believe. That the divine life came from above, I do not doubt. That it was properly heavenly is never said in Scripture. Further, it is entirely unscriptural and very evilly ambiguous to speak of "everlasting union with Him who was 'the new thing' in the earth"; because Christ says, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." Scripture never speaks of union with Christ while on earth. Never. It always speaks of union with an exalted Head.

And it is evident to me, that when Christ breathed on them after His resurrection, He conveyed an accession of living power. The second Adam is a lifegiving Spirit; and as God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, so here Christ breathes upon them—does not send down the Holy Ghost from heaven so that they should be the habitation of God through the Spirit; but He does what He never did before His resurrection. But I have no doubt that this was life more abundantly. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus it is that has made us free from the law of sin and death. He quickened Lazarus, but it was not a question of his soul, but victory over death by power, in answer to His cry to the Father, though He was

in living power then the resurrection and the life. But His resurrection was another thing. It was according to the power of an endless life; and this was not Lazarus's case. We are quickened together with Him; and this is so true, that, notwithstanding Lazarus and other persons raised to life during the period recorded in the Old Testament, He is the first-fruits of them that slept. All these cases belonged to, and were brought to pass in, the old thing, through the power of God in it.

If man had not been in the state he really was, totally and fundamentally corrupt, so that atonement was absolutely necessary, there was power, living power in Him (the Father had given Him to have life in Himself—in Him was life) to restore all. But as Adam was not in fact the head of the race till fallen and in sin; so Christ is not a corporate Head till He has wrought out righteousness, and we can be made it in Him, and then we belong to the new creation. Whereas, divine and perfect as He was, He, supposing He was the new thing, was come into, and dealing with, the old—God's last dealing, we may say with it (save a peculiar special intervention with Israel), and therefore abode alone till the foundation was laid of the new thing, the new creation, in His death, by which He passed out of and closed the old, and His resurrection, by which He began in power the new, breaking the bands of Satan who had conquered in the old, in his last stronghold—strong by God's judgment. And hence when, in instructing us what the church is, the apostle speaks of the new creation, He speaks of our being risen and quickened together with Christ, and set in heavenly places in Him, the middle wall of partition being broken down to make both one, making peace, and to present both in one body by the

cross: that is, He speaks exactly in the opposite way to the writer of the “Thoughts.”

Accordingly, it is a serious thing to make the death of Christ necessary only to the ordering of the church, and not to its founding and existence; and to make Christ, alive in the earth before that solemn, and in the literal sense of the word, all-important act, the centre of union, when the apostle says it could not be till after—nay, when Christ says that He abode alone till then. It has been urged, and rightly urged, that incarnation was not union. But the Lord affirms further, there could not be union without death. He was to die to gather. We are baptised into one body. That life was communicated I fully recognise; but I do not see that this is necessarily union in the sense of forming the body, which is everything as regards the church. I find it distinguished from heavenly things, in Christ’s conversation with Nicodemus. He had spoken of earthly things, when speaking of regeneration. For the Jews, taking earthly things of God, must be regenerate. But with this He contrasts the heavenly things, and, when He mentions these, states to Nicodemus, that the Son of man must be lifted up.

That God forgave from Adam’s sin downward in respect of the cross is plain, and stated in Romans 3:25; and that He communicated life to the old saints I do not doubt—eternal life. It is too clear to me to reason on it here, for without it none shall see nor enter the kingdom of God. But Christ is never spoken of as the Head of the body, the church united to Him, until He was Himself exalted to the right hand of God, and had accomplished the work which made the church’s whole place before God. It was not therefore merely arranging the church’s form

that was in question; it was doing the work which could give it a place before God, lay the foundation for its existence, and make the peace, reconciling Jew and Gentile into one body unto God by the cross. Is this rightly treated in this passage of the writer? Does he speak of it as the Scriptures speak of it in any one single place? He has quoted none—not one. It is pure assertion, and assertion entirely different from, and opposite to, Paul's statements in the Ephesians, and indeed in all his epistles.

The next paragraph (page 22) introduces fresh confusion. The union of the church with Christ as sitting in heavenly places is totally shut out. We have it gathered, but not ordered, during Christ's life; and visible on earth from Pentecost. But all Paul's statements in his epistles are passed over altogether, and what is spoken of as the church constituted turns out only to be a particular church on earth, with a difference of metropolitan power, but all the churches of God are essentially alike. Thus the church is silently dropped into churches, and the whole idea of union and unity entirely set aside, and the church and churches confounded (the church being after all the church at Jerusalem, which had essential resemblance to all the churches of God—only that at Jerusalem had singular dignity pertaining to it alone). I know not how Christians will estimate this dealing with the existence and privileges of "the church," the pillar and ground of the truth, the body and fulness of Him who filleth all in all. But they will do well to consider, if they have ever received any comfort or spiritual blessing and power from Paul's epistles on this subject, what becomes of it in these statements. It is very clear that what rilled the

mind of the apostle, what the Spirit there expatiates on, has no place in them at all. The church may be a visible body on earth, gathered though not ordered before Christ's death, equivalent to churches; but in heavenly places one body, it is not known here. I will add elsewhere a word as to its standing, hopes, and laws; for the present, briefly as to its order. It was metropolitan—all that could be called the church, for it was constituted at Jerusalem; but "the church at Jerusalem was … the centre of light and control." And what makes this more remarkable is, that we are told that one candlestick would have fitly represented it, as it actually does in Scripture "represent Jerusalem when she shall nationally assume her metropolitan position in the millennial earth," thus bringing down the church, as far as possibly can be, to the position of Jerusalem on earth in the latter day. "The appropriate emblem" for the one "is the character of the symbol employed to represent" the other.

We are told, accordingly, that "when the church at Antioch was in difficulty, it sends to Jerusalem for direction, and receives an authoritative reply." "This then was a relation that could not be fitly symbolised by two candlesticks unconnected, equal and alike."

"But when Jerusalem had rejected the testimony of the church, Paul was raised up to carry the truth among the Gentiles—he established a new order among the churches which he gathered. This order was not metropolitan."

Would it be believed, from this statement, that the difficulty at Antioch arose from teachers come from Judea years after the raising up of Paul; and that it was

Paul and Barnabas that went up from Antioch, after the metropolitan order had been dropped accordingly in extensive regions; and, moreover, that they went up to the apostles and elders about this question —that the apostles and elders came together to consider it, though the letter is written in the name of all; and that Paul moreover delivers the decrees in those churches which were not in this metropolitan order at all, but independent one of another? That there was a blessed effort to maintain unity between the scenes of Paul's labours and the Jewish churches, when trouble had broken out at Antioch (where the church had been planted by the scattering of the Jerusalem church, and the starting point of the independent ministry of Paul), is most true. But the facts and the dates shew that, however strictly it may have been a mother church, this affair, and the distinction of Paul, is all misstated. Furthermore, the presence of the apostles was metropolitan, and, so long as earth remained something, Jerusalem did too. But all this was after the scattering of the Jewish church, except the apostles, on Jerusalem's rejecting the testimony. The order was, in a certain sense, metropolitan,10 because of Jerusalem and because of the apostles.

But a more serious question connects itself with this—the new order of the apostle Paul. The evident object here is, to shew that the teaching of Paul was the same; his order not unity, but independency; that unity was the metropolitan system, which ended with Jerusalem's rejection of the testimony of the church there—only there was a moral unity preserved by Christ Himself walking amongst them, so that "the saint journeying found the same thing in each place, and the world could

then take notice of it. They knew that in the several Gentile cities there were those gathered together who, in faith, and doctrine, and manners, were emphatically one. The whole of the Gentile churches, though locally separated, together constituted the one church of the living God, and as such were known and recognised among men." I pray the reader to read this statement over again, and to say, is this really so? Is it Paul's statement of the unity of the church? And the writer is speaking of Paul's work and teaching. It is just nothing more nor less than modern independency setting aside all Paul's doctrine on the whole subject. We will compare them.

Paul "preached the same gospel; but He established a new order among the churches which he gathered. This order was not metropolitan. Seven Gentiles churches are represented by seven candlesticks of gold, separate one from another—all equal—all alike; connected by no visible bond, neither revolving round any common centre. They were independent one of another," etc.

It is very evident that this is to meet the statement made by other brethren, that while Paul preached the same gospel as to salvation—of which no one of course entertains any doubt —he was at the same time specially employed of the Lord to bring out the unity of the church as sitting in heavenly places in Christ, the seven churches having been considered as the history rather of the decline of the churches, the actual historical state in which John found them, but selected by the Holy Ghost as affording morally a sample of Christ's dealings with "the churches," and by many as an outline of the church's history in general, the prophetic part of the book coming "after these things."

In opposition to the idea of Paul's peculiarly bringing out the heavenly unity of the church, he is stated (the italics are the writer's of the "Thoughts") to have preached the same gospel; and while metropolitan unity existed before on earth, Paul set up independent churches. I have already remarked that heavenly unity is entirely left out here.

The seven churches of the Apocalypse are adduced as proofs of Paul's work. Doubtless he had been the means of founding many of them, though not all; but their then state was no part of Paul's preaching. It is not Paul who presents to us seven distinct churches, all equal, all alike, or any other churches whatever in this state; it is John, and that when they had ceased to be under Paul's care. That local churches existed no one doubts (i.e., local assemblies of God); but there is no teaching of the apostle Paul on the subject. The fact of their existence is on record.

This is his teaching.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," etc.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the

Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Again, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery … which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God … to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus." Having prayed then to Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to His power that worketh in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, we have, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." "He ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men." "And he gave some, apostles, etc.; till we all come in the unity of the faith, etc… but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love." And again, "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it … for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

Again, 1 Corinthians 12:12, "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one

body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free," etc.

Romans 12:4, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Now, I would ask, after these quotations, is not the statement made by the author of Paul's teaching a concealment of that which is peculiarly his, all being reduced to earth—Jewish metropolitanism, and a new order of independent churches, established by Paul? That Samaria, and afterwards Antioch, and all the Gentile churches planted by Paul, were maintained in unity by the circumstances which occurred we have seen. But is not the object of his special teaching unity, and not independency? That there were assemblies of God in each town is admitted on all hands. That they acted locally, according to need, no one denies. But where is this doctrine of independency alluded to by the apostle? Is not in fact the unity of the whole body, acting by joints and bands, and its several members, the peculiar topic of the apostle's teaching on this subject? Is there no unity but metropolitan unity, or is it a mere unity, as "in faith, and doctrine, and manners, emphatically one"? Does this truly represent what Paul's teaching was? And now note the character of this unity. It was founded on Christ's death; by this the middle wall of partition was broken down, that He should make both one, making in Himself of twain one new man. The existence of the unity of which the apostle speaks was based on this.11 It was now that to the principalities and powers in heavenly places was to be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; other things had

shewn other wisdom, this a new kind. But this wisdom, now made known to principalities and powers by the church was the subject of the eternal purpose of God— this church now based on the death of Christ, and formed by the Holy Ghost.

This unity, as it was based on the death of Christ, so also was formed by the Holy Ghost. There was one body, and one Spirit. By one Spirit they were baptised into one body— so much so that from Christ the Head by various joints and bands the whole body fitly joined together, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." For even as the many members of the human body make one body, so was Christ. So that we, being many, are one body in Christ, having gifts according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, etc., so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body." Is this the doctrine conveyed by the statement that, on the cessation of the unity of metropolitan order because of the rejection of the church by Jerusalem, Paul established churches independent one of another? Or is the unity of the church based on Christ's death and formed by the Spirit (so as to be a witness even to principalities and powers in heavenly places of the manifold wisdom of God, by what now took place) that which the apostle most peculiarly sets forth?

Nor even did union of faith, doctrine, and manners, however emphatic, make this. It was corporate unity, a

body. It had its joints and bands and members by the one power of the Holy Ghost working in a whole. To what, or to which of these independent churches, did Paul belong? Or were the other twelve who were in none of Paul's establishing, not of the body? and the prophets—were they set in a church, or in the church? Or any other gifts? See 1 Corinthians 12:28-30.

No one who has taken the pains to examine Scripture can doubt that the whole statement of the author, whether we refer to the facts he mentions or to the doctrine he omits, is quite different from Scripture. According to the author, the case of Antioch is a proof of metropolitan order: which passing away, Paul is raised up to establish independent churches. Whereas it is Paul himself who goes up to Jerusalem about the case at Antioch and carries the decrees to all the churches, which he had then established. On the other hand, the great point on which the apostle insists as to this is the unity of the body, formed by the Holy Ghost on the breaking down of the middle wall of partition by the death of Christ, so that principalities and powers might learn a new kind of wisdom of God. The Lord give us at least whom it so much concerns, who are the objects of it, to learn and value this new kind of wisdom!

There are yet a few remarks to make on this part of the subject. In page 26 the author, in insisting on the unity of the church of God, presents the unity of the saints in each city as that of which he has to treat. "This is the only pattern for the Gentile churches. That they have long since ceased to answer to it is plain." And this he holds so strongly that he says, page 31, "I scarcely need repeat that it is idle, and indeed sinful, to pretend to a church standing when unity has ceased to exist; and

unity has ceased to exist, for it is neither found locally nor generally." Now if this be so, then has Christ's relationship to the church ceased to exist: for that with which He was in relationship, according to this system, does not exist at all: individuals may hear the message but that is all. Nor is this mere inference. We read (pages 14, 15), "But the church, being a body chosen out of the nations, and separated to God, was placed under the immediate government of Christ." "He hath made it a kingdom," etc. "It is set to our union with Him in glory," etc. "We might expect therefore in such a book as the Revelation, which especially refers to the period during which Christ is hidden with God, that His excellent relation to such a body would be distinctly marked. Accordingly the very first chapter reveals Christ in His relation to the churches."

But then His excellent relation to such a body, to the church separated to God out of the nations, is entirely gone, for there are no churches to be in relation to. Just see where this system leads; and that because the very idea given of the church by the apostle is wholly rejected. Paul has set up independent churches; the churches have ceased to exist; and therefore the relationship of Christ to the church, in which it is set to own union with Him, is gone. And yet this is the relationship which belonged to the whole period of Psalm no, and the body He was able to maintain in its right relation to God. It would be a sin to suppose the existence of that with which the relationship was established: for the relation to the churches is the amount of His relationship to the body. I feel it useless to pursue the consequences of thus rejecting Paul's statements as to the church, as in pages 28, 29. The true

church position, the test of true churchship, has no kind of connection with the unity of the body and its members.

I have only to observe as to the church of Ephesus that the remark in the note, and given even in notes of quotation, “among the seven, where it is now standing in my secret sanctuary,” is just the imagination of the author. It is an address to the angel of the church at Ephesus (to be sent as a written epistle to that church), threatening to come to it—a word which certainly does not give the idea of referring to what was in His secret sanctuary. Was it there He was to come? And when He says “thee” to the church, was it addressed at Ephesus or in the sanctuary? The reader may refer to the note (page 30), and see if I have in any way overstated the author’s view in this important point. Catholic unity is thus described. “They [the churches] were together separated, had a common calling and service, were alike one to another, were nourished and ordered by the same hand. This was catholic unity.” Let this be compared with Ephesians 4; 1 Corinthians 12, or Romans 12, where, note, the apostle is speaking of one body by the operations of the Holy Ghost on earth acting in these members, and increasing and edifying itself in love thereby. It will then soon be seen where, and what, is the fundamental difference between the author and the apostle. I do not enquire as to the consequences of this. The perusal of these chapters will soon lead the reader to see its bearing on gifts, the exercise of them in different localities as by members of the body of Christ, the ministry, and other accessory questions. I enquire into the scriptural justness here, not the consequences.

Some remarks are called for on the notes. I shall be forgiven for expressing here how painful a task I feel it, to pursue the unceasing rashness and recklessness of assertion which characterises this work. But all of these assertions have an object, and bear on some part of the system maintained, or seek to discredit silently what has been advanced by others. Thus the character of servants has been adduced, as shewing that this book stands on a different ground of communication from the Holy Ghost's communications in the church, as to those things which are received and understood by that unction from the Holy One, by which the infants in Christ knew all things—the Father's communications to the children. This is admitted: indeed the fact cannot be denied. But still the effect must be done away; and we are told that" it is important to observe how continually the name' Jesus 'is used throughout this book. No Jewish confession of Messiah, as about to come; nothing, in short, but the Spirit, giving communion with the Father and His Son, would entitle any to be regarded as servants of Jesus. The place and character of John marks that of those who are considered witnesses to Jesus throughout this book." The object of this is to shew that the testimony throughout this book is a Christian testimony, such as John's own testimony was in his own place and character. This is a pure assumption, and an assertion without any proof whatever. "The place and character of John marks that of those who are considered witnesses to Jesus throughout this book." To this statement we may assent or not according to our own judgment; for no proof is given but one, namely, that the author says so. It would be unwise to reject it for this reason, but equally unwise to receive it. And

when he says “considered witnesses” —considered by whom?

First, no one is called a servant of Jesus in this book but John himself, in the church of Thyatira the saints in general, and the angel who declares himself John’s fellow-servant. So that this book would prove nothing, save so far as the angel being called a fellow-servant goes, if it be of Jesus (as is to be supposed, as he is speaking to John, who is called Jesus’s servant here); and in that case the author’s assertion would be unfounded, for an angel does not answer the description which, according to him, alone entitles any one to be so designated. But, leaving this aside, which would contradict his statement, the statement itself thus becomes immaterial, though so carefully stated in italics. For an apostle and the saints in a church are stated to be Christ’s servants, which I suppose no one doubts, who has read the New Testament. But this proves nothing as to no one else being called so. The angel’s account of himself goes to disprove it. The aim is to prove that the witnesses must be all of them such, and that therefore the Revelation speaks of the church. But the angel (fellow-servant of John) is sent by Jesus to witness or testify these things in the churches; so that it does not seem an exclusive idea.

But there is a further difficulty. “The Angel,” in chapter 11, who will not be denied, I suppose, to be the Lord Jesus (in chapter 10, indeed, the author treats it so, and very justly)— the Angel endows His two witnesses. But at this time, according to the author (page 124), Christianity is withdrawn from Jerusalem; and a new and different testimony is raised up, which speaks of Jesus as Son of God rejected, and declares it too late for

present acceptance, and the joy of faith by the Holy Ghost. So that we see witnesses to Jesus and His witnesses, and those the most fully and prominently spoken of in the book, who are not, according to the author in his remarks in page 124 and elsewhere, what, for general purposes, he says they must be, in page 33.

In result, no one is called in the prophetic part of the book12 (and that is the question) servant of Jesus but an "angel"; and "His [Christ's] witnesses "is applied to those who bear testimony to Him when Christianity is not there at all. By the statement of these facts we find that the assertions of the author are not only unsustained, but totally unfounded. The fallacy of his argument (and I beg the reader to remember that no scriptural proof is attempted; it is a mere abstract assertion)—the fallacy, I say, is this that, because one placed in a blessed and heavenly situation acts, and is addressed in a lower place, therefore all addressed in that lower place must be in the higher. The same fallacy as if I should say, Every man is an animal; therefore every animal must be a man. Let no one say that servants of Jesus13 must be sons of God. The statement is not true. And none are called servants of Jesus who are subjects of the prophecy. But John is said to bear witness: therefore every witness must be in the same place as John. Why so? We have seen, on the author's own shewing, that they are not. My son becomes my servant: is therefore, necessarily, every one of my servants a son? Christ is the faithful Witness. Is therefore every witness to Christ in the same position, or spoken of on the ground of Christ's position in the throne? There is no scripture statement, and the argument is good for nothing; and it supposes,

moreover, a fact (i.e., that some are called servants of Jesus) which is not the case.

But let us enquire what Scripture does afford us on this point. First: Were the disciples during the life-time of Jesus servants of Jesus? It is to be supposed they were, since He says, “Henceforth I call you not servants, I have called you friends.” Yet they were not in the condition the author supposes necessary. Remark the things contrasted. Jewish confession of Messiah as about to come—nothing in short but the Spirit giving communion with the Father and the Son. Now the disciples of Jesus during His life were in neither of these conditions. They had not the Spirit giving communion with the Father and the Son; and they went much farther than a Jewish confession of a Messiah about to come. The same may be applied to the two witnesses. On the author’s own shewing they have not the Spirit in this way (page 124); and yet they go far beyond a Jewish confession of Messiah, as about to come. “They will be able to speak of… the Son of God slain and hanged upon a tree—of the message of forgiveness through His blood despised, and now withdrawn— of the day of His glory with all its judgments being nigh, even at the doors.” So that the author’s division is altogether a false one. He leaves out exactly the point in question. It is contradicted by himself; for he introduces elsewhere a class of confession which is neither one nor other of those he gives here; and hence the argument drawn from it as to the character of the witnesses of or to Jesus in the Revelation is disproved by his own statements.

Further: “The place and character of John marks that of those who are considered witnesses to Jesus throughout this book.” In what place and character?—an apostle?

No. He is not considered in this character here. The vessel of the Holy Ghost was to know things in the way of gift by his union with the Head. “It may seem strange,” says the author, “We should be instructed through an angel.” “If the truth communicated had pertained to the family, as such, it would not so have been.” What place and character does John then hold here? “Paul and John were not instructed through angels in feeding and ordering the churches. But, since the subject of the Revelation is God on the throne of His government in His relation to the nations, John, and the church as represented by him, are placed in a comparative distance.” Now, how is the church represented by him? He has the place of a prophet. How can he thus represent the church? Where is a word or a thought about his representing the church? or how does one addressing the church represent the church? This is a mere unfounded statement of the author to bring in the church into this condition, in order to prove that the church is found in it in the Revelation. But it is, as all these statements are, absolutely without proof, or an appearance of reason for the statement. When the church is seen or speaks in this book, it is always quite in another position. But let that pass. John is not in the apostolic place or character, and the truth communicated does not pertain to the family as such. Which, let the reader remark. “At present the Holy Spirit does not give the power of fellowship with God in the glory of His government.” John is placed in a comparative distance.

This then is the place and character of the witnesses in the book: not the proper Christian or church place at all; not with the communion of the Holy Ghost sent down

from heaven. Indeed, as I have stated, the church is always seen elsewhere when it is seen in this book. And so we shall find it stated. Not that Christians were not witnesses to Jesus— clearly they are, or ought to be; but that is not the character of the witness or testimony here. And the book clearly asserts that there is another kind of witness or testimony to Jesus— the testimony found in this book; which is not by the Holy Ghost sent down for fellowship and communion, or "communications pertaining to the family," but which nevertheless constitutes persons servants. "I am thy [John's] fellow servant," and John was the servant of Jesus, and a witness,14 "and of thy brethren the prophets: for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." This latter is what is called a reciprocal proposition, each member having the article; and therefore we are justified in reading it inversely: The Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Now here we get the declaration that this comparatively distant position, which is not for the communication of truth pertaining to the family as such, is nevertheless a testimony of Jesus. In Peter I get the Spirit of prophecy, while, of course, of just as much authority, contrasted with the gospel or church testimony which pertained to the family. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets was testifying, i.e., witnessing beforehand, and ministered things which are reported by them who have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Into these things the angels desire to look; of these they are themselves the messengers, because they are not properly of the family, though everything belongs to it. A steward is for the estate: with the family concerns he has nothing to do, though the family have with the estate too. In a word, it is the Spirit of prophecy

which characterises the witnesses in this book, and not John's own proper place as an apostle in the family; and therefore he speaks of himself only as in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, and not as an apostle in the church. Christ Himself takes no character beyond what He was, or will be on earth, in His title in the address; namely, faithful Witness, Firstbegotten from the dead, and Prince of the kings of the earth. And the celebration of the church's association with Christ in heavenly places is in the mouth of others, and that in heaven. The opening response of the saints (chap. 1:5, 6) and the closing desire of the bride (chap. 22:17) associate the church down here with it. The character of the witnesses then throughout this book is not a church character, but a prophetic angelic character, which we find (in Peter) contrasted in its nature with the testimony of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

That all this was suited to a state of things when all was out, of course, is most sure. That it has served in a measure of application, so far as it could be said there were no churches on earth and that apostasy had come in, and that it will suit a time of more decided manifestation of their principles, is most true; and so far blessed is he that keeps the sayings of this book in all this period. But it applies to no church condition, not to the family as such.

When the author says, "The church has not yet the seven Spirits of God" —where is it ever said it will?

When the author remarks how continually the name of Jesus is used throughout this book, the answer is, It is never used in the prophetic part of it, but in the expression of testimony, or witnesses of Jesus.15

Chapter 12:17: the dragon makes war with them. Babylon (chap. 17:6) is drunk with the blood of the martyrs or witnesses of Jesus. Chapter 19:10: “Thy brethren which have the testimony of Jesus; for the testimony of Jesus,” etc. And it is remarkable that, in the introduction and close of the book, before and after the prophetic part, where the name of Jesus is mentioned, it is always associated with this testimony; chap. 1:2, 5, 9. Christ Himself even becomes, so to speak, a prophet revealing what God gave to Him.

As to witness to Jesus, it is clear that it does not in itself suppose a church state, or the Holy Ghost as sent down from heaven as the power of the church’s unity: because John the baptist is spoken of expressly as bearing witness to Jesus. See John 5:30-39, in particular verse 36.

As to the assertion that this book “has the character and authority of other prophetic and apostolic writings,” the authority is admitted clearly; but how the same character, if “the truth communicated did not pertain to the family as such”? Is that the character of the apostolic writings? Or is the character of the prophetic and apostolic writings the same? When the author says, “The command given to the churches16to observe the things written herein”; the answer is, There is no command given to the churches. I do not doubt that any one that reads and observes the things that are written therein will be blessed. I do not doubt that it is for the church. The whole word is for the church. Everything that was written aforetime was written for our learning. The question is, not whether we are to keep the things which, by means of these revelations, may direct the saints (I do not doubt it), but whether the things

prophesied of directly concern the church in its present state. Now as regards a great part of the book, it clearly does not: none of the latter chapters do. The very important revelations as to the two witnesses do not. And therefore to say that the command to the churches in this book supposes that the church is in the circumstances prophetically revealed, is not true of the whole, and the use made of the passage therefore is unfounded; for if actually untrue of a part, it may be untrue of all: and the deduction is unfounded which from the existence of the exhortation infers applicability to the church. The fallacy is the same here as elsewhere, as if there could be nothing but the church as such, and Israel's state after the church is gone. It is assuming the whole question; and, I have to repeat here, an assumption denied by the statements of the author as to the two witnesses. I admit that we are interested in the events predicted in a sense different from the Old Testament prophecies; because the Old Testament prophecies predict the consequence of Israel's conduct, and the Revelation, the consequences of the church's or Christendom's conduct, and God's ways in this respect. Thence any one on the stage of Christendom now is very directly interested in all its contents, and that in the most serious and solemn way. But this does not prove that the faithful church will be in the circumstances of which it is thus warned, though the warning be of the deepest interest to it. The warnings and revelations may be just the means of hindering our being there, while they may be a guide and support to them who find themselves in it. This is certain as regards the two witnesses for the last three years and a half; and therefore the use of the passage as made by the author is necessarily false.

Hence it could not be given, as he alleges it to be, as a command to the churches, because a very considerable part will not be fulfilled in the churches at all. Nay, according to the author, they no longer exist even now. Hence the Spirit of God has stated it in a general way, applicable when the apostle wrote, applicable now when there are no churches, and applicable when a new testimony shall be in the special place of testimony, when Christianity is withdrawn. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and observe those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.” I have only to add this remark, that the present address and exhortation of John applies itself to those who were not in the circumstances; for he says, “Blessed are those that observe the things written therein”; and yet not as circumstances they were in, but on the contrary, because the time was at hand. That is, they were to anticipate the things revealed in it. I observe morally the things of a prophecy, not when the judgments prophesied are there. It is a revelation of future things to act on my conscience now. I do not mean that there may be no directions for saints when in them; there may be in particular cases. The Lord may say, as He has said elsewhere, “then do this,” and “then do that”; but a blessing on the observation of the things in a prophecy while it remains prophecy (and this is the case here) is not conduct looked for in the circumstances prophesied, and therefore cannot prove that we are in them.

The statement of the author is not what is in the Scripture; and the argument founded on it is unsound. The comparison he makes is the oft repeated fallacy,

which I have noticed, of stating an alternative which just leaves out the question.

What the author states about Christ is quite true. The passage speaks of Him who has been faithful, is risen, and will be manifestly glorified among men, but it says nothing about His being ascended, nothing of His being the Head of the body, nor as in the position in which He is connected with His body the church.

“Every eye shall see him” is opposed, I apprehend, to His being seen for testimony by chosen witnesses. I do not attach any importance to it, but it seems to me very clear that they also which pierced Him are exclusively the Jews; for I suppose the civilised Gentile nations would come under “every eye”; and, “they also which pierced him” refers to Zechariah 12. I agree that the wailing here must be distinguished from the true sorrow of the spared remnant—still as of the nation. They had pierced Him.

I do not understand what wailing against a person is. They are confounded at seeing Him, I apprehend; and wail about themselves. As to “this generation” (Matt. 24), it is clearly the Jewish unbelieving race: hence the tribes of the land wail. But what have the heathen to do with this generation in in Matthew? But this by the by.

But at the close we have a statement which must detain us for a moment. “One object of the Revelation is to shew that, during the whole period previous to the appearing of the Lord, Israel remains unconverted.” Which part of the Revelation treats of this? The author does not furnish the smallest iota of proof; and I humbly suspect his readers would be considerably embarrassed in finding out or naming in what this object of the

Revelation appeared. Israel's tribes are once mentioned as being sealed in the perfect number of one hundred and forty-four thousand as servants of God in their foreheads. I do not know whether this will be alleged as a proof that they are not converted. It would be a singular one at any rate.

Now I would humbly suggest, notwithstanding the assertion of the author, that while the Revelation says nothing directly about it—I urge that it is a very bold thing to say without any proof, that one of its objects is to shew that Israel will not— yet, that other scriptures clearly shew that there is a remnant turned to God, really converted, before the Lord comes, though those that are left have not received deliverance and salvation. The Lord Jesus expressly says, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, until ye say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Here we have a positive assertion of the Lord Jesus, that they will not see Him till they say, Blessed—till their heart be converted to receive Him. Again, Let any one read Isaiah 56, where Jewish blessings are promised, and yet it is only said "my salvation is near to come." Will it be said that persons of whom God says, that they choose the things that please Him, take hold of His covenant, that join themselves to the Lord to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants—that God in this describes unconverted people? Again, Isaiah 65, 66, where a remnant is distinguished by the Lord as His servants. See chapter 65:8-15, and 66:5, 14, where there is a remnant very expressly distinguished even from others that are spared. And here I would remark in passing (what seems to me the key to all Isaiah) from chapter 40 to the end: it is this word servant. Israel was Jehovah's

servant to be His witness. But Israel as in chapter 49 rejecting Jesus, He is the servant; and then the remnant at the close, who hear the Servant's voice, are themselves recognised as the servants to be blessed with Him in His earthly glory. They are thus described in chapter 51, and their progressive condition spoken of (chapter 51 to chap. 53:12). Then the atoning work of the true Servant is brought out. Again, not to mention a multitude of other Psalms, see Psalm 80, where Israel, God with Israel, and Israel's blessings are spoken of. Yet here it is prayed that the hand of Jehovah may be upon the man of His right hand, upon the Son of man, whom He made so strong for Himself. And, to go no farther, supposing the testimony of "the Son of God rejected"—stated by the author himself to be given in Jerusalem after Christianity is withdrawn—to be believed, surely the believers of this are not in an unconverted state, nor unprepared to receive Him. Or will their wailing be the opposite of the wailing of Zechariah 12, when He does come? The supposition is absurd. Again, the wise who understand of Daniel 11, 12, where I think the unprejudiced reader cannot fail to find persons commended of God as those that shall understand, and who will seek to turn the mass to righteousness (for that is the force of chapter 12:3; it is not who have turned many, but who have been teaching righteousness to the mass—to the many), a class which may after Christ's days have been added to the church, but who are also found in the end in a Jewish position, and blessed with Jewish blessings, and delivered with a Jewish deliverance. In a word, while there is a most unfounded statement, without an attempt at proof, that such was one object of the Revelation, the thing stated to be the

object is contradicted by a multitude of the plainest scriptures.

It seems to me, indeed, a most solemn thing to say that the Spirit of God in the Psalms should become habitually the instrument, not of prophetically revealing the wickedness of the wicked, but of expressing the false piety (for, if unconverted, their piety is false) of unconverted men, and that in the most touching strains of appeal to God,17 some of which rise up to prophecies of Christ Himself, and are all inspired by His Spirit. It is in vain to say they are Christians. Their hopes and prospects, their prayers and praises, and the answer of God's Spirit to them, are all Jewish. And yet if this be not the former, the whole system of the author must fall down together (and that is the worst of making systems). See the promise even at the end of that famous Psalm 69. Take again Psalm 73; so Psalms 65 and 66: I take the first that present themselves. Are the promises in Psalms 31 and 35 not to be accomplished in respect of those whose confidence is expressed in so many other passages? And these shew the connection of their hopes with Christ. And note here the quotation by Peter, and even the prophecy as to Christ, verse 20. But it would be endless to quote them all. The reader may make this remark, that while often insisting on integrity of heart, which the Lord insists on too (see Psalm 24), where the ground of hope is stated or an appeal to God is made, and His mercy and righteousness are introduced, mercy is always first introduced as the ground of their hope; and this is but the answer to the work of grace in their hearts. I cannot pursue this subject at large, but I have said enough to lead one who searches it out to see how very untenable the author's

statement is. Yet his system stands or falls with it, because there is clearly in this case another testimony, another work of God outside the church, before the Lord comes, connected with Jewish circumstances and interests, Jewish in its hopes. I have no doubt that the Scriptures give a great deal more light on this subject than I have taken upon me to state here; but I confine myself to the fact itself.

I agree with the author as to Lord's day (i.e., his interpretation as to "on the Lord's day"); but I confess it is beyond me what he means by, we "may live only to God on that day." May we do anything else on other days? I admit, and rejoice in, a special blessing on it; but living only to God is surely every day in the week.

In the subsequent note we are plunged back again into the confusion in which we were before. The threefold division is a recognised one. But let us see the application of it. "Chapters 2 and 3 are concerned with the things that are, i.e., present to John, but to us past. Chapters 6, etc., altogether future." The relationship then of Christ to the churches, nay, to the church, see pages 14, 15 (as described in a book which refers to the period in which Christ is hidden with God, i.e., the dispensation to which the New Testament belongs, the present period) is to us past—His excellent relation to such a body.

The mere fact of these churches being past is not in itself what makes so enormous a position of this; but its being the description of the relationship of Christ with the church: and this because it was to be maintained at all cost that the Revelation applied to this present period —the church period. It is the system of interpretation

which produces these consequences. I apprehend indeed, though that be of comparative small importance, that it would be very difficult to shew that all that is said to the churches is a past matter. I fully admit that there were such churches which were so judged. But not only is the number seven significative, but “he that has an ear” is called upon to hear what is said to the churches. Now this could hardly be the case unless the condition (and it is not merely individual conduct) of these churches might be descriptive, at such or such given time of the state of things in which believers would find themselves, and of which the Lord gives His judgment. The church in general lost its first love as well as Ephesus; and others may, whether in particular circumstances, or in the general state of the church, at a given time, find themselves walking where there was a name to live, and yet death. Nor can I suppose that when the Lord speaks of “the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them which dwell on the earth,” and adds, “Behold, I come quickly,” that He is speaking of that which is to us past. And how, if it be to us past, can the author say (page 83, referring to the last development of human evil), “the great hour of temptation comes only upon the oikoumenee (the Roman earth); but it is to try or put to the test them that dwell upon the earth?” (Rev. 3:10.)18 And if this be true of Philadelphia, can it be confined to it? Or would it not prove that the Lord’s mind was going beyond the local circumstances and referring to God’s further and more general dealings, though it might require a spiritual mind to judge of the application? And why, I would ask, are all the peculiar instructions, and the heavenly and blessed promises, thus passed over with one word—it is “to us past.” I understand this, if the prophetic part

referred to a distinct period which might be separately discussed; but all belongs (according to the author) up to chapter 19 to the church period.

One topic remains untouched, to which, as occupying the minds of many saints, and of great importance in their eyes, I would here advert. A few words suffice to establish the system, and sanction the widespread condemnation of those who do not hold it: but the explanation of the point will require a somewhat greater space. “Their laws were heavenly; for they were those of the sermon on the mount” (page 22, note). This meeting the popular and just feeling, that the principles of the sermon on the mount ought to govern us, settles the whole question in many a mind that the sermon on the mount was addressed to the church, and that it was for no one else. But hard words will not drive me from what I have been taught of God from the word. Now I fully admit that the directions in the sermon on the mount are a guide to us. On the other hand it surely is very objectionable to say “their laws were heavenly, for they were those of the sermon on the mount,” if it be meant that this is the whole directory of the church, or that the church was put under laws. Both of these propositions are entirely false. But the question (though it may seem so to those unaware of the bearing of all this) is not whether the church can take these directions, and use them by the Spirit for her guidance. If they are addressed to others than the church, then a condition is found to have existed to which the testimony of Christ applies, but which is not the church. If it is solely and exclusively the church, then there is no example (here at least) of disciples other than the church; and we are to take the disciples as being, during the lifetime of Jesus,

the church; and the proper and peculiar blessedness of that body, in the unity of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, becomes a mere casual difference.

I say then, that the disciples were not then the church, though they afterwards became the first nucleus of it, and that the sermon on the mount is not addressed to the church, nor could be (though the church now has it for its guide in its walk). If I say to one who has never been at court, You cannot join the king's court but in a court dress, it is clear that he will have to wear the court dress when there. For what I say means that that is the dress that suits the court; but the man as yet does not form part of the king's court. But, further, the kingdom of heaven is not the church; and while we enter into it in the way of being the church, others may enter into it in another way, as the Jews and others during the millennium; and this dress prescribed in the sermon on the mount may be as needed for those who are to enter in in that way, as for those who are, by this new form of the manifold wisdom of God, become the church of God in earth. Thus when it is said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," this may be true of those who shall inherit the earth in a millennial way, and I believe will be true and more literally and immediately true than it is of the church; and that to confine it to the church as exclusively true of it, is only ignorance. This shews the bearing of the question.

Then, as to the fact, I say that the disciples were not then the church, and could not be addressed as the church (Christ being not yet dead and risen again, and the Spirit not given). They were addressed in their then condition. And is there any great wonder in that? But farther, could one in the church, a Christian now, as it

has been put by one opposed to my view, have sat on the mount with the disciples, and have listened with the disciples to this sermon as addressed to himself as well as to them? I answer at once, No. He would have said, How blessed to my soul are these instructions! what a guide to my feet in this dark world! how my soul delights in them, and in Him who gave them! But he would have felt that they were addressed to them, and not to him. He was in the kingdom, he had the secret of the Lord, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. And this one word, “Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven,” would at once make him feel, “This is for them, addressed exclusively to them.” It is impossible that such language as Ye shall in “no case enter” can be addressed to those who are already within, who are in and of the kingdom. It gives the immediate consciousness that the address is to others, though it may at the same time give the consciousness that the principles addressed belong to those that are within. That they got new instructions, belonging to the remnant, is most true—such as would not have suited any others. That this remnant became the nucleus of the church and carried these instructions along with them into it, is equally true. But they were not then addressed as the church, nor even as being in the kingdom: nor could they be, for neither was set up. And this sermon is in prospect of the setting up of the kingdom, and shews the qualities and persons suited to it before it was so set up, and in no case even alludes to the church.

For my own part, though a practical direction in principle, I have no doubt that chapter 5:25 applies to

the then position of Christ with the nation, and that the nation is now suffering the consequences of not acting on the principle there stated. I add that, while all the teaching here remains eternally true for every one, yet that, as it stands here, it could be addressed now neither to saint nor sinner. Not to a saint; for it is a question of entering into the kingdom of heaven. Not to sinners; for it is not an address of grace to them at all, nor is redemption once mentioned at all, but doing Christ's sayings as the ground of entry. (See chap. 7:21.) To say that it will be true as regards heaven for us is avoiding the question. It is running an analogy, and a just one; but it is not what is said or treated in the sermon on the mount.

I affirm then that the sermon on the mount was addressed to the disciples in their then state; and I should think it very natural that it should be so. But their then state was not that of the church, but very far indeed from it. I do not draw any further consequences, though I believe these considerations throw light on many points; but as the subject was started in the note to page 22, I thought it well to state and repeat clearly what I do believe, as to the general principle, to be God's mind about these passages. And I have done it the rather because of all the denunciations which have been sent forth on the subject. They may produce prejudice (where there is not the light of God on the point—a sorrowful effect), but will neither produce conviction, nor create fear where there is. One may, while confessing one's liability to error, sorrow over those who utter, and those who are led by them; but that is all.

But as we are on the subject, I would touch on one or two points connected with it. It is alleged that, at any

rate, prophetic passages cannot be addressed to the disciples, save as representing the church—passages, that is, which relate to a time subsequent to the Lord's death. Now I apprehend that Matthew 23:8-12 is of perpetual obligation on disciples. Yet here we have, in the beginning of the address, a passage which most certainly cannot be applied to the church, as such; and yet "you" and "ye" are continued all through the passage as if to the same class (the disciples being then considered as connected with the multitude and a Jewish position). They were to mind the scribes and Pharisees, as sitting in Moses' seat. And it may be remarked that, in this chapter, the apostles and others are spoken of as Jewish teachers sent to the nation, as such, that their scribes and Pharisees might fill up the measure of their fathers. Yet, in the midst of this there are instructions binding upon them, and prophecies of their sufferings, when they were in the place of Christians, after the descent of the Holy Ghost. (See the verses cited above, and 34, 35.) The Spirit of God must teach us to apply these passages aright, and to put each word of God in its place, according to His mind.19 In Matthew 10 again we get directions for the future, which, it cannot be doubted, have had an accomplishment, at least, in the apostles after the Lord's death; and yet clearly the passage does not apply to the church, for they are forbidden to go to the Gentiles. Yet the Spirit speaks in them, and they suffer for Christ's name sake.

I admit that the standing of the Pentecostal church was heavenly. The doctrine of the unity of the church as the body of Christ was not yet brought out. That doctrine

was clearly based upon the death of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

Christ could not be (and that is the material point) the beginning of the church, until He had wrought redemption, and was risen from the dead. He was not set apart as Son of God with power, but by resurrection. No Christian doubts He was Son of God, or that He was the resurrection and the life. But as we are taught (Col. 1:18), “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” His headship of creation was based on His creative power; though it has to be reconciled. But the cross and redemption were needed, as well as life, to place any in a church standing —to begin it. Ephesians 2 teaches the same thing; but more of this hereafter. But, as touched on here, I thought it well to say a word on the doctrine. It is a very important one. The Holy Ghost can recognise nothing as the church on this side death and redemption. The foundation was not laid.

“Thoughts on chapters 4 And 5”

The introductory part of this chapter I offer no remark upon because, though I do not acquiesce in parts of it, I am not aware of any principle involved which is not elsewhere remarked on. In page 40 we have another example of how little anything critical or exegetical can be trusted to in these “Thoughts.” “He saw ‘a throne set in heaven.’ Being ‘set,’ or firmly established, it stood in contrast with the mutability and failure of everything he had known below.” Now it is perfectly clear to anyone who can consult the Greek that there is no semblance of any such idea. It is literally, “a throne lay there”; but in

English perhaps best rendered by “there was a throne there.” “Set” there (in the familiar sense of setting, i.e., placing a chair) is all very well; but the idea of “firmly established” has no sort of place in the sentence.

The meaning of this difference is this: stability of the throne refers to the whole period in which man failed down here; whereas finding a throne placed, or set there, shews rather the assumption of a particular position or relationship by God. And this is perfectly answerable to the statement made to John by the voice, “Come up hither, and I will shew thee what must happen after these things.” Now God may be ever in a general sense on a throne (though He is not considered always in this light, nor is it the highest thought of God—that is rather the dwelling in the light inaccessible); still He is the blessed and only Potentate. The throne, however, of government is a special relationship, to be known as it is revealed. Thus in Job we see Satan going among the sons of God before it. Here the throne is revealed in relation to things which are to happen after what has been stated as to Christ’s relationship to the churches on earth. For it is well to remember that which is stated of one general common period is contradicted by the express word of God in the Revelation. John, after the vision of the churches, is caught up to see the things which should happen thereafter, and then sees the throne20 which was set or was then in heaven. Revelation 4:2.

As to the jasper and the sardine stone, I have not much to say, nor any particular reason to object to what is said as to it, save that it is all without any foundation. I know not why, because He that sat on the throne was like a jasper and a sardine stone, so said to be by the Holy

Ghost, that therefore it should be concluded that He was like the others which the Holy Ghost does not mention at all. It would rather seem that it was a special sort of glory to which these stones answered, or had some analogy: as the building of the wall of the city was of jasper. And the city is thus spoken of, “Having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Here, what had the glory of God is likened particularly to a jasper. In the twelve foundations the sardine stone is not found. I confess I do not know what the light of a precious stone means, nor its not flickering; yet I would not stop to remark on it. But whatever this glory and beauty be, I would ask, What means “accomplished in no little measure when the church of the Firstborn shall inherit that heavenly city … and when of Jerusalem it shall be said that her righteousness shall go forth as brightness”? Is the church glorified with Christ in an imperfect state of glory? Is it only “in no little measure” that its grace and glory are accomplished? I suppose, then, being like Christ, seeing Him as He is, leaves yet something to be accomplished by some other glory than His. Or why this effort to shew the glory of the bride the Lamb’s wife, having the glory of God, as yet imperfect? and to bring in, as analogous and parallel glory, Jerusalem on earth? “The stones of the breastplate were covenant tokens21 of these blessings”; and, “yet the moral excellency and the glory as of the church, so also of Israel, were in this vision seen alike secured in the Person of Him who sat on the throne— ‘in Him that is true, even the true God.’” (page 41).

“Union with the Person of the Son of God, is the great characteristic blessing of the whole family of the

redeemed, whether in earth or heaven," etc. "And therefore we read of the heavenly city the bride," "and of Jerusalem it is said," etc. "Such are the results of His being as the jasper and the sardine stone, who sitteth upon the throne, for He is the Preserver now, even as He will be the Communicator then, of all this exceeding grace and glory." Is then this exceeding grace and glory communicated to Jerusalem on earth, as well as to the bride the Lamb's wife? "The bright excellency of character and glory, which is now found in Him who sitteth on the throne, is, in Him, preserved for us, in whom it is soon to be manifested in like radiancy of beauty. And therefore we read of the heavenly city"; "and of Jerusalem it is said," etc.

Is then Jerusalem on earth to be in like radiancy of beauty with the heavenly type of the divine glory? Is Jerusalem to be clothed with what is said to be preserved for us? "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption." "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." But here, by a measure of accomplishment only for the church, and the connection of figures used as to Jerusalem with the type of divine glory, all is swamped in one undistinguished mass, based on union with the Son of God. Are the saints prepared to have the promises to the bride the Lamb's wife thus dealt with? Jerusalem may be a "crown of glory in the hand of the Lord"; but is that what the bride is in the Revelation, or the New Testament promises? I have little disposition to reason on these statements: if the heart, as taught and animated by the Spirit of God, does not reject them, reasoning would be of very little avail.

And what are these statements based on? An assumption, that because two stones were specially selected as descriptive of Him on the throne in vision, therefore it meant all such as were found on the breastplate of the high priest—from which, observe, lights and perfections were distinct—the enumeration as to the heavenly Jerusalem being moreover different. Then the actual state of the church of God in glory is said to be only an imperfect state as to state and glory, inward and outward; and then they are stated to be Israel's risen priests, without a hint of proof being yet given. That is, by a series of statements without the least appearance of proof, or a single text of scripture adduced as warranting them, the whole condition and state of the church in glory is subvened, by giving to Jerusalem in vague terms what Scripture does not, and taking from the church, the object of Christ's dearest affections, what He has ascribed to it.

"Union with the Person of the Son of God is the great characteristic blessing of the whole family of the redeemed." Where in Scripture? That they all have life from Him is undoubtedly true. But where is union spoken of with the Son of God as characterising the saints on earth during the millennium? Union is an ambiguous and not even a scriptural term; and, though blessedly used when spiritually understood, may be used to ensnare the understanding of those who truly desire Christ's glory. Are the saints on earth in the millennium united to Christ in the sense of being then His body? This is what would be implied here, though the author has not ventured to go so far as to state it.

Union with Christ, spoken of in Scripture, conveys the idea of the body with the Head. Now there was no body,

and no Head neither, till the exaltation of Christ (Eph. i). The Holy Ghost speaks of the exceeding greatness of God's power in raising Christ, and setting Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that fiftieth all in all. That is, it is the exalted Man with whom, as Head, the church is spoken of as one body. Now there was no exalted Man till Christ ascended on high; and thereon He sent down the Holy Ghost to form the body in unity. Giving of life is not here the point. As Son of God He gave life to all the family in every age; but union as a body with a glorified man could not be when the glorified man was not there. Nor are the saints during the millennium said to be in union, nor anything of the kind. Nor are they the glorified body of Christ. The saints filled of the Holy Ghost are spoken of as having gifts according to the unity of this body, till we all come—that is, Scripture contemplates only all the saints under the operation of these gifts which are the joints of the body. And the use of "in him that is true" is a mere gloss and has nothing to do with its use in Scripture. Here the grace and glory are said to be secured for the church and Israel, in Him that is true: whereas Scripture says, "we are in him that is true."

The truth is, "Union with the Person of the Son of God,"22 is an idea as unscriptural as the words. "We are in him and he is in us." We are also said to dwell in God, and God in us; but we do not speak of union with God. Again, of whom is it said, "We have received of his fulness grace for grace?" Of the Word made flesh, He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Before that it had been said, "in him was life"; but now the Word becomes flesh, and we talk of fulness. Again, the same truth is omitted in citing the passage, "in whom all

fulness dwells." Is it merely in the Person of the Son of God? Not at all. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And we are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power." And again: "He is the head of the body the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For all the fulness was pleased to dwell in him. And having made peace through the blood of his cross," etc. That is, it is not the mere lifegiving power of the Son of God, but His own taking a position as Man, in which He becomes the Head of the body, the church, which gives occasion to the union.

Hence the whole of these pages are a perversion as to Israel, the church, union, and Him with whom we are united. And I beg it may be remembered that there is not a word in this chapter commented upon about Israel, nor the priests of Israel, nor the God of Israel; though all seems to be based on it, and the very glory of God to be drawn from the breastplate of their high priest. Nor has the rainbow anything to do with the God of Israel. It was established long before, though God may bless the earth when He restores Israel, and manifests the church in the divine unity of all His counsels.

The author is pleased to say, "Hence the connection of the rainbow with the throne of the Lord God of Israel." But where is it said, "the throne of the Lord God of Israel"? Or what shews that this heavenly throne was that of the Lord God of Israel, unless the fact that there is but one God, and so it must be the same? But such a reason is trifling with Scripture. On the statement as to the church I have not much to remark, but that "knowing as we are known" has nothing whatever to say with "participating in the counsels of the Most High,"

which Scripture never says, and I believe to be impossible. These counsels may be revealed to them; but God does not take counsel, as if anything were undetermined in His mind. Nor do I see how the fact of the analogy of the twenty-four courses of priests connects them with Israel, so as to prove that Israel is not forgotten.

That the twenty-four elders allude to the twenty-four courses, I believe, and in general all the vision to the state of things in the temple, as is quite clear; but to make out of this figurative allusion that they are therefore really Israel's priesthood in the world to come, without any allusion of Scripture to it, is building without any foundation. The vials were the prayers of the saints—it is never said of Israel, nor is it said to be during the time of glory. The Lamb is yet in the throne above. As to 1 Chronicles 25, it is Levite service, not priestly at all. There is no scripture quoted or alluded to, on which to ground it; and a figure drawn from facts is surely not a warrant for actual relationship with those from whom the figure is taken: and this is all that is to be had for the large system here presented, which is to unite heaven and earth.

As to the thunder and lightning being not the millennial relation but the present, there is nothing yet which proves it to be either. This book is evidently written for persons long and carefully imbued with the ideas it contains, or it would be impossible to advance so many things without any proof. We have seen this as to Israel's priesthood, stated without a symptom of proof. Here we are told that the glorified are to be manifested on mount Zion: this is assumed and reasoned from. It may be so, but cannot be assumed. I believe it to be a total mistake.

At all events there is no proof.23 But as to present relation, if the churches are present relation (which, as to period, they are stated to be), then the throne—I have to repeat—cannot be; because this vision is said to be of things after the others.

But we now arrive at statements of the most unaccountable character, which suppose a confusion of mind scarcely possible to conceive in one guided by the Holy Ghost. “The appearance of the jasper and the sardine stone attaching to Him who sat on the throne, has taught us the source of all our excellency and glory. The elders represent one form under which that glory will be exhibited”; “the cherubim symbolise another.” What glory? The divine, as a jasper and sardine stone? By itself this might pass; for we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and the city had the glory of God. I draw attention to it merely that we may see on what ground we are entering— participating in the divine glory as seen in the throne itself.

But before these we have two other symbols, we are told: “one indicating the nature of a power with which we are to be invested; the other, the essential purity that will attach to our new condition of being. The first of these is represented by the seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.” They represent the Spirit “as subserving the government of the throne of God” —not as He acts in strict co-equality. Yet “nothing, perhaps, amongst all the attributes of God, is more wonderful than this Omnipresent control; all the merely executive agents of His government being subordinate thereunto,” etc. “When we consider … that the universe, morally as well as physically, is under a superintendence,” etc.; “it gives

a view of Almighty and Omnipresent power, more wonderful, perhaps, than the original power of creation, or that whereby He continually upholds that which He hath created. This power is at present possessed and exercised by the Lord Jesus; for He hath the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth; but His saints do not possess it yet. At present His divine power is given to us only so far as is necessary for present purposes of life and godliness. But since it is said in the scripture, that we are 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all,'24 and that we are to be made 'like him, and joint-heirs with him,' and since the Lord Jesus has Himself said, 'the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one,' it cannot be doubted that the church will participate in this branch also of His glorious power." And that there is no mistake in this attribution of Almighty Omnipresence to the church, we are told that all the merely executive agents of His government are subordinate thereto: for such we could well suppose the church to be according to this power, as angels are now, or even more exaltedly (though they are said to be equal to the angels, Luke 20:36). But it is distinguished from this; and in the note we are told the difference, that this power in the whole universe is "in Him essentially and inherently; to us it will only come by communication."

I have given this long quotation, and I shall add little comment. It is not strict coequality of the Spirit; but it is an "attribute of God" more wonderful than creative power, or that by which He upholds the universe. It is the universality of Omnipresent control, or Almighty and Omnipresent power. The saints do not possess it yet, but they will participate in it. What is coequality of the

Spirit, if it be not in the attributes of Godhead? And are you, saints of God, prepared to accept— to admit of— such statements as these? Do you thus interpret “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”? What shall I say? Nay, I leave it to yourselves. For how should we reason on the attribution of Almighty and Omnipresent power, to which all executive agents of His government are subordinate, to the church; and that in a chapter in which it is said that, yet imperfect, her grace and glory can only be said to be “in no little measure” consummated? If anything were needed to complete this confusion it would be the connection of the notes of the preceding chapter, where we are told, that, in the thought of impending conflict, “we may remember the seven Spirits of God, that their power has not ceased to be supreme, and that benediction, as from them, has been pronounced over us.” Yet, though supreme, and exercising power greater than creation, it is not coequality with the Father and the Son. Alas! what is the confusion of man’s mind when it deals thus as human mind with Scripture?

Nor is this all. It is brought yet again most definitely out. “But there is yet another character of power, which the church is to exercise, in the glory” (page 51 —though this follows on partaking of the glorious power of the throne. “Admission into the counsels of God is represented by the throned elders—Omniscient power of superintendence, by the seven spirits; but the execution of the will of God, and the omnipotent power, necessary to such execution,25 is also committed to the redeemed.” I know not what more power should be committed to them than Almighty power, which they had already in the seven Spirits, or what else should be

necessary. And indeed I know not (though I really feel almost afraid to reason on such statements, lest the reasoning on them might take the character of the folly of bringing man's mind into such subjects, and I should do what the author has done, though only to refute it—for there are some things which to refute is as foolish as to state); yet I know not why it should be said, "the will of God," when they participate in the counsels of the Most High (page 45). Let the reader only weigh all this. The author insists on it, "nor," says he, "is it conceivable that the saints should be joint-heirs with Christ, without being invested with this character of power."

Nor is this all. "That the cherubim symbolise the redeemed, is manifest," etc. "The vision of Ezekiel affords the fullest description of that power which the cherubim denote." The author then quotes the description, not of Him seated above, but of the cherubim, and adds, "Nothing can be more significant of the resistless course of Almighty power. These terrible wheels—combining the movements of four, without losing the unity of one, etc.; nowhere absent, but everywhere present, in the perfectness of undivided action; afford the mysterious, but fitting symbol of the omnipotent agency of Him, before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? "Is this the power which the cherubim, the redeemed, denote? We read (page 53), "Their agency in the earth has for the present ceased," and "we may see the necessity for such a power, and the high calling of the church, in being entrusted with its application." "The various

characteristics of this power are denoted by the forms of the four living creatures," etc. A reason is then given for the change of form from Ezekiel, which I leave to any one to explain; and after describing their characteristics, we are told that "as such," they "will apply to the earth and to the universe the wisdom of the elders [!!] and the throne." Is it possible that saints can have read such a passage as this, and not hid the book from them? "Of the elders and the throne!" and the elders are themselves. But no observation ought to be made on such a passage as this. And all this is to be saved by the confession that, though it may seem to exalt the creature almost into coequality with God (no wonder, when they possess attributes more wonderful than creative power, and that it is their wisdom as well as that of the throne they apply), yet that, for all that, they worship Him that sits there. In possession of wisdom and power, blessed in himself, and a source of divine blessing to others, man will yet render homage to Him from whom all things proceed!

Glorious as these cherubim, however, were, the exaltation of the elders was higher. Still they worship. They may be a higher symbol, but it must be remembered that they are the symbol of the same redeemed church: so that, even in this respect, all is confusion here. The church has been taken from its proper blessed glory and joy as the bride of Christ, to reduce it to a vague uncertain position of identity with Zion and Israel; and hence, to satisfy the cravings of the mind (or rather to shew its wanderings), all this exaggerated statement is to be made, outraging every truth, and making every feeling of the soul shrink, not only from this, but from afterwards approaching the

question of what these symbols do mean, for fear of being drawn into the vortex.

And now let me ask this question of the reader, Was there reality in the vision of Ezekiel? that is, was there the exercise of judicial power in Jerusalem, of which he saw the symbol in the throne of Jehovah in vision? If there was, then, was it the church of the redeemed that then exercised the divine power? or were there eyes in others who are to be deprived of them? The church was not there. Nor were the cherubim the executors of anything. A man took a coal from between the cherubim, and certain agents of judgment smote those that another had not marked. The cherubim did nothing of all this.

Further: the cherubim did not then (chap. 11) go up to heaven, though this is a common mistake. Nor were they (though that be equally common, and one into which I dare say I may have fallen myself) the throne of God at Jerusalem. See Ezekiel 1:4. It would seem from that to be providential judgment by the means of Nebuchadnezzar. Compare Jeremiah 1:13, 15—a prophecy referring to the same period in general, though there were several successive invasions. That the church may be the instrument of His power is very likely: but partaking of Almighty omnipresent power is quite another thing.

Another example of the entire uncertainty of exegetical interpretations, introduced to serve the moment’s purpose, or deny those of other brethren, is afforded here. Generally the human face in the cherub has been interpreted of intelligence. Here, page 55, we are told “the human face” “represents not, I think, intelligence,” “but that sympathy with humanity,” etc. Of the locusts

we are told, page 108, “Their having the faces of men (the same characteristic as we find in the cherubim) marks, I suppose, the wisdom and sagacity with which they carry on their hellish counsels.” The reference of the cherubim is the author’s own.

“Thoughts on the Fifth Chapter”

It is a remark, I think, of Lord Bacon’s, that if one were to tell a falsehood to one’s self often enough, we should believe it at the year’s end: how much more when error comes from those we are accustomed to respect, and falls in with our natural wishes and feelings. “The throne, surrounded by the symbolic glories we have been considering, is intended, through all the deep darkness and sorrow of the present dispensation, to stand before us a sure sustaining object of faith.” Abstractedly, no doubt, the throne of God does so, though much more to us a Father’s love.26 But this does not hinder its being true that the revelations here made are, according to the author, all entirely future. The throne here displayed has never acted at all up to this time. And, according to the word, all the events were subsequent to what is stated as to the churches; which are Christ’s relationship to the excellent body, the church, according to the author. It is future glory too, according to him, that is revealed: so that it is not the throne as acting now. Further, while it shewed the church in its high and distinctive future glories, “our future exaltation,”27 yet the object also was to give us instruction essential to our testimony and service upon earth among men—precise and definite instruction through John to the churches upon the earth. Now what is the instruction as to service? Or when, save the two

witnesses, is there any service of the church, or of any saints at all, spoken of in the Revelation; and that precisely and definitely? For that is what a book, we are told, is the symbol of. Not one word of proof or example is given as bearing out this assertion.

But again, “Hidden in the throne had been one who, now for the first time appeared, and assumed a new relation to Him who sat upon it” —first appeared, that is, in the heavenly vision; for He had been seen in another way among the churches. But if it was a new relation, it was not a relation to the churches at all. It is in vain to say that this was an anticipation of the millennium;28 because in the same character He opens all the seals, which are “this period,” the “church period,” and contain precise and definite instruction to the churches upon the earth. But how to the churches on earth, if it was, as indeed it really was, a new relation that the Lord was in; and instructions, moreover, for testimony and service? And when the author speaks of a new relation to the throne, was He in a new relation to the throne without its being new towards the earth and the saints? That cannot be, because it was a new intermediate relation. And it was a new relation. It is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David. No doubt that it was the same person as the Lamb slain, and all-important that we should know it; and no doubt this knowledge was communicated to the churches. For things to come belong in knowledge to the church. It was to Abraham that the knowledge of what was to happen to Lot at Sodom was given, not to Lot, nor because Abraham was there, or to be there, but because he was the friend of God. But this new relationship was not established with the churches, though

communicated to them. If people choose to call it the church, it is the church on entirely a new footing, and in a new relation, after the Lord has done with the churches and His excellent relation to the body.

Further, it is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David—that is, Christ's name in relation to the earth and Israel in power.29 So also, on the other hand, it is not yet His millennial relation on earth, because then He takes the additional character of "Offspring of David" — that is, as actually coming, as may be seen at the close of the last chapter of this book. Judgment and righteousness (page 58) are to be exercised in the earth, and Judah be saved, and Israel dwell safely; but this is not Christ's relation to the churches, nor to the church. So that it is not His relation to the churches, for it is a new relation. It is not His millennial relation, for then He is Offspring of David; and yet the throne in which He is found is the stay of faith during the present dispensation. Nor is even "Lamb slain" properly His relationship with the churches. He is, as such, the foundation of reconciliation with God, and the taker away of sin from before Him; but it is not His relationship with the churches.

I pass on to page 60, where I read, "The book taken from the throne reveals the manner in which God is about to enforce the title of His Son as the Lion of Judah, and to manifest that He is indeed the root of David." Now, is this to be done connectedly with God's relationship to the church? Clearly not, save as being with the Lord in heaven. Is it precise and definite instructions for the church's service? It may be revealed to the churches. But are they the objects of its revelations, when God is enforcing this new relation,

and manifesting that Christ is the Root of David? Is that the church period? Yet this, by the author's own statement, describes the contents of this book. It is clear the church's portion and place is when God does not enforce this title, nor manifest that Christ is the Root of David. The church suffers with Him, when His title is not enforced. It is the "contrariety of all things in the earth to this His title,30 and the consequent necessity of enforcing it by Almighty power, that will bring on the coming judgments of the throne." But is it not the plainest first principle on this subject, that if we suffer with Him, from this very contrariety or contradiction of sinners when His title is not enforced by judgments from the throne, we shall reign with Him?

"It was only for a moment that the Lamb assumed this intermediate place between it (the throne) and the creature." What place? "The effectual communicator of the blessings which will flow from the love, and from the glorious power of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth?" Does He assume this place in this chapter 5, or anything like or about it? That He will have it is certain. That there is here and often in this book an anticipation of the results actually to be produced by subsequent events I do not at all deny. But that it is a celebration of a millennial state of things, or that a millennial song is sung, or that Christ, even for a moment, assumed a millennial position, or that there is a word about Israel, is entirely false and contradicted by the statement of the chapter. "The Lamb had" not "taken His place between the throne and the creature, as the connecting link of blessing." Where is there one word about it in the chapter? He will do so. That they may anticipate it from seeing Him may be possible, as I may

do in thinking of Him now, and with a nearer approach to it; but He took no such place.

These are the words of Scripture: “And he came, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. And when he had taken the book,” etc. “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God,” etc. Now, is that a millennial song, when the thing celebrated is the title to open the book, all the contents of which are to be accomplished before the millennium begins? Is the Lamb seen here as “the effectual communicator of the blessings which flow from the love, and from the glorious power of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth,” even in earnest, when the contents of the book, not yet opened, were the actings of God upon the throne for Him before He left it or took His place as such? When the throne from which He received it is one from which proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices? If the preceding31 “chapter” (and it is the same throne) “had been describing the millennial relation of the throne to things below, and not its present relation, we should not have seen this Sinai character of awful majesty attached to it”; nor “if Israel and the earth had been reconciled to God.” (Pages 46, 47.) Whereas, when from this very throne, the Lamb takes the book which describes the judgments which are to flow from it, during the very period thus insisted upon as not millennial, “Israel is supposed to be reconciled” (page 61).

It is in vain to say, The presence of the Lamb supposes the state of millennial reconciliation, because the “awful names” given Him are to be enforced by the “coming

judgments of the throne," and these judgments are what He is here receiving the communication of, in (as the author reminds us in a note) a bitter book. There is nothing about a link of blessing. That every creature owns His glory, when He appears, is quite true; but His relation is not as a link of millennial blessing then; nor is millennial blessing the thing celebrated in the song, but His worthiness to open the book, which is not millennial.

Again, in the note we read, "the prayers of the saints (i.e., Israel)." Why? This has been stated three or four times, and to be believed because it is said, if the reader pleases. No word or hint of proof is given. "Who are reigning": where is Israel said to reign as such? Where is this oft-repeated statement, "The church discharging its priestly functions?" When men are sufficiently imbued with a system, they may receive these notices of it. But those who hold to Scripture must be excused if they do not receive an immense system because it has been repeatedly asserted without proof pretended even to be given. It is very convenient to say "saints, i.e., Israel." But can any reasonable man be expected to receive things stated in this way? I would urge the saints who really believe that Scripture is the only source of truth, to ask themselves in reading the book we are examining, every time they meet with any statement, where the Scripture proof or authority alleged for this is. They will soon see how many have such authority even advanced for them.

I will close the examination of this chapter, by asking, Is it an interpretation which can be received for a single instant, which takes the proof of the actual reigning of Israel, being in view, as anticipated, from a passage thus presented: "Thou art worthy to take the book … for they

[Israel] are reigning”? Yet this is what is presented to us in these “Thoughts.” I add (as to the criticism in the note: “This is the right reading: Thou hast redeemed us to God—and hast made them” etc.), that the “us” here insisted on, is rejected by Griesbach as absolutely spurious,32 and by Tischendorf. though admitted by Scholz. Mr. Tregelles, who generally approves Tischendorf, admits it, but without giving any authority for it in the margin. The only ancient MS of the three which remain33 (which MSS Mr. T. says are worth all the modern ones) rejecting it. Now I would only ask, When Griesbach and Tischendorf reject, Scholz, without quoting his authorities either, followed by Tregelles doing the same thing, receive, the word “us” (but both the latter giving as against it the best and only ancient MS, of which we have the reading here); what is the warrant, under these circumstances, for this short and conclusive dictum— “The right reading of this passage is”? It may be all very right; but things cannot be settled in that way. It is a most royal road, to critical certainty. And this word, thus uncertainly supported, is the only proof given (page 51) that the cherubim symbolise the redeemed. They may: I do not here decide; but on what a basis it rests, on the author’s statements!

“Notes On Chapter 4 And 5”

The author insists that the words “Come up hither” do not refer to being seated in heavenly places in Christ, nor to a future translation of the church. That it is not as to John personally one or other is clear; but this is not the question, but whether he is not therein brought prophetically to view events from the position in which the church would view them as so placed. I do not here

decide the question; I only state it, because his allusion to John's personal condition and conduct entirely falsifies the question. If John was taken there to be instructed, and these instructions are for the church, is not the church to view the things he speaks of from the same point of view? Or why is he set to instruct the saints from this point of view, if it is not theirs when the things arrive, though always prospectively profitable? I repeat, I do not decide this question: I only disencumber it of the fallacy of his argument.

But the following note really goes too far. "It is immaterial whether the Greek be translated 'hereafter' or 'after these things.'" Is this really to be said, that it is immaterial whether a passage of Scripture be translated right or wrong? Whichever be the right translation, it cannot be immaterial; because it is not immaterial to translate it right. But, moreover, it is so little immaterial here, that the whole structure of the book depends upon it; and if the exact translation be given, the whole system of these "Thoughts" is entirely subverted. The words are "after these" which plainly signify "after these things." There can be no disputing about the plain meaning of the words. They are used in the Revelation continually in this sense, and all through the New Testament; and I find no case in which they are used, without reference to some previously stated fact or time, after which certain things happened. This might be translated very commonly "afterwards." This would be the ordinary English word in a great many cases. In a few "hereafter" may be used, where there is no subsequent limit put to the second period.

Thus, if speaking of present things actually existing, I should say "now," or "already" and "hereafter." Now, or

already, you are guilty of such or such things, and hereafter you will do yet worse; because I mean thereby, after these that you are now doing. But then it always supposes an existing state of things, after which the things subsequently stated take place—never the general English idea of “hereafter,” referring to a distant future, with a length of time elapsing before that future arrives. The preposition meta means sometimes things co-existent with34 others, sometimes things immediately consequent upon the cessation of the others.35 As Tregelles translates it “hereafter,” I thought there might be some special idiom, and I had the LXX and other lexicons also searched by a friend: but there is nothing whatever to modify the usual sense of the words.

Further, in this particular case we have a special guide to the employment of these words, because they form a distinct division of the book. The division I allude to is admitted in page 37 of the “Thoughts”: indeed, no one can deny it. It is found (chap, i:19), “Write the things which thou hast seen”—contained in chapter 1; “the things which are” — contained in chapters 2 and 3; “and the things which shall be after these things” —i.e., which are future to the things which are: the seven churches; at the close of which (related and judged in chapters 2 and 3) John is caught up to see the things which are to happen afterwards.

The form of the Greek in chapter 1 is stronger even than if the words in question were found alone. The things which are, and the things which are going to happen afterwards, after these. But if this be so, and the seven churches be the relation of Christ to the body gathered out of the nations, then the things which happen after are not during the period of that relationship. The

system of argument followed in these “Thoughts” depends on the period treated of in the prophetic part of the Revelation being the church period. But if the seven churches give us Christ’s relationship to that body, as previously stated by the author, then the words “after these” (afterwards) shew that the prophetic part refers to what is subsequent to that period. In a word, his system is founded on the prophetic period and the church period being the same. The words “after these” are a positive declaration that they are distinct, and that the prophetic period is subsequent to that treated in chapters 2 and 3, and denominated “things that are,” the only direct mention of the church, considered as on earth, in the Revelation. In the prophetic part it is only seen as in heaven above. If it be “hereafter,” then it is merely that the things there related were after John’s time. Is this immaterial? Or can the divisional structure of the whole book, relative to the very point in debate, be immaterial to the argument?

Next as to the throne. We are told it was something then existent, and not future: but inasmuch as the symbols which surrounded it pointed onward to yet future glories, these chapters have a prophetic character indirectly attached to them. If this merely meant that God had an eternal throne, but that its character here was prophetic, this might be all very well. But in the next note we have an application of this which throws all into confusion, the object being, as may be seen in reading the note, to connect the throne with this dispensation. But before I enter into any detail, I would ask, Is it not singular that, to give the vision of the throne of this dispensation, we have first the throne “in itself,” as it is “unchanged throughout all dispensations,”

and surrounded by symbols which do not belong to it in this? The throne by itself belongs to none, or (if you please) is unchanged throughout all. Its relative character must then be determined by the symbols attached to it. But these pointed onward to future glories. It is thus indirectly prophetic when the symbols are separately and abstractedly considered. They were anticipative, and of the next dispensation, as is clear according to the “Thoughts” (see page 61, in the text and note). The symbols themselves then do not belong to this dispensation. Indeed this is clear, for the church (the elders) are in heaven. Nor does the throne belong to it.

But the symbols “will not be attached to it in the same manner” in the next dispensation: which in several respects is quite true. But then, would not the natural conclusion be that, if the symbols do not belong to this dispensation at all, but are prophetic of future glories, and yet that they are not attached to the throne in the same manner as they will be when the next dispensation is established, the throne represents a peculiar state of things, and belongs properly to neither? Is it not (seeing that the symbols are confessedly in themselves not indicative of this dispensation, but prophetic of future glories, and that the throne belongs to none)—is it not strange from those premises to draw the conclusion? “The vision of the throne, therefore, must be regarded as peculiarly belonging to our present dispensation. It is only indirectly prophetic when the symbols are separately and abstractedly considered.” And what if considered as characterising the throne, which in itself is unchanged throughout all dispensations? But it may be added, “the Sinai character of the throne” has to be

considered as well as the symbols. Be it so. Is the Sinai character of the throne what characterises our dispensation? Is this its relation to the church? Or is the church really to have no place at all in considering our dispensation? Take the Hebrews. Is Sinai the character given to the throne there as we view it? (See chaps. 4 and 12.) It is all very well to say, “a character it may well retain whilst Israel and the earth remain unreconciled by the blood of sprinkling.” But what is this but to put the church and church-relationship wholly out of view as characterising the “church period” and “our dispensation”?

The church is seen exclusively in heaven in the prophetic part of the Revelation. It is not seen, save after chapter 19, in its millennial state. The throne has a judicial character, governing and plaguing the earth. What am I to conclude? That it is the church dispensation? or something special?

The statement of the unchangeable throne, however, is full of confusion, because all the titles, the revelation of which distinguished dispensations, are given as the titles of the unchangeable throne, and declared to be the same one as the other. Now, they are just what distinguish the relationship, as the symbolic circumstances and the Sinai character do here the peculiar position which it takes. The eternal throne, we are told, of Jehovah Elohim Shaddai, the covenant God of Israel.

Now, that the one true God was all this is well known: but the revelation of these names was what constituted the difference of dispensation. “I appeared,” says God, “to your fathers, by my name God Almighty, but by my

name Jehovah was I not known to them." Now He takes this name as the covenant God of Israel. At Sinai the legal covenant connected with it is sealed by blood. As "seen by Isaiah and Ezekiel," it was not a heavenly throne. In Isaiah, "His train filled the temple," which is now no longer owned. In Ezekiel, He is the God of judgment against that temple. For His throne was not there, but came there. And now the throne was found in heaven. The throne was supreme and immutable power in government: but its relationship varied. These variations are what are called here the unchanged throne, throughout all dispensations; and that which is Sinaical in its character, and clothed with a glory confessedly future, is said to be peculiarly belonging to our present dispensation. But when we find this Sinai character connected with the expression "after these things," speaking of the churches, or "things that are," does not the character of the throne become most peculiar and significant?

That the throne was then existent (that is, the throne of God simply as such) nobody doubts at all. But this proves nothing. It is a mere sophism, because the throne will be connected in the mind of the reader with that throne, and thus that throne attached to the present period or dispensation. But let him remember that the existence of the throne is alike true of all dispensations, and before and after all. The question is, Was that throne, i.e., the throne in that state, existent? because otherwise it has nothing to do with dispensations at all. It is "unchanged throughout all."36 It is not revealed by itself. It is clothed with prophetic glories, and we must not consider, in order to judge of dispensations, either the throne by itself, "for it is unchanged through all,"

nor the symbols by themselves, but the throne clothed with these symbols, and these symbols connected with the heavenly throne—that is, the church in heavenly glory, the Lamb in the throne, etc., and yet the throne having a judicial Sinai character (i.e., a character which does not belong to the next dispensation, and is not its relationship with the church in this). The church indeed being seen, not as its object at all, but enthroned around it, or in, and in the circle of it, if we so apply the cherubim also. But to judge of the throne by separating the symbols from it, is to separate it from what characterises it here. Nor is anything gained by what is called its Sinai character, i.e., that it is actively judging the world, and enforcing the awful names of Lion of the tribe of Judah, and Root of David, because that certainly is not its character as belonging to the present dispensation. It evidently has its own proper character, such as is nowhere else found; which is not millennial with the world, and is not its relationship with the church.

As to the opposition between government and worship—that it is a court of government and not of worship—all that can be said is, while the government part is fully admitted, that it is not the fact; of which any one can satisfy himself by reading the book. That government is the predominant thought, most have long seen. The added thought, that it is not worship too, is clearly entirely false, as these very chapters particularly demonstrate, their chief subject being worship as soon as the throne is manifested. Government, though the throne be set for it in this new peculiar character, not being exercised at all. If in “this dispensation it is

otherwise," it is clearly not otherwise here; so that it is not this dispensation that is in question.

When it is stated that the court of regal government will finally be identical with the temple, the answer is, It is not so stated in Scripture. Zion is not the temple, and Zion is the holy hill on which the decree has set the Son. That He is a priest upon His throne is another matter, but that is before the Possessor of heaven and earth. That does not set the throne in the temple.

What the following statement (page 66) may mean, is hard to tell: "The seat of His universal government cannot be symbolised by the temple, until Israel and the earth are reconciled through applied redemption." And what is it symbolised by in this vision? Is not that seat symbolised by the temple?

"The contrast between the court of government and the temple is clearly sustained in the Revelation." That is a strange note to append to Revelation 4 and 5. I can only ask the reader to read the chapters.

"It is whilst in the court [what court?37] that John sees the vision, in which vision the temple, the earth, the sea, are all equally employed as symbols of something external to the place in which he was." In vision he was in heaven. It was said, when the door was opened in heaven, "Come up hither," and the throne was set in heaven. As far as one can speak of a man in vision being anywhere, he was there where he saw these things. Nothing is said of any court where he was. He was in heaven, where all this was, and he saw it. There was no veil to distinguish the holy and holy of holies, nor is this distinction maintained here. The prophet was near enough too to converse with the elders. I hardly know

whether the confusion or the unsustained character of the assertions is more remarkable in this note.

I have only to repeat here that “fellowship with divine glory,” and the church being “the fulness of him who filleth all in all,” are not at all the same thing (the latter being the description of the church as the body of Christ); nor is all fulness dwelling in Him the same as filling all in all. The former relates to His Person; the other refers to the place He has actually filled as mediator, as may be seen in Ephesians 4.

As to the note on “They sung38 a new song”—its contents have already been discussed, as to the new song being millennial. It is added now for the first time, “It is plain that Israel is meant by the saints … because it is said they are reigning, or shall reign,” etc. Neither Israel nor the saints were reigning when the book was opened: that is a clear case, if it be a future thing. Are not the saints to reign over the earth?—the heavenly saints? They are a kingdom and priests, Why is it so plainly Israel to the exclusion of those who need encouragement as being yet under trial in this book? And where is kingship on earth said to be the privilege of Israel? That they will have great privileges, I do not doubt, and be a royal nation: but I do not know where it is said that they are to reign on the earth. The nearest statement is, “Instead of thy fathers, thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands”; but it is never said anywhere in Scripture that Israel shall reign on the earth. Kings are to be their nursing fathers, but their reigning is never spoken of.

But there is another point here. The author rests on the words “on earth,” putting them in italics— “kingship on

earth." "We are kings: but we suffer, instead of reigning on the earth." But here he is simply and entirely wrong. The translation in a general sense might be borne with as it stands, taking the earth as the subjected object of government. But when the word "on "is insisted on as distinctive, the answer at once is, It is not the meaning of the Greek word. Hence Mr. Tregelles has very properly translated it "over "in this passage.39 Yet this, which is simple error, is the basis of the very important interpretation given to the passage. Moreover, the least attention to the system of the author will shew that it is an essential link of it. It has been already stated four or five times (no proof of it being given) in the previous pages we have examined, as necessary to the understanding of the order and relationship of the different parts of what he calls the Israel of God. The church in heaven being Israel's priests, and Israel thus united and brought into the same body, though in an inferior position, and enjoying, through the intercession and priesthood of the church, communion in all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places, and so standing "in all the full excellency of the heavenly calling manifested on earth." Now this connection of Israel and the church standing in a priestly place is found to rest on a complete error in the use of a Greek preposition.

As to the mediate place. It is a very strange assertion, that opening the book was a sign that there was some one worthy to communicate blessing. No doubt opening a book may look like communicating its contents; but how communicating blessing? Is not worthiness to receive and open, a common identical title in the passage? And how to communicate blessing, or (as is

said, page 61, of its “understood meaning”) “the effectual communication of the blessings which will flow from the love and from the glorious power of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth,” when page 7, “the chief subject” of chapter 6, i.e., the opened book, is the infliction of divine chastisements on the earth, until they are consummated by the day of the wrath of the Lamb? “Or how indeed did He appear as communicator, when (pages 74, 75) “the Lamb opened the seals, not to fulfil the events declared under them, but to instruct us prophetically concerning them?” Or, after all, what is a mediate place between receiving and communicating? Or what is there about all this in the chapter, contradictory as it all is? The taking the book, that was in the right hand of power of Him that sat on the throne, called forth the song of those in heavenly places seen in their glory, because the glory and person of Him who took it to receive and develop the accomplishment of God’s counsels were brought before their eyes. That He will be the effectual communicator of blessing no one doubts; but there is nothing about it here. And the reason of His title to receive and open the book is quite another reason, that is, His having accomplished the redemption of those who sing.

As to the vials.40 2 Chronicles 4:22 only says, the basons were of pure gold; and where they are mentioned elsewhere, all that is said is “and he made an hundred basons of gold.” From the place they are mentioned in, and the materials, it may be supposed that they were somewhere in the holy place; but there is no kind of connection with the altar of incense whatever. It is elsewhere that that is mentioned, and these hundred basons are connected with other things. Nor does the

author venture to state why they “answer to the vials.” Incense, of which the vials were full, was put in another kind of vessel called censers.

As to the note at the close, stating “they are reigning,” it seems to me absurd; because the song celebrates the opening of the book, when most certainly they were not reigning. Griesbach and Scholz both give “they shall reign” (the latter citing the authorities for both readings together, without distinguishing them). As to the evidence of these different readings, it is this. Two of the three ancient MSS are here wanting. One has not this passage: the other, if it has, is not cited. The one uncial MS which remains reads “they reign,” with fifteen others, and some versions. Eighteen MSS read “they shall reign.” Tischendorf reads “they reign” — Knapp, “they shall reign.” When the writer states that it is not found in any ancient MS, he goes farther than he is warranted. There are but three. One has not this place in it at all, being imperfect, and the other is not cited at all.

There is one thing, curious enough, as to the exactitude and authority of these criticisms, namely, that in the beginning of this note, the MS “A” has no authority whatever; at the end, it is almost conclusive. The statement of the friend alluded to, we are told, leaves little doubt that the reading “they are reigning” is the correct one. That on which the author rests, leaving all other authorities out, is, that it has the authority of the Alexandrian MSS (read MS), whereas the other reading is not found in any ancient MSS. In the beginning of this short note we are told that there is no doubt that the correct reading is “thou hast redeemed us,” etc. The unlearned reader will be surprised to hear that this

same Alexandrian MS is against this reading. It is conclusive at the end of the note, under the same circumstances (that is, the silence of the other two); on the other side, it is totally rejected at the beginning, where no authority at all is cited against it; that is, a certain MS called “A” rejects the word “us.” But “us” is retained as of undoubted authority, though not found in any ancient MS either. This same MS reads “they are reigning,” and then it is conclusive, though a majority of other MSS read “will reign.” It can hardly be of no authority, and of all but conclusive authority, in the same note. Yet, as we have seen, a whole edifice of interpretation, a complete system, as to the church’s priesthood, and Israel’s place, is founded on all this. Do not let the reader complain of my plunging him into criticism: I engage him to keep out of it. But when vast systems of interpretation are based on assertions made about them as of undoubted authority, one may be forced to enquire whether such assertions are well founded, because they have an imposing air with many who have happily no idea of distrusting them.

Chapter 6

To the statements in the introductory part (page 69), though they be not quite exact, taken in a general way, I have no objection. Generally speaking, from chapters 6 to 18 inclusive, the prophecy does treat of God acting for Christ; the subsequent part, of what occurs after Christ is sent forth. The period thus noticed is not the whole of our dispensation, nor even here stated to belong to it. The fact merely is stated, that this part of the Revelation treats of God acting for Christ; the other, of events after Christ is sent forth. Indeed the

statements would seem to distinguish this as a peculiar period. The author says, “events which are brought to pass during the time that the throne of God is acting for Christ.” Now, as the whole period and series of events is future,41 this future period seems designated as the time during which the throne of God is acting for Christ. Such is clearly the case. It is the revealed period in which God is so acting (treated as future in page 37) as characterising the present period in page 11. I could only say, generally speaking, because it is quite clear that the end of chapter 11 closes the whole history, and goes far beyond the period here spoken of; and begins with the marriage of the Lamb, which is not an event after Christ is sent forth. When we come to details, these distinctions will be important; but do not affect the general statement, that the subjects referred to are those of these two parts.

But then the statements in page 70 are altogether contradictory and untrue. I supposed at first the author must mean the whole prophetic part, but he is precise, and says, that from chapters 6 to 18 the last forms of evil are described, etc. But how, if this part be only “the throne of God acting for Christ,” and Christ “waiting till His foes shall be set as a footstool for His feet,” can it be also “then by the mission of His Son”? Again, if it be the second part that gives events after that mission, how are found in the first “the aspects of the blessedness and glory, both in earth and heaven, which will, as soon as the hour of Satan’s triumph is over, attach to those who share the resurrection glory of the Lord Jesus”? If these are the subjects of the first part, then it is not merely events brought to pass during the time the throne of God is acting for Christ. Further, the mission of Christ is

neither the throne acting for Him, nor events that occur after His mission.

But there is another more material objection to this statement. It involves (as so many others that we have seen) most important, and, I believe, entirely false views, assumed without the reader's being the least aware of what he is adopting. It reveals, we are told, "various aspects of the blessedness and glory, both in earth and heaven, which will, as soon as the hour of Satan's triumph is over, attach to those who share the resurrection glory of the Lord Jesus." Now what does this mean? Who are they that in earth share the resurrection glory of the Lord Jesus? I am aware that it is stated farther on, that Jerusalem on earth is in the full excellency of a heavenly calling. And this, unsaid but quietly assumed here, prepares the mind for such statements. But where, I ask here (from chapters 6 to 18 inclusive), are those spoken of who in earth share the resurrection-glory of the Lord? Or what is the blessedness in earth of those who share it (if this is the turn given to this passage), so stated in these chapters? One hundred and forty-four thousand of Israel are sealed to be spared. But where is blessedness and glory on earth spoken of in these chapters, unless the writer would apply the rest of the great multitude to earth, which he does not? And if on earth, how do they share the resurrection glory of the Lord? All this just goes to efface the proper heavenly distinctive glory of the church; and no one can have read the book attentively, without seeing that this is its constant and unvarying purport. I would draw the reader's attention to this. It is evidently of the last importance. And I would ask him what is the meaning of blessedness and glory in the

earth of those who share the resurrection-glory of the Lord Jesus; and where he finds that in Revelation 6 to 18 inclusive.

Next, as regards the order of arrangement. There are several separate visions. This I do not contest at all. But that Christ's mission is referred to (that is, if the author means by the Spirit of God) as then just arrived but not entered upon, I deny altogether. The only passages which can be alleged in proof are, first, the close of chapter 6; and secondly, chapter n:15-18. The first is the fear of the wicked in the earthquake, and not the revelation of God at all, nor in any circumstance or prophetic date, whether of narration or fact, possibly to be connected with the actual coming of Christ; because all the circumstances are quite different from the account the Spirit gives of His coming; and the seventh seal is not opened. The second passage which may be referred to is chapter 11:15-18, where the voices in heaven, on the seventh woe-trumpet sounding, celebrate the earthly kingdom of Christ as come, and all the consequences from that time onward. This does indeed, as has been stated, actually close the mystery of God; but the only thing that is not referred to in it is Christ's mission. And it speaks of our Lord and of His Christ as having the kingdom. The events which follow are declared, but not the mission; and even this not at all in a revelation by vision, but in the celebration, anticipative as to the facts, of the kingdom by voices in heaven. And it is quite evident to me that the connected historico-prophetic narration of God's dealings closes entirely here. That which follows is made up of distinct visions as to special points at the close; but of this more hereafter.

Next: “Blessing is mentioned first,” we are told, “prior to the events of evil and of judgment by which it is preceded and introduced.” This, which is a very ancient remark on the Apocalypse, I do not contest neither. The use that is made of it, to deny narrative order, I affirm to be entirely unfounded. How does it militate against any orderly narration, if I say, See the happy and blessed order and prosperity of that family; and now I will shew you all the discipline and trial they went through in order to arrive at it; and then give their previous history in orderly narration? It would be a very simple and consistent method. The question is a question of fact. The reasoning to subvert it, a priori, is perfectly futile. That God, who knows the end from the beginning, may encourage the saints by shewing the result before He makes them go through the difficulties of the way, is most possible, and I believe constantly true. He stated that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. Yet, I suppose, we have an orderly narration of what passed from that day out in Scripture until it be accomplished. Nor does this declaration militate against its historical order. As I have said, there is not the slightest force whatever in this reasoning. Its aim is evident, but it has no force.

Then as to the facts by which it is sought to prove it. Chapter 17, we are told, is earlier than chapter 13. Now let me put this case. I am giving the history of all the revolutionary war. I give a long account of all that passed in France— Buonaparte’s victories in Italy, etc.; I come at last to his subversion of the Romano-Germanic empire by his victories over Austria. In order to make this understood, and its importance appreciated, I give an account of the origin and formation of this system, its

place in Europe, and in general history; and, having brought it down, together with perhaps a similar account of the Italian States, to the period at which I had arrived in the general history, I resume the thread of the narrative, and complete what referred to all thus brought under view. Would it be said, because of this, that my narration was not orderly? Is it not the universal practice, when a general history bears on particular subjects? Can it be otherwise, if a history is complete? And, as “we know in part,” is it not the way to be expected, though the writer be the Spirit of God Himself? And it is just what is found in the book of Revelation. If it were asserted that the same order of narration continued from chapters 6 to 18 without interruption, then indeed what is remarked of chapters 17 and 13 might have some weight. But who has asserted this? No one but the author himself. And having given to understand that chapter 6 to 18 is one complete whole, he shews that it cannot be a whole of orderly narration. But then the proof given is merely a mistaken assertion of the author assumed to be true.

I surely do not believe that the reward given to prophets and saints precedes the destruction of Babylon and the mission of Christ; but this does not hinder my finding orderly narration. Let us examine the facts.

I have a succession of events: seven seals, one after the other, and seven trumpets in order: and before the last of these, I am told (in connection with a parenthetical little book which is opened, of which the close is clearly marked) that in the days of the seventh angel, who is about to sound, the mystery of God should be finished. The seventh angel does sound, and the time for closing the mystery is come. Hence the voices in heaven

celebrate all connected with closing the mystery, and the orderly narration is interrupted—the general scheme of the history being complete. A vast power42 (as important as all the rest of the history, and whose parasitic roots, as we learn from 2 Thessalonians 2, had been planted in Christianity from the days of the apostle —at least what prepared its way) was to be unfolded as that on which the judgments, celebrated in general at the close of chapter 11, were especially to act. Hence the history of this as a distinct power in all its bearings is given, and the historical order of narration of course interrupted.

Chapters 12 to 14 give us this history complete, and the dealings of God in the world connected with it. It is a distinct vision and hence the order of date must be confined to the subject treated, and can at most only be compared with what is in another vision. But it has its own order within itself, closing with the vintage of God. Then we have another sign in heaven, introducing the seven vials, which are the wrath of God on the earth not the history of the beast, though the beast be found there. This was needed to complete the materials of this history. Just as I might relate the state of the provinces of France in the history I have supposed, after giving the public European history of the revolutionary body.

Lastly, chapters 17 and 18 do not profess to be history or narration at all, but description of a particular object of judgment, whose details had not yet been entered into; only the fact of its judgment had been mentioned in its place in the two previous statements of the course of final events. Now the details are entered into, of what it was, its relationship with other objects of judgment, and’ the circumstances of the judgment itself. Just as I might

describe Paris, its circumstances, vanity, objects of art pillaged elsewhere, and its siege, in the history I have supposed. The same thing occurs after the completion of the history of, and subsequent to, Christ's coming: after the marriage of the Lamb, the coming of the King of kings—the destruction of the beast—the binding of Satan—the millennium—the loosing of Satan—the judgment of the dead—and the close of all things. In a word, after the series of events given from chapter 19 to the end of chapter 21:8 inclusive, a description is given of the heavenly Jerusalem, and its relation with the earth (as before of Babylon, and her relation with the beast, and in the same manner). But all this does not touch the orderly narration, where orderly narration is professed to be given, as it surely is, as description is professed to be given in another part; and to take events out of the descriptive (professedly descriptive) part, in order to compare them with others in the narrative part, to disprove the order of narration, because the chapters of description come after the narrative ones, is simply confusion and nothing else. Yet it is of this the writer says "I wish it to be especially noticed, that these instances prove that the Revelation is not a consecutive history; and therefore any system of interpretation that regards it as a consecutive history, whether of events yet future, or of events past, must be erroneous." And all this confusion is the more unreasonable, because it is based, not upon the statements of others, but upon the author's own assertion that chapters 6 to 18 is one complete part, taken together; and on this he argues to prove that others must be in error.

There is this peculiar to the Revelation, and this only—that, the subjects being moral, the descriptions and

account of judgments are of as great consequence as all the history; and, we may almost say, of even more consequence than the narrative part. But this changes nothing of what I have said. On the contrary, it is very important to have the narration, to give the order, to put each thing in its place, and shew the general relationship of events. This is the division I should make in the book. First, in general, chapter 1; then chapters 2 and 3; then chapter 4 to the end. Then, in detail, chapters 4 and 5; then chapters 6 to 11. There the general history closes,43 but none of the facts of the seventh trumpet are given in prophetic vision. Then chapters 12 to 14; then chapters 15 and 16; then chapters 17 and 18. Thereon the scene changes, but the event is taken up,, and we have chapters 19 to 21:8. Then chapter 21:9 to 22:7; when the closing remarks and testimony commence, and complete the book.

We come, in page 74, to the chapter (6) before us. “Its chief subject is the infliction of divine chastisements on the earth, until they are consummated by the day of the wrath of the Lamb.” This is a most inaccurate account.

Four riders on horses go forth: three of whom, at any rate, bring chastisements on the earth. The opening of the fifth seal lifts up the veil to shew us martyred souls who yet must wait for the execution of vengeance, till others are killed as they; of which, note, nothing at all is said. Then there is an earthquake, but nothing at all said of the day of the Lamb’s wrath, but by the terror of the kings, etc., of the earth. That it is not the undescribed day of Christ is clear, because the state of the kings of the earth, etc., is described, and it is entirely contrary to the description the Spirit of God has given of their state at that day, at the close of chapter 19, where they make

war haughtily and boldly with the Lamb, and are slain, and did not hide themselves from His wrath at all: they had been given over to believe a lie. The effect of fear upon unbelieving man is confounded with a revelation of the Spirit of God. It is, moreover, revealed that these signs come before the great and terrible day of the Lord. It is these signs that alarm them, and not the actual arrival of the day, nor consummation of wrath by it.

And here let me recall what was said, that opening the book was a sign there was some one worthy to communicate blessing. It was surely a strange book to open to prove that.

We again also see the unsuitableness of the song as celebrating the opening the book, and Israel's actual reigning at the same time. But further, "The final triumph is first announced." What final triumph? I admit that God can give anticipative views of blessing before the sorrows that introduce it. But that we have had, according to the author (and I am not combating the general idea), in chapters 4 and 5 already. But after that has been done, and we have seen the resulting glory, and we are come to a systematic succession of events of an active character, numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., of an analogous nature—to say that the first of these means the result of all, seems utterly unreasonable. The resulting glory we have had: we have now events opened, and active agents in the scene. The first seal is opened, and the first beast says "Come and see," and there is a rider on a horse. The second is opened, and the second beast says "Come and see," and there went out another horse; and so on. This second horse the author would persuade us is the first, and the first the last of all. Is this a reasonable interpretation?44 The fact

of the seals being opened in vision changes nothing of their being events to be fulfilled, though not then fulfilling. So that announcing or fulfilling makes no difference: they were announced as to be fulfilled.

But this, though it seems to me unreasonable, is comparatively immaterial—a point in which any might err in interpretation. But what follows (page 77) is surely very serious in its character, and is the settled leading principle of the book. “Neither is He yet surrounded by the risen church, as ‘His fellows,’ partaking in His glory.” That is admitted, of course. “Jerusalem does not as yet stand as the ‘Queen at his right hand, arrayed in gold of Ophir,’ i.e., in the full excellency of a heavenly calling, maintained and manifested on the earth,” etc.

What is then the heavenly calling? It is clear it is not a calling to heaven at all: for this glory is on earth. It is glory terrestrial, at the time all things are gathered together in Christ in heaven and earth. If the earthly Jerusalem (if such a contradiction in terms can be stated) is “in the full excellency of a heavenly calling,” how is it heavenly? Because, remark, it is not suffering for it. We have the heavenly calling now; because, though on earth, our hopes, joys, place, when Christ comes in glory, are with Him there. We suffer on earth because we have this heavenly calling. But this will not be the state of things then. It is with Jerusalem and her inhabitants the result on earth of Christ’s coming in glory. And how is that a heavenly calling? Can the full excellency of a heavenly calling be maintained and manifested on the earth? and if so, what is a heavenly calling? For, I repeat, it is not now the manifestation of its power in suffering, in following Christ crucified. That

may manifest in spirit the power and excellency of a heavenly calling, because all is dross and dung for the sake of it; but that is not the case here. It is the actual result of Christ's triumph and coming on earth, for those who have not suffered with Him by faith in the heavenly calling and glory. And how can that be a "heavenly calling," and its "full excellency"? Is it not destroying the very idea and meaning of it, and bringing all down to earth, and levelling all to that measure and standard? I ask any saint, is the state of Jerusalem on earth the measure for his soul of the full excellency of the heavenly calling? And if not, what is this but to lower and degrade the church to the place and level of what is earthly— of those who have not suffered with Him in His rejection?

It will be said, perhaps, It is distinguished from sharing His glory as His fellows. No doubt it is not said that the earthly Jerusalem is in heaven with Him: I suppose that would hardly be expected to be received. But their sharing His glory as His fellows, together with what is yet more blessed—being one with Him in love in the Father's presence, and being His bride when He holds the kingdom—that is the heavenly calling in its chief parts. And how, if it be distinguished, is Jerusalem on earth said to receive it?

Nor am I aware that the eternal state is ever spoken of as the heavenly calling (supposing now that there is no difference when that eternal state comes, between those who have been in Christ's glory, and those who have been His subjects on earth during the millennium); I am not aware that it is even particularly connected with heaven more than earth. God is all in all, the kingdom being delivered up. The tabernacle of God is with men.

But there is nothing ever spoken of as distinctively heavenly. The heavenly calling is an expression used in the Hebrews to contrast it with the earthly promises made to the Jews, which will be accomplished in the Jerusalem glory, which is here stated to be the full excellency of the heavenly calling. The same contrast between the promises to Israel and our portion, I have no doubt, is urged in John 3, when (having referred to the necessity of regeneration for the enjoyment of earthly things with God, as they had been revealed in prophecies which the master in Israel ought to have known) the Lord says, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” and then at once refers to the cross, the lifting up of the Son of man—taking Him (and us with Him) out of these earthly things.

Thus what is properly and distinctively our calling is entirely effaced and set aside in these statements. The earthly Jerusalem being on earth when enjoying present glory, not suffering for hoped-for glory, in the full excellency of a heavenly calling maintained and manifested on earth. We have already seen the expression—The blessings on earth of those who share His resurrection-glory—an expression entirely incorrect, or extraordinarily ambiguous, and entirely destitute of foundation in the chapters from which it is alleged to be drawn, in which there is nothing about blessing on earth at all.

But there can be no doubt as to the general purport of the writer to exalt Jerusalem on earth to the full level of our calling now. Those familiar with the question will well remember the passage often urged to shew this, “We are partakers of their spiritual things.” But to insist

only on what is found in this book, I shall produce here from other pages in it the statements of the writer, shewing that it is not because of an isolated passage of doubtful meaning, that this view is attributed to him.

Thus page 138: “Our mother is not Babylon, but that divinely ordered system of truth and power, which though now not known as having form or comeliness is yet to be paramount in the earth, and to reign, beautiful in holiness, supreme over all nations. ‘I saw a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.’ Such is the vision of her coming glory in the earth [note, he is speaking of “our mother”]; and faith even now recognises her as this. This is our parent— the system to which we belong, and to which, in the midst of all the brightness of Babylon’s rising greatness, we give the homage of our hearts; and will, through God’s grace, constantly adhere. Our estimate of its excellency will of course vary, according to the singleness of our hearts, and the integrity of our faith and knowledge: but in proportion as we are able to look on into the future, and consider the period when Christianity shall, in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, be supreme in the earth, we may see the reason for the glory of the symbols wherewith this chapter commences.” Is it to glory in the earth that the homage of our hearts is given? or is Christianity supreme in Mount Zion, and Jerusalem here below, our mother? Where then is the heavenly calling? or why such avoiding of the simple and blessed statement of the apostle, that Jerusalem which is above is our mother?

Again (page 142), We need not marvel, therefore, if Christianity “be here presented, as if bearing the name of Zion.” (We may remark in passing that it is not at all

so represented: the writer is commenting on chapter 12.) “How indeed could it be otherwise? For when that holy blessed system of truth and power, for which we and all saints have from the beginning suffered, and which now we name Christianity, shall at last arise into its destined supremacy in the earth, it shall be identical with Zion, arising in the moral grace and dignity of its high calling in the earth.” (This expression is the more remarkable— “high calling in the earth”; because high calling, as anyone acquainted with the Greek Testament knows, is calling above, up out of the earth, our calling, ‘above’ —ano). “Christianity can never have its rightful pre-eminence until the hour comes for the mountain of the Lord’s house to be established in the top of the mountains, and to be exalted above the hills (mountains and hills are the emblems of authoritative power); when many people shall go and say, ‘Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.’ The mountain to which we by faith are already come,” etc. “So that the identification between ourselves and Zion will need no proof.” Are the promises to Israel—of its latter-day glory, the “Come ye, and let us go” —our hope? the rightful pre-eminence of Christianity—of that “which we now name [what an expression!] Christianity”? Do “we belong” to Zion on earth?

It will be seen further on, that Zion itself, literal Zion, is said to be the church’s place, as holding power on earth; that the saints, in an earthly state, are as “really blessed” as those in the heavenly; and, on the other hand, that “a heavenly as well as an earthly character is

given to Zion.” But all this in its place. It is merely the general statement that I would place before the reader now. One quotation more will suffice for this purpose.

“There is, however, one blessed point of contrast between the system of God’s city, Jerusalem, and this. When Babylon’s system is separated from its city, it perishes—and perishes for ever. But, when Jerusalem’s system is separated from its city, as it even now is, it does not perish. It is indeed outcast in the earth—no eye but the eye of faith recognises its beauty: but it exists, and there are some eyes that see it, and some hearts that love and cleave to it—and they shall continue to cleave to it, until the hour comes for it to be united to its own city, and to be exalted in the earth.” Now what I would ask here is this: Is Jerusalem on earth the “own city” of the system to which my heart cleaves—to which yours does, reader—or Jerusalem above? Is it earthly Jerusalem’s system to which you belong? If not, where is all this leading you? Certainly not, as to your mind at least, to heaven. Heaven and the heavenly calling cannot be denied, but it is assiduously made “our high calling in the earth.” I have given those long quotations to shew that it is not a casual expression, but a regularised system: no matter of inference, but of elaborate statement, and diligent repeated assertion, that Jerusalem on earth is the own city of the system to which we belong—that our high calling is a calling in the earth.

Having made the matter of fact plain, I do not reason on it much here; I prefer leaving it to the reflections of the reader. It will recur again in its effects and bearings on other points. I pursue now the chapter.

After stating that some will be slain in the midst of all this abounding iniquity (the connection of which however with this period is given without any proof at all), we are told that the “altar represents the priestly intercession of Christ. It is the place around which the risen priesthood of Israel45 will by and by be gathered, clothed in their garments of glory and beauty,” etc. “But here they are under it, in the place of ashes, crying for vengeance.” “The holy place is turned into a place of judgment.”

Why does the altar represent the place of the priestly intercession of Christ? Christ intercedes within the veil, not at the altar of burnt-offering. The altar of burnt-offering was not the place of intercession at all. If it had been the altar of incense, there might have been some appearance of reason here, though that is not properly Christ’s place; but it is not. As the writer observes, their souls were in the place of ashes under the altar. It is indeed an evident allusion to their having been as burnt sacrifices for Christ: their lives are found under His altar. And how are the risen priesthood of Israel to be gathered there in their garments of glory and beauty? Was it at the altar of burnt-offering that the priests offered their incense and sought blessing? Sin-offerings and bloody offerings of every character were offered there; but that was all. We have indeed seen that this priesthood of Israel, so often repeated, rests merely upon a decidedly bad and false translation of the Greek. I must say it i6 a painful thing to be obliged page after page to take notice of trains of statements so entirely unfounded and palpably wrong. And what of the system built upon them?

It is a curious remark, that the white robes were given to them, but not put on them; but I leave it where I find it. Everyone can judge of it according to the weight it has in his mind.

As to the criticism46 “a white robe, and not white robes,” I suppose it is correct: but then it is not merely said “to them,” which the English reader might suppose, because it is said “to each”; so that, white robes were given to each, or a white robe was given to each, is pretty much alike.

When it is said, “signs which immediately precede the manifestation of the Lord in glory” —in a general sense it is true: but it is quite clear that the signs in Luke occupy a period—perhaps a considerable period of time —a state of things in which men find themselves, which causes them to look forward with anxiety.

But it seems to me that, as the images here used are drawn more or less from passages whose accomplishment takes place clearly at different periods, the image being generally used for great revolutions, we must take its date as employed here from the revelation itself: and, I apprehend, its coming before the seventh seal is opened proves that it is not the closing act of the mystery of God. Passages in which these images are used will be found in Isaiah 14 where it is connected with the fall of Babylon, which is itself called the day of the Lord,47 and, according to the author, precedes the final judgment of the nations. In Joel they are said to come before the great and terrible day of the Lord; in Isaiah 34 they accompany the judgment of the nations in Idumea. Seeing also that, while the objects used as signs are the same, what happens to them (whether

intentionally I do not here say) is quite different; that the particular points here are taken in part from Joel, which says it is before the day, in part from Isaiah 34, where it is the accomplishment of judgment on the nations in Idumea; while clearly (the seventh seal not being opened, nor, I apprehend, even the trumpets blown, though this may be differently judged of, but certainly the seventh seal not opened) the final judgment is not executed:—considering all these things, it seems hasty to fix the time by a view of these signs taken from other passages, and quite incorrect to suppose that they are used as happening once in a determinate sole time common to all the passages. Nor are the signs given in Luke at all the same as those in this passage. I have already remarked that Joel says they are before the day, and that the state of men's minds here does not answer to their state at the end.

Further, the writer should not say "events which follow the manifestation of the Lord," because there is not one word about His manifestation in the passage. It may be remarked that the same expressions as to islands and mountains are used as to the judgment of Babylon, in the Revelation itself (chap. 16:20), which, according to the author, is before the day of the Lord on the nations, or the manifestation of the Lord (as indeed is clear in that passage chapter 16:20). The other passages cited from here are Hosea 10:8, and Isaiah 2:19.

As to the rest of pages 80 and 81 I say nothing. I believe, as we all do, that these countries will be the scene of marvellous events. The statements made here, which are given as of "doubtless "events, I do not enter on, as they are more prophecy than interpretation. The only effect is to lead the mind to put far off its own expectation of

Christ by statements which not one syllable of scripture is brought to support. I read that political events “must infallibly raise,” etc.; that other events “will doubtless dispel,” etc.; and that European energies “will doubtless be an era “in the world. So that we may safely put off the Lord’s coming till another era is passed. But who will answer for the infallibility of all this, or dispel the doubts which may arise as to it? I might bring as strong arguments against it as for it, but as mere speculation I leave it untouched.

Scripture seems to say that Egypt shall not rise into greatness. Nor do I remember there any statement whatever of the glory and greatness of these countries in the latter day. Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles to the end. This may be considered moral perhaps. These countries will be the scene of wars and political jealousies, rumours of wars, nation rising against nation. But it seems to me that Ezekiel 34-37 tends to shew that the land of Israel will not be in prosperity till the Lord restores Israel to it. I should think Hosea 2 tended to shew the same thing; Joel 2 also; and even the accounts given in Daniel. And I would ask, Is there any passage to the contrary? Deuteronomy 32 I would cite as bearing on the same conclusion; and Leviticus 26:33, 34, 40-42 seems to speak very strongly in the same sense. But I do not pronounce on what the wickedness of man may do: only prophecies of this kind, drawn from political events, without one word of scripture, cannot be of any weight. First, the information of the writer may be very imperfect;48 and political consequences are so uncertain, that one cannot trust them in divine things. One would like to have a little scripture for them. As to Babylon, concerning which I

am sure there are many erroneous statements made by the author, I will consider it when we come to that part.

I have only to add, as to the note to this page (81)— “the principle of each prophetic book being its own interpreter”— where is this principle to be found? I should judge that the statement of the apostle Peter (2 Pet. 1:20), rightly understood, is the direct denial of this principle. No prophecy of scripture is its own interpreter: you cannot interpret it in taking it by itself. Such is the plain translation: so it is understood by Wahl (though he adds what will interpret it, in which we may not agree with him; but this is his translation). Every one will judge of this for himself.49 I know not who ever considered the change under Constantine as the real work of the Spirit of God, save as a providental work is.

In page 82 we have a very important principle, which the reader will do well to weigh. “These nations cannot be raised except in direct contravention of His (God’s) declared resolve.” Yet here “the unhindered progress of human greatness is to reach the final point of its attainment.” Surely this serious statement ought to be well borne out by plain and direct scripture. It is not merely blessing, left to man’s responsibility, lost, and men acting contrary to God’s revealed will. “These nations are declared, in the word of God, to be under His judgments.” Now, that man should attempt to act in contravention of God’s will is, alas! surely to be expected. But that he is to succeed in raising up whole countries to such prosperity as never was heard of, in direct contravention of God’s declared resolve, so that the unhindered climax of man’s progressive greatness should be there, where God declared it should not be, and in places which are under His judgment—surely this

requires some wonderfully strong proof, to be believed. And let the reader remember that this way of putting it is the author's own, not mine; and that he has not adduced nor alluded to one passage of scripture on the subject. There is nothing at all but his speculations on political consequences, and a system he has framed in his own mind.

I have no doubt that the prophetic and specially the Roman earth is the scene of the greatest events and deepest evil principles of the latter day. But when the author says (page 83), "The great hour of temptation comes only upon the Roman earth (oikoumene—see Luke 2:1), but it is to try or put to the test them that dwell upon the earth," his use of oikoumene is wholly unwarranted. Augustus representing the imperial power of the beast, the habitable earth (for this is what the word means) was given to him; and the pride of man, ignorant as he might be of God's counsels, was prone enough to assume the title. But to use this in order to confine the word to the limits of the Roman earth actually possessed is entirely unwarranted. Is it only the Roman earth, the assurance of the judgment of which is given to all men by Christ's resurrection? (Acts 17:31.) Or is this the meaning of verse 6 of the same chapter? Is it only into the Roman earth that the First-begotten is introduced? (Heb. 1:6). Or is the sound (Rom. 10:18) gone out only into the Roman earth, translated "the ends of the world"? There it is used for Tebel, the world, in its largest Hebrew sense. So the LXX. (Psalm 9:8). We may remark that Romans 10:18, moreover, seems to set "earth" and "world" just in the contrary way to that in which the author puts it. Nor am I aware of any passage which gives ge, earth, a more extended sense than

oikoumene. (See Isaiah 24:4.) The contrary is the case, as in those already cited; that is, ge (Greek) is used for eretz (Hebrew), and oikoumene (Greek) for Tebel (Hebrew). There is clearly no possible authority whatever for the use of oikoumene for Roman earth in Revelation 3:10, because it is applied to the empire once in a confined sense (that empire then including the civilised world, which indeed had been give up to it by God). As to the rest of pages 83, 84, the topics found there have been already treated—the candlesticks said to be in the sanctuary, etc.; and (the assertions made in it, though without any proof at all, being partially true) I turn to more important points.

As to the order of the book, I have already given what I believe to be the true one: but I would add some remarks on that given in the notes (page 85). In a certain sense chapter 6 is complete in itself; that is, there is suspense, to bring in the sealed ones and the great multitude before going farther. But it is not complete in the sense of closing the order of things treated of, because the seventh seal was not opened; only chapter 7 comes in in parenthesis.

The next division is as unreasonable as it can well possibly be, that is, chapters 7, 8 and 9; because there is a clear and positive series of trumpets divided into two parts—preparatory trumpets, and woe trumpets, which last three are named as going to sound, in chapter 8:13, and are not closed till the end of chapter 11; and the second woe contained in chapter 11 is not said to be ended till chapter n:14. There is in the meanwhile the little open book; but its introduction merely gives the place and date of its close, viewed in connection with the order of events under the trumpets, as is evident

from chapter 11:14. Moreover, in chapter 10 it is stated that the mystery of God would be finished in the days of the seventh angel. And accordingly when he sounds, the kingdom is celebrated—anticipatively, perhaps. Still as a series of trumpets, the detail is closed, though events included under them may be important enough to be detailed elsewhere. So that to put chapters 7, 8, and 11 together, and cut off chapters 10 and 11 from chapter 9 is to subvert the declared order of the passage itself. The object is to identify the witnesses with the period of chapter 13; but with this purpose it is a contempt of the declared order and not a statement of it. In chapter 10 there is no preface of blessing at all, nor any blessing stated. There is a public declaration of right to be accomplished afterwards (to wit, at the seventh trumpet, the sixth being not yet ended), but this is all.

Chapter 12 is evidently quite a new vision. The temple being declared to be opened for the first time. Some of it evidently precedes the last three years and a half, and cannot therefore be called a narrative of the same evil period— assuming the three years and a half of chapter 11 to be the same50—which is very far indeed from being proved or as yet attempted to be proved. At all events, nothing is said in chapter 12 of this period, but as a result of something else, of which the greatest part of the chapter treats (chapter 13 being mainly the account of the beast, who has received his throne from the dragon, whose history we have in chapter 12; while in this last we have very little of the period mentioned in chapter 13). As to chapter 14 being, read by itself I make no difficulty; though I believe it to be intimately connected with chapter 13—God’s dealings in mercy and judgment in relation with the evil. It has not the form of

a distinct vision, more than verse 14. However it may be considered apart, and I have no desire to make any difficulty. Chapters 15 and 16 I agree with—chapter 17, alone, I do not; but then I do not feel any need to enlarge upon it. We shall have the subject before us farther on. Chapter 17 seems the description and relationship with the beast; chapter 18 the judgment, and its effect on others. However, I may pass on.

On the two following pages I have not much to say. The statement as to Daniel (page 86) certainly confirms strongly the doctrine that there is a Jewish remnant recognised in Jerusalem at the end; because Jerusalem has “a national existence,” and it is clear that the remnant spoken of there are identified with her, and her interests. To say (page 87) that the inroads of the barbarous nations were not destructive agencies from the hand of God, is an assertion that must be left to everyone acquainted with history to judge of. It is curious that one of their chiefs became celebrated as being entitled by public and universal consent “the scourge of God.” Nor am I aware how Constantine consolidated human greatness. His own genius stayed the ruin for a time; but the departure from Rome, making a balance between the pagan aristocracy of ancient Rome and the Christianity of the emperor and the East, paved the way very plainly for the dissolution of the empire. But these are not subjects I feel it necessary to pursue here.

As to the note on “Hades followed with him,” it seems to me quite unfounded, and beside the object, of the verse; but I do not feel it worth discussing. The next note is more important, and will demand a little more attention. I shall not discuss the difference of language in chapter

20, nor the giving of the robe. Seeing the souls seem to me only to mean that he who had power to kill the body had none over the soul: they were alive still. I do not see that the question of resurrection is treated in either case. The resurrection is never (that I am aware of) treated of in the Apocalypse. There is the single expression “This is the first resurrection,” speaking of those who have part in it; but no account is ever given of it at all, either in this chapter, or in chapter 20.

And now as to 1 Corinthians 15:23—a passage evidently of the utmost importance as to this, and one quite calculated, as here commented on, to produce difficulties in an honest mind. But then there is not one single statement of the author which is not incorrect. We have, Christ “the firstfruits, then those that are Christ’s (they that are Christ’s), then “cometh the end, etc., when, as we learn from Revelation 20, the final resurrection occurs of those who are written in the book of life. Consequently those who are not Christ’s (i.e., manifestly His51) at His coming, do not rise until the last resurrection. If the words first, second, and third had been used, they could not have fixed the order of the resurrection more definitely than it is fixed by the words ‘firstfruits’—‘then’ and ‘then’; 1 Cor. 15:23, 24. The writer then reasons on the Greek word meaning “coming,” or else being used in the sense of “presence,” as opposed to absence. If used in the latter sense, he argues, there could be no contrast with the third period at the end. “Besides which, nothing can be more clearly revealed than the inconceivable rapidity of the resurrection.”

Now that these three Greek words mean consecutive order is quite clear, that is, as to what is connected with

one of them, in respect of what is connected with the other. For example, they that are Christ's could not be raised before Christ; nor the end be before they that are Christ's be raised. The order of the events actually named is definite. But they express only the order which exists among the things stated; and if the author means to the exclusion of other intervening things, he is quite wrong. I have not to make even the most unlearned reader travel far to be convinced of this. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:6, 7. "That he was seen of Cephas, then [eita] of the twelve: then [epeita] of above five hundred brethren at once … then [epeita] he was seen of James; then [eita] of all the apostles; last of all of me." Now here we have the very same words, with the absolute certainty that Christ was seen by several other parties, which are not mentioned here: as Mary Magdalene; the two that went to Emmaus; once also by the eleven when Thomas was absent; and another time when he was present—of which, at any rate, only one is mentioned—to seven of them, in John 21. This is declared to be the third time to the disciples; and yet He certainly was seen another time, when He ascended; besides the mountain in Galilee, which is perhaps the five hundred spoken of, though only the eleven are mentioned by Matthew. At any rate we have here the absolute certainty, that while eita and epeita give the order of events mentioned, they do not exclude others. Any reasoning founded on this idea is entirely destitute of any force, as the example drawn from this chapter itself proves. Again, we know that many bodies of the saints arose after the resurrection of Christ, whatever became of them afterwards. So that this order does but state the order of the great public acts referred to, but certainly does not exclude others.

Further, when the author says, “Then cometh the end, when, as we learn from Revelation 20,” etc. Now, why could not he go on with Corinthians 15? For a very simple reason: because there is nothing about the final resurrection at all, but quite another thing, namely, Christ’s giving up the kingdom. Now it is quite clear that this does not refer to the judgment of the dead, mentioned in Revelation 20, because He does not then give up the kingdom. For He is to judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. It is surely wrong to slip over what is stated in the chapter under discussion, and most decidedly misapply another passage, quoted to help the argument out—further, even, not only misapply, but misstate the sense. For there is not one word about the final resurrection of those in the book of life. All that is said about the book of life in that passage is, that those who were not found there were cast into the lake of fire: but not a single word about those who were. The author’s statement is, They who are converted during the millennium rise then. Who told him the saints died during the millennium? Death is not destroyed: but where is it said the saints died? Nowhere. And! think there are very strong passages to make us think they will not. At any rate it is in vain to build a great system on passages which say nothing at all about it, as if they did, and to allege that they do—leaving out the very passage treated of, to give us its sense from this other, while it actually speaks of another point, to which the other passage cited cannot apply.

Next as to “coming,” or “presence,” the word avowedly means “presence”: but as by coming a person ceases to be absent, it is so used. Thus, as to the coming of Titus,

the apostle says, “I found no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother” (i.e., he was absent); then by his coming he was comforted (i.e., by his presence). As to the words “by my coming to you again,” it is a strange passage to quote as not applying to a prolonged presence, as he is referring in the preceding verse to his abiding and continuing. The truth is, there is nothing in the word to fix continuance or not. I may present myself and disappear, and it would be my presence or coming. I may do so, and stay, and it would be my presence or coming. Now I have not the least doubt whatever that presence or coming is used in 1 Corinthians 15 in the general abstract way for the occasion and power of the resurrection of the saints; for this only is spoken of, though we know the wicked will be raised. While Christ is absent, they must remain in their graves: when He comes, when He is present, they that are His will leave them: and this is most certainly not contrasted with another resurrection at all, but with another event—that is, the giving up the kingdom—which will most positively happen after all resurrection, even of the wicked, is over. And this confirms very strongly indeed the general sense of “presence” or “coming,” because the contrast is with another thing (which thing quite changes everything from that idea, and puts an end to what it expresses), that is, with giving up the kingdom.

There is His own resurrection, His presence, and another event which closes and is in contrast with this, or changes the whole state of things brought in by His presence (to wit, His giving up the kingdom). I do not think anyone reading the passage with intelligence can doubt the justness of what I here say. One thing is certain: the whole statement of the author as to it is

wrong. The statement is a general one—that when Christ comes, they that are His will rise. I suppose no Christian doubts it.

In verse 51 the apostle is giving details as to themselves and the dead previous to this act, and does not speak at all of all the dead in Christ, or of the order; but of themselves, of the church, such as he then addressed it —the general principle or manner of their own resurrection. “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment … for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Such is the manner of the church’s resurrection. But nothing more is said; and the writer himself believes that there will be another resurrection of saints after this: so that it is clear no principle is involved in applying it to those only of whom the apostle is actually speaking, and going no farther—a most important principle in interpreting scripture.

For my own part, then, I have not the smallest doubt that we have (v. 23, 24) the general principle and order —every man in Christ. First, Christ the firstfruits; then His presence comes (for He is now absent), and they that are His are to rise, when He is thus present. Afterwards He is to deliver up the kingdom. Secondly, we have the manner of the church’s resurrection, wherein, from many passages, I have no doubt that the saints of the Old Testament will be found. I do not cite them, because I suppose no one doubts it.

There is another very important principle involved here. “There is no redemption apart from union to the person of the Son of God.” This sounds well; but while, as a general expression, it might have passed unnoticed as a

commonly received truth, that life is in the Son, and of Him we have it, and in Him we have it—still, taken as the accurate basis of an immense system, it is well to estimate justly its value. There is no such thing spoken of in Scripture, that I am aware of, as union with the Son of God. He is our life: and we are said to dwell in Him, and He in us; which is known to us by the Holy Ghost.

But I apprehend unity is spoken of the body—of the head and members. He is the Head of the body. But this is not redemption; nor is possession of life ever said to be this union as His body. For the millennial saints are most certainly not in this, seeing it is His fulness as Head over all things— glorified together with Him when He reigns (to be glorified together with Him being the consequence and reward of suffering with Him, which the millennial saints most clearly will not). That they are redeemed and quickened is most sure; but they are not glorified with Him: those that suffer with Him are. We are His body, His body the church—of His flesh and of His bones—that is, the bride, the Lamb's wife, whom He presents glorious to Himself— "the whole body" (Eph. 4), which makes increase of itself in love, through the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, "till we all come," etc. In the ages to come He is going to shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us, whom He has made to sit in heavenly places in Him. We who have first trusted or pre-trusted are to the praise of His glory. And there is one body. Headship in Adam and headship in Christ may be spoken of in another way. All Adam's children had Adam's life, and the consequences of it; but all Adam's children were not Adam's wife Eve. No one can live before God, but by the life of the Son of God. But it does

not follow that all are His body, His bride. I go no farther than to say here, it does not follow. As in the Adam all die, so in the Christ shall all be made alive. They are the two heads— of a sorrowful, and of a blessed system. This happens in one, that in the other. I do not doubt that all saints will rise in virtue of the life-giving power of the Second Adam. That there is universality in this is quite clear to me; but I do not see why this makes union in the sense of the bride. That they will have all spiritual bodies I do not doubt. This cannot be forced to prove that pages 51 and 52 apply to all, because the writer's view is that there is another resurrection at the end. So that either these latter do not partake of the spiritual body, or else the apostle turns in these verses from the general principle to the special mystery of the church's participation in it.

As to the order of the resurrection of all who are quickened52 in the second Adam being given in 1 Corinthians 15, the answer is, there is not one word about it. There is the general statement—they that are Christ's at His presence or coming; and that is all. We have already seen that the author is obliged to resort from 1 Corinthians 15 to Revelation 20 which says nothing about it, save the fact, that it will be in the time of His presence or coming. The confusion between the doctrine53 of the Epistle to the Ephesians and 1 Corinthians 15 is perfectly unwarranted, and very important too.

There is another point I would refer to here, that is, the force of the word "in Christ." It is not at all to deny that participation in His life may be included in this word; but it is not its meaning nor force. Thus, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (or, there is a new

creation) is affirming that about a Person in Christ, while the expression “in Christ” has its own ordinary meaning.

The following passages will shew that, while it is most certain that there must be the life of Christ communicated to be really in Christ, as a saint, and that this implies now being actually a member of His body, the words “in Christ “have not in themselves this force.

Ephesians 1:10, 11: He should gather together in one all things in Christ. Here it is clearly not life, nor union. Colos-sians 1:17: By Him, (en auto, in Him) all things subsist. 1 Corinthians 11:11: But neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord. Romans 8:9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. It is clearly not union with the Spirit, though the Spirit be life. Philippians 1:14: Many of the brethren in the Lord. Galatians 5:6: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision. Philippians 4:1: So stand fast in the Lord. Philippians 4:2: To be of the same mind in the Lord. Philippians 4:7: Shall keep your hearts and minds in (through) Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19: Glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:21: Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. 1 John 2:24: Ye shall abide in the Son and in the Father. 1 John 2:27, 28: Abide in Him.

The following passages prove that in, and dwelling in, do not necessarily imply union:—

Romans 8:1: No condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15:8: They that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 1 John 4:4: He that is in the world. 1 John 4:16: He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God,

and God in him. 1 John 5:19: Lieth in the wicked one. 1 John 5:20: And we are in the true one, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 3:6: He that abideth in Him.

The consideration of these passages will shew that being in, dwelling in, are not expressions which necessarily mean union; for they are used where union would be entirely out of place. That these two things go together in our own case, when we are really in Him, is fully admitted. Indeed the very expression “as in the Adam all die, so in the Christ,” etc. proves that it is not union; because, though involved in Adam’s fall, we are not in union with him, as the church is with Christ; we are not members of his body.

As to the following note, in what is quoted from Jeremiah 4:23-27, if parallel, the Lord declares He will not make a full end. So that the symbols most clearly do not mean what they are alleged to mean. And if it is the time that He will shake, etc., how do they hide themselves in caves, etc., seeing once more is the removing of things that can be shaken? Jeremiah and Haggai cannot both apply; because Haggai 2:21, the apostle tells us, means the end; and in Jeremiah, the Lord tells us, He does not.

Chapter 7

We have here to deal with some very important points. Some important in themselves, others through the questions raised on them, though of themselves comparatively of little moment.

The general ideas of the way the Gentiles have despised the promises to Abraham, etc., are common to all who

hold the personal reign “since the revival of prophetic light.” It is the use of them which is here to be enquired into.

The very word “despise,” taken with what follows, has a very equivocal force, though it would not have struck me perhaps else. It is not reject, or refuse to admit, but” despise,” as something which might be worth our having. And as we read on, the full force of this little word becomes evident, falling in with the earthly character to which Christianity is really reduced always in this book. We are not called upon to own Israel’s ancient promises as belonging to Israel, but to blend them into harmony with the new hopes ministered by Jesus and His apostles. These ancient promises to Israel being forgotten, the consequence was that Gentiles Christianity became useless for God’s purposes of practical testimony on the earth. And, in fact, before the apostles died, they were boasting themselves against the natural branches of the very tree to which they owed all their own fatness—such is the author’s view.

God makes everything work together for good to those who love Him. It was the attempt to lower our Christian privileges to an earthly measure (so constantly and assiduously made in the system of which this book is the fullest expression, and from which the Spirit of God made one instinctively recoil)— it was this attempt, I say, which led my mind to dwell on the highest and blessed source from which our privileges do flow.

Now, I would ask, do the apostles blend into harmony the ancient promises to Israel with the new hopes ministered by Jesus and His apostles? Or, while maintaining these hopes, did they confound them with

the heavenly glory which belonged to the church? Nay, did Jesus minister these hopes, or did He say that He had many things to tell them, but they could not bear them now, but that when the Spirit of truth was come, He would guide them into all truth, and shew them things to come, glorifying Christ and taking of His things (and all the Father's were His) and shewing them to them? And as Jesus declares, in direct contradiction of the author's assertion, that He could not administer these hopes to them then because of their state, but that the Spirit could (because, being in them, He was a capacity of reception as well as power of revelation)—so the apostle declares that it was the Spirit that did so reveal them. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "So the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things freely given to us of God." And this (to go no farther in quoting passages on this very important point) was so truly the case, that, precious and blessed as the presence and care of Jesus was, such was the immense difference with the coming of the Holy Ghost, and that to dwell in the disciples, made, that it was expedient for Jesus Himself to leave them.

All this is kept out of sight, and new hopes ministered by Jesus and His apostles brought in together, as if there were no difference. Is this honouring Jesus? Would men think it needful to bring Jesus up to the level of the apostles? They may spare themselves the trouble. His

lowliness and humiliation were His glory, His highest and new glory. It is, on the contrary, but despising His own lowly and tender words in that place of humiliation which no living man but Himself could have taken. The Son of God making Himself of no reputation is the eternal wonder of heaven and earth. That Israel's earthly hopes and glory will be accomplished when the church's heavenly hopes are, and that thus there will be harmony, is true. All things in heaven and earth will be gathered together in one in Christ. But they will never be blended. Flesh and blood will never inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption. If an eternal state be spoken of, then these are not Israel's ancient promises. What is peculiar to and prophetic of Israel, will then be done with.

The ancient promises made to Israel were of earthly blessings (as God's people no doubt): but the promises to Israel were of an earthly inheritance, made to them as a people separated from Gentiles. I am not now speaking of individual saints, looking beyond those promises to better things. These were not promises to Israel, but heavenly hopes. And that the hopes ministered by the apostles were different from those promises is clear; for the author calls them new hopes. The question is, how far they are blended. That there may be common things is very possible. No doubt there are. They must be born again. They must be forgiven. And they will have life. But what is the blending of the heavenly and earthly hopes? The olive tree would be referred to; and here it is said that the Gentiles owe all their fatness to it. Now this is merely the sad principle which runs all through this book— namely, reducing the church to the lowest privileges of which it is partaker.

Let us consider a little this teaching of the olive tree. The apostle had concluded all under sin without difference, the Jew having only added transgressions under the law: and he had closed the account of the privileges of the saints in Romans 8. Not, it is true, on the ground of the elevation of Christ to be Head of the body (this is the subject of the Ephesians), but on a principle of a headship of Christ going beyond Abraham and David, and extending to a position which answered to that of Adam, the figure of Him that was to come—the new resurrection man. This blotted out the idea of Israel as to distinctive position before God. Lifted up from the earth, He was to draw all men in a new way. God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews. The free gift had all men for its object. The consequent blessings are then enquired into; the presence of the Holy Ghost; they were called, justified, and glorified, and never to be separated from God's love in Christ Jesus. This closes chapter 8.

But then naturally arises the question—If Jews and Gentiles are indiscriminately admitted by faith, what comes of the promises made to Israel as God's people? This question the apostle answers in chapters 9 to 11, shewing that God had foretold that they would be a disobedient and gainsaying people, as they had in fact stumbled at the stumbling stone. The question, then, here discussed is not church privileges, but how to reconcile their being indiscriminate with the distinctive promises to Israel. And therefore (chap. 11) the apostle asks, Hath God cast away His people? And here he comes entirely on earthly ground: for Israel never were, and never will be, and were never promised to be, a heavenly people: whereas the church, in its higher and

distinctive and proper privileges, was a heavenly people, and had Christ's suffering portion for them upon earth. They were sitting in heavenly places in Him. But they were to have a place actually on earth; and here they replaced for a time Israel. But this did not at all set aside the promises to Israel as such: there was no blending of them. A Jew, or circumcision, was nothing now. One displaced the other on earth. In heaven the distinction was unknown. Christ was the Head of the body in heaven, but He was no Messiah of the Gentiles upon earth, though the Gentiles were to trust in Him, so that the apostle could justify himself by the Old Testament.

But then how reconcile these things? God had not cast away His people. First, He had reserved an elect remnant. Secondly, it was to provoke, as He had declared He would, to jealousy, His ancient people; therefore not to cast them off. Thirdly, Israel would be saved as a whole by Christ's coming again and going forth from Zion.

But this last, instead of blending, was preceded by the threat of utterly cutting off the Gentile branches. Now it is quite clear that this cannot refer to the heavenly body of Christ (for it cannot be so cut off), but to God's dealings with them on earth. And this is yet more evident, because the Israelites are said to be graffed into "their own "olive tree, which clearly has nothing to do with the church as a heavenly body, because that is not their olive tree any more than a Gentile's. All were alike here, children of wrath. There was no difference. It was one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. But there was an administration of promises, and immutable promises, which did naturally

belong to them. The Gentiles came in here, inasmuch as, being united to Christ the true Seed of Abraham, they come into the promises and blessing of Abraham. But on repentance, Israel down here on earth will be grafted into their own olive tree, where we are now contrary to nature.

But all this naturally, and contrary to nature, has no place in our proper church position: all is beyond nature and contrary to nature there. Yea, though we had known Christ after the flesh (and He was seed of David according to the flesh, and Abraham was the Jew's father after the flesh)—but, though we had known Christ after the flesh, we were now to know Him no more, though we recognise His title. "The glory of the Messiah of Israel" will be established, but not on the principles, though both be received by grace, on which the church is set in heaven; because there can be no Israel known there. They have their own olive tree down here, and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. But in Christ as known to the church there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all. The church of heavenly places has put on Christ and knows nothing else.

And it is because the church at Jerusalem did yet as to earth refer to this special place of Jews, according to the mind of God Himself (and not as if it did not enter into the full heavenly privileges itself), according to the sermon of Acts 3 (where the unbelieving Jews are still treated as the children of the covenant which God made with Abraham) that the Pentecostal church has been spoken of as having a Jewish character. It is not that those who composed it did not form part of the heavenly church and body of Christ; but that God (till Jerusalem

had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost about a glorified Christ, as she had rejected a humble Christ) did not finally cast her off as having no more hope. She had deserved it, indeed; but God answered the intercession of Christ for that nation upon the cross, by the Spirit in the mouth of Peter in Acts 3 (as indeed as a nation He will hereafter, only in a remnant saved by grace) telling them that now, if they repented, He would send Jesus, and the times of refreshing would come. But when He called, there was still “none to answer”; and judgment, though with long patience, took its course. And Paul appears (Col. 1), as minister of the church, to fulfil the word of God, and of the gospel to every creature under heaven; and the full heavenly indiscriminate character of the one body is brought out. Nobody ever dreamed that the Jewish saints were not of it; but they justly discerned the blessed patient dealings of God with His ancient and beloved people—the nation for which Christ died, and for which He interceded—and the full bringing out of the doctrine of that heavenly body which knew no difference of Jew within itself at all, nor Christ Himself after the flesh, while it recognised the truth of all the rest.54 And further: the doom of the Gentile nations and beasts, though long foretold, will not have its accomplishment till the Gentile church has lost its own place. “Gentile Christianity “as such—as Gentile—became mighty when Peter’s testimony was useless at Jerusalem; that is, when the blending down here of Jewish promises and Christian hopes closed Jerusalem’s rejection of the gospel, as to practical testimony on the earth. It was as effacing the distinction of Jew and Gentile, and shewing that Israel was cast away for a time from all its hopes, that the testimony of Gentile Christianity was mighty upon earth—not by blending

them. That the denial of Israel's earthly hopes has helped on the ruin of Gentile Christianity is most true: because the church thereon looks for earthly place and position, which is only and contrastedly Israel's. It was the attempt to blend them55 that did the mischief, and I firmly believe is the grand mischief of this book. Deny Israel's place and glory with Messiah, and the church will become earthly, rise in its own conceits, and finally, as a system down here, cut off. But it was the distinct and unequivocal maintenance of the church's proper and separate place, as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, which maintained its position for Israel; and not blending them in harmony, when God had temporally replaced on earth one by the other, as He will the latter by the restoration of Israel on a new ground, but as a distinct people on its own promises. And if this be not kept clear, the church actually and practically loses its own place and character, and will not long give its testimony in the earth. It cannot blend itself with Israel's promises, and Continue so to do. It is true that the church has taken up the dropped inheritance of the promises down here; but it has taken them up as possessor of a higher and new glorious title, which was no subject of promise—living union with the Lord Jesus as His body, which was no subject of promise—and in accomplishment of a mystery hidden from ages and generations. Israel was judicially blinded to let in the church; as the apostasy and excision will come, and the faithful be in heaven, that Israel may be graffed in again. Is this blending them? The Gentile Christians do not owe all their fatness to the tree. They partake of its fatness, i.e., of the Abrahamic promises. But they owe their highest blessings to their union with Christ—being His own body—a thing never promised to Abraham at all,

whatever portion he may be judged to have in it, in his own person.

That Paul recognises the old things and the new we all believe; but, as we here find, the writer does not go beyond old things and new of the kingdom. The church, as the body of Christ, does not enter into the new or old in his statement. I do not the least wish to deny the importance of this question; I implore brethren to weigh anxiously this point: they may be assured it is of the greatest practical importance—I mean the distinctness of the church's hopes or their blending with the ancient promises to Israel. The life and spiritual energy of a saint depends on his faith in what is proper to his own dispensation. This is so true, that, if he only believed what belonged to the last, it would not be life to him; it has ceased to be the test of faith to him. To Abraham, faith in Almighty God was living faith: is this (though living faith surely owns it) what living faith consists in now? A Jew, not owning Jehovah, would have failed from the covenant. And it is true of power too. If the Holy Ghost be not fully owned, if the proper heavenly place of the church be not fully owned, no general idea of salvation, however true, will give the power, nor form and guide for Christ's glory those who neglect the former. What is special to the dispensation is the power and testimony of the dispensation, and not what is said to be common to all.

We will now turn to Christianity in Jerusalem. It is well for the reader to remember that all that used to be said as to the church being in the tribulation, the blessedness of our being forewarned and prepared for it, the doctrine of Christ's appearing before the church's going up to meet Him in the air (to prove which the "rest with

us" when He shall appear was quoted)—all this, I say, which was so much insisted upon, is entirely given up. Many of the disciples of the school still hold it; but the author of these "Thoughts" has entirely relinquished it. A few scattered Christians (and disobedient ones too) may be caught in the storm: but all intelligent and obedient ones will escape it altogether. It is a new testimony, when Christianity is withdrawn, that will be exposed to the malice of Antichrist. This is evidently an important point. The saints well know how much it was insisted on, that they would be there and must be prepared for it. It was urged as one grand delusion to fancy the church would be out of it, whereas God was specially preparing their hearts for it by forewarning them. The mistake (it appears now) was in those who insisted upon it. In page 124 of the "Thoughts" the reader may see that Christianity is withdrawn from Jerusalem. The dragon drives it away into the refuge God has prepared for it out of the limits of the civilised earth (pages 148, 149). The harvest also is reaped in Christendom, and has no reference at all to the regions of the Roman earth, where Christ appears suddenly to destroy Antichrist.

But let us examine these statements. The reader will understand that the answer must be somewhat longer than the statement; because, when a statement is made without any proof— when it is said, that such is manifest from Matthew 24, it does not suffice to say, "It is not manifest," and increase the phrases only by the word "not." It would be quite as valid, but very useless.

That Christianity will again exist in Jerusalem is not denied, for it does exist there. But, according to the statement of the author, already referred to (page 124),

it will not exist there during the tribulation, or period of the beast's power. So that what he means by His disciples being destined to witness in that city the great hour of Antichristian triumph, it would be hard to tell: on the first sign cf that triumph, they are to leave the country. All is mixed up together here, to say the least, in the most confused manner. He (Christ in Matthew 24) "foretells," we are told, "the period of unequalled tribulation." "The Revelation also again and again refers to those who hold fast the testimony to Jesus, and the faith of Jesus, in the midst of similar circumstances to those which Matthew 24 describes." Now would it be supposed that the author held that there would be no Christianity in Jerusalem during the last three years and a half (that is, during the whole period of anti-Christian triumph, or "period of unequalled tribulation")? So that all that in the Revelation refers to the beast's reign, as far as "hopes and testimony of Christianity in Jerusalem "go, must be entirely excluded from all that is said here. The obedient ones, seeing the sign, will be far away. And it is not to be passed over, that the only definite reference to testimony to Jesus, and faith in Jesus, in the prophetic part of the Revelation, refers to the period of the beast's reign.

And, further, I will assume56 with the writer that it is Christians and Christianity that receive the direction to flee from Jerusalem when the abomination of desolation is set up; because then there would be unequalled tribulation, and that "ye" means in Matthew 24 this same body, the church, all through its "last representatives." Does he mean to say that they are directed to flee from Jerusalem because the tribulation is setting in, to be in the very same tribulation

elsewhere? Is there any sense in that? And if not, what "evil hour" does he refer to as "that evil hour"? He had spoken of "the great hour of Antichristian triumph." But in Jerusalem they will not suffer from it. They are to flee —not, I suppose, into the identical persecutions elsewhere. So that they will not be in the great tribulation at all. In speaking, therefore, of similar circumstances to Matthew 24, the author must refer to what precedes the day of the beast's power. So that his doings against the saints in Revelation do not apply to those instructed in Matthew: they are fled "into the bosom of uncivilised darkness." Very possibly; but they are not in his power. We may remark that the patience of those who "have the faith of Jesus" is referred only to not worshipping the beast. It is an expression used only once. The expression "faith of the saints "is used in reference to the same thing. And so is "testimony of Jesus "in the only place in which it is connected with any persons specifically. Only here it is the dragon who makes war with them.

Continuation of Chapter 7

We may set aside, then, the beast's reign as referring to Matthew 24 in connection with the suffering of the saints, on the authority of the author himself. I should have had merely to cite the statement of page 124, that Christianity will be withdrawn from Jerusalem, and the statement here, "Christianity in Jerusalem," if there had not been the greatest ambiguity of statement. First, you would suppose that witnessing in that city did not mean exactly fleeing so as to be secure, on a signal divinely predicted—that when (after taking all those addressed in Matthew as one body, because of "ye") it is stated

“the Revelation also again and again refers to some,” etc., you would suppose that the statements of Revelation were connected with the same period of Antichristian triumph, and the trial of the same persons. But not at all. Christians are not to be there. It is there said in italics, similar circumstances to Matthew: I suppose to avoid saying the same; because at Jerusalem Christianity will not be to be persecuted. But are they the same persons? Can this be supposed? Does the reader believe that the Lord desires to flee because of tribulation, that these identical persons may be in the same persecution elsewhere? I say same, because similar circumstances can only mean a like persecution —elsewhere, perhaps, but the same thing. But if it be not the same body, why is it introduced here, giving to suppose that it is the same? or why connect them with Matthew 24, where those that listen to Christ’s voice evidently get away from under the beast’s power? If the statements in the Revelation have anything to do with Matthew 24, how can the faithful ones of the earth at that evil hour (who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus, and hold fast the testimony to Jesus, and who are in the Revelation described as suffering in patience of faith under the beast’s power) be the same as those whose obedience, if they had listened to the voice of Jesus, would have taken them out of his power? It is true the writer does not say here that they suffer in the evil hour, because the contradiction with Matthew 24 would have been flagrant; but if the passages in Revelation are consulted, it is plain. Elsewhere (page 148) he leaves a general idea of suffering because driven out. Be it so; but that is not patience under the beast’s reign, who is overcoming them.

The truth is, the whole system is so unsound that you cannot put the different parts of it in juxtaposition without its discrepancies being manifest. The expression of them may be avoided; but they are not the less flagrant to those who take the pains to examine them.

One thing is certain, that we have no need to examine the beast's doings in Jerusalem at "that evil hour"; because the Christianity at Jerusalem, of which he speaks here, will not then exist. If any Christians remain, they are clearly (according to the author) disobedient ones, not the faithful ones. Indeed they would spoil all; because the new witnesses would be declaring it was too late for present forgiveness; and these Christians, disobedient though they were, would prove that it was not. And here I would ask in passing (for we must speak of it farther on) how the witnesses in Jerusalem (page 124) can testify of the message of forgiveness through His blood despised and now withdrawn, when elsewhere in Christendom this forgiveness subsists still, and is not withdrawn at all? Nay, when it has been stated that in Antichrist's world, though Christianity be driven out, some scattered saints remain? Is it withdrawn and subsisting at the same time? Can an individual have peace in Russia and its dependencies, perhaps up to the Euphrates, and the testimony of God the other side be, that he cannot? Yet such is the system which denounces as heresy whatever does not submit to its statements. And let us remember that we are here upon the very ground of that assertion —the interpretation of Matthew 24.

However, we may now leave aside the application of Revelation to Matthew 24, as referring to the time when Christianity is not in Jerusalem, and speak of the

previous period, when it is alleged to be there. Only we shall do well to remember also, that it is the Revelation we are examining, arid that this part of Matthew 2457 applying solely to Jerusalem in that evil hour, the Christianity spoken of as referred to in the Revelation, has no place here at all; because it will not exist at Jerusalem during the evil hour.

Now first, as to the word “Ye”: it is urged as a conclusive proof that all the chapter refers to Christians.

Now, if Christianity be entirely withdrawn from the scene, and that “ye” and “you” mean Christianity, how is it that the words “ye” and “you” are found after the tribulation is come in, and refer to their being involved in its difficulties? “For then shall be great tribulation. Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert,” etc. That is, the “ye” and “you” are continued after Christianity is withdrawn. For it will hardly be denied, that these false Christs, etc., appear in the scene of the tribulation from which the Christian disciples have entirely withdrawn, on the sign given in the chapter, verse 15. And if Christianity be withdrawn, who, on the author’s system, are the elect?

But, further, not only is the “you” continued to them in the scene of tribulation, after Christianity is withdrawn, but the character of the warnings is very strange, if it be Christians that are warned. When I say, “Christians,” I heed the word very little: it is a human name; and if men please to call Christians the confessors of that time, I do not oppose. On the author’s statement of what it is, I do not see how he could refuse it, though he does. But what is material is the church as such now. Does Matthew 24

speak of that as such? Now, what is the warning? It is—not to believe (though, as we have seen, it is hard to understand how they are there, if Christianity be withdrawn) the statement of Christ's being in the desert, or the secret chamber. But how can the church believe that, when it is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air? It must first believe that Christ has falsified His word, and have fallen from the faith. But I shall be told that that would be true: but that we know how Christians have forgotten the proper hope of the church, and therefore may need these warnings. Let it be remembered, then, that these instructions in Matthew apply only to those who have entirely forgotten the proper hope of the church: which it is impossible to reconcile with what is here said. This is a good deal to say of the faithful of the earth, who "stand like the last representatives of the firstborn on earth, just as Stephen and the pentecostal saints represented it in its early history" —so that the visions of glory in the Revelation seem almost exclusively to belong to them.

But let the fact be remembered, that the Lord's warnings here are entirely inconsistent with the church's own hope given elsewhere.

But the truth is, even this resource is taken away here; because what the author is treating of is the revival of clear light on these very subjects, blending in harmony the ancient promises and the new hopes. And whatever the revival of prophetic light amongst us western Christians may do, it is certain that when Antichristianism has brought back the nations of the prophetic earth into their former place, and Christianity is again found amidst Israel and Jerusalem, the expectation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, and of the

judgments that will accompany His return, will again form part of the hopes and testimony of Christianity in Jerusalem. But will this clearer light, this more than revival of prophetic light (described in its prophetic character, page 92, as the blending into harmony the ancient promises with the new hopes, which does revive the expectation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel) exclude the church's expectation? If so, surely it is not Christianity. If it does bring this clear blending in, as the apostles and Paul had it (and we are told the disciples, who were the apostles, were so addressed here), then this warning can have no place here; because it is clearly inconsistent with the church's hope. If, on the contrary, it is a revival of Israel's hope of Messiah, and an exclusion of the church's, then the case supposed is one of a believing Jewish remnant, and not the church. I am obliged to put it in this alternative, because the author, in speaking of the revival of prophetic light, and, further, of Christianity at Jerusalem, has not said a word of the church's hope. I may therefore suppose that he takes for granted its power, according to what he approves in page 92. If not that, it is excluded. But in page 96, we are freed from this uncertainty. It is asserted that "they" (i.e., those who are here addressed) "will be freed from the darkness which now broods over Gentile Christianity, and will again combine the new things of the kingdom with the promises made unto the fathers." It is therefore impossible that, thus clearly discerning Israel's hope and the new things of the kingdom, they would be liable to be ensnared by being told that Christ is in the secret chamber; because, with a clear and certain light, they will know that they themselves are to be with the Lord in the air. All reasoning from "the darkness that now broods over

Gentile Christianity," which might make a true saint liable to such a mistake, is quite taken away. The truth is, the whole system is a mass of confusion, arising from man's mind dealing with the mighty word of God.

Nor is it merely the state of men's mind we are to consider. The Lord, we are told, is dealing with the disciples as the church. Would the Lord, in explaining all to the church, give them warnings which implied the denial or total absence of the church's hope in their minds? Would He sanction that, by not even alluding to it? For the Son of man's appearing is only spoken of as acting on the tribes of the earth, or land. I will not enter into the discussion of the whole chapter here, having now applied myself to the use the author makes of it in this place. I will only add one or two questions. Of what age do the disciples speak, when they enquire about its end? Does the Lord correct the evident Jewish character of the disciples' questions, or answer them on their own ground, which was clearly Jewish in its character? Of what is Daniel treating, when he speaks of the abomination of desolation? Is it of Jews or Christians? Is God's testimony there occupied about the Jewish people, as such, or Christianity? Daniel's people, it is clear. (See chap. 10:14.)

One thing yet remains in this testimony of Matthew 24 and in Revelation. According to the author, Gentile Christians will not be entrusted with this closing testimony in and round Jerusalem. Yet it was people from every nation, etc., contrasted with Jews, who, in Revelation 7, were come out of the great tribulation. Matthew 24 does clearly not speak of Gentile Christians, but Revelation 7 as clearly does, contrasted with Jews, if this be the great tribulation, as the author says.

I have only to remark further on page 97, that I am not aware of any who are spoken of “who shall testify therein,”58 unless it be on the chasing the woman into the wilderness. But let us note here, that, according to the author, testimony in Jerusalem is over, viewed as testimony of the disciples of Jesus at that time: so that all said of that in the Revelation does not apply to what is directly the beast’s reign there.59 But it does not apply to a testimony previous to that reign in Jerusalem, for the patience and faith of the saints in the Revelation is during his reign. And when it is said “escape its plagues,” the writer must not think of God’s judgments: they escape the tribulation of Antichrist.

But there is another point here. We may travel out of Jerusalem. Now these are the faithful ones of the earth at that evil hour, the enlightened ones, with old promises and new hopes, and so on. But “they see, like their Master before them, the sphere of their earthly service hopelessly closed, and wait in suffering and in trial for the hour now fast approaching of their final deliverance into their heavenly rest.” But lo, when I turn to Matthew 24 I find a most active testimony going on at this time. The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world (if any one choose to translate it “prophetic earth,” the argument is only stronger), for a witness to all nations, and then the end is to come. Now, if the sphere of earthly service is hopelessly closed to the faithful ones in that evil hour who had the testimony to Jesus, what is all this preaching in that evil hour? For it is the evil hour; for it is to the end. If the gospel of the kingdom be what we have to preach—the gospel of salvation such as the church has it—how is the sphere of earthly service closed of the faithful ones, the last

representatives of the church on earth, just as Stephen and the Pentecostal church? If it be not the gospel the church has to preach to the world, our present gospel, then what are we to say to the subject of Matthew 24?

There is another curious statement in page 96. Gentile Christians being wise in their own conceits, the testimony to Jesus in the scenes (though we have seen that it is not in the scenes, because the word is used of the period of the beast's reign and even of Jerusalem, according to the author with one exception, and Christianity is not there) therein described is not entrusted to them. Now, the branches are to be broken off because of this state. So that we find here the Gentile church, or Christians, in that state which precludes the testimony to be raised up being given to them, and, I add from Romans u, going to be cut off and a new and other set of witnesses (not the two) raised up out of Israel, who are not to be in this state at all. Thus, the church gets into the state for which it is to be cut off, so that testimony is not given to it, and a new church is raised up out of Israel, after this total decline and disappearance (as far as testimony goes) of the Gentiles —which yet is the church, and is quite out of the state of darkness which broods over us. And yet, as we have seen, they have to be warned against fancying Christ is in the secret chamber, their earthly service being closed; and they wait in suffering and trial the hour of their deliverance. And yet all the while (though coming from nobody knows where) there is an active gospel preaching all over the world, for a testimony to all nations.

After the departure of the disciples of Jesus to wait for three years and a half, while another testimony goes on

(itself rather a strange position for the faithful ones in that evil hour), that other testimony, the two witnesses, is raised up. Of these we will speak in their proper place. I only add, that I do not believe the hundred and forty-four thousand of the sealed remnant are the remnant—the "but a little remnant" —brought to repentance by the two witnesses in Jerusalem. I make no complaint at all of this statement; merely, I do not agree with it. It certainly seems to me that Revelation 7 speaks of a more general remnant spared of the whole nation, without any reference at all to Jerusalem, or the two witnesses. I see none in the chapter. It seems purposely designed to embrace the whole nation, who are not then there, and to secure beforehand God's elect remnant out of the whole nation, before any wind blew on the earth, or sea, or tree. Whatever came any where, this remnant would be safe. However, I leave this to the judgment of the reader. They are, as the author says, "the preserved of Israel on earth." But then it is clear that a very great part of Israel is not at Jerusalem: Ezekiel 20 proves this; because the rebels of all that band will not enter into the land at all, and there are yet others (Isaiah 66) brought home after Antichrist is destroyed. So, I suppose, Isaiah 27:12. It is reasonable, and I think scriptural (see John 5:43), to suppose that the Jews who rejected Christ, and do so, come under Antichrist: while others who have suffered for their rebellion, but not been in that guilt (i.e., the mass of the ten tribes under Joseph's stick) may be differently dealt with in this particular. Compare Isaiah 28:14,15. However, I leave this point.

As to the church of the firstborn in heavenly glory, "What is remarkable is, that they are all described as having come out of the great tribulation."

The author had said, “No one, I suppose, will doubt that this is the song of all the church of the firstborn.” For my own part I do doubt it very much, unless [the] great tribulation be taken as the whole church period. But I will not discuss this here. Taking it as the great tribulation, we are told, “Individually, of course, the greater part of them could not have been there. Yet as represented by their brethren they were there; for the church is one.” This is, I must say, a most comfortable way of being in tribulation: to be represented there, and yet get all the blessings resulting from it. That there is sympathy with those in tribulation is true. But to find them celebrated as in it, who had such darkness brooding on them, and were so wise in their own conceits as to be unfit to be there, is a little strong.

But then there is another grave difficulty. None of them were there. On the sign being set up, which was to shew that it would take place, they all escape to avoid it. This “is a commandment too definite and too express to be disobeyed by any who value the authority of Him who gave it.” So that no obedient disciple of Jesus was in it. I suppose it will not be argued that Jesus said, Flee, for there will be great tribulation; while He meant that they should be in the tribulation, whether they fled or not. If not, not one was there in it; and yet all the church were there. Well, I confess, this “is remarkable.” And not only so, but “the church as a whole will be known as having come out of that dispensation which gains its distinguishing characteristic from the evil hour with which it closes.” Yet not one single one of the church will be there. It is an odd expression, “come out of that dispensation.” Is it not then after all this dispensation, “the church period”? the church dispensation? And, if

so, is this power of Antichrist and the dragon the distinguishing characteristic of the church dispensation —when the church will be giving no testimony at all, the sphere of its earthly service being hopelessly closed? Can that be the distinguishing characteristic of the church dispensation in which the church is not found at all, in which it can given no testimony, and from which it is desired to flee? This will make the reader see why I enquired into these terms at the beginning, and the important effect of identifying the kingdom and the church, and this age or dispensation. It entirely destroys the true character of each.

Chapters 8 And 9

I have not much to remark on here, not admitting that all the flock of Jesus are those who are come out of the great tribulation. It seems to me somewhat strange for the church to have a conversation about themselves, and describe themselves as a class of persons, explaining who they were. That very different symbols may represent; or that a symbol and that an historical statement may both be used of, the same persons, I fully admit; or that the Lord should present a man’s history to himself in a parable: all this I conceive easily. But if the elders are the church (which I do not combat), and the great multitude is the whole church, too is it not somewhat extraordinary that they should thus, as one looking on, ask the seer, Who are these? when they were themselves? and then, when the latter referred it back to him as knowing, should give a special description of them, and what was to happen to them?

If they were a special and exceptional class, I could understand it, when those who as a body made up the

twenty-four courses of priests, were already brought in in blessing. It would have to be explained, who they were, and whence they came; and their salvation, and no more, being ascribed to God on the throne and the Lamb, would answer to the character of those who would be delivered under the circumstances of this book —at any rate, of the greater part of them. And they sing no more than their own salvation and deliverance— nothing of the special blessedness and title of Christ, as the previous song did: and their blessing is all in contrast with previous trial and sorrow.

I am not prepared to recognise a cry, not unheeded without intercession, and answered when intercession comes. “If we know that he hear us, we know that we have the petitions.” And it seems to militate against the force of “I say not that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you.” If then saints below were the church, and this book takes the ground of the church, this statement can hardly be true.

The note, also, I believe to be a mistake as to the “right translation.” I think it will be found that didomi is used in the Revelation in a peculiar manner, signifying ‘give efficacy to something already subsisting.’ Thus, in chapter 11:3, which is exactly the same form,’ I will give [power, or efficacy] to my two witnesses.” So here, ‘that He might give [efficacy] to the prayers of the saints.’ However, this is not of much moment.

To the rest of the statements I demur also. First, there is nothing particular stated, as to Israel, in the first trumpets. There is more reason for it in the woe trumpets—at any rate in the first, so that there I leave the remark uncommented upon. But smiting earth, seas,

fountains, rivers, heavens, if taken really and literally, as is supposed here by the author, must surely be more than Israel, and not Israel particularly. Besides, Tyre and Babylon are not Israel; so that page 104 and the first note do not agree.

The author says these several parts of nature will be literally smitten60 (page 112): but it is rather a loose way of getting over it to say “when the sea shall cease to supply its riches,” when it is said “the third part became blood”; and of what sea, if literal? And how does a great star fall literally from heaven, its name being Wormwood, so that a third part of the waters became (literally?) wormwood? And think of the key of the bottomless pit being literally given to a star falling down upon the earth! And what then is the description of the locusts that came out of the bottomless pit?—is this literal too? And if not, why suddenly draw a line, because the absurdity becomes too palpable? And why, if a third part of the sun was literally smitten, should the day not shine for a third part of it? It is easy just to pass over all this by talking of “waters changing their refreshment into bitterness, and the heavens in their revolution beginning to minister darkness instead of light.” But then for a literal explanation, we should have something more precise. Nor am I aware why it should apply to Israel.

It is a still stranger comment to say that these locust powers of darkness wore chaplets the same as on the head of the Lord Jesus: “for the commission of Apollyon is equally from God.” How is a chaplet the sign of a commission from God? and what shewed it in the rider of the white horse? And are those who come out of the bottomless pit crowned the same as Christ, because they

have equally a commission? I have already noticed in its place the inconsistency of explaining the men's faces here ("the same characteristic we find in the cherubim") as marking "wisdom and sagacity" —when, in explaining it in the cherubim, it was declared not to mean it (page 55). And why woman's hair signifies joy would be hard to tell. That a woman's shaving her head may signify grief (being a shame, and her ornament gone) I understand; but why a man putting on woman's hair should be joy, is, I confess, beyond me. I am not prepared to combat it, because I am not clear about the point myself.

Nor do I admit the two witnesses to be during the last three years and a half.61 But how if they are (and they are introduced during the sixth trumpet, or second woe, which closes after the end of their history) does the author bring the first five trumpets into the three years and a half, which three years and a half are occupied in his system with the witnesses who are found in the sixth, and not till then? I put this not as an objection, but as a difficulty that requires solution.

As to the note (page 112) on the Jews, it is a thought long since promulgated—the gradual breaking down of the Jews, and their sanctifying by the gradual progress of morally unbearable evil. But if "humbled," "thoroughly broken (conscious of the truth respecting the past, and correctly anticipating the future" and that by the testimony of God), surely they are converted. And it cannot be said that they were like John's disciples, and that there was no testimony of Jesus when Christianity was withdrawn; because John's was decidedly a testimony of Jesus. And if they were conscious of the truth respecting the past, what was that about? Was

there no Jesus in that past? Were they not believers that Jesus was the Christ, and yet not in a church standing? And, if they are servants of God in Isaiah, they love His name and take hold of His covenant; and say in Psalm 80, “Let thy hand be on the son of man,” etc. (See Isaiah 56 and Psalm 80.) “John’s disciples before they were brought to Jesus” avoids the question. Was there no testimony to Jesus by John? These persons are converted and know that Jesus is the Christ, and are waiting for His appearing: and they are not the church. Let the reader note this.

I suppose the repentance of a person thoroughly broken through the testimony of God proves him converted; and this testimony was of Jesus rejected and coming. And is it not a strange thing to say that the Spirit of God has provided them with inspired expressions for their self-righteousness? That He prepares the utterance of the complaints of God’s people, is true. That He prophetically declares by the Spirit what the wicked will do, putting it as a complaint in the mouth of Christ, as in Psalm 22 and 69 (“They wag their heads, and say,” etc. “They gave me gall,” etc.), or sometimes in that of a godly remnant, is true also. But can the Spirit of God prepare an abundance of touching appeals to God for self-righteousness, and sanction them by inspiring them beforehand? Is it not a monstrous supposition? Yet this is the theory of the writer, in order to make good his prophetic system and reconcile the Psalms with his theory of Israel’s state. And if not, it all falls: for otherwise there is a remnant of Israel after the church is gone, converted and turned to God; and yet fed by Jewish hopes, and sustained by testimonies of the Spirit

adapted to them. And there is recognised as of God on the earth what is not the church.

I have not much to say on the numbers: I think them mistaken, but immaterial. Seven and twelve are alone important. Seven is clearly wrong. Are seven devils rest? or seven heads on the dragon? or even seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth? or seven vials? or seven trumpets? It seems to me seven is used for completeness in spiritual things, twelve in human associations. But others can judge of this. Surely agency towards others in blessing is not specially the character of the heavenly city. I do trust we may get a little “rest” there; yet I do not remember any sevens in the city. There is agency, it is true; but is dwelling with God and the Lamb, where there is no temple, an inferior part of the blessing? The twelve loaves of show-bread, what agency had they? Twelve stones set up by Joshua as a memorial? The twelve tribes of Israel, even, what agency had they?

Is it not rather a singular thing (if seven means rest, and twelve agency) that all that part of the Revelation which describes the actings, whether of Satan in mischief or of God in judgment, is identified with the number seven, and the result in the city of glory with the number twelve?

I believe the one hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter 7 are distinct from the one hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter 14; but I do not believe the second a heavenly company.

And why in the next note does the fact of a multitude coming out of all nations, and the elders and cherubim also coming out of them (assuming them so to do) prove

they are the same body? And what proof is there that the one hundred and forty-four thousand of chapter 14 come out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues? There is absolutely none.

As to the instruments of action: why, if all be literal, is blood a symbol? All this description of agents assumes the statements of the chapter which we have considered (and which seem to me quite untenable), or they are mere fancy. But I do not feel they involve any principle so as to discuss them at length. But as to the stars (page 115), “the third of these divisions” (where is all this found?)— “they are continually employed to represent the saints in their resurrection glory.” Where? This is all a preparation (as we shall find) for statements elsewhere founded on it as if it were a truth; but would it not be better to adduce one passage as a proof than to say “they are continually employed”? Believing stars to be inferior authorities, I admit they may clearly be employed to denote the millennial state of the saints; and of course it will be unearthly and superhuman then. But I demur altogether to the general statement. Here too we have a most easy way of getting out of the difficulty of interpreting the terms used in the trumpets: “I doubt not that the waters, and all that they symbolise, will be found bitter.” This saves all difficulty certainly; and you can hardly be wrong, at any rate, but by excess. But then how is it consistent with the note in page 112, which seems to shut totally out “all that they symbolise”? There they are literally smitten, and do not mean spiritual blessings. “The gifts of God in creation, and the artificial constructions of man,” are the things judged.

However, to pass on. Who says that the host of the high ones on high, and the great ones of the earth, are punished together? Scripture does not: for it is said, “the host of the high ones [that are] on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.” So that it is not together; for the high ones are punished on high (if these be taken for spiritual wickednesses, which I do not combat), and the kings of the earth on the earth.

As to time, “it comes to pass in that day”; but this proves no identity. The whole chapter (Isaiah 24) speaks of a certain period, as in many other places. Chapters 25 to 27 are all “in that day” also; and the four chapters clearly represent a series of events—the wasting and desolation of the earth, continuing some time—the resurrection—the full blessing of Israel—and the judgment of Satan, and the gathering in all the outcasts from every quarter, one by one—all “in that day.” So, in chapter 7, “that day “is clearly used for a continuous time, characterised, however, by the same event or its consequences.

But when the author says, “the expulsion of Satan from the presence of God in heaven (see chap. 12) is carefully to be distinguished from the possession of the authority of the air,” it is really pushing the slighting of scripture for a system too far. Why is it to be carefully distinguished? On what scripture is this founded? The prince of the power of the air is the spirit that now worketh; and the expression is found in the Ephesians, where the evil spirits are called “spiritual wickedness in heavenly places,” where our blessings are said to be, and where we are said to sit. Now in Revelation 12 we read, “There was war in heaven; Michael the archangel fought, and his angels; and the dragon (who dragged

with his tail the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to earth) fought, and his angels; and prevailed not, nor was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out … he was cast out into the earth," etc. Hence they cry in heaven, "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth," etc. Now, is not his casting entirely out of heaven and down to the earth, so that his place was not found any more in heaven, identified with his being no more before our God—the latter being celebrated, because the former was accomplished? Just as the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he is called prince of the power of the air in connection with his worldly power, is the only place where he is said to be in heavenly places where our blessings are. And how, if cast from heaven to earth, was he still the prince of the power of the air?

I leave the other two notes; though they seem to me, one very unwarranted (certainly it is not yet proved that Babylon and the Euphrates are to be the world's centre), and the other most strange. It is strange to say the blue flame of the pit, or of burning brimstone, is a result of the same holiness of God as the blue of heaven: specially when there was no smoke which darkened the sun, and no flame at all; and the blue that was found here was of breastplates on the demons. I suppose this was not the holiness of God, nor much to do with it, nor with the flame of brimstone either, that I know of. It is all

summed up in one word—imagination. Blue is in heaven —blue is in brimstone—blue was in the priestly robes— and blue was on the breastplates of demons.

The distinction between Satan's possession of the authority of the air, and his being in the presence of God, is made because the system needed it; for this reason—it was determined to keep the church properly speaking on earth till the end. Now, it is certain that Satan is cast down from heaven three years and a half before this: and therefore, if there was not such a distinction made, it would be impossible to consider the church as in its original condition. The whole scene of its existence being totally changed spiritually, and it called upon to rejoice because it was so, its spiritual combats would have ceased, viewed (as the Ephesians view it) as inhabiting heaven, and as Revelation 11 does view this class of saints, calling on them to rejoice because the kingdom and salvation were come as to heaven. But then this upsets all the system; and therefore this distinction is introduced here, and left to have its force without any explanation or any proof.

As to the "Thoughts" on chapters 10 and 11, I have already discussed the order. I only recall that the close of the little book of chapter 10 is clearly connected in order of time with what precedes: for the sixth trumpet is declared to close after it finishes; and then comes the seventh of these trumpets, which come in succession; while the announcement of the angel who gives the book refers to the seventh trumpet, which clearly closes everything, though its contents be not given as such. Chapter 12 begins, after this, quite a new subject, not embraced in the trumpets, but connected with the episode of the little book (through the allusion to the

beast who slays the witnesses) introduced there to find its place in the general and comprehensive order of the trumpets, which embrace the whole series of judgments historically; though the grand moral evil of the latter day must be brought out in its sources, character, and judgment, distinctly.

I believe a part “immediately precedes,” then, and a part not, the time of the Lord’s power. This is a very fair subject for enquiry. I think I shall shew that there are untenable statements; but I can readily allow for this kind of error, as such as we may all fall into, though it be right to shew it.

In page 113, there is a statement which is unallowable, because it is based on the system the writer is pleased to maintain in direct contravention of the scripture. “Drunk (he says) with the wine first mingled by the harlot, and finally ministered through the beast.” Now, this is altering Scripture, not interpreting it. Where is the wine said to be ministered through the beast? “She,” Babylon, “made all nations drink of the wine” (chap. 14:8). She had the “golden cup in her hand.” They were” drunk with the wine of her fornication” (chap. 17:2, 4). So chapter 18:3. She “corrupted the earth” (chap. 19:2). Nor do I find a trace of anything else. But here Scripture, on a very material point (namely, who and what is to be watched against as rendering men morally and spiritually drunk), is altered and set aside; because the system of the author sets the ruling power of Babylon aside as a system at the beginning of the three years and a half, and transfers all activity to the beast, and therefore puts the cup in its hand. But is this right?

As to the presence of Christ asserting His title to all (earth and sea) here below, and announcing the closing of the mystery of God, I have only to remark that, as to the time particularly noticed in the little book, the church has nor, according to the author, “to watch, testify, and endure, many days.” I suppose we must consider the three years and a half of the witnesses the special object or period presented in that which was before this mighty angel, as it was the period contained in the little book He gave, of which the knowledge is “so easy to be grasped.” But during this period, according to the author, the scene of the church’s earthly service is closed. So that it certainly had not to testify. Hence the light of this vision cannot shine upon its service as to the period spoken of in the vision. And yet this is not to my mind the saddest part of this statement. It is its consistency, not its inconsistency. Earthly deliverance, an earthly power of Christ, is that which is always presented as the hope and relief of the church. His title in the world is the object here. I agree in this. But is it in the strength of this knowledge that the church has to watch, testify, and endure? That earthly deliverance and Christ’s earthly power should be Israel’s hope, or the remnant’s hope, rightly or wrongly apprehended, I well conceive; but is this the church’s strength? Rest with apostles and prophets, being caught up to be for ever with the Lord—I should have thought to have been more the coming hour, and that knowledge, the strength of which would have taught the church to endure and to testify. The church does know that God shall destroy those that destroy the earth; and it is a relief to the oppressed spirit. But in this it knows that the earth is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God—for that part of the deliverance at least which can be

accomplished while earth remains. Its hope and faith surely precedes, and rises higher than all this, in being with Him who shall accomplish it, though it own the other.

I have only to add that pages 120, 121, just follow on in this train. This is our future glory together with the Lord, and the sorrow of the Lord was only sorrowful testimony, and testimony, prophetic testimony, against peoples, etc. Is this the sum or nature of His highest and deepest sorrow? Is testimony against the world our62 proper place, or testimony to sinners of His and the Father's love? I understand well the place taken, sons being made servants, and the church made prophet of, instead of the bearer and witness of, grace to the Gentile world. This was what made, we found before,63 the only efficient practical testimony in the earth; the Gentiles were to be viewed as beasts under God's judgment, and it was having these things clear that gave the testimony power! Was it Paul's testimony in preaching, or was the gospel of the grace of God? I appeal to the word, and call upon the conscience of my reader to answer. That he instructed the church in these things, according to its need, is true. That he told generally that there was a judgment of this world at Christ's coming, is also true; but was that which he presented grace and salvation, or not? Is the gospel and heavenly glory to be given up for prophecy of earthly deliverance as the hope and strength of the church? Is our sorrow to come from testifying against people? The prophetic judgments of God I admit. It is well known I have taught, and that far and wide, these judgments. But the hope of the church is another hope, and the sorrow of the church and of the Saviour is another sorrow. Besides, whatever sorrow

may accompany the testimony, the coming of the things themselves is to cause joy in the hearts of those who listen to the Lord. “When these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”

Chapter 11

We now come to an important chapter, with (as usual) an immensity assumed or implied. Some points may be noticed here, other statements can be examined when more enlarged upon. “Those cities are Babylon and Jerusalem.” This implies that an earthly Babylon is one great centre of the world. Here it is contrasted with the earthly, not the heavenly, Jerusalem; in Revelation it is most certainly with the heavenly, whatever its own place may be. But I shall only remark here, that the mind, thus unconsciously accustomed to this idea, is accustomed to an unproved thing. The enquiry I reserve for its place.

Such an expression as “that miserable race who are about to re-people Jerusalem” cannot be too strongly animadverted upon. I appeal to every one familiar with Scripture, as to the manner in which the heart of God yearns over His people, wandering though they be: and if they are miserable through His judgments, taunts are not what become Gentiles, confessedly become wise in their own conceits. Their sins are plainly proved in Scripture, and wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: but they are dealt with there with the hand and the heart of God, not with the insults of men. Nor do I believe that the curse of man on those who are yet beloved for the father’s sakes would be found in the mouth of one guided in his expressions by the Spirit of God. Does the Lord, when he states the fact here alluded

to (which is not denied), use any expressions like “that miserable race”?64 None ever.

But to turn to the substance of this chapter. We are told that the chapter “supplies us with the history of Jerusalem during the period which immediately preceded its final visitation by the Lord in glory.” I have no complaint to make of such a statement (which is an opinion on an interesting subject of enquiry), but that it is not proved—a very material thing, of course, in such a statement. It is taken for granted, and we are told, “In reading this chapter, therefore, we must imagine Jerusalem,” etc.

So we are told, “It would seem,” “that Christians, and Christian testimony remain,” previously to this period. But is this the right way of dealing with questions of the kind? The facts of Antichrist’s65 deceit and subsequent malice I believe to be true, and therefore need not enter on here. But as to the place of the witnesses in the order of events, I entirely demur. It is in vain to say, “scarcely terminate before the seventh angel sounds” … “this mystery of God will terminate and other scenes open”; because, according to the author, it ought to terminate without any “scarcely” at all. Besides, it is only in the days of the seventh angel who is about to sound, that the mystery of God shall be finished: and the seventh angel sounds a woe trumpet; and therefore it is not said “when he sounds,” i.e., at that given time—woe is still on the inhabiters of earth after and by the sounding of the seventh trumpet. We shall see that the order stated by the author, and necessary to his system, is impossible and contradicts itself. It is attempted indeed to be slurred over by the words “scarcely terminate”: but a

moment's examination will shew the palpable contradictions in the statements made.

I read (page 125), "when these servants of God shall have finished their testimony, the wickedness of earth will again, though for the last time, be allowed to lift up itself and prosper." Now this itself is not the testimony scarcely terminating when the mystery of God finishes, and other scenes open (see page 123), for the wickedness of earth will again lift up itself and prosper. But in the notes, the positive contrary of the statement in the text is proved (page 131). "Its being said that the Gentiles tread it down for the definite period of forty-two months, proves that they do not tread it down after this definite period is over. Consequently the sackcloth testimony of the witnesses and the times of the Gentiles, and therefore the reign of Antichrist, end simultaneously." How, then, when the servants of God shall have finished their testimony, will the wickedness of the earth again lift up its head and prosper? I should bring the passage of page 125, which is drawn from the plain text of the chapter, as demonstrative of the falseness of the position taken in the note, which is yet necessary to the author's system. But to give the simultaneous ending of the period as absolute and identical for both, in connection with a statement, that when one ended the other lifted up its head and prospered, is an excess of self-contradiction rare to find. Yet the writer well knew what he was about in thus identifying them; because, absurd as it is, his whole system falls if the termination of the witnesses' testimony and the reign of Antichrist be not synchronous; because this testimony of the witnesses being for the twelve hundred and sixty days, if it be not

the last half week of Antichrist, we have then some previous half-week, during which a testimony—which is not the church, nor, according to him, Christianity (though it testify of Jesus among the Jews)—has been going on, which is closed (as he says, page 125) by the wickedness of the earth rising up again and prospering. Yet it is clear that the synchronous, simultaneous termination of the testimony of the witnesses, and the reign of Antichrist, is an absurdity on the face of it: because Antichrist it is that kills them—a most curious way of ending simultaneously. I know not what opinion the writer must have formed of his readers to make such a statement.

And not only so, but there is an earthquake after; and subsequently to this it is said “the third woe cometh quickly”; and then some time consequently after the seventh angel sounds, in whose days the mystery of God is finished. So that it is quite clear that the simultaneous ending of the testimony of the witnesses, and the reign of Antichrist, and this evil power of the Gentiles, is impossible, being contradicted by the express statements of the word, recognised in part (page 125), and hushed up in the word ‘scarcely.’ And in these remarks I have passed over the rather strange statement, that they testified as much dead as alive; stranger still when we remember that it is said (as quoted, page 125), “when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” And yet, though they “have finished their testimony,” and their enemies are rejoicing over them, these three days and a half are included in the period of their testimony.

But I have no need to insist upon this, seeing the evident untenableness of a statement which makes a simultaneous ending of two things, when one puts an end to the other, by his wicked power, and there are several subsequent events positively referred to before the close of the latter comes. Besides, is there any moral identity in the state of things? When the beast is given to make war, and overcome the saints, and to kill whoever did not worship him; and the power is given to the witnesses, that if any man would hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed? I do not say that the beast will kill all actually; I admit with the author, it need not be actually done as to all. But is a power to do so, and as is alleged from Daniel (though I do not agree with it) the saints delivered into the beast's hands, consistent with a power given to the witnesses of God against all that could touch or hurt them? Is this the same state of things? "Power from God for protection will visibly be granted them." "They cannot be overthrown, neither can their testimony be stayed." Is this the character of the period of the beast's power, "just at the very moment when he is exalted into the plenitude of his glorious power"? Is it the statement given in Scripture of the relationship of the beast and the saints?66 And now I beg attention to the character of the witnesses' testimony. Christianity is withdrawn from Judah and Jerusalem. The statement that used to be made was, that there was not a Christian to be found in the Roman earth, and that the wheat (Matt. 13) represented risen saints in the earth, after their resurrection, and before their ascension. This, however, is now given up, and the matter stated very generally. (See page 143.) But at any rate it is

withdrawn from Judah and Jerusalem. And the new character of testimony is this— “They will be able to speak of the law broken; of restoration granted, only to be forfeited again by aggravated transgression; of prophets sent to be rejected; of the Son of God slain, hanged on a tree; of the message of forgiveness through His blood despised, and now withdrawn; of the day of His glory with all its judgments being nigh, even at the doors,” etc. Now have we not here, after the church is withdrawn, a testimony to Jesus by the Spirit of prophecy? and who are “my two witnesses,” servants of Jesus as prophets? Is the testimony not to Jews, not at Jerusalem, not about Jewish hopes, and yet about Jesus, and Jesus slain, and Jesus to come— and yet altogether Jewish in every sense? And how then is it impossible that such a testimony can be without the foundations of Christianity being gone? And if the Lord Jesus has alluded to it, is this very wonderful? Or if He has left a door open, in what He has said, to the application of His words to it, when speaking of these very times, is this very wonderful? There may be more detail. It may require patient submission to the word to connect it all. But is it wonderful that, when speaking of Jerusalem in the latter days, he should allude to such a testimony as this? And what comes of statements made of their remaining a people rejecting all testimony until they see the Lord, and are converted by it?

But further, testimony (page 128) ceases on the earth (during the three days and a half). Where then is the church? But “the time has come for the Son to quit the throne of the Father,” etc.; “and to be invested with the power which now is finally taken from the hands of man. The times of the Gentiles finish, and with them the

mystery of God." This is really too bold; because after slaying the witnesses, and even after their receiving the Spirit of life from God, there is an earthquake, and very notable effects ensuing on it.67 Then it is declared the third woe comes quickly; and, as we have seen, it is only in the days of this woe that the mystery of God is to be finished. In a word, the statements of the author are in direct contradiction of the plain text of scripture.

One thing is certain. If this secret scene in heaven takes place in heaven before the seventh trumpet sounds, it is perfectly clear that the Lord rises up and takes the kingdom some time before the mystery of God is finished on earth: for this is only in the days of the seventh angel. Moreover, this celebration of the sovereignty of the world being become our Lord's and His Christ's we find again in chapter 12 decidedly three years and a half before the end. "Now is come the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ."

And now just see the reasoning of the author. In chapter 11 we find, "there were voices in heaven, saying, The sovereignty of the world hath become our Lord's and his Christ's"; or, The sovereignty of the world of our Lord and of His Christ is come. We find in chapter 12, with the stronger expression "now"— "I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come … the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ." In the first (we are told) the scene has passed in heaven of taking the kingdom, and the times of the Gentiles finished, and the mystery of God, and the time come for the Son to quit the Father's throne; which, we shall remember, ends the age altogether. In chapter 12 this assertion of power was as yet for heaven only. If it be so (though it seems to me a mistake), then it is quite clear that Christ takes in

heaven the authority, and the kingdom of God is set up for the blessing of the dwellers in heaven three years and a half before it is on earth.

Again: “It is the last of these trumpets, and will bring alike upon Israel and on the Gentiles the final blow—administered by the Son of man Himself.” This is never said. Nor does it seem to me to be a just interpretation of the trumpets to make the coming of Christ a woe. I know it is said that it will be to the inhabiters of the earth; but it seems to me excessively strained so to apply it, or to term God’s personal judgment a woe. Nor is it said to fall on any but Antichrist and his army, who are not the inhabiters of the earth. At any rate, if the seventh trumpet ushers in the administration of this blow, again, I have to repeat, Antichrist is not put an end to simultaneously with the witnesses before the sixth closes. And, again, if it be the final blow on the Gentiles, the Assyrian, Gog, etc., are all left entirely out, as if no prophecy existed about them: for Gog comes up when the land is at peace, and Christ is the peace when the Assyrian comes into it.

I proceed to the notes. As to this new translation, I conceive it is simple nonsense. What is the meaning of, “In the days of the voice,” etc., “when he should be about to sound”? Are the days of his voice before he has sounded at all? Tregelles has fairly enough translated it “when he should sound.” There was to be no longer delay; the seventh angel was going to sound, and when he should, in the days of his voice the mystery should be finished.

What is stated about “mystery of God” and “mystery” is eminently calculated to mislead. The church is not called

the mystery of God; nor do I believe the expression refers to it,68 but rather to the strangeness of the existence of God's sovereignty while evil was allowed and rampant. But it is said "this is a great mystery" —to wit, the union of husband and wife; "but I speak as concerning Christ and the church." The church, therefore, its union at least with Christ, is called a mystery. And of what is it the apostle speaks when he says, "the mystery of Christ, which, in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and the of same body," etc.? "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God … to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church," etc.

The church is not the whole of the mystery of God's will. That is true. But this is certain, that what Paul specially preached (and this he identifies with the doctrine of the church) was from the beginning of the world hid in God. Here is his statement of the mystery: "That he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance," etc. This he developed in the same chapter as being "head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The mystery thus includes Christ's administrative headship over all things, and the union of the church to Him as such, as His body. This

mystery was made known to Paul by revelation. It had been hidden in God before. It is not a true representation of the apostle's statements to talk of the great "mysteries"; because he talks most expressly of "the mystery," over and over again, as hidden previously from the sons of men. Thus, in Colossians 1:26, 27, the mystery hidden, or—if we are to imitate the translation of "the tribulation, the great one" — the mystery, the hidden one from ages and generations, but which now has been manifested to His saints; to whom God would (has willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, etc. And had not this (Christ in them) something to do with the church—the breaking down the middle wall of partition, and of twain making one new man in the body, the church, united to the Head? So in Colossians 2:3. If we read with the margin ("wherein" as indeed I doubt not we should), we find the immense importance of this special mystery. So in chapter 4:3 we find that Paul was in bonds for the mystery. Compare Eph. 3:1 and chap. 4:1. Now I would ask, after reading these passages, Is it a just representation of the apostle's teaching to say, "the great mysteries connected with the ministry of the apostles"? Or why is it concealed that there is a mystery, of which the apostle speaks?

I ask, too, whether saying neither the church of the Firstborn nor the church in any of its parts is the mystery, would not mislead? And when do we read of the parts of the church in Scripture, save in the sense of members of the body? Is not the great object of the apostle to insist on its unity? And where it is said, that which has been stated in the Old Testament, but allowed to remain there silent69—is this, taking all the passages,

what the apostle states, or not? And if not, why this care to cover up his statements as to this great mystery hidden from ages and generations—hidden in God? Does it not shew that there is just that in it which the author's system would not bear, the church's proper place as the body and spouse of Christ? A mystery is not necessarily a fresh truth (he says) never before stated. Does not the apostle say that the mystery had never before been stated? Why this anxious effort to get rid of what distinguishes the church?

As to "make known by the70 prophetic scriptures," the author would have very great difficulty indeed to shew that it meant the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is impossible to affirm it from the passage: but I shall not contest it. But it is a strange thing to say that that which had been kept secret or silent since the world (in all times of ages), but revealed or made manifest now, was revealed all along in the Old Testament (only kept as it were silent there). Do we not find the apostle quoting passages constantly from the Old Testament prophets, to vindicate, and prove, and make known what was not revealed at all there, but which maintained certain truths when they were revealed? As, "He hath stretched out his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people;" "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." And, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so it is written, I have set thee for a fight to the Gentiles." All these the apostle uses in making it known. But surely they did not reveal the mystery. They were found accomplished in the mystery when it was revealed and so used in making it known: but by themselves they never would have revealed it.

And this was just the wisdom of God, to provide, while leaving the Jews to their own proper responsibility, for a system to be set up when they should fail in it (and which was yet shewn to be according to the previous purpose of God, when once it was revealed in its time)—a system which was set up when they failed in that responsibility, established in fact, but suspended in revelation, till they had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the exalted Messiah, as well as crucified the humbled one; and thereon fully revealed, and their whole system and existence for a while replaced by it. For I avow unequivocally here, that all the objections and all the difficulties raised against it have only confirmed me in the distinctive character of Paul's ministry, set up consequent upon the rejection of the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Jerusalem in the martyrdom of Stephen. It was the turning-point of the whole proper present position of the church. No one denies that the church was then in Jerusalem. But no passage can be adduced to shew the revelation of its position to it as one heavenly body with Christ, all difference between Jew and Gentile being lost therein. The case of Cornelius had shewn that God would visit them on earth, and take out of them a people (little as it was understood, the nation having been preached to by the Holy Ghost as still God's people, and the disciples still holding their place as Jews). But its proper place, as sitting in heavenly places, was not brought out; nor does Paul ever refer to the case of Cornelius as establishing the views he taught.

Next, as to measuring the temple of God.

"The first two verses (we are told) refer to the time which immediately precedes the last twelve hundred

and sixty days of Jewish tribulation." The measuring clearly does not, according to the author, as the next note shews. The temple is measured for those days to be preserved. This makes the distinction between the temple and the court. But if the temple be Christianity and the court Judaism, does the author mean to say that previously Christianity and Judaism were one common system, as the temple and court were? If it was, had not Christianity lost its proper church character? It is not merely existence, which is recognised, if anything is. They are recognised as one common united system (no doubt one exterior to the other), but still united and identified in recognition. One perhaps might be afterwards trodden down and abolished, the other not. But till this happened, if represented by the temple and its court as then previously existing, they were recognised as one united system, both sanctioned in their place. But, besides, the argument of the note is quite invalid. There is no proof whatever that the altar means the altar of incense. I should say the contrary: because it is mentioned besides the temple. The altar of incense was in the temple and is called in the Revelation generally "the golden altar which is before God." There is no passage, I think, which mentions it without some accompanying circumstance to distinguish it. One may be discussed (chapter 14), but cannot be adduced as proof. In the rest of the New Testament, altar always means of burnt sacrifices; and "of incense" is added the only time the other is used. So we have temple and altar, or altar and temple (house), distinguished as here, in Matthew 23 and Luke 11, where clearly the altar is that of burnt sacrifice. I think no one, examining the use of the word, will doubt to which altar the word applies used alone, and still more used as something besides

temple—Greek naos. And the temple being measured, measuring the altar of incense added nothing. If this be so, the argument of the author fails.

But, further, is it not strange that measuring means casting out into dens and caves of the earth? Or was Christianity as such (i.e., the church condition of saints) now for the first time distinctively recognised of God? I say "of God," because it was not now publicly sanctioned and settled providentially. For, according to the author's system, it is thereon banished from this world's Eden, out of the reach of the beast's power, or hid in caves, Previously to this it had had a publicly recognised existence; on being measured it is driven out. It is clear that of God it had been recognised for centuries. But if measuring is not recognised of God, it means abolishing71 (not being given up to be trampled upon): why then does measuring signify to "recognise as our own"? Both existed before without any measuring at all. Why is not measuring then abolition, in the case of Jewish worship? Christianity was recognised of God before. And, as far as the prophetic earth goes, it is abolished by man now at this time of measuring it. Or why, if Jerusalem and Jewish worship is Sodom, and utterly rejected of God, and "the court" means their worship, is it called the holy city, or symbolised by this expression? I see no proof at all. Why is not the court and holy city symbolic also?

I do not believe the twelve hundred and sixty days, here spoken of, to mean the days of Antichrist's final power. 72 Of this I have already spoken. Nor do I believe treading under foot the holy city means abolishing it, or Jewish worship symbolised by it. It seems to me the circumstances of the witnesses are quite inconsistent

with the state of things under the beast during the last three years and a half. Measuring the temple and the altar I cannot consider as a secret recognition of Christianity, which surely could be no new thing. Public recognition in the prophetic earth it would just exactly then cease to have, according to the system urged. And moreover, this chapter gives the "history of Jerusalem," from which Christianity is wholly withdrawn. Nor is it to be imagined how the saints are to be secured and measured during the time they are given into the beast's hand to kill. And, measuring here being contrasted with giving up to be trodden upon by the Gentiles, how can its suppression by these Gentiles in the limits of the empire be a contrast with that? Is it not trodden down by them during this period, according to the author? Moreover, Christianity is withdrawn, and ceases to give testimony in the prophetic earth. It is still existing outside the Roman earth, but not as a testimony at all. A new testimony is to be raised up—new in character—which subsists at the same time. And the position here assigned to Christianity is said to be that of saints, whose blessedness and fidelity characterise the church in such a way that they alone are mentioned in the Revelation as in glory. Thus Christianity is withdrawn, and gives no testimony. The witnesses have power to destroy those that hurt them. Who are the saints given up to the beast to kill?

We are told in the next note that "its being said that the Gentiles tread it down for the definite period of forty-two months proves that they do not tread it down after this definite period is over." Nor of course before it commenced. But then where is all the treading down during the time of the Gentiles, from the capture of

Jerusalem by Titus, as insisted on by the author in his lecture on Luke 21?73 Next as to the two olive trees.

Because there is a reference to Zechariah, they are assumed to be the same thing, additional features of glory being added in the Revelation. Can anything be more unreasonable? I might as well prove the heavenly Jerusalem to be the earthly, because there is a reference to Isaiah 60. The account is quite different. In Zechariah there is one candlestick. Here there are two. It is not an added feature, but a totally different state of things. The feature is in Zechariah as well as in Revelation. Then we are told, “they will be in their own persons in heaven … what they will enable others to be on earth.” What does this mean? Will they be the church in its unity before God above, which is what the author says is a candlestick? Or are the witnesses in their own persons in heaven? I read “they stand before the God of the earth,” and I suppose it is on earth they are killed. And then we are told that the petition of the mother of James and John was doubtless grounded on this passage in Zechariah! To be on the right hand and left of Christ, as the two olive trees that supply oil? For what they sought was to sit on the right hand and left of His throne. Can anything possibly be more absurd?

We have then a long statement about a Greek rule, which is totally and entirely wrong.74 I will not enter into a discussion of Greek here. I will only cite a few passages which prove it wrong; I might add twenty more (Hebrews 12:3; 5:5; Matthew 3:3; 10:4; John 12:1; Romans 8:351 Corinthians 7:10, 26; 11:5; 1:31; 10:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:16, verse 4 also may be quoted [perhaps also Heb. 2:9]; Galatians 1:4). But, not to quote other examples, there is one which will, probably,

surprise the reader; and that is the passage itself on which the author is commenting. This is a singular example to afford of the confidence which can be reposed in the critical accuracy of this book. In Revelation 11:4 (“which stand “) the passage by reason of which he gives this rule, is an example that the rule is quite wrong. It is the Attic form of the participle of the perfect active.

We have, then, a more precise statement as to the testimony of the witnesses. To the infidel multitudes around it will be the Lord’s coming in judgment, and the sins which cause it to fall. But for those who tremble and bow before their word (so that there are such), to such they can promise protection through the coming fires, “and acceptance in Jesus after He shall have returned and removed ungodliness from Jacob. Such anticipation of the future, founded on the word of others, is something very different from present faith and joy in the Spirit.” Now, that this remnant will not have joy in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, I believe. But let us consider it according to the author’s system. During this period Christianity subsists still in the earth—is professed Over a larger portion of the globe than the dominion of the beast. The Spirit of God is there. The church is yet on earth, and the Spirit abiding in it. At the same time there are persons brought to own Jesus as Son of God—to own Him as the one in whom they are to be accepted in a year or two, and who will protect them till that time; but they have nothing to do with the church, which is yet down here on earth, nor with the Holy Ghost, which is here too. Yet they have trembled at the word of God, bowed and been humbled, and owned Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God; and that previous

to the close of this dispensation, the church being yet upon earth, and the Holy Ghost as sent down from heaven. Yet, though owning Jesus to be the Son of God, previous to the church's rapture, and counting upon acceptance in Him when He appears, they are only to have the earthly portion of Jews. Is it not singular that during this dispensation persons thoroughly humbled, recognising Jesus to be the Son of God,75 and acknowledging that He was coming again, should not be justified (I read, "by him all that believe are justified from all things"); though acceptance in Jesus is a thing proclaimed to them, and the church be still in existence, and the day of grace not over elsewhere?

And the ground of this is still more singular; namely, that "such anticipation of the future, founded on the words of others, is something very different from present faith." And what then is faith? This remnant is thoroughly broken under the testimony of the witnesses; so that it is not even mere head knowledge. But I thought that receiving on the testimony of others was the peculiar glory of the Gentiles, indeed of all faith. "In whom after that ye had heard" is the way the apostle describes the blessed faith of the church. The ancient patriarchs received individually personal communications; the word of the Lord came, or the Lord appeared. Thomas believed because he saw; but blessing rests on him who believes without seeing, whose faith as to the instrument rests on the word of others, but that word received as the word of God. One would have thought that anticipation of the future, founded on the word of others, was wonderfully like present faith— "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." What was Abraham's faith

but seeing the promises afar off, being persuaded of them, and embracing them? This, it is clear, the remnant do; because they are “assured of subsequent blessing,” and that on this testimony, in spite of all the present power of Antichrist. But here we are told that it is something very different from present faith. Compare the testimony in page 124 (by which they are “thoroughly broken,” and which consequently they believe), and the assurance of what is promised (page 133), and say what it is if it be not faith? Is it not exactly what has been believed as to a Jewish remnant? only that the author insists that this shall take place while the church and the Holy Ghost are here below, without conferring the blessings conferred there.

And I beg the reader here to remember that it is because saints have believed that there would be such a remnant, and that the Lord so spake as to refer to and provide for it in Matthew 24, that so great a cry has been raised. Is there not such a one? Is it not the only one in Jerusalem, according to the author, during the last three years and a half? The only difference in principle being that some have thought the church would be in heaven—the author puts them in caves and dens of the earth, rendering no testimony at all (this other new testimony being raised up while they are there), though such is their glory, that the whole church is characterised by them. I do not believe his dates, because I believe it is impossible to place the witnesses in the last three years and a half. I believe they close their testimony, and the third woe still remains, which is a real proper woe, coming on the inhabitants of the earth from the power of evil let loose.

But however this may be (which I treat only as a very legitimate question, on which I should be glad to hear what anyone had to say), the principle of the question is as I have stated it. And what comes of the outcry as to testimony to Jesus, and faith of Jesus? Do not the witnesses, when they promise future acceptance in Him, and declare His past rejection, give testimony to Him? And do not the remnant, when they trust this—are conscious of the truth as to the past, and assured of blessing in the future in Him—believe in this testimony? And yet they have not the Spirit, and are not in the church. That is the other side the Euphrates,76 or hidden in dens and caves.

As to the Psalms, I cannot enter into them at large here. I believe there are two periods at Jerusalem: one during which the testimony is preserved; and the other when it has been driven out. There is a difference as to these two periods in the Psalms, I believe. Generally, I apprehend, the first book refers to the first period, which has a strong analogy to Christ's ministry on earth. It goes down to the end of Psalm 41. The references to resurrection are very much more frequent in it; still, proper Jewish hopes are there. It is not the period of Antichrist's proper power as such after Satan has been cast down from heaven. This begins with Psalm 42, but enters on a far wider sphere; because all Israel, the bringing in the Only-begotten into the world, and consequently the testimony to the Gentiles, and the final hallelujah of triumph, now open to view. But the hopes are more exclusively Jewish, though a suffering Christ be found the centre and the stay of each and every condition.

It is well known that the Psalms are divided into five books and I believe by distinct' subjects, besides several clusters of them which treat each a complete subject by itself. But I do not believe any part of them describes the church state as such (that is, the power of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the unity of Christ's body upon earth). If a Christian, as regards his walk on earth or state of soul, finds himself in the state any psalm speaks of, he has certainly the sympathy of the Spirit of Christ there given. And this is the proper force of the Psalms—Christ entering into worldly sorrow, and the condition of His suffering people upon earth, instead of having what the first two psalms speak of. Now His earthly people will be there, and the Psalms will fully apply to them.

But the saints (the remnant according to the election of grace), and the Gentiles graffed in, followed Christ in that place on earth; and therefore they find the sympathy and consolations of Christ in it. But then higher and heavenly blessings have been revealed to them—their sitting in heavenly places in Christ, to which (save some allusions in reference to the heavens in the day of judgment) the Psalms do not refer. Their own proper peculiar blessings are not there. It is from Christ's entering in them into worldly sorrow, and the condition of His suffering people upon earth, that we find in the expressions of His own heart (not in prophecies about Him) prophetic statements of His own condition. For He entered into them, not by a mere divine sympathy above, but by being actually in them here below; and this is what renders the Psalms so peculiarly precious. But then He was on earth a Jew, though much more than a Jew, and the literal circumstances always identify themselves with that

people. He does not rise up to His heavenly place, save in general expressions, as “the heavens shall declare his righteousness,” etc. But though Christ does not rise to the unity of the heavenly body here, yet the members of that body have taken His place upon earth; and therefore, when the shadow of His sorrow (for indeed it is but that) passes over them, they find it is His sorrow, and so His sympathy in it: and this is very precious to them, though it may bring them to the thought that they do not rise up to their proper place with Him. What He is in them is the everlasting manna of the saints.

The next note requires a few remarks. First, we have again their Lord, of those who witness when Christianity is withdrawn—who do not testify of grace but as to come. What was stated as to “His servants” was unfounded. Further, Gentile nations are known by other likenesses. It is merely those united to the beast, and when and as so united, that are presented as any part of the likeness. Gentile national churches are never called so at all. This confusion of different things together is very mischievous. Our part is rather to separate what is precious from what is vile. The powers of Gentile nations are as yet ordained of God: and Gentile national churches have never any such name given to them at all, or any name that I know of in Scripture.

“The Spirit of life from God entered into them.” If they literally revived, they literally ascended up to heaven in a cloud—not in their natural bodies. Did Elijah go to heaven in his natural body? Was it in his dead body unchanged that Moses appeared? Was his dead body glorified? What natural body had Moses when he was dead? Does appearing in glory of those who were either dead or translated convey the idea of a natural body? It

would really seem that the writer took pleasure in making strange statements.

The last note is still more unjustifiable. The Lord God Almighty taking to Him His great power and reigning “is the resumption of the power delegated to the Gentile monarchs.” And the language too, in the Greek, is emphatic, “thy power, the great” —that great power. The reason of this assertion is obvious. It is to make the sounding of the seventh trumpet the time of the assumption of earthly power by Christ77—at least God’s taking it away from man to give to Him. But are all the consequences of verse 18 the exercise of Nebuchadnezzar’s power? Or is the solemn testimony of God’s almighty and supreme power to be thus dealt with, to secure the proof of a date, and prove that the heavenly exercise of power cannot precede by any interval the earthly? For this is the object here. I do not feel it needful to discuss the remaining notes, though they do not approve themselves to my mind.

Chapter 12

This chapter is of the last importance. I should have hoped that the mere reading of it would have sufficed for every saint to have rejected it at once. But in this dark and gloomy day we begin to feel the effect of that word, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” This chapter just acts upon the unbelief it finds in the heart, and lowers the church from all its proper glory and heavenly place.

Our mother (page 138) “is yet to be paramount in the earth, and to reign beautiful in holiness, supreme over all nations. ‘I saw a woman clothed with the sun,’ etc. Such is the vision of her coming glory in the earth.”

“This is our parent— the system to which we belong, and to which … we give the homage of our hearts.” In proportion as we “consider the period when Christianity shall, in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, be supreme in the earth.” Thus, that which has the homage of our hearts is not only to be supreme in the earth (itself a strange expression for the heavenly Jerusalem, ambiguously stated as a “divinely ordered system of truth and power,” so that actual heavenly place and glory are kept out of view), but it is in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem that it is to be supreme. Its place of manifestation and supremacy is quite clear; it is the earth. There may be the presence of the glory of Christ, and the unearthly glory of the risen saints; but it is in and on earth that it is all to be. And this earthly system has the homage of our hearts! I must say no system has the homage of my heart, but Christ. But my mother is “Jerusalem above,” and nothing on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. And in page 140, how are they the children of a parent so glorious? It is the woman, the mother herself, that is the object of Satan’s rage. In a very general and unapplied sense I might reckon all as the woman’s seed, save the millennial saints who are born in a time of power. But any application at once takes it away from all this; and if taken in this sense as Christianity, Christ can in no sense be said to be born of it. As the expression of an idea, it may be applied to all; applied prophetically, it cannot be Christianity and Christ born of it. The object is to make one system from Abel to the end of time; and this one system, what is now called Christianity—a mere casual name at a given time:—a doctrine which makes the various display of God’s glory indifferent; all that could act on the affections spiritually, indifferent (the bare fact of life being in man making all equal).

The statements of page 141 are such as we have constantly to notice, unproved, or based on previous statements assumed to be true without proof. There is a connection between Zion and the woman. Well, what is it? Zion brings forth a child78 without travail in Isaiah. The only idea there being the speed of its birth without sorrow; for all the rest that is said is imagined. In the Revelation a woman brings forth a child with travail—it is said, to be glorified in heaven; but this is all imagined too. And that is the connection. The woman being never called Zion, this is introduced by saying the woman's glory will by and by be identified with it, of which no proof at all has been advanced as yet. The woman in the Revelation is never called Zion, and all proof of reference is the fact of birth in each case. Were the woman Zion on earth, we might see some contrast.

I admit in no wise "an unseen Israel." The only possible text to be quoted is "the Israel of God," in the Galatians, which I do not believe is applied as a title to the church at all. What is stated of it is all confusion. The reference in Matthew 2:15, was to the old Israel, whose promises Christ took up; but that was not the church. If the Israel, the new Israel, commenced with Him,79 then the Israel of God are not all the saints from the beginning, nor any previous to Him; and thus the idea sought to be established of the Israel of God fails.80 And what is the meaning of "the heavenly courts of Israel's temple"? Is Israel used as a symbol, or what, here? If it has any literal meaning, then "heavenly courts" is nonsense; if not, then Israel means nothing. "Heavenly courts of Israel's temple" cannot have much force in it. Further, in the sense of the church, it did not begin even secretly with Christ alive. He would have abode alone, had He

not died. A living Christ is a Jewish Christ. Lifted up from the earth He would draw all men. The middle wall of partition remained, by the authority of God Himself, till His death.

But here the author returns to his main theme. “We need not marvel if Christianity be here presented as if bearing the name of Zion.” But it is not presented as bearing the name of Zion. Nor has the slightest proof been given that the woman is Christianity. Then it is the holy and blessed system for which we and all saints from the beginning have suffered, which we now name Christianity. Here again everything peculiar to the church, the body of Christ in this dispensation, is set aside. A system going on all through got the name of Christianity, but that is all; and when this system “shall at last arise into its destined supremacy in the earth, it shall be identical with Zion,” “arising in the moral grace and dignity of its high calling in the earth.” Is that your hope, Christian? And really here it is too bold, because “high calling” in Scripture, as everyone knows who can read Greek, means calling above from earth;81 and therefore high calling in the earth is a most thorough perversion, nullifying our calling above in the use of the very passage which directly asserts it, and making an assertion which neutralises its known force to the unconscious reader.

Nor can there be any mistake here. We are told “Christianity can never have its rightful pre-eminence, till the hour comes for the mountain of the Lord’s house to be established,” etc. “Mountains and hills are the emblems of authoritative power.” “The mountain to which we by faith are already come” will be associated with the church of the Firstborn in heavenly glory, so

that the identification between ourselves and Zion will need no proof. We speak of Zion as our mountain. We belong to it as part, although the heavenly part, of the Israel of God.

The only answer is, We do not; because the apostle says, Jerusalem which is above is our mother.82 The rightful preeminence of Christianity is not in the earth, nor at Zion. There it will be Christ and the Jews in the earthly kingdom. The saints will judge the world: but it is not to earthly Zion they belong, if the apostle has taught us aright. And what becomes here of the heavenly calling? The whole statement from beginning to end is an elaborate denial of it. A high calling in the earth, and identification with earthly Zion, is certainly not a heavenly calling. I do not even admit that they are the same principles which rule now, and then: because now it is grace, then judgment in the earth.

“Zion, morally,” we are told, “is not deserted—the blessed system of truth, etc., hereafter to be established upon Mount Zion, is not deserted.” This “etc.” is very convenient. The word added elsewhere is “power “(page 142). But is there nothing peculiar, then, in the system for which we suffer? Does “truth and power “or “truth, etc.” characterise sufficiently the church of God? How do we suffer for power? or are grace and power the same thing? For “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Why is grace so studiously left out all through this? Is not the suffering in grace now, as Jesus did (with which the millennial saints will never have a part) the very condition which is identified with our proper heavenly glory? Is it the way that God acts on the faith of the saints, to leave this all out? or, in a word, is not the

whole proper system of the gospel entirely excluded in all this?

Then we are told “that Christianity will at that period be found in Jerusalem, is evident from Matthew 24, and various other passages.” Would it not be well, on such an important point, to have cited or given a reference to one or two of these various other passages? But this we have not. As to Matthew 24, we know how it has been called in question, and I can hardly be expected to discuss it here. It is possible Christianity may be found there in such a profession of Christ as it made by the two witnesses, which suits the kingdom (that is, as the author states, judgment, and not grace; for such is the testimony of the witnesses). But Matthew 24 does not speak at all of the church of God as such. That the church may have used it, and use it still, I fully believe. Just as Peter, in ministering Christ to the Jews as a nation, and with no reference to the church, might suffer, and possess his soul in patience, he being doubtless in and of the church, yet his ministry not apply to the church, but to the nation; because Christ died for it, and therefore the Holy Ghost must testify to it. So of Matthew 24. The church may have used it, and may use it; but its subject is not the church, but what concerns the temple, the Jewish nation, the age, Jerusalem, and the dealing of the Lord in judgment on them, to bring in the close of the age.

So, if a testimony such as that of the witnesses be in Jerusalem before the last three years and a half, which is not the church position, I heed not whether men call it Christianity or not (though it will not be what is now called Christianity, and yet it will own Jesus to have been the Christ), they might well use the directions given

also. The author considers them to preach that the Son of God had been rejected (and therefore it is to be supposed that they will own His words and instructions); and yet he holds that Christianity will be withdrawn. I think it inconsistent to place this under the beast's reign, into whose hand they say the saints are given. But whenever it is, those who own Christ rejected may well use His words; yet Christianity and the present church standing are confessedly gone.

Having said thus much on this point, I return to the proper subject of the chapter, namely, the reducing the heavenly calling of the church to the level of the earthly Zion. We have the most distinct enunciation of it in page 145: "There is an appointed hour of Satan's power; and, until that hour is past, the place of the children of Zion will not be sustained here. He owns them indeed as worthy of the same name of excellency which will by and by be given to those who shall be born of Zion, when she shall bring forth before she travaileth," etc.

Here there is no mistake. It is an honour to the saints of the church of God to get the same name of excellency as those who bear the future earthly glory. Their place is not sustained here. That is reserved for those by and by born without travail (that is, in Zion); but still' they are counted worthy of the same name of excellency. Is not Zion said to be our place here? And, instead of some better thing being reserved for us, and our suffering here, because we are not of the world as Christ was not, being the road to that better and heavenly and eternal weight of glory in the heavenly Jerusalem which is our mother, we are allowed to hope (though we have not the earthly Jerusalem sustained) to have as good a name, nay, to bear it as if that honour of sustained Zion

belonged to us. Is this the church's place? That, as regards their sojourn on earth, and the kingdom, they may for a season have mysteriously taken Zion's place, and be counted for Jerusalem's children, is very possible, and I believe it: but to make it a high calling to be there, and our special privilege to get as high in excellency of name as those that belong to it on earth hereafter, is nothing more nor less than to deny the heavenly calling entirely. It is in vain to add it is a better glory than the mere glory of earth; because this is only to say they are better than Babylon. They will be taken to have the glory of God. But what is this? Ruling all nations with a rod of iron. Be it so. We know from the promise to Thyatira, that the church will have this glory. But, though the church participates in all the display of Christ's glory—even that in which He shall, according to the decree, sit on Mount Zion, as King, ruling all nations with a rod of iron, is this our portion, our city, our excellent name, rightful pre-eminence, our parent who has the homage of our hearts?

Again, we find, "Nothing can more distinctly shew how all the features which marked the morning of our dispensation in Jerusalem continue unchanged on to its dark closing hour. This generation shall not pass away, until all be fulfilled." What is the meaning of this passage introduced here? "We find Christianity still bringing forth with sorrow in Jerusalem, still watched against by the same great enemy, and her children not allowed to grow up, and prosper in the earth."

Now is the character of the church, judged of according to the heavenly calling as preached by Paul, bringing forth in Jerusalem? Earthly Jerusalem? Did this continue unchanged? or was it all broken up and dispersed, and

another ministry called out for the Gentiles, or not? It is in vain for opponents to say, Paul preached the same gospel. As regards the doctrines of salvation and eternal life, no one ever raised a question on it unless themselves. But is bringing forth in Jerusalem the characteristic of the heavenly calling of the church? “All the features which marked the morning of our dispensation in Jerusalem continue unchanged.” It is quite clear that the special ministry of Paul is entirely set aside.

Either the author must admit that the Pentecostal church was Jewish, or he must admit that Jerusalem had nothing to say to it, nor any other mountain; and that bringing forth in sorrow in Jerusalem was not a feature which characterised it— the only feature which is mentioned here. Further, he holds that our dispensation continues on till Christ rise up to judgment for the destruction of Antichrist. But then, during the dark closing hour of the three years and a half, Christianity does not bring forth in Jerusalem at all. It is withdrawn. So that even so, his statement is all contradictory. And what generation is not to pass away? The Jewish unbelieving generation? But what then? No one thinks it will. Still, testimony is to be withdrawn from them—nay, as such (as Peter preached to them in Acts 3) withdrawn from them long ago. At the end a “new testimony “is raised up to them, though the church be yet upon earth. So that the relationship of the church with that generation (which must be what is meant here by the morning of our dispensation continuing unchanged, and this generation not passing away, if it has any meaning at all) is quite changed and ceases altogether, before all is fulfilled. The features that marked the morning of our

dispensation are entirely changed, according to the author himself, before all is fulfilled.

The truth is, the associations of Christianity with Israel or the Jews—founded (if I may venture so to speak) on the obligation the Holy Ghost was under in virtue of the promises of God and the intercession of Christ—ceased within the period of Scripture history. Wrath was come upon them “to the uttermost”; it was no longer discipline, that is, in hope they might bend their neck. It could no longer be said, “It was needful that the gospel should be first preached to you, and seeing ye count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” The “to the Jew first” has ceased: no one now applies it, and very justly. They do not deny it; but it has had its accomplishment. And Acts 28 closed this solemn and wonderful history of the patience of God with His poor stiff-necked people, beloved, yet disobedient, so that wrath should come upon them to the uttermost; and the “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles “has its large and full accomplishment.

The patience of God was perfect, but the features of the dispensation are entirely, yea, I may add, confessedly changed, and in that particular part of it (which is here in question) had its accomplishment. That the Jews will be in the first line again as regards the church, I do not believe. It would be reversing the judgment and ways of God pronounced upon them. We know neither Jew nor Greek, but grace towards all. But in the latter day testimony it will be so. There will be bringing forth (at any rate testimony) in Jerusalem, with reference to the setting up of Christ’s power there—to the kingdom—to His sovereignty in power over the world; and here the Jews arid a “certain standing in Jerusalem” will be in

prominency. We believe it: but a certain standing in Jerusalem was not certainly Paul's testimony. Hence I do not believe that this is properly a church testimony, nor as such a church standing, for this is not a certain standing in Jerusalem. Whether it be called Christianity, I do not insist on; because (at any rate for the first three years and a half) Christ will be owned by the witnesses to it, and yet it will not be Christianity such as we speak of now.

"The man-child, born in Jerusalem," is not the church calling, as taught in Paul's epistles, though they may be mystically reckoned her sons. But further, judgment83 begins to be executed because of Satan's dealings (not the beast's) against this testimony (which thus precedes the end by three years and a half), which is a new sort of testimony to the earthly kingdom and glory in Jerusalem, 84 "testifies to the near coming of the kingdom of God" in that place. This is not the case now. It is the time of grace, and the day of salvation —the time in which the accuser of the brethren is not cast down. So that we have the whole scene and manner of God's actings changed, in consequence of a new testimony and Satan's actings in respect of that testimony, at least three years and a half before the end.

The statement seems to me to vary from the chapter; but I take it as it stands. I say "vary from the chapter," because the author speaks of "Satan's bringing the power of the ten kingdoms against the man-child, born in Jerusalem"; whereas he is only watching by the woman to devour it, and it is taken out of the way, and he then persecutes the woman. He is not allowed to do anything with the child, or bring any power against it. He is against the woman, though in vain.

But note further: the woman “denotes Christianity.” The male child representing Christians as heirs of a certain standing in Jerusalem, and the remnant of the woman’s seed, may be Christians any where or in any circumstances. “The man-child is evidently an emblem denoting peculiar position,” “and that in Jerusalem.” So that we have here a peculiar position differing from “Christians anywhere or in any circumstances,” and that a position in Jerusalem, “a standing lost” or “not occupied on earth,” but “occupied in altered and more glorious circumstances in heaven”—founded on a special testimony at that day, a testimony in Jerusalem, and acting principally at any rate on Israel; and to this Matthew 24 specially refers (I add from that chapter that the gospel of the kingdom will go out to all nations before the end come); but it is different from “Christians anywhere or in any circumstances.” So that it is not here (very clearly) the common church position taught by Paul. For it is quite certain that this did not testify to the man-child in this peculiar position born in Jerusalem.

Further, we have (considering the known arguments, and the arguments of this same page on the point) this singular statement, that, “If we were to apply this passage to past circumstances, we might say that when the Pentecostal church was scattered, the man-child (although then allowed a little to increase in stature) was taken from the earth, but the remnant of the woman’s seed continued—scattered and persecuted.” It has been said, ‘Truth is mighty and will prevail.’ The Pentecostal church then was in a peculiar position, and that in Jerusalem. Its standing was lost, or at least not allowed to be occupied on the earth, they being heirs of a certain standing in Jerusalem. Well, what else has

been alleged as to them but this? But then, if this position was not allowed to be occupied on earth, and this man-child of the morning of our dispensation in Jerusalem was allowed indeed to increase in stature, but then taken from the earth—how, even as to this very point, for so it is, do all the features which marked the morning of our dispensation in Jerusalem continue unchanged on to its dark closing hour? What it began with was all put a stop to— was “not allowed to grow up,” or at least only “a little to increase.” It is resumed (this peculiar position in Jerusalem) at the end, but surely not continued unchanged. We find it not “still,” but “again.”

I do not believe that God will again by the church set aside the condition and heavenly calling out of Jerusalem, into which it thus passed when the peculiar position and standing in Jerusalem ceased, in order by it to set up this standing again. But there will be before the last three years and a half such a peculiar position and standing taken in Jerusalem, in title and testimony different from the present standing and testimony of the church, of which in certain respects (while admitted to be itself the church) the Pentecostal church was an example. I believe that in the Pentecostal church (though God had begun and fully recognised the church in it) God still lingered in mercy over the associations with Jerusalem, and that founded on the prayer of Jesus on the cross. He was willing to consider they did it through ignorance, as Peter testifies, Acts 3. Hence the associations were not at once broken. But they rejected this mercy, and the church passed distinctly into its own proper heavenly place as the body of Christ, of which the ministry of Paul is the great expression—I might

add, the only direct revelation, as it is its grand topic. He calls himself minister of the church to fulfil (or fill up, complete) the word of God. I do not believe that we, as the church, having and knowing this standing, are to go back to the peculiar position and standing in Jerusalem, though God may have lingered over it. But I believe that when the time comes (known to Him), God will raise up a testimony in the midst of His ancient people, referring to this standing in Jerusalem.

But the question is, Is the church to give up its standing, and to take this peculiar position connected with the earthly Jerusalem, or hold that which it has had as born of Jerusalem which is above, since, by the scattering of the Pentecostal church, the position of the man-child ceased to be occupied on the earth? It is a serious question. I trust the saints may understand now what the difference about the heavenly calling is. Can they in faithfulness surrender that which places them properly and exclusively as their city in Jerusalem above, and descend to Jerusalem on earth, as belonging to it, and having a peculiar position and standing in it, as born there, as millennial saints will be?

I confess I find the language on page 147 painful. To talk of God holding power, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, to be the friend of the accused, is speaking as Scripture never speaks. That He could not receive the guilty consistently with His justice otherwise, every Christian fully and gladly owns: but to talk of God's holding power in virtue of anything—and I would say specially of Christ's sacrifice, as if it were not the fruit of His own common counsel alone—is offensive, I judge, to the spiritual mind and ear. The author does not talk of consistency with justice, for he goes on to say, "He hath

not yet put forth in acts of vengeance, not even against Satan himself." How does this question of justice apply here? Is power to cast out the accuser in virtue of Christ's sacrifice? That sacrifice is the answer to his accusations while he is there. All this is in order to confine it to the idea of the accuser (when accusations would doubtless, though often false, have truth enough to condemn us justly), in order that it may not appear that Satan was cast out of heaven entirely as to his authority of prince of the power of the air. But the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan (i.e., accuser and adversary), was cast out of heaven by power and his angels with him. If he were setting aside accusation, then indeed it would be in virtue of Christ's sacrifice. But it is power; and holding power is not in virtue of Christ's sacrifice. And it is expressly said, that as serpent, dragon, devil and adversary, he and all his angels are cast out to the earth by power—angelic power. Of course, thereby the accuser was gone, and the joy of those concerned in it is declared. Nor is it said "Christ's brethren," as the author states. I do not say they are or are not; but I say he has felt it necessary to change what the chapter states. But all this is the effect of having a system. How is it that righteousness and justice permit Satan and his angels to be in heaven? and what change is there in righteousness and justice, the church being yet upon earth, as the author holds, which causes him to be cast down? What is meant by the souls of the righteous being cognisant of circumstances in heaven? Of the departed righteous, or the living? And what is there in chapter 7 about it? Chapter 7 contains the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, and the great multitude come out of the great tribulation.

And now I would ask the reader to examine pages 144-146, and say whether he can say here in page 143 what are the Christians and Christianity persecuted when Satan was cast down. The Christians are the man-child; but where is the persecution of the man-child, in the chapter, after Satan was cast down? Yet in pages 145, 146, it is this. But the man-child was not there at all. We have already seen that no proof at all is given that the woman is Christianity. But we may note here, that if it be, it is allowed no home in the Roman earth. It is driven to the distant desert, in the bosom of uncivilised darkness. Yet, first, it was the earth helped the woman and swallowed up the flood the dragon cast out of his mouth. Further, it must be remembered that according to the system of the author, there is Russia, which is Christendom, the United States, and Sweden, and the far greater part of Germany, Prussia, and Poland (not to speak of Scotland and Ireland), which form no part of this civilised Roman earth. So that this uncivilised darkness is rather poetry than fact. But there is another difficulty. We have been referred to Matthew 24. But then the direction is, “Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains.” How is this a chasing out of the civilised Roman earth? It is just flight to the mountains, because of what is set up in Jerusalem bringing the days of tribulation and vengeance.

Finally, let us remember, here, that the Pentecostal church had a peculiar position analogous to that of the man-child, which “is a symbol which would not,” says the author (page 153), “I think, be used of any Christians out of Jerusalem; nor of them except in peculiar circumstances, both as to unity, power of testimony, and bearing on their nation. It is only in

Jerusalem that the child of Zion can obtain its proper standing of strength."85 Let us remember "that when the Pentecostal church was scattered, the man-child was taken from the earth"; and, further, that this man-child is to have, according to the author, this place in Jerusalem again (though Scripture says nothing of this), and that it cannot be used of any other Christians; and we shall see how far the attacks on the statement of the Pentecostal church having a Jewish character, are reasonable. But, what is much more important, we shall also see that, this Pentecostal church being scattered, and something to arise again which cannot be used of any Christians, out of Jerusalem, there is clearly a standing and place proper to us in the interval distinct from this, which knows nothing of Jerusalem nor of Jews —a heavenly standing which leaves aside all those questions altogether, has a heavenly Jerusalem for its mother, does not even know Christ after the flesh; and that question is, Are we to give up this, our proper heavenly place, which God has given us, as testified and opened out to us by the apostle Paul, for that which cannot be used of Christians out of Jerusalem and bears necessarily on the nation of Israel? For my own part, through God's grace, I surely will not. But this is the question.

This is what it is sought to lead us to.86

As to the notes. "A woman." This statement is quite unfounded in the general way in which it is given. Cities are called women in and out of Scripture—Jerusalem, Tyre, Babylon, and so on: and when a system is attached to a city, the name may pass to the system. But that does not prove that, when Scripture says a woman, it means the moral system of a city: though cities may be

sometimes called women, women do not therefore mean cities. Thus Hagar and Sarah are the two covenants; Rebecca, I doubt not, the church: and so of others. Woman as a type means a principle on which a system is formed; as man- is the actor, faithful or not, in that system.

But be it so, that the woman is to "be regarded as the expression of the glory of that system which is by and by to be the earth's system, through and in Jerusalem." Is the glory of the earth's system in Jerusalem the church's, or, if you please, Christianity's place?—Christianity's as it belongs to me? Here is the grand question. Heavenly glory, in a word, the distinctive heavenly calling, is taken away. That is not to be at all the earth's system in Jerusalem. Is Jerusalem to be in heavenly glory? Look at it, prosper under it, it may; but it is not to be in it. And see how it is all swamped in one. "To say that it represented the glory of the church of the firstborn merely, would be too limited. To confine it to the glory of Israel on the earth, would be too narrow likewise. It represents the glory of a system of truth, government, order, etc., wherewith the church and Israel are alike connected, although the earthly medium of its manifestation will be Israel in Jerusalem." Let us only remember that the woman is Christianity too.

But here it is not heavenly glory, being like Christ. It is a system of truth, government, order, the church and Israel alike in it; and the earthly medium of its manifestation is Israel in Jerusalem. I suppose the world will not know in Christ's glory given to the saints that the Father sent the Son. But if it is through and in Jerusalem, and Israel in Jerusalem, that the glory of the system which "we now call Christianity" is to be

manifested, with which the church and Israel are alike connected; what becomes of the church and its distinctive position? Are saints really prepared to receive this, to give up absolutely and entirely the proper manifestation of heavenly glory in the church?

But, further, to confirm this we have the sun and stars compared. The star is distant and unearthly glory: the sun is what is prepared for earth. But then, first, it cannot be the church and Israel at the same time in the same and like glory.

But “consequently, when Christ first appears in the fulness of divine glory, in the glory of the Father, His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, He is symbolised by a star. I am the bright and morning star.” “It is to flesh and blood terrible glory, and in it He will exercise the destructive judgments whereby the day of the Lord will be ushered in.” How unceasing and assiduous the effort to exclude the church from any proper separate and bridal joy! It is fit to make one weep, and wish one’s eyes fountains of tears, to see the unwearied-ness of the effort to destroy all this.

So the day star arising in our hearts87 means the executing terrible judgments on the adversary. “I am the bright and morning star” (harbinger, I should have thought, of joy, and light, and blessing, after a dark and gloomy night) are destructive judgments. But where is it said (to come to its proof) that the star is Christ appearing in the fulness of divine glory? Or where is it said Christ appears as a star? Or is it not strange that a star should be the fulness of divine glory, and the sun a sort of inferior earthly glory to eclipse by the coming in of day that fulness of the divine glory? And how, if it be a

distant and unearthly glory, the glory of the Father, and His own, etc., is it shewn in the exercise of destructive judgments upon earth? I suppose it is not distant or unearthly when He shall stain all His garments in blood. And is our distant and unearthly glory to be destructive judgments, and His glory in Israel to be gracious and benign? Where is this system leading us?

When Israel washes his feet in the blood of his enemies, and the tongue of his dogs is red through the same—when the praises of God are in his lips, and a two-edged sword in his hands—when He makes Judah His goodly horse in the day of battle, out of whom come the battle-axe and every weapon of war—when He has bent Judah for Him, and filled the bow with Ephraim—when they shall grow up as calves in the stall, and tread down the wicked under the soles of their feet—when his horn shall be iron, and his hoof brass, and Zion shall break in pieces many people; what glory do they share in then? Is that distant and unearthly, or the gracious and benign display of glory? Did the writer take the trouble of reading only the passage he has quoted? If not, I will cite it for him, and for those who may follow such statements without giving themselves the trouble of doing so: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall; and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do (this), saith the Lord of hosts.” And this is the passage quoted to prove that benign and gracious glory belongs to Israel as under the influence of the Sun of righteousness, and destructive judgments to the church as having the bright and morning Star!

Yes, the bright and morning Star does belong to the saints, and its glory is distant and unearthly. But destruction and terror upon earth are not distant and unearthly, though they be terrible to flesh and blood, and not so till they come sudden and near. The Sun of righteousness shall heal Israel, but shall place the power of righteousness and judgment there, according to the principles of God's association with them. But the bright and morning Star is not terrible. It is the sweet and blessed sign to them that watch, that the day of blessing is coming in. It anticipates the day; it is joy and gladness rising in the heart that has watched, whether in hope or possession. And such is Christ before He appears. The Sun will arise on the world, and men will stand in the light, for blessing or for judgment. For the sun is always supreme glory, under whatever circumstances. The star is before the day, the joy of those who watch. The unwakeful world, who sleep in the night, see it not. Where is it ever said that Christ appeared as the star? or where is a star connected with judgment? And if it be His Father's glory, where is it ever said that He will give us that? He that is as the light of the morning is to be just. I can conceive nothing more painful to a saint than to know that destruction is to be his share in glory; grace and benignity Israel's.

Further, while the woman is clothed with the sun (supreme glory, certainly, however near), she is crowned with the unearthly glory of the heavenly city: but then it is a mere distant and comparatively obscure thing. It is a wonder, if the sun be there in all its gracious and benign glory, that the stars are wanted to give effect to the holy system of truth and power— I suppose as inferior agents to the supreme glory of Jerusalem. "Truth and power

paramount in the earth" —but, after all, grace is not to enter into their service. Terrible destruction ushering in the day is their part; the grace is reserved for Israel and Jerusalem.

The rest of the note will be to be discussed elsewhere. It is secretly laying down a principle, which, received as here in the mind, will serve to prove something elsewhere. But proofs must be scriptural, or it is but man's mind at work: only one remark is needed here—that it is in nowise drawn from Scripture. It is not true, in fact, absolutely; but if the systems are the governing powers before Antichrist, and the systems are represented by the heads, it is quite clear the writer is all wrong if we follow Scripture, because Antichrist does not sweep away the heads at all. It is a system of the author's (which may have a certain element of truth in it), not of the Apocalypse.

What is the meaning of the next note? Does the fell sweep of the dragon's power cast down from heaven those who are to be there prospectively? Or when cast from heaven to earth, if it be the saints, what does it mean? Or what is the encouragement? For it is never said they get up again. It is said, called to suffer. But how is casting down from heaven by the dragon's tail suffering? But stars being saints in a distant and unearthly character, not inferior authorities or powers, as usually taken; all this unaccountable confusion must be added, in order to be consistent.

The next note I have sufficiently treated. Only it is quite clear that it is not the church's place in unity, heavenly unity, if it cannot be used of any Christians out of Jerusalem. Nor do I see how a child seen born in heaven,

and caught up to God and His throne, signifies Christians persecuted at Jerusalem.

Where does the Scripture state that the casting down of Satan is consequent on his interference with the progress of Christianity at Jerusalem? So says the author, It appears. Where does it appear? Not in Revelation 12, because his persecution of the woman is consequent on his casting down. He is seen above, ready to devour; and, the child of power being prepared and caught up, war begins in heaven; but there is not a word about Jerusalem there. There is not, that I can see, the slightest appearance of such a view here, but quite another order of things. The divine mind, seeing the purpose of the dragon, and having prepared the man-child who is to wield the power, whoever that be, begins to execute its purpose; though it may leave the woman on earth awhile, the object of Satan's ineffectual malice.

"The priesthood of Christ will not cease to be exercised for us when our accuser is cast down."

First, it is not said our accuser, but "the accuser of our brethren," And are we not to have the place of those in heaven, when all this special scene goes on at Jerusalem about symbols which cannot be used of any Christians out of Jerusalem?

And surely the casting down of the accuser must make an amazing difference in the exercise of Christ's priesthood. They are supposed no longer to have to overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony—this they had accomplished. And why are the dwellers in heaven called upon to rejoice so? Who are they? The inhabitants of the earth are hardly the church as such, i.e., in its proper heavenly character

as sitting in heavenly places; otherwise it would be worse off by the casting down of Satan. The victory over him, thus celebrated, would be a woe to it. Their brethren had overcome him in trial, and this is celebrated with joy. This can hardly mean that they were in a much worse case down here, with the same spiritual conflicts continuing. And such is the supposition of the author. They have still to wrestle against the spiritual wickednesses, and, besides that, they have, if they be not now clear from Satan as dwellers in heaven,88 woe increasedly upon them down here. Further, it is said, we shall not "cease to wrestle against evil spirits when he is cast down," etc. "We are not said to wrestle in heaven against evil spirits; but to wrestle against evil spirits who are [now] in heaven." Is it ever said we are to wrestle against them on earth? But what an entire inapprehension of the force of all the apostle's statements, and how constant the effort to undo the proper heavenly position of the church! How can we wrestle against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places when there are none there? It is in vain to say they are as bad when on earth. Worse, if you please; but it is not the same state of things. God has begun to act in judgment, and cast them down from their high estate, from the place where they dwelt in power, and where the church's place and glory and blessings are stated to be. This wrestling is spoken of in the Ephesians, where it is said that we are blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ—that we wrestle with spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places. Can these two things be thus contrasted when there are no spiritual wickednesses there? We sit in heavenly places in Christ. We are a witness to principalities and powers in heavenly places of the manifold wisdom of God. All has

its own character and place—the mischievous power of Satan in heavenly places, and our blessings there. And we are told that his casting down thence will make no difference! And why is “now” added? The statement is characteristic in Ephesians: our spiritual blessings are there; our spiritual enemies are there. Supposing I were to add spiritual blessings (now) in heavenly places, its incongruity would be seen, because it is manifestly characteristic, and not merely a matter of time. And the expressions are identical: the introduction of “now” makes it a mere matter of time, as if there were nothing characteristic in power in Satan’s being there with his angels. But this is a manifest perversion of the passage. And when it is said, “Satan will still continue to be the prince of the power of the air,” it is not a perversion, but a denial of Scripture: for he is said to be cast into the earth, and therefore he is not prince of the power of the air.

I am at a loss to know how the liberality of the day tempered the attack on Christianity at the French revolution. However, it is immaterial, as there is no question here.

I have considered sufficiently elsewhere the testimony “of,” or “to,” Jesus Christ. I only recall that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. The spirit of prophecy is not the gospel; but that is the way the testimony of Jesus is considered in the Revelation.89

Chapter 13

I should have thought that on certain points, such as the four empires, I may say universally received among those who have studied prophecy, no remarks would have been called for. But here also, by the unparalleled

carelessness of assertion which characterises this book, almost every statement is wrong. I suppose it arises from the author's mind being so absorbed by the Antichristian empire, and thus forming a system as regardless of geographical facts as we have found it to be of Scripture statements, and grammar itself. I do trust this will not be considered harsh, but I say the simple truth when I affirm that I never met with a book like this in its assertions.

The prophetic and Roman world are not at all the same things. About half the prophetic earth (confining that term to the four empires) is outside the Roman world; besides which (though I have no objection at all to this distinction of the prophetic earth treated of in Daniel, because it is connected with the times of the Gentiles, and the giving power to them during the disowning of Jerusalem), it is well to remember that a vast portion of the prophecies apply to other subjects and other countries: so that we must not suppose the prophetic earth to mean the earth of which prophecy treats, but merely that portion of the earth given up to the Gentiles during a certain prophetic period, in which Jerusalem was set aside, and the power of the house of David broken—that rod despised as every tree. If we do not recollect this, the whole book of Ezekiel, for example, will be left out of prophecy. Nor is it all by any means that would be. There are Nahum, Jonah, Amos, and a very great portion of other prophets, which are occupied with other countries, or with Israel or Judah under other aspects.

Further, it is a great mistake to say that the prophetic earth is situate geographically round the Great or Mediterranean Sea. The first two empires only just

reached its borders90 in their utmost conquests; and the body of their empire was far, far away from it. Nor, though Emmanuel's land be the centre of the prophetic earth, can it be the centre of the Roman earth, if the coasts of the Great Sea be its boundaries; because it is situated at one extremity of it. How is the Roman world "the birth-place and centre" of Persia as an empire? Persia never was in it at all. And the limits assigned to the Roman earth by the author leave out half the city of Babylon, and a great part of the province of Babylonia, and all the richest part of its territory (among the rest, I apprehend, Shinar). Nineveh also was outside it. The commencement of the grandeur of the prophetic earth (that is, Babylon) had no connection with the Great Sea. The next empire was further east still; and the third, which had its origin not far from the Mediterranean, pushed all its conquests eastward from it, as far as Judea, and never held but that extremity of it which had been in the hands of the Persians. Four-fifths of the Mediterranean were never visited even by the third or Grecian empire; the Romans alone surrounded it by their conquests and power. So that the whole statement is wrong. That it is now a principal scene, though it can hardly be called the centre (for there is not a single dominant power which can be said to be seated on its coasts) of the world's energies, is very true.

Nor is it true that God has never interfered to hinder the onward progress of human counsels. The irruption of the northern and Germanic hordes laid waste the Roman, without substituting another, empire. That it accomplished God's counsels there is no doubt; but that it destroyed for a thousand years the European and all civilisation, and, save for one reign (Charlemagne), all

concentrated empire, is equally certain; and the latter is not to this day restored. So that, while I do not doubt that man will set himself up against God, this setting up of man in admiration of his unhindered glorious progress from Nebuchadnezzar onward, is unfounded. It is astonishing how anyone could state (when we consider the barbarous subversion of the Roman empire, when no one knew what to count on a moment, and the effects of which last to this day), that from the days of Nimrod the onward progress of human counsels has never been hindered. That there will be a man of sin, who will concentrate the energies of man and the power of Satan, all who would be interested in these pages believe. Still I find no such account in Scripture as is here given of him; nor do I believe that this high coloured exaltation of him comes from God. That men will be given up to him, we know from Scripture; but it will need strong delusion, so that they should believe a lie.

Let the reader take any part of scripture, and see if the beast or the man of sin be presented by the Spirit of God in this way. I do not doubt that the faculties of man will in him be in many respects in their highest exercise. It is natural to suppose that it will be so in one who exercises such extended and paramount influence; though, indeed, this in its worst aspect they are led to do by another agent and mouth-piece of the enemy, almost overlooked in this chapter, and yet far more deeply mischievous in what he does. “If we can conceive— the intellect of statesmen, poets, and orators, such poets, etc.— all varieties of intellectual power, etc.—we may form some conception of the glory of this great one of the earth.” Why are we to conceive all this?

Where does Scripture thus present the beast? That certain characteristics of the three preceding empires were found in the last is true. But I am not aware that this fascinating power is anywhere attributed to him; and it seems to me a serious thing to ascribe to anyone as affording him this fascinating power, without the authority of the word of God—what cannot be used without God's permission to exalt any. I see the fascinations of Satan connected with his coming; but this is attributed, in the chapter we are considering, to another person, the second beast or false prophet, and not to the first beast or imperial power. Deceivableness of unrighteousness I find in them that perish. But where is it said that the scattered intellect of former ages will be centered in the imperial beast, or its head, the man of sin? I do not see but that this is the creature of the writer's imagination. Great things, war, blasphemies, are attributed to him in Revelation 13 and Daniel 7; self-exaltation, doing according to his will, utter disregard of God, dividing the land for gain,91 in Daniel 11. Setting up to be God in the temple of God, opposing and exalting himself, Satan's working, powers, signs, lying wonders, will be there, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness. I say, "will be there," because it would seem from Revelation 13 wrought rather before him than by him. And delusion from God will be upon those who did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Such are the serious statements made concerning this man of sin, this son of perdition.

But though I do not doubt his great capacities for the sceptre and the throne, and using probably all the arts which such persons may be supposed to use to flatter and amuse the passions of men; still, strong and

energetically drawn as the picture of this “individual man” is in the “Thoughts,” I cannot recognise it in Scripture, and this is what I seek. If there be such a one, where is it? I do not exactly find the soberness which can judge of this, and which I believe the Spirit of God gives, when I read (page 160), “fallen man is but a poor weak thing apart from Satan,” and in page 155, the chapter beginning “There is a wonderful energy in unregenerate man.” I do not mean to say that there may not be explanation,92 and a reconciling by explanation of these two statements. But there is a haste in making the two, which does not savour of quiet scriptural enquiry. Besides, in this picture of the man of sin, not one single scripture is quoted, except for Satan’s delusions, which is only an accompaniment. So that when it is said that “the glories of intellect and taste, of war and conquest, of the genius as well as the majesty of sovereign rule, are found, for the first time, in perfect and harmonious combination,” a picture is drawn by the author, not by Scripture: and I doubt very much indeed that God permits in evil any such perfect and harmonious combination. At least there is none such in Scripture: no proof is given.93 The characters given there are much darker and more evil—evil, deadly evil. “The elegance of the refined Greece “was not even to be found in Macedon, whose leopard wing passed over half the world, faster almost than the flight of man’s ambition would have led it, to a goal where there was nothing left to conquer. Nor have the children of light who have received the love of the truth anything to say to the delusions by which the disobedient world is seduced. They are not sent to them.

When the author says that “this is he through whom the dragon makes war with the remnant of her seed,” it is a statement entirely unsupported by Scripture.

I believe that we get, chapter 17, not an earlier but a more general history of (not Antichrist, but) the beast. For it is unwarrantable to call the beast absolutely Antichrist, though Antichrist may wield his power at a given period. Being more general, it is true, it does not confine the history to the latter period of his being, as chapter 12, but shews who the beast was that was there; and so far is earlier. Chapter 17 is a description, not a history, and includes all his closing history94 as well as the rest. The connection of chapter 12 with chapter 17 in historical time is therefore quite unwarranted. It would be absurd to connect them in such a way, as to suppose a dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and a beast with seven heads and ten horns at the same time. But they are not at all so brought together in Scripture. If the ten horns had not given their power to the beast (Antichrist) yet, he had not the virtual power of the Roman empire. Satan had not yet given him his power, and his throne, and great authority. If Satan held it himself and afterwards gave it to him, they did not hold it together.

Besides, if the seven heads of the dragon were crowned, that is, if he hold the power of the systems, then (the beast not being in the exercise of his power with the horns) how does he, the beast, hold the systems uncrowned, not himself uncrowned, but his heads? The systems can hardly be crowned and uncrowned at the same time. It is not the dragon crowned and the beast not, but both having seven heads and ten horns, and the heads crowned on one and not on the other. And this is

explained in the note as the “systems ruling,” “during the time the systems are crowned”: so that putting them crowned on the dragon, and uncrowned on the beast at the same time, cannot stand.

Besides, the horns and the beast are to have their hour together: the power and authority are not yet given to the beast as such. He is not even yet called up out of the sea, according to the author’s system, for that is his character here given. And in chapter 17 he is so far from possessing virtual power (for we have seen manifest power was not yet given him), that the woman rules him —he was the governed party.

Further, seven heads are seven systems. Why? Here is the only answer I can find: “Systems are ruling now, and will through the whole Babylonish period, until,” etc. But this is merely explaining the author’s views of present things by using the statements of the Apocalypse for them, and not expounding the Apocalypse. The seven heads are seven mountains. Are mountains systems in symbolic language? “And there are seven kings.” Are they systems? “Mountains are the emblems of authoritative power” (page 143). I might say, perhaps, seats of power; but are these systems authoritative powers? They may exercise a very great influence on those who hold power, but they are not in themselves authoritative power. Supposing systems now rule. Why are the dragon’s heads systems?

Besides, the author has elsewhere made out six, lamely enough, I think (page 239)—political, military, civil, religious, commercial, educational systems—where, note, the word is used in quite another sense; for these words are merely generally characteristic. There might

be five political systems, and so on. Besides, some political system predominates always, and some civil; so that there is no sense in giving it as peculiar that a system should govern. But let that pass. Of these six systems one turns out to be the woman, who rides the beast and governs him, so that he does not wield its power: nor is it a very intelligible system to make seven crowned heads together, and one of them as an exclusively dominant system governing the whole. At any rate, there is not one word to prove that the heads are systems, but that the author says systems rule now. But there is more than this.

The dragon does not call up any one from the sea at all. It is attributing providential power to Satan. Further, it is well that the unlearned reader should know that “he stood” upon the sand of the sea, instead of “I stood,” though declared summarily here to be the right reading, is rejected by Griesbach, Scholz, and Tischendorf. Mr. Tregelles’s system may be right: but the question can hardly be disposed of thus. To raise a system of interpretation on a reading hitherto rejected by those who have most elaborately examined it, and that with different systems of recension, must at least leave grave doubts in the mind of a considerate person. Further, the expressions used in Daniel for the great sea are not at all the same as the Great Sea, when the Mediterranean Sea is spoken of. I do not believe that the expression is ever used of the Mediterranean. That is called great in Joshua 1:4, etc. Daniel employs the Hebrew word (Rab), meaning, I think we may say, a multitude of waters: and in this general sense of the great sea, it is used without any article—the four winds of heaven striving upon great waters. The Great Sea is used with the article—the

Sea, the great one (Heb.—ha yam hagadol). And it is quite evident that the passage in Daniel (to which I dare say the passage in Revelation refers, though not at all to any where the Mediterranean Sea is spoken of) speaks of the origin of these empires from the sea of unformed peoples. We have already seen that at least two of the great empires did not commence near the Mediterranean at all. So that the sense here would not at all be calling up from the Mediterranean a formed known power, not one of which ideas are found in Daniel, nor here. Satan gives him his authority when he rises up out of the sea. But this is all that is said.

I have already remarked upon the leopard. It is the swiftness of Alexander's conquests, and not the civilisation of Greece, that is in question. Is it true that the refinement and elegancies of civilisation have found no home but in Greece? And if in chapter 17 neither the leopard nor bear nor any likeness be found, the time is found when the horns reign with the beast. At any rate the whole system of being called by Satan as a known suited power from west to east, is totally foreign to the statements of the chapter, or any idea contained in it.

I do not see on what ground it is said that the beast and Satan are to act together in parity of glory; nor do I at all like the spirit of page 166. But I examine the accuracy, rather than judge the spirit of this work now. There is plenty of evil, no doubt, in saints mixing up with what the author alludes to. Does it not seem a rude thing to say that Christianity is one of the heads of the beast, which head being healed (not another substituted for it), all the world wonder after the beast, because the wounded head was healed? Is it a scriptural way of stating things to say that the substitution of

Antichristian-ism for Christianity is healing the head of the beast? Christianity having been that head? Besides, then the wounded head.is the second beast. For this is the new ecclesiastical influence. And, further, it would be the dragon who wounded his own head; for the systems were crowned on his heads, and he as yet has not given the power to the beast; and he it is who destroys and drives out Christianity. (See page 148.) And the mischief is done to this head before Antichrist rises (see note to page 167): so that it was really his own crowned head the dragon slew. If so, the war against Christianity is clearly not merely at Jerusalem, nor the scene in Palestine; because neither the ten kingdoms nor the seven heads are in Palestine. The locality of the second beast I do not doubt; but this is not the question here. It is well to remember here that the author separates entirely the seven kings of chapter 17 from the seven heads. If there be any connection, his system is an utter absurdity from beginning to end.95 And, bad as the Greek superstitions may be, to say that they are as bad or worse than Rome—this constant palliating Rome, or making anything more important, I do not believe to be of God: nor representing the evil (for evil there is) which may be going on in the East now, as being a more developed form of the mystery of iniquity in its religious forms, than popery, or what is acting in the West.96 It all clearly misleads the mind from the growing evil, which the rest is evil as tending to.

But there is another very material objection to all this system of heads, etc. That is, that this religious system being one of the heads, and evidently (according to the statements we are discussing) an eminently important one, it is now one of the ruling systems, and governs the

kingdoms, and will do so through the whole Babylonish period. The systems are what are crowned, not the horns (page 177); they regulate the kingdoms (page 162). But (page 175) “these are principles little suited, even to this incipient Babylonish period, as we may see if we watch the present relation of the crown of France to the popedom. The crowns of the ten kingdoms will assert their supremacy, and the religious systems that are respectively under them, whether Greek, Roman, or Anglican, must have to fall into the second place.” Now, this is not during the reign of Antichrist, because he rises with his head already wounded unto death (page 167); that is, Christianity has been destroyed, “is gone” entirely, and all religious influences swept away, as far as our present subject is concerned. So that it is during the Babylonish time that they must learn to fall into the second place. But if the crowns of the ten kingdoms, during this period, will assert their supremacy, and force the religious systems to fall into the second place, how is it that they are not crowned at all during this period; and that the very principle of the period is, that the systems are crowned (of which this religiousness is one, and a most important one) and govern them? Page 175 subverts page 177, because it really is the exercise of man’s mind on the present state of things, and occasional passages adapted to it, and not the explanation of Scripture itself.

I have already spoken of ‘the habitable world’ being translated the Roman world, and the earth being used for a larger sphere (both assertions being quite unwarranted), and the inconsistency of its use here with the assertion, that the period of the churches was entirely past. It seems to me also, that the statement of

page 172 is quite unfounded, and moreover contradicted by the note to page 164. The lion, leopard, and bear do not act on, though they may have the principle which increasingly prevails, and will “during the whole Babylonish period,” for which men are educating, and under whose influence men act now, and which “are the objects of modern pursuit.” The tendencies “of the hour” clearly are not what “fall under the symbol of the lion, the leopard, and the bear.” And though in the note to page 164 it is said that Antichrist will not destroy the utilities, yet in page 258 the whole system is destroyed. At all events, what is cultivated now is not what falls under the symbol of the lion, the leopard, and the bear. If the lions’ dens, and the mountains of the leopards,97 in the Canticles, mean Antichrist, or his system, how is it the place of our present sojourn, or applicable to the church now, when the leopard does not yet exist?

I believe myself that the seven heads are the completeness of power in different forms, which are seen in the worldly power of Satan. When the beast is in his last form, there is division into ten kingdoms, which give their power to him. But as to those ten kingdoms several things are to be remarked. First, Antichrist rises as a little horn after the others, becomes more haughty looking than all, and subdues three of them. This itself is a proof that the accounts we have in the Revelation are more characteristic than historical.

Next, Daniel 8 proves nothing about it. The division into four is mentioned; but nothing is said as to the latter day of them, beyond the expression of the latter time of their kingdoms, and a little horn came out of one of them. But I do not at all believe this little horn to be Antichrist. I do not make any objection to anyone’s believing it; but it

is not proved here, and I am entirely convinced it is not. Nor do I think Daniel n allows of the two chief monarchies being viewed as under Antichrist. They make war as kings of South and North upon him. Next, the quotation of chapter 9 makes me suppose that the assertion here is based on his taking away the daily sacrifice. But I apprehend the marginal reading in chapter 8 to be indubitably the right translation—“from him,” and not “by him”; and in that case “him” refers to the prince of the host. And this is entirely confirmed by the expression, “the place of his sanctuary,” which is certainly not the little horn’s.

The Hebrew is certainly properly “from him.” The only case in which it is used for “by” is quite another sense; as we might say, “he died from eating poison,” or “by eating poison”; but otherwise the word means “from” and not “by.”98 The study of Daniel has convinced me that we are in more ignorance as to the historical details of Antichrist than we suppose. As to his moral description, it is plain enough in Scripture. I do not believe any one competent to make such a systematic statement as is attempted by the author. It saves the mind a deal of trouble, as all hypotheses do; it has only the misfortune of not being true. The fact of the subduing of three horns alters historically the whole matter, and a good deal the moral system too. It is not noticed in this chapter.

The progress of a general absorbing system into the Roman empire, of what composed it, at least the Western, and acting on the Eastern, I suppose is generally received; but still it is untrue of part as to fact, as it is unwarrantable to say, “so will it be with Turkey and Syria very soon, and Babylon will be their head and

centre." I strongly doubt this in many parts of it. It ought to be proved and not asserted. There are many reasons which render me doubtful of the absorption of the Grecian and Eastern part into the body of the beast. It would certainly seem that they are treated independently in the book of Daniel, and other prophecies. "The Assyrian," for example, occupies a very much more prominent place than Antichrist in the prophecies which precede the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

As to the next note, it is strange to say, "he is symbolised merely by a little horn." Is nothing said about this little horn, nor about more than its insignificant rise? His look is more stout than his fellows, and he casts down three horns. If Revelation 13 comes after, then clearly the ten horns never historically give their kingdom to the beast, for there remain but seven.

"A leopard." The fourfold division of the empire is here incorrect. After the various wars between the generals, the death of Antigonus (I pass over Perdiccas, Eumenes, etc.) the fourfold division was Greece, Thrace, Syria, and Egypt. Asia Minor was not one. If Egypt and Syria are excluded by chapter 11, they are excluded from subjection to the beast also. But I have already said I do not believe Daniel 8 applies to Antichrist. But this is to be discussed as the fairest subject of enquiry, on which, for my part, I should be glad to hear all the author, or anyone, had to say.

In the next note Daniel 7:23 is a misprint for 8:23, of which I have just spoken. I have to add that I do not believe Daniel 11:41 applies to Antichrist, but to the king of the north. I feel pretty clear upon this; but as I

once supposed myself that it was Antichrist, I cannot be surprised that others do. I am pretty confident that both I myself was and that the author is wrong. But it is a point on which everyone can enquire and judge. As to Zechariah, I agree.

As to days and years, I will not enter into this controversy here. The author steps very easily over it, saying, “the passage that has been commonly quoted.” He must be very ignorant of the controversy on the subject, or have a very treacherous memory. The grand hinge of the controversy rested on Daniel 9—the seventy weeks: a difficulty out of which the adversaries of the year-day system have never been able to get. It is very certain, and nobody denies it, that the ordinary word for weeks is there used for weeks of years.

Then, as to “facts” and “principles,” the author is clearly wrong; because John says, “Even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time”: so that this great fact of the close is applied to facts and persons in the apostle John’s day. And I suspect we shall find a good many facts used for the latter day which certainly had an accomplishment in facts in a measure in the Old Testament, as Babylon, Solomon, Sennacherib, and many others. But then this is another question. Symbols are not exactly facts; and it is quite possible that they may express principles fully embodied in certain ultimate facts, and partially in certain others; and that is the way John uses the term Antichrist. Historical accuracy is not found in the Revelation; for we learn from Daniel that three horns fall, of which there is not a word said in the Revelation, and therefore the principle, the basis of the author’s reasoning, fails. He has no right to call symbols facts. He may apply them to

facts. He may be right or wrong in his application; but that is a certain use he makes of these symbols; but the symbols are not facts. Antichrist is never mentioned in the Revelation: I do not doubt there are symbols which apply to him, but this is another matter. So there is no little horn in Revelation—another historical fact which is not found. We get, on the other hand, an eighth head, which is of the seven, which is the beast. While, as we have seen, three horns historically fall in Daniel, in moral principle and system the ten horns have power one hour with the beast. So that the statement here insisted on is a misconception of the very nature of the Revelation; I do not at all doubt its accuracy, or its fulfilment in facts: but on the technical rigidity of the author it cannot be. We have seen its impossibility in the trumpets—making a star called Wormwood make the waters bitter, settled by “waters and all that they symbolise will be found to be bitter”; and how the darkening the third part of the sun made it not shine for a third part of the day, not settled at all.

The word of God will not lend itself to the narrow systems of man’s mind. If a system was required for Antichrist, either it did exist (or else John was wrong in saying there were many), or else we must come to the conclusion that the mere rigid arrangement of the author as to Antichrist and his system is unsound: which is, I do not doubt, the solution of the difficulty. It is a question between the author and the apostle’s statement. When the author talks of Antichrist’s own peculiar system, and his destroying another, it must be remembered that he is only speaking of his own peculiar views about the matter. The insuperable difficulty is one of his own making. He assumes the beast to be literally

Antichrist all through, and, therefore, he cannot exist only during the twelve hundred and sixty days. That is, if he be literally Antichrist99 all through: but then, this is exactly the question. No doubt, when the contrary is assumed as true, the difficulty is insuperable. For my own part, I do not admit it at all. Nor does the author, because it is a well known influential power, who has had one of his heads wounded, etc., who is set up, and sets up the system. So that the beast is not the Antichristian beast all through. And his history (call it principles, or facts, as you please)—his history does extend in the Apocalypse beyond the twelve hundred and sixty days: how far, I do not enquire here. As to "his tabernacle," I have only one remark to make; that is, that the dragon had been dwelling in heaven, and now was cast out of it.

We now come to 2 Thessalonians 2, and more new translation; to which I decidedly prefer the English, the only decidedly faulty word being worse in the new translation. I will give a translation I made myself, without reference to this controversy, as affording in the shortest way my judgment of the passage. Some words will be found different from the authorised version, where the sense is the same. It being for my own accurate study of Scripture, of course, I did not follow the English translation.

"But we beseech you, brethren, by the coming—or presence (parousia)—of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that ye may not be quickly unsettled in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as of us, as if the day of the Lord was here. Let no man deceive you in any manner, that [it will be so]100 without the apostasy's coming first, and the

man of sin's being revealed, the son of perdition, the opposer and exalter [of himself] above everyone called God, or object of veneration (sebasma). So that he101 shall seat himself in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Do ye not remember that, being yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth,102 so that he should be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already working: only there is a withholder at present until he be out of the way. And then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus103 shall destroy104 with the breath of his mouth, and abolish105 with the appearing of his coming."

Now, as to the critical differences, I do not attach very great importance to the translating the Greek 'huper' "by" or "concerning." But I think the English translators undoubtedly right. There is no doubt at all that it is a regular known use of the preposition. The truth is, it is its commonest use. I do not mean that in this common use it is always used with words of entreaty, but that it is used with them in its most ordinary sense, that is, "on account of"; which, with words of entreaty, we generally in English render "by" meaning "by reason of." "I beseech you, on account of the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto him." When it is a motive, we say "for the sake of"; but the sense is really the most common usual sense of huper, to which the English word "for" most nearly answers, adding idiomatically "sake of" in certain cases.

And now I will put the question in another shape. When huper is used with words of beseeching, as it is here, is not its natural regular sense "by" or "for the sake of"? 106 Whereas it is quite certain from many examples that

the preposition used for concerning with erotao, to ask, is pert, and not huper. See Luke 4:38; 1 John 5:16; John 16:26, and several times in chapter 17. I suppose that no one will dispute that its regular sense with a word of beseeching is “by”; and therefore I conclude that the English translators were right, and the author wrong.

As to having to choose between “on behalf of” and “concerning,” it is perfectly ridiculous.

The only plausible ground to make “concerning” allowable is its use in 2 Corinthians 12:8, where the word however is not erotao (to ask). Nor do I think that huper could be used with a long subject stated, about which he was entreating them. It would be peri: whereas, after stating the subject, huper toutou I can well understand. Finally, “by “is the regular translation of the Greek. Thus Luther also translates it. It may admit of discussion; but I believe the English translation right.

The remark on chapter 5:2 is utterly futile, because in English we do not say unsettled “from” your mind, but “in” your mind, where it is a question of quiet stability. “Shaken from your understanding” is not English: that is all.

The next remark, on verse 2, is subtle enough, that the Thessalonians were wrong in expecting the Lord or the end immediately; and we are told that the word is used “in connection with wrongness of expectation of the end being immediate.” Now the sentiment against which this remark is directed is, not that the end is immediate, but a distinction between the Lord’s receiving the church, and the end; so that the church may be always waiting for the Lord, though it affix no date to the end. See 2 Thess. 2:2.

“Be troubled” is used in Matthew 24:6 and Mark 13:7, exactly as it is used here—that present troubles should not make them think the end near, or the day of the Lord come. It is not wrong expectation in either case, but trouble from present circumstances alarming the mind, and taking away its security, so as to give it fears as if the day of the Lord were there. “When ye hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled.” It was clearly a trouble arising from disturbing causes actually and sensibly in operation.

Further, the word “set in” is given as the literal meaning of the word, and “present” as its secondary sense, in order to furnish the idea of a setting in out of sight and absent, which might be supposed in the mind. Now firstly we have seen that the Greek for to be troubled, is used in the passages cited in connection with actually present alarming circumstances, which they heard of as then going on on earth. And, moreover, 1 deny totally the expression “set in” to be a literal or any translation of the Greek which in the English in 2 Thess. 2:2 read at hand or present. “To stand in” is the literal sense, as we say of a month “the third instant” meaning the present month: and, secondary or not, it is perfectly certain that it is always used in Scripture for “present” in contrast with future or absent. These are the passages where it is found: Romans 8:38; 1 Corinthians 3:22; 7:26; Galatians 1:452 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 9:9.107 Anyone can examine these passages and see what present means. And, as the author says, “There is no example of this word being used to signify the approach of anything that is not yet existent” —and I add, that is not present. Now if it was only set in in heaven, it was just its approach to them, which this word cannot mean. And I apprehend

that the Greek for be troubled and be shaken in mind, as in 2 Thess. 2:2, would not be used of persons in tribulation, who “had been taught” “that they would be delivered as soon as the Lord descended into the air.” Is the comfort and joy that would produce, if even unwarranted, expressed by these words? It is quite certain that ‘be troubled’ is used for the alarm occasioned by present things, not by joyful expectation, where it is used in Scripture.

As to the apostasy, I agree it must not be confounded with the mystery of iniquity: though its principles are at work therein, so that it may be morally called so very justly; and Scripture speaks in a way analogous to this. See Jude. “These are they,” etc. But it is much more unwarrantable on the other hand, to say that it will not take place apart from the personal manifestation of the man of sin. There is no scripture whatever for this, nor any proof that it is true. That it is the apostasy of man as man, I do not deny, because that is true of man as man already, and it will then be fully manifested; but it is not what is meant by apostasy at all. It most clearly and evidently refers to Christianity, and nothing else; but as the others will be manifest, I need not discuss this further.

As to criticism, “And ye know that at present,” etc. I have no hesitation in saying that it is quite wrong: the original statement in 2 Thess. 2:6 is most certainly not the Greek for “ye know what now hinders,” but for “now ye know the hindrance,” or “what hinders,” as the English version has rendered it. The “now “of the succeeding verse 7 is quite another word, in Greek (‘arti’) meaning at present, or, for the present, with which the “then” of verse 8 is in contrast. Moreover, if I

were to say “at present,” or “now you know,” emphatically as to them, it would no way imply that in future they would not, but that they had not in time past. 108 Moreover, in the Greek of 2 Thess. 2:6, there is no ellipse at all. It is as plain a Greek sentence as can be well written, saying and meaning “and now ye know what hinders.” Nor do I understand what all this mystification of Greek is; for the doctrine that there was now a hinderer which would be removed, and then the lawless one be manifested, is very plainly stated (v. 7, 8). And I know no reason why there is so much about this, unless the author is jealous of the Thessalonians knowing well what we, as to the literal application, are ignorant about. I believe the wisdom of God threw it purposely thus in mystery, though I do not say spiritual intelligence may not find His thoughts about it in the word.

The next note, on “that which holdeth fast,” is entirely wrong. The Greek does not necessarily imply what the author states. For the unlearned reader I quote two passages that will clearly shew it. Acts 27:40, “made toward shore.” Luke 14:9, “thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.” I suppose that was not “holding fast.” It means just possessing, as 2 Corinthians 6:10, holding, keeping, and hence, if there be danger of losing, holding fast. But “the exercise of forcible or violent power “does not the least enter into its meaning. I may keep things by that, of course, in some cases. Here it is just simply, what it is translated, withhold or restrain. The author has not understood the opinion which he combats, and which I am not going to defend here. If the church remains here, and the Spirit of God consequently on earth, God does, and does by the Spirit

as a Spirit of government and providence, restrain the world from being given up to Satan. The powers that be are maintained, which are of God; whereas it is Satan gives his throne to Antichrist. This falls in with the idea of the primitive Christians, that the power of the empire was the restraining thing; for which reason they prayed for its preservation, thinking that when it fell, Antichrist would come. As to, the church, and the Spirit in the church, remaining in the exercise of their proper powers until the end of the age, that is just the point in question, and cannot be therefore stated as a proof—especially by the author, who holds that in the sphere here treated of, “their scene of earthly service will be closed,” Christianity withdrawn, and a new testimony raised up where the church and the Spirit in the church had been. So that the church and Spirit do not act in testimony where this Antichristian power is. It is the time of apostasy, when another witness is raised up.

As to Zechariah 5:8, it is not said “he cast on the mouth of the ephah again” at all. It was then put on the mouth of the ephah, which was transported to the land of Shinar. Now this makes all the difference. The lead was not lifted up to shew the woman to the prophet; that is, it was not an evil long restrained by something existing all the while to keep it down. It was then shut up to carry it elsewhere, to set it on its own base. It might have had a fair name before; but now it was to be built at Shinar on its own base, not go on in the land. But all this has neither more nor less to do with 2 Thessalonians 2—incorrect as the statements are in themselves.

As to this passage itself, the Thessalonians, who were suffering sore persecution, had been bewildered, or

were in danger of being bewildered by some one; not as if Christ was there, or they with Christ, which is what they had been taught to expect (and by which, or concerning which, the apostle beseeches them) but “as if the day of the Lord was come”— not approaching—but come, present. Now the day of the Lord is constantly used for a time of trial and trouble, from which the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to Him is to exempt us. The day will not come on us unawares: we are of it.

Let the reader take a concordance and search for passages under the day of the Lord, and he will find them terror and dismay, judgment calculated to trouble and shake the mind; and further, that this expression by no means implies the presence of the Lord. I do not doubt that this will be the full accomplishment of the thing itself. But the judgments of God, inflicted by instruments of His hand as scourges, are constantly called the day of the Lord. And the Old Testament prophets take various occasions to awaken this alarm in the minds of the people. Thus Joel, for example. Now it is perfectly intelligible that these false teachers, instruments of the enemy, should have given, or sought, to give, this colour to the trials and persecutions under which the Thessalonians were lying.

The day of the Lord being set in in heaven would not have disturbed them in this state, for it was to be their deliverance and rest. But the false teacher’s interpretation of the trials might be very well connected with the way the day of the Lord is always spoken of in the Old Testament. The thought of gathering together unto Him, to which the apostle refers, would at once dispel the delusion. That this being shaken or moved by

the tribulation, was clearly the danger of the Thessalonians is evident, as we see, 1 Thessalonians 3:3-5. The enemy had tried to work on this, not by excited hopes, but by excited fear and uneasiness. The day of the Lord is not used in the preceding epistle, as alleged here. The whole statement at the commencement of page 183 is inaccurate. The day, moreover, will not commence secretly in heaven. This is never called the day of the Lord in Scripture, in any form or manner whatever. The day of the Lord is always what happens to man in judgment down here. The Greek word in 2 Thess. 2:2. cannot refer to such a setting in, because it means “present”—present to the persons concerned, by which they were beset. We shall know what is in heaven, as to the Lord’s presence, by being caught up to meet Him there. It is not a sign down here we have or want: our blessed sign is being there ourselves with Him.

Having changed “present” to “set in,” and “set in “being interchangeable with “commence” we have now the author’s own translation changed to suit his object better, given in inverted commas. I believe that day will not commence till the son of perdition be revealed, because that day is judgment on the earth, and he that above all is to be judged, must surely be there; but nothing that passes in heaven is ever referred to as the day of the Lord. If so, let the passage be cited. All this is merely the confusion of the author.

Furthermore, God has not “made known by His servant Daniel that it would be the blasphemy of the last apostasy that would cause His throne of judgment to be set in heaven.” There is no such statement in Daniel, but quite a different one. After setting the thrones, it is said,

“I beheld then, because of the great words, etc.—I beheld till the beast was slain.” Moreover, there is another serious point in this. If the day commences by the secret setting of the throne in heaven because of the blasphemy, it is certain that it is after the setting of the throne that the Son of man is brought before the Ancient of days. So that the day of the Lord, though its power may be exercised by Christ afterwards, exists previous to His receiving the power. I would refer the attentive reader to the distinction in Daniel 7:22. “The Ancient of days came.” But the truth is, the use of the day of the Lord for something passing in heaven is a totally unscriptural use of it.

I have omitted to state that the words, “as if we had said that the day of Christ had set in,” are a pure insertion of the author. Their object is thus to attribute the feeling exclusively to some testimony of the apostle as to what passed in heaven, and not to a false interpretation (pretended to be of him) of the circumstances the Thessalonians were in. It is just simply an addition to the word of God. And, moreover, it presents a totally false idea of the passage in general; because certainly “neither by spirit,” and I think probably “neither by word,” do not apply to Paul; whereas the author makes all rest upon what Paul might have said, which alters the whole sense of the passage. They were not troubled by spirit as if Paul had said. A pretended letter might allege his statements; but a pretended or false spirit would be acting on the present state of the Thessalonians’ circumstances.

On the whole, the translation and the criticisms of the author on this passage, as well as his interpretation, I have no hesitation in saying (and the reader has the

proofs), are entirely wrong. The meaning of the Spirit of God in the passage seems to me very clear. Save the word “at hand” for present, of which the passages I have quoted (and they are all in which the word is used in the New Testament) will enable the reader to judge, the authorised English translation is a perfectly satisfactory one of the passage; unless you except the insertion of “will let” (v. 7) instead of saying, “Only there is now (or at present) a letter (or one who letteth),” which does not the least alter the sense. Whereas the author’s translation entirely changes the plain sense of the passage, by unwarrantable meanings given to words, and supplying ellipses as he understands them, and inverting the plain order of the words themselves.

One point I admit he may fairly discuss, though I do not agree with him; that is, if huper means “by” His coming, or “concerning.” He is quite wrong in confining us to the choice of meanings he does; because “beseeching by” is a regular known meaning of the word; but he may of course adopt a meaning which the Greek bears perhaps, though others may judge it wrong.

Chapter 14

I have already spoken of ‘the supremacy and glory of the Gentiles up to Christ’s coming to earth.’ The unqualified statements as to it seem to me unfounded. They have been smitted, sorely smitten of God; commerce destroyed—that is, the whole system on which it is based, according to the author. There have been wars, earthquakes (public overthrowings, I doubt not), as well as literally men’s hearts have been failing them for fear, and for looking for those things that are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken: days in

which men will seek death, and not find it, and desire to die, and death depart from them, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. That the Gentiles will be pre-eminent, and the oppressive and warlike wilful king have109 a host of willing followers as of oppressed subjects, is true. But the picture drawn is not scriptural. Besides, this lingering Christianity embraces all Christendom except the Roman empire, according to the author's system, which is just the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. So that this undisturbed supremacy is a very confined one. I do not desire to weaken the idea of the wickedness of this lawless one, nor his ascendancy by various motives over the minds of those who are given up to his power. This is every way dreadful. But his pretensions do not secure the glory and peace of the earth. As regards Israel, the seat and scene of these statements, according to the author, we know that there shall be great tribulation, such as never was since there was a nation, no, nor ever shall be. Israel, by the uniform testimony of the prophets, 'shall be in the utmost distress in general. It is the time of Jacob's trouble. I might refer to chapter after chapter, but will quote only Isaiah chapters 18, 24, 27 to 33; Deuteronomy 32:6; Leviticus 26: Zechariah 11:16, 17; Joel 3:1-7. Even as to Gentiles, Luke 21 does not seem like great prosperity and comfort, though this may be towards the close of the period— Isaiah 24:6; and verse 4, where the Hebrew word Tebel (earth) is used, and therefore I apprehend it must go beyond the land of Israel. These statements seem to shew a different state of things from what is alleged about Antichrist's reign.

But to proceed. The scripture "reveals the earthly seat of that new and heavenly power whereby the earth and

all things therein will be ordered." But where is it taught that the heavenly power has an earthly seat? I know it is sought to settle it there. Scripture has given the heavenly Jerusalem as the seat of the church's glory, not earthly Jerusalem. This latter, or Zion, which as to this is the same, is not the mountain of God for the heavenly church, nor the church's seat of authority, but of Christ as Son of David.

"The purpose of the Lamb in again visiting the earth is to bring into it, and finally to establish in it, the glory and the holiness and the happiness of heaven." Again, "yet it is in this world that the glory and holiness and happiness of heaven is to be manifested and established." I hardly know why or how it should be called the glory and happiness of heaven, if it is to be established in the earth. It may be alleged that in the new heavens and the new earth, when Christ has given up the kingdom, and God is all in all, the blessing of the human redeemed family made perfect with Christ will take place, or that there is no longer the same distinction, and even contrast. The beginning of Revelation 21 and the expressions in 2 Peter 3 may be alleged, with possibly some others, for one or other of these thoughts. I do not affirm or deny either here. But in any case, Christ will have given up the kingdom, and that is not the thing in question here. That will be a new earth and must not be confounded with this; and the Son will then Himself be subject, having subdued all. It is not what He establishes, nor properly speaking in this earth. And certainly the seat of the holiness and happiness of heaven is not on the earth during the kingdom, as it is stated here. "Even in the millennium" "there is one spot in the earth where the righteousness and joy and

blessedness of heaven will be perfectly found, and that spot is the height of Zion."

Is the reader prepared for this? Is the joy and blessedness of heaven to be perfectly found on earth? its seat there? For it is not that individually they carry the happiness in their hearts, because serving God's glory, when going to the earth from the heavenly city. According to the author, the whole hundred and forty-four thousand, the church as such, is found on Mount Zion, and the joy and blessedness of heaven perfectly found there. Are the golden streets transparent as glass there? Is it there they walk with Christ in white? Is it there that the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple and the light of the blessed inhabitants of that city, which has the glory of God, and descends out of heaven? Is it there that they see His face? Is it there Christ has received them to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also, meeting Him in the air, and so being ever with the Lord? Alas, alas! where are we come to? But indeed it is no wonder, when we read in the notes, "Just as Peter and James and John, on the mount of transfiguration, were just as blessed, and as secure as Moses and Elias." I suspect Peter and James and John had another thought than that, about their comparative blessedness, and that what they saw awakened desires which seem to me sadly dimmed in these pages, and which the presence of the Holy Ghost did not diminish when Peter wrote his epistle, and referred to it. Fellowship with the royalty of the Son of David is not the heavenly glory of the saints: nor indeed, though they share in the power which He exercises over the nations when seated in Zion, do they ever share His earthly

royalty as Son of David, though we delight in it, and minister ourselves on earth.

Further, the statements are a string of mistakes. There is no statement in Scripture, that Jerusalem is to be built around Mount Zion. Indeed the statement in Isaiah 66 as to the carcases in Hinnom would render it impossible. As to the note about citadel too, I suppose, no one can doubt it is wrong. The castle in the Acts (chap. 21:34, etc.) was undoubtedly the castle of Antonia, adjoining the temple, and was not on Mount Zion. I do not know that it has much to say to the matter. Its importance is only to shew that the whole tissue of statement, page after page in this book, is the mere fruit of an unbridled imagination.

Who ever heard of seeking the protection of Sinai? Or "the tents clustering round it"? It is true neither in fact nor in spirit. They were forbidden to approach it, man or beast, but to keep afar off. The glory is over Zion, and people dwell in it. See Isaiah 4. Or how were the people "disappointed in that shelter" of Sinai? And where is Zion "spoken of as the place of manifestation of the better and abiding glory"? Nowhere in Scripture. "We are come to Mount Zion"; to the place of Christ's royal grace, the undying Son of David; and not to the fiery law of Sinai. But it is never hinted that this is the place of manifestation of the better and abiding glory of the church—nowhere. The heavenly Jerusalem is distinguished from it in the passage, and that is where the church's abiding glory is seen. That this glory may be specially over Zion and Jerusalem, as the cloud and light covered the camp, is very possible, as in Isaiah 4 referred to. But this supposes Zion the dwelling place of men, not the seat of the abiding glory of the church. I

see no intimation of Zion's being miraculously exalted above the hills (i.e., physically). In page 143, these same words are used as the emblems of authoritative power, and explained as the rightful pre-eminence of Christianity. Besides, the truth is, it is not Zion that is spoken of, but the mountain of the Lord's house. And everyone knows that this was not Zion. "The house of the God of Jacob" was not in Mount Zion at all.

All this is one string of mistakes. That the glory of the Lord Jesus will be manifested in Mount Zion—that it will be the scene and seat of His earthly rule, I believe; for Scripture is plain enough as to it. That there will be hence a peculiar connection there between heaven and earth, I do not at all deny, and special glory. That is not the question, but the church having its seat there—the glory, joy, and blessedness of heaven being perfectly there. In the Psalm where Sinai is spoken of as in the holy place, i.e., angelic glory, the temple at Jerusalem is spoken of, and His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds. That the Lord dwells in Zion, I doubt not, and at Jerusalem. The question is, does the church? As to "one grade of glory to another—appear in Zion before God"—is the valley of Baca a grade of glory? Can there be a more thorough perversion of a passage? Is it not Israel, plain, fleshly, though now returning Israel, going up to Zion?

And now as to the chapter itself. These hundred and forty-four thousand stand with the Lamb in Mount Zion; they are associated in the Spirit's thought with the suffering of Him who is then glorified as the royal Son of David, made Jehovah's firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. If they learn and repeat, it is not for others to learn from them; for none could learn it but they. But

while different figures may be used for the church, as bride, sons, body, and so on, yet it seems very strange if these hundred and forty-four thousand are the church who sing in heaven, that they should be learning from those who sing there. A new song is sung before the throne, the beasts, and elders, a new occasion of joy and praise being given; and these one hundred and forty-four thousand, who are there above these very beasts and elders, in another place are remarked as alone able to learn it. I do not believe the same persons are described by different figures in different places, in heaven and earth at the same time, and learning in one character, and remarked as being alone able to learn what is celebrated where they are in the highest place, in another. It seems clearly a different class of persons. Nobody doubts that heavenly feet will tread this lower earth. That this is the scene here revealed is another question. It is not treading the earth as Moses and Elias, but the "better and abiding glory "of the whole church which is stated to be here revealed. "It is in this world that the glory and holiness and happiness of heaven is to be manifested and established."

That they are in contrast with those who receive the beast's mark, I believe; and just in this marked as a special class. This is not the church's place; Christianity, according to the author, is withdrawn during the beast's reign from the Eden of this world. But these are in contrast with the beast's followers; they are associated with the lamb-like character of Christ. But then, when it is said that "such are the new persons into whose hands the authority of the earth is transferred," it is a mere invention of his own: there is not a syllable about it in the chapter. We do not find in them the new and living

centre of the earth's power. They are the first-fruits from the earth thus heaved up to God. But evidently the first-fruits and the harvest are connected (i.e., the judgment of the earth down here).

The general idea of the chapter in page 200 I have nothing to object to, only remembering that the connection of the first verses with it so very plainly proves that the one hundred and forty-four thousand belong to this scene, and have therefore nothing to do with the church at large. The character of redeemed from the earth as first-fruits to God and the Lamb shews their connection with the new world, though as first-fruits offered to God from it.

Further: "and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people" is clearly more than the apostate earth. The dwellers there, save the elect, were worshippers of the beast, and apostate; but that was not true of all nations. As to the period not being fixed, as to a day or a date, it is not; but, morally, it clearly is. "The hour of his judgment is come." So that it is just before the close—a further proof of what the one hundred and forty-four thousand are. And the statement of the writer, that it is the apostate nations who are preached to, confines it.at any rate to the last three years and a half. It is clearly a new testimony in mercy, not confined, I believe, to the earth, for the understanding of which the order of Psalms 95 to 100 (here referring to Psalm 96 particularly) will furnish us with a good deal of assistance.

It might be supposed that I should have difficulty as to what is stated as to verse 13. But, though the manner of its expression is. adapted to the theory of the author, yet

I believe this verse does designate the time when the killing power of the beast being to be put an end to, the whole company of saints can enter into their proper place of reward. So that in general I agree with the statement. It is not the rapture of the church, for it only concerns those who die, a condition which now closes; and hence the harvest of the earth which follows has nothing to do with this, for the Lord does not reap the dead upon the earth. It is quite another thing, the harvest of the earth—that earth from which the one hundred and forty-four thousand had been redeemed as first-fruits.

As to the everlasting gospel's being the opening of exhaustless grace, unshaken and unchanged throughout every age, the answer is simple. The gospel that the angel carries forth is, "Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." That there will be deliverance and mercy for them who listen, I doubt not, when the judgment announced arrives. But surely this is. not what we have to preach to sinners. Though we admit fully its truth, there is something more than this. Is calling from idols, because the Creator God is just going to judge, that which characterises the heavenly gospel of redemption which we preach? There is not even mentioned what finds its necessary place in what is most like it, the preaching of Paul at Athens. There Jesus and the resurrection form the topic which gives its weight to his discourse, and which tells on the assembled hearers, and brings things to a point with them. Here there is nothing of it.

The writer is then obliged to contradict himself and the chapter too, because of his system—himself, because the apostasy “will not take place apart from the personal manifestation of the man of sin” (page 125). But during the time of the man of sin, no such testimony is allowed, Christianity is withdrawn, and yet (page 200) this testimony is among the apostate nations, and consequently during the manifestation of Antichrist who allows no professed Christianity at all. Yet, if it be among the apostate nations, it cannot be in the period which precedes the full development of the Antichristian blasphemy, because before that the author says they are not apostate. It is contrary to the chapter, because the angel could not say “the hour of his judgment is come,” when the thing to be judged was not yet manifested. But it was necessary to his system, because he cannot allow the gospel during the apostasy; though here (except that other people had so applied it, and the unwillingness to allow any gospel other than the church testimony) there be no reason why he should not leave it (as he does, page 203) among the apostate nations, at any rate in part. The mention of Babylon also afterwards makes it necessary to his system.

I know not why the author makes this statement as to Babylon a prophetic statement. In page 201, “The events follow in the order in which they are stated” —this therefore among the rest. Nor is there anything that I see at all to contradict the statement, which seems to me very plainly the case. There is the testimony—the fall of Babylon—the warning not to worship the beast—Babylon being then set aside, which was the previous snare, and judgment approaching; then a period or close put to the death of the saints—then the harvest—and

then the vintage, which closes all. It is very evidently from one end to the other the closing scene of the earth. Those redeemed from the earth—a testimony against idolatry, the hour of God's judgment being come—Babylon fallen—a closing warning not to worship the beast, because of the torment that awaited him— the death of the saints put a stop to, and the rest of those who had died announced—the harvest of the earth—and the vintage of the earth. It is earth's closing scene.

I suppose the testimony as to Babylon is made future in order to urge such a testimony now. Whereas, if it be the announcement of events according to page 201, all this falls. I confess I think page 201 more right than page 203. It is clear that, if it be merely a prophecy of the future which ought even to be going on now, it has nothing to do with the order of events.

If there are saints under Antichrist, and Christianity is withdrawn, and chased into uncivilised darkness, and that the obedient have escaped according to Christ's word, there are saints who have the faith of Jesus who are not Christians, at any rate Christians not having on earth the place of the church and Christianity according to the mind of Christ; for that has been driven away, and the sphere of its testimony is gone. That there will be such saints, I doubt not; though the faithful will be kept from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth—a passage which the author himself applies to the latter day.

The author then goes on to urge that the judgment of the harvest does not apply to the prophetic earth at all, but to Christendom. But first, the harvest of the earth

and the vintage of the earth apply to the same scene of judgment, and also the testimony to the dwellers on earth. But these two apply to apostate Christendom, or the prophetic earth. Then we have merely “the earth was reaped”: no gathering up into the garner stated here, as in Matthew 13.

The author states that “the wheat-field will not represent those who will, when the Lord returns, be found in the open rejection of the name of God and of Christ, and worshippers of a man.” But Jude states the contrary. After speaking of false brethren crept in unawares, he says, “these are they”— denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ—perishing in the gainsaying of Core—hard speeches they had spoken against the Lord—and they had men’s persons in admiration— twice dead—though they feasted with the saints. In a word, the apostle, or rather the Spirit of God, identifies absolutely and positively the tares, those who were sown while men slept, who crept in unawares, with the judgment of blaspheming apostates. Enoch prophesied of these. The statement of the author seems to me to be contradicted in terms by the express testimony of Scripture; and with it his whole system of judgment and of the earth, and of Christendom (his very names of things) falls entirely. I believe the harvest here a much more confined thing, not involving the heavenly saints at all. Those who had been killed under Antichrist, and who are certainly, according to chapter 20, to have a part in the first resurrection, had been disposed of in verse 13; and then comes the harvest of the earth, and the earth is reaped; discriminating judgment is executed then to introduce (when the vintage is finished) the feast of tabernacles. And is it not singular that the vine of the

earth, which has ever been the symbol of God's plant on the earth, should have nothing to do with such a scene? That it is apostate and under Antichrist is clear; but still they must have some analogy, some pretence to be, or be historically, the people of God, though anything but that really. The great king of the earth is Antichrist, we are told. But then, of what earth is the harvest? There are other details here, which I leave, because we shall meet with them again.

To turn to the notes. We have here the express statement that the one hundred and forty-four thousand learn the song of heaven from themselves, that is, they learn on earth from themselves in heaven. Is this a reasonable interpretation? There are grades of glory which belong to Christ, but is it scriptural to suppose that the church is with Him in these grades, or that it has its own? Does it vary its glory, and have sometimes earthly, sometimes heavenly? Is it not more simple to suppose that there are different bodies in these different glories of Christ, when such different bodies are spoken of? It is certainly true of Israel. It is never said that we are joint-heirs of Christ's glories. We are glorified together with Him. But we are not united with Him as Son of David: we are not sons of David—and this is the place of Christ in Zion. And the church has not its centre of government on earth. It belongs to the heavenly Jerusalem. "It would be very strange," we are told, "not to find the church anywhere represented in connection with Zion, the seat of power." Well, I suppose then this is the only place in Scripture; but then it must be proved to be the church. And it is just a confession that the church is nowhere said to be in the seat of earthly power. The author may think it strange; but there are those who are

content with their heavenly place of power, and better blessings too, and who do not seek to find Scriptures to bring the church down to an earthly seat and centre of government, because they know God has given it another and a better place. And to say that man in this mortal body is “as blessed” as in glory, and to insist on finding some earthly place for the church, is just in a few words, as here plainly stated, the whole gist and object of this book.

First-fruits of the earth is not the church’s title; and the harvest of which this was the first-fruits was of the earth. Besides, though I do not believe it is here the whole body of the nation of Israel, yet Israel is called first-fruits; Jer. 2:3. Nor is there the least possible analogy with Sinai, save by way of contrast: and to talk of “heavenly persons on the earth admitting into their presence persons who yet were in earthly bodies.” Is that a description of Sinai? what heavenly persons admitted them?

As to the article, while I admit that the Revelation in the instances given uses the article or omits it, as other Greek authors do, because it would make nonsense otherwise (as when I say, the house fell, it is clear I mean some house spoken of to which I refer; and so if I say, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, I mean some one hundred and forty-four thousand already mentioned, or no one would know what it meant), yet, though thus far speaking as usual so as to make sense, the Revelation is very irregular as to the article, as it is in every part of grammar, as every Greek reader well knows. I do not say reasons may not be given which shew it to be the mind of the Spirit, as is to me clear in the case “thou art the wretched and the miserable and

poor and blind and naked" (chap. 3:17); but as to chap. 4:7, "having the face as of man," I understand the phrase; but no one can say it is the regular use of the Greek article. So compare chapter 4:11, chapter 5:12 and this latter with verse 13. As to the grammar in general the reader may read chapter 7:9, which is by no means a single instance; chapter 8:3; so chapter 9:15. But I need go no farther.

However, I admit the difference of the hundred and forty-four thousand. When the author speaks of men serving God in the earth where we have failed, we shall serve Him in the earth again; but in Scripture that is connected with the heavenly, not the earthly Jerusalem. The passage is merely using human feeling to divert from direct divine teaching.

A heavenly character is thus given to Zion. But Zion is not heavenly, nor ever represented as heavenly in Scripture, anywhere or in any manner; nor is a passage adduced to prove it, in which Zion is mentioned. Our hymn-books are quoted; that is, we are led back to that confusion of Old and New Testament hopes out of which God in His mercy had delivered us. That the song is heavenly, I do not deny: but it could not, I repeat, be learnt by those that were singing it from themselves. As to the next note: the hundred and forty-four thousand are represented as a female company. It is just nonsense for anyone that has read the passage.

We have only to compare the rest of the note with page 77 to find one of those incessant total contradictions of self, which it really (when occurring at nearly every page) is a miserable task to follow. Here it is the earthly state and glory; there it is the full excellency of a

heavenly calling, maintained and manifested on earth. If it be not a contradiction, then a heavenly calling is nothing at all, because its full excellency is on earth as to glory, Messiah's glory, when the church is not mentioned but in another character in which the earthly Jerusalem is not at all. I do not agree in the interpretation of virgins her companions. I judge they are cities of Judah, or at most of Israel. But this is only a matter of interpretation, as to which I am ready to listen to anyone taught of God.

The note on "worship him that made heaven," etc., is a most strange departure from sound interpretation, in pursuance of the author's false system as to the Psalms. He quotes a Psalm as after the Lord has come and forgiven Israel, which the apostle expressly quotes as addressed to them, for fear they might fail of entering into the promised rest. But such is the effect of a system. And it may be remarked that it is in the following Psalm we have announced what answers to the everlasting gospel here commented on. I understand that the author may found himself on those being forgiven to whom the apostle writes: but such a plea would, I confess, to me, make the matter worse. The apostle addresses those who professed to look for the coming of the Lord, and believe that Jesus was He, proving to them that they should endure in trial because a rest remained to God's people, and therefore exhorts them to hold fast as others who had not received the promises. But when the Lord has come, and forgiven Israel, would such an appeal to hold fast because the rest had not come yet, or they would fall in the wilderness, like Israel of old, and not get the promise, have place? It is either singular a want of spiritual understanding in the interpretation of

Scripture, or a most bold defiance of the apostle's use of Scripture.

"Who die in the Lord" (Rev. 14:13), I believe to be, not the whole church, as the author says (because we shall not all die), but all, as a class, who die in the Lord. It prescribes the time of blessing, not of dying. The Holy Spirit gives such a testimony to the then realised blessing of those who die in Jesus, that they could be called from that hour, blessed, even supposing they died after this moment. I do not say they will: but the passage pronounces nothing on it. As the author has said elsewhere, it denotes the abstract fact, and has no reference to time.

From the author's system of the apostate earth and Christendom, etc., I dissent entirely. It is an assertion, like so many others, of which no proof is attempted to be given. That there is an apostasy we all recognise. That there is a man of sin, and head of the beast, we all own. That the Roman earth will be the scene of especial evil and judgment, all hold. It is not the exclusive sphere of it, even as to the prophetic earth; because the whole image becomes like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, by the blow that smites the feet. Moreover, Gog, I have no doubt, is Russia and its dependencies, and is not in the Roman earth, or what is included in the four beasts of Daniel—but it is in the prophetic earth in the full sense and in Christendom. If this be so, the whole system falls; because the author thinks as I do, that he comes up after. Yet he would have had to be previously judged as Christendom or of the prophetic earth. Further, we have already seen Jude affirms the direct positive contrary of the author's theory. And it would suppose that ripe tares had ceased to be tares at all—

that that mystery of iniquity which was working in Christendom, secretly sown of Satan, when grown up into open apostasy and wickedness, had ceased to be the tares ripened for judgment. Teaching errors as Balaam for reward, though not the position in which they perish, leads on to the gainsaying of Core, in which they do. And Jude affirms that they are the same identical objects of judgment.

Besides, who says that Christendom is the kingdom? The author does, I know: but would it not be better to prove it in some way? In the sense in which he exceptionally uses it, I deny it entirely. The field is the world. In the same scene in which they were sown the tares were reaped when they were ripe. Such is the plain statement of the parable. It is monstrous to suppose that their ripeness makes them cease to be tares. 2 Thessalonians 2 and Jude both identify the earliest work and final judgment as one progressive matter. Besides, it is a great mistake to suppose that the harvest of Matthew 13 is a momentary act. It is no such thing. “In the time of harvest” the Son of man says to the reapers, Gather together first the tares in bundles to be burned. This in page 207 the author is careful to omit, and puts the tares last as cast into the burning, and the wheat first gathered into the garner, omitted the first gathering the tares.

Now see how this applies to his system. Christ has the tares gathered out of His field into bundles first, so that He disposes of the whole field, as thus mixed, by first separating the wicked into bundles, whatever that means, and then deals with the wheat thus left clear. But, according to the author, no such process takes place at all in the apostate Roman earth. It is in vain to

give a vague idea that the harvest is a gathering in of saints, who could be smuggled (so to speak) out of the dens and caves where they are supposed to be hid, and then say it is from Christendom that the harvest is mainly gathered. This is a wholly incorrect representation of the matter, and merely slurring it over to suit his views. In the harvest of Matthew it was not merely gathering from. The first thing done was gathering the tares. Is that done in the Roman apostate earth? I suppose it will not be denied that this dealing with the tares applies to the wicked on the earth who were growing in this world. Christendom, we are told, is His kingdom, and to that the harvest applies. But then it does not apply to the Roman apostate earth, and not to wheat more than tares. It is not the field which is the subject of the harvest at all. The harvest in Matthew is a dealing with the field, and the state of the field—not the judgment of individuals according to the secret knowledge of God who judges the heart; and therefore, to speak of Christians belonging to a geographical division, and apostates to another, and to be picked out by the secret judgment of God when the field is not judged, is a subversion of the whole object and statement of the parable; which is that He would let indeed both grow together until the harvest, but that then He would clear the whole field, and first deal publicly with the tares, then take in the wheat and burn the tares in their day. Ripened apostates having ceased to be tares, there is no harvest for what is now the field where they grow, though wheat may be hidden in it.

Further, it must be remarked, that according to this, the tares in Christendom (i.e., ripened110 wickedness of men) is judged on the earth before Christ comes at all,

and before He appears; according to the system of the author, burned as tares in the fire. For Antichrist is destroyed by His appearing. Moreover, the church is taken away before His appearing, at least from Christendom, where the harvest takes place—it does not appear exactly when: consequently, also, before Christ rises up, for then the age ends, as we have been previously told; and, as I have already remarked, the harvest is the end of the age. So that really it is not Christ's judgment at all, nor does He come to receive us. In page 204, it is said, "He comes in glory and divine majesty, seated in the clouds." But then, "whenever [page 11] the Lord Jesus quits His present place on the throne of God, our dispensation ends, and the new age begins." So that the age is already quite ended in the harvest in Revelation—for He is come. But it was in the end that the harvest in Matthew takes place. So that the two harvests cannot be the same at all. And moreover, on the other hand, the judgment of the wicked on the earth must precede Christ's coming, not be His judging at all as Son of man: for then God is acting on the throne for Him, that is, till that age ended. All that can be said is that the contradictions are endless, because the author has framed a system which is not Scripture at all.

He says (page 205), "neither will the wheat field represent those who will," etc. The wheat-field is the world, not people. But this is put to avoid the plain evident revelation of a judgment on the earth, which clears the place judged from tares in order to take in the wheat. For, if once it is a judgment of the field, it is clear all his system is wrong, because the hidden Christians left in the Roman earth would not be gathered up, or else the Roman earth would be judged in the harvest.

It is indeed, on account of the time by which he closes the age, quite clear that on the author's system the harvests in Matthew and Revelation are different. There is no vintage in Matthew, because the harvest is a general thing, the result of the Son of man's and Satan's sowing in the world. And to suppose that the Son of man's kingdom, when He executes judgment, coming as King of kings and Lord of lords, is only what professes His name previously in the earth (i.e., what has continued to do so where He was not shewing His power) is perfectly fallacious. He has no right as King to more than His kingdom: and where do we learn that Christendom is the kingdom of the Son of man? It is not what is given Him in Daniel 7 and in the parable. It is carefully taught that the field in question is the world. We may fail in making it good, or maintaining it by the power of the Spirit; but when He comes to assert His title, it is not limited to that. He asserts it to the whole field. And, "all things that offend and them that work iniquity," is universal. Were this the judgment of Christendom merely as such, we should have no inhabitant left at all in those countries.

The writer says that "Matthew 13 and 25 are especially devoted to the history of Christendom." As to Matthew 13 I leave it aside here. I have said sufficient on the parable referred to. The first three parables are; and, perhaps I may add, the last. But then the writer must remember that he has described the leaven as working in the Roman earth. But Matthew 25 most surely does not. The first two parables may be, in a certain partial and particular sense, perhaps, said to be so (that is, to consider certain things which will take place within the sphere of Christendom, or apply to Christians, real or

professing); where, note, the going out to meet Christ during the night, as coming to the wedding (to Jerusalem down here, if it be followed out) is what gives the virgin character to the church, whose only thought was meeting the Bridegroom, being ready for Him (though they might forget it). Service accompanied it, but that was settled when He returned. It was the display in glory, owned—fully, blessedly owned—but an inferior thing. It was reckoning with servants. Infinite honour to be His servant! It will be recompensed with rule and honour. It will be joy with his Lord to the servant. But it is not exactly going in with Him to the marriage. I do not mean here that both may not be to the same person; most surely they may. We ought to wait, and we ought to serve: and to separate one from the other is evil. But the first thing the Lord has put forward is waiting, yea, going out to meet Him. He Himself is the object; and it is joy. May those who wait for Him be found serving!

To say that the rest of Matthew 25 is the judgment of Christendom, is so throwing away everything which brethren have been taught, and such a reckless rejection of all his own views by the author, that it is difficult to deal with it moderately. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations (or all the Gentiles), and he shall separate them,” etc. Now, first of all, is it not a strange thing, when the word of God says “all the heathen” (for “nations” is the very word from which “heathen” comes), that the author should have a class “III heathen countries,” which are not these, but another class which alone comprises the sheep and goats of the parable, to

the exclusion of the heathen? It may be alleged that he uses heathen in the moral sense of idolaters. But it is his assumption that there are such at the time of this judgment. The plain express word is all the Gentiles. Next, Christ is sitting on the throne of His glory when He is come. Hence it is clear that it is not the church living then, because it is not called up with the living wicked professors at all; but, being changed, is identified (Jew or Gentile) with the raised, and they go up together, quite apart from the wicked, to meet the Lord in the air, and so are ever with the Lord. The living wicked are not brought up before the throne at all (if throne it is to be called, in the air, for the scripture never calls it so (we go to meet the Bridegroom, or stand before His (bema) judgment-seat), as the goats are here), nor the dead wicked either. Further, He is now King. It is not the Bridegroom receiving the church, but the King when He is come. Moreover, the moment Christ quits the Father's throne (we are told) the former age ends. But, we have often remarked, the harvest is the end of that age; so that the saints of Christendom have been caught up before the King is on His throne here, for He is come. Moreover, again we may remark, the tares are gathered first in bundles. If this be the same judgment, the sheep are addressed first. We may repeat the remarks as to the destruction of Antichrist by the sudden appearing of the Lord: whereas here the King is quietly seated on the throne when He is come. So that if it be Christendom, it would be judged, and the saints received, after the destruction of Antichrist by the brightness of His coming, when we know they are received before, and come with Him. In fine, it is quite clear that a gathering of all the nations (clearly living nations, for so the author holds) before Christ to be

separated (and, as the author moreover holds, individually) is not the resurrection of the dead saints, and the changing of the living to be caught up distinctly by themselves as a body. But this last is the portion of the saints in Christendom; and therefore the application of the parable of the sheep and goats to Christendom is as unfounded as it is contrary to all the saints instructed in prophecy have learned. It has really no foundation at all, but the necessity of supporting a system, which can admit of no saints but the church in its present standing till Christ appears, and which sacrifices everything to this error.

I will add here what seems to me the evident structure of these chapters. Chapter 24:1-31 gives the consequences of the Lord's rejection as to Judah and Jerusalem, and directions to those who listen to Him, till He comes. In a word, it gives the history of the Jews, with instruction for the disciples in their relationship with them, to the end (the gospel to the Gentiles being merely given as a sign and necessary preliminary to the end). This is in two parts: general, verses 1-14; details at the end, verses 15-31: all as instruction to the disciples. Christ comes in great glory, and gathers the elect Jews, or rather Israel, from the four winds. Then come moral remarks. They are to learn certain things. And on to chapter 25:30 we have instruction for the disciples, in which their proper condition relative to Him (not to Jerusalem) during His absence is brought out in three parables, which follow the warnings. All these are a sort of parenthesis, and relate to the heavenly people. And then His being come (taught in chapter 24:31) is resumed (chap. 25:30) in reference to earth; and, as He had treated the Jews and Jerusalem before, and the

church's position in the parenthesis, now the judgment of the Gentiles is given.111 I cannot enter here into the enquiry of the scene or scenes (for it is evident, I think, that there are more than one of the judgment and destruction of the nations) this being one particular judgment called the vintage. I do not think the vintage at all the only judgment. It is properly and peculiarly that of the positive apostasy. The use of the same terms in Joel 3, where Jehoshaphat is spoken of, proves nothing, because it is also called harvest there, which the author does not apply here. They are merely general figures in Joel. In Isaiah 66 we have a judgment which would seem to include the vintage, though there is no reference to it here. Several escape, and declare the glory they have seen—the carcases of the slain being in a sort of Hinnom.

In Isaiah 63 we have the winepress connected with Edom. This judgment in Idumaea is spoken of as the grand one in Isaiah 34. There is, besides this, evidently the judgment of the Assyrian in Micah 5, where Jesus Messiah is already their peace, and, if it be distinct, Gog also. Zechariah 14 would seem to connect itself with Joel. As to Edom, see also Psalm 83. It is because of the evident extent of this subject, that I do not pursue it here. The vintage has its own proper place—apostate Israel, and Antichrist with his followers. The attempt to explain with a forced literality the figure used seems to me, as is many such examples, only injurious to truth. That there will be dreadful carnage and destruction of sinners, I do not doubt; but "blood came out of the winepress" merely says it is a question here of men that are trampled in fury. Because it is clearly not a winepress; and as to flowing from the valley of

Jehoshaphat, it is not said in the Revelation to be there; and if it were, a river of blood, deep and wide, would not (let it be ever so exaggerated) “really” meet the case, because it must flow sixteen hundred furlongs, that is, two hundred miles. I confess it seems to me only degrading Scripture, to force it in this way—making all absurd to make half accurate, according to the narrowness of man’s mind, and the rest consistent neither with the other part nor with anything else.

Chapters 15, 16

I agree with the general purport of this, as one vision: only “at present acting for Christ” has nothing to say to it, because the author holds that the Apocalypse is all yet future. What follows is again without any attempt at proof, and no such connection is given in this chapter. I quite admit that after God has closed His preparatory judgments, to which men refuse ultimately to bow, but rather harden themselves against them, Christ comes forth to execute His wrath. But then this is not sending the rod of His power out of Zion, for He has not been yet set up King in Zion. The rod of His power is here sent out of heaven. Christ as King in Zion is not known in the Revelation. The judgment of the beast may introduce His reign there, but it is passed over in the most general terms possible, connected with the resurrection and binding of Satan, and the heavenly Jerusalem described. But besides, after the announcement of the destruction of Babylon, with which the vials close, but the accomplishment of which is given in chapter 18, another event takes place, wholly overlooked here, and which surely ought to interest us—the marriage of the Lamb. It is after this heaven is opened, and the rider on the white

horse comes forth, and the armies which are in heaven follow Him. All this is an entirely different scene from the rod of His power out of Zion. Yet He has left His Father's throne before either of these events takes place. That is, the whole of what is stated in the Revelation, all that concerns the blessing of the church, and the glory of Him who comes forth as King of kings, and Lord of lords, is entirely left out in a book professing to describe its contents.

"Commission to act is given to Christ," says the author, "as soon as the ministration of the vials ends. He will then quit the throne of His Father; the rod of His power will be sent out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies." Such is the statement of the order of events, as set forth in Revelation. And the author continues "accordingly in this chapter," etc. shewing the exactitude of the statement, adding, "the day of Christ begins when the vials terminate." Now, is it not strange that neither of the events spoken of in the above extract is mentioned in all that follows, but a large series of most important events which are entirely left out in it? It is never said that Christ is on the Father's throne here, nor that He leaves it, nor a word about the rod of His power going out of Zion; but between the end of the vials and the possibility of the rod of His power going out of Zion, all that relates to the full accomplishment of the heavenly blessing of the church with Christ, and His coming forth with the saints from heaven. In a word, all that relates to the heavenly blessing and glory of the church with Him is brought fully out in the Revelation; and no place is given to it at all in the arrangement of events by the author. His arrangement is a denial, by its

silence, of all that it is the object of the Revelation to reveal as to this.

This is clearly very important. It is the key to the whole system of the author, which is nothing more than the exclusion of the church from its own blessings. Further, when it is said, “Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth,” we surely get an intimation that He is coming, not to the church, but for the day of the Lord. Because that day does not overtake us as a thief. The day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night; but this has nothing to do with the church going up to meet Him, raised or changed. The day does not come on the church at all.

As to the “symbolic scene of chapter 16” being “evidently laid in Egypt.” I do not doubt that there are allusions to Egypt and Pharaoh. “The song of Moses” leaves no question of this. But it is just an example of the rashness of those systematic generalisings which feed the imagination and withdraw the mind from the statements of Scripture. First of all, I find in page 227 that it is not symbolic at all. “The declarations of this chapter will be minutely fulfilled” … “The sea throughout the appointed sphere will become as the blood of a dead man.” “I expect also that Euphrates, the river,” etc. So that it is not a symbolic scene; and, if it were, how is Euphrates, and Babylon, a symbolic scene laid in Egypt? Or even fountains and rivers of waters, where in Egypt are they found? Or the appointed sphere of the sea? The sun is the nearest, for it shines there as elsewhere. Still it is difficult to say what happens to the sun is a scene laid in Egypt: the scene is not Egyptian, and (if I am to believe the author elsewhere) not symbolical. It is just imagination outrunning all

Scripture. An allusion to a place puts the whole scene there, when there are positive statements quite different. The earth, sea, rivers, sun, are all smitten, symbolical or not (all are the wrath of God on the earth); and then, descending to particulars, we have the throne of the beast, Euphrates, and Babylon; and all these are a symbolical scene laid in Egypt.

That Antichrist will rise up against the Lord in a manner analogous to Pharaoh, I do not doubt; nor that Pharaoh is in many respects a type of Antichrist: but this is all. I do not attach very great importance to the idea that they are gathered at Armageddon, and that the battle is elsewhere. They are gathered to the battle, and they are gathered there; and the allusion, I have little doubt, is to Deborah's song; Judges 5:19, 20. Armageddon is a mystic name, an allusion: as indeed is Jehoshaphat in another way, meaning the judgment of Jehovah, or, whom Jehovah judges, as some explain it. This I do not dwell upon, though it be a statement, like so many others, without any proof.

But, as to those standing on the sea of glass. They are as usual the heavenly part of the Israel of God. Now it is quite certain that they are exclusively those who had gotten the victory over the beast, from the presence of whose power all obedient ones had fled through the persecutions of the dragon. For we must take in both Revelation 12 and Matthew 24, or else the author would seek to confine the affair to Jerusalem. But in Revelation 12 the civilised Eden of the earth has no place for them. But this is the Egypt in question, so that the church will not have been there. It was not "their calling" (page 218), "to be on the Lord's side against all His enemies." They were called on to flee, and another testimony was

raised up— “the sphere of their earthly service was closed.” Indeed the whole of this is a confusion of the imagination, because the Red Sea closed all service against Pharaoh and his hosts; and hence, as a type of Antichrist and his armies, all idea of Christian testimony perishes here in all and every sense of it. And therefore there is no application of any subsequent being on the Lord’s side except in glory. But with Egypt they were not to be on the Lord’s side in any testimony. The command (see page 97) was too express and definite for any who were obedient to the Lord to avoid. So that there was no such place of identification with Him in service as His host during the Antichristian Pharaoh’s time, nor after. The Red Sea closed Pharaoh’s career. The service for the Lord of hosts came after. Here, if there were such, the service must come before: but, even so, the sphere of earthly service was closed for Christianity. Just in the dominions of this new Egypt a new testimony had been raised up. I have no doubt that the sea of glass mingled with fire (quite a new element) shewed that these had come through the tribulation, to be saved from which had been a positive promise to those that kept the word of Christ’s patience. These had been in the tribulation. All that is said of Ezekiel is quite beside the mark. There was a throne above there, not on the firmament: and what had the sea of glass to do with the firmament which was over the heads of the cherubim? I would just remark here the neutralisation in this system of all distinctive position which the book of Revelation carefully shews forth. The elders are in the circle of the throne. The great multitude worship day and night in His temple. These are on the sea of glass, which was not in the temple. All this is obliterated, and this though it is

positively said here that it was one special peculiar class.

As to the church of the firstborn emerging from that last abyss of Egyptian darkness, what we have already read in the book shews it to be all wrong. First, the church had been reaped in the harvest in Christendom, outside the sphere of Antichrist's power. So that they do not emerge from this at all. They come back to the execution of it with the Lord. We never emerge from this abyss. It seems to me clear that this triumphal song refers to chapter 14:9-12. At least, that is the last formal testimony on that head.

The writer then speaks of the nations yet unsmitten as analogous to Edom, etc. But the saints are not to smite these, nor are they to evangelise grace to them. That is done by those that escape the carnage on earth. (See Isaiah 66). And therefore all this, being on the Lord's side against all His enemies, ends with "with these prospects we shall look down from the sea of glass, the place of our sanctuary, and contemplate the results of the power of Him," etc. Was ever greater confusion? And then the author just slips into "It will be the hour of Israel's triumphant history commenced anew" — commenced in whom? Or who is "Israel" here? "Separated unto God according to the life-giving power of Him, who is the Son, consecrated for evermore, they will not again find the words of triumph die upon their lips, nor disappointment blight their expectations." Who are "they"? Can we talk of disappointment when we are in heaven and heavenly glory? Yet it is we who look down from the sea of glass as from the border of the Red Sea; or have we our triumphant history commenced anew? If it be said, Nay, it is Israel's history that is

commenced anew, not ours; then how is it our triumph on the sea of glass? It is an absolute identification of the suffering but now glorified church, and Israel on earth, or it has no sense at all in any way. It is a complete confounding of the heavenly and earthly hope.

Further, we are told, “But now we must turn from the heavenly scene, in order to consider the hour of Egypt’s strength and of Egypt’s judgments, out of which they come who stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire.” But how does the church of the firstborn come out of the hour of Egypt’s strength and Egypt’s judgments? Will the church of the firstborn come out of Egypt’s judgments? Or how, even out of the hour of Egypt’s strength? The writer has taught us that they are not to be in it. That those who are on the sea of glass have passed through the hour of Antichrist’s strength, is true. But this proves that they were not on earth in the proper place of the church of the firstborn. For those who kept the word of Christ’s patience were to be kept from the hour of temptation; and the disciples were to flee from Judea, not to be in it, and, therefore, I suppose were not in it elsewhere.112 And now as to Israel and the earth being brought unto the heavenly temple long ago: where is the proof of this? Had they been converted, surely times of refreshing would have come from the presence of the Lord, and He would have sent Jesus. But what is there of being brought to the heavenly temple in this? In speaking there he says, “the heavens must receive till the time,” etc. It is a simple assertion again of the author, without the smallest iota of proof.

Further, we are told that Paul preached the same gospel. Now, speaking of these subjects, did Paul preach the gospel which Peter preached here to the Jews (and that

is the whole question)? Never. “If,” says the author, “Jerusalem had listened to their words, the Lord Jesus would have come.” I agree to this; but Jerusalem did not listen, and Jesus did not come. And therefore it was not the same testimony which was continued, nor which another extraordinary apostle was raised up to bear, but quite another testimony on these points, which lifted up the church into union with Christ as His heavenly body, always in God’s mind, but hid in Him, and now brought out by revelation.

Where are golden girdles the excellency of divine power? These bowls had not surrounded the golden altar. They were given by one of the four beasts. All the arrangement and statements on the subject in this page are the imagination of the author. In page 227, of course, everyone must judge whether it is literal or not. I would only remark that, when it suits the object (page 171),113 earth is of wider extent than world (Roman world): here it is exactly Roman world, though the use of it be identical. But what is the appointed sphere in which the sea becomes like the blood of a dead man? and what is literally the blood of a corpse like? Surely sea is contrasted with earth here. And what is every living soul dying in the sea? And indeed “the sea” is used most generally; and why is it omitted to notice that the rivers and fountains (I suppose in the Roman earth) become blood as well as the sea—blood as of a corpse? And if the sun scorch men literally with fire, the contents of the golden bowl must be poured literally upon it. And if “the kingdom of Antichrist be full of darkness and anguish, so that men will gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and that they

have nothing but blood to drink"—how is it that after this they "rest (being gathered by devils) in all the proud consciousness of undisputed greatness"? or how is it the fairest scene of collected glory that the earth had ever witnessed— "the beautiful clusters of earth's fairest plant"? These poor creatures, full of pains, sores, and anguish, smitten of God, their kingdom plunged in darkness! And how in undisputed greatness, if the king of the south has pushed against him already, and the king of the north with chariots, and horsemen, and many ships? Let the reader remember sailing in what sea. The truth is, this book is nothing but the indulgence of the most unbridled imagination making a system of its own.

That unclean spirits will go out, I doubt not; but that they go out at the bidding of Antichrist, etc., I do most entirely. "First to Armageddon, and then to the battle," is not scripture. As to Babylon, we will discuss it when the subject is completely before us, when we shall find statements as unfounded as on everything else.

To turn to the notes. "Whenever angels are mentioned as being the agents, it is a sign that the present dispensational period in which God is acting for Christ has not yet terminated." The reader will recollect that this is the church period or dispensation, and that it closes with Christ's rising up from Jehovah's throne. It is, I suppose, clear that Christ has risen up when He comes to receive the saints to Himself in the air. Now turn to page 204, where we have the description of the harvest in which the saints of Christendom are gathered into the garner. "He (the Son of man) comes in glory and in divine majesty." "We are not here taught as to the means employed by the Son of man to give effect to that power here symbolised by the sickle. But from another

part of Scripture we learn that the reapers are the angels." Again (page 207) "so as soon as He descends into the air, and the earth is spread before Him, to receive the hour of its visitation, His first act will be to judge that which is bearing His name, 'judgment begins at the house of God.' He will send forth His angels, and they will separate the tares from the wheat," etc. I believe the author has misinterpreted and misconceived the whole ways of God as to this, from beginning to end, in identifying Matthew 13 and Revelation 14, and I might add Joel 3: but I am examining here the details of this book. Now it is clear here that the Son of man employs the angels, that He is descended into the air, and therefore, I suppose, He has left the throne of His Father. In the note before us the employing of angels is a proof that the present period in which God is acting for Him is not closed. The writer is wrong in all—wrong in attempting so to define the period, wrong in the way he interprets the employment of angels, and wrong in the way he connects the two. His whole system is wrong, and statement after statement made just as it suits the idea of the moment, and the point sought to be proved. Look at Matthew 24:30, 31, and see what such a statement as that of this note comes to.

Does anyone allege what is said (page 204), "but He comes still as the servant of the Most High God—and therefore an angel comes forth from the temple that was seen in heaven," to shew that it was the Most High God that was acting for Christ, as if He were still sitting on God's throne till His enemies were made His footstool? I can only say such an attempt to cover the inconsistency would be worse than the inconsistency itself, and a mere attempt to maintain the credit of a system at the

expense of the known contradiction of Scripture, and this book's statements about it. "He comes in glory." He is not therefore sitting on God's throne—that throne acting for Him till His enemies be made His footstool. Servant or not of the Most High, I suppose when judgment begins (page 207), it is the Son of man Himself that is acting.

The rest of the note is confusion. God acts by angels for His wrath. Be it so. Then comes the wrath of the Lamb, and then He will sit down "upon His throne"; and then, instead of angels for wrath, saints, attended by angels, will issue from the temple. But do not saints come forth with Jesus, when He "comes to execute wrath,"114 as in chapters 17:14 and 19:14, all which, we are to note, happens after He has judged all Christendom? The marriage indeed of the Lamb had come, so that on the author's system it must be so, the harvest being of Christendom, and the beast not in it at all. So that He had come to receive the saints, judge all the wicked in Christendom, casting the tares into the furnace, before heaven opened for Him to come forth to judge Antichrist.

And where is it said that saints will be attended by angels when they issue from the temple? Though their issuing indeed from the temple is an idea not found in Scripture.

Again, how is fire living holiness? It is judicial holiness—killing holiness therefore. Our God is a consuming fire. The fire tries every man's work what it is.

Again, where are the waters of the sea used as an emblem of destructive power from God? They are used sometimes as the rage or overflowings of the people

(which no doubt destroy), great and tumultuous actings of men, and hence trial also; but where as destructive power from God blotting out of the land of the living?

And what is the meaning of “purification unto life”? Where is such an idea in Scripture? That historically waters did destroy, is quite true: but waters are not used for destruction. That waters purify, is true too: but purification unto life is quite an unscriptural idea. That we, without being the Israel of God, shall enjoy final deliverance and priesthood, is most sure.

As to the note on “King of nations.” The reading seems to be adopted by all; so I have nothing to say on it. But the principles of the note are to be examined. For they are of much importance, and tend (as everything in the book) to the depreciation of the church of God, or rather of the grace of God to the church— “that he might shew in the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus.”

I do not dwell on the alleged suitableness to the song of Moses. The song of the Lamb is forgotten in the explanation. If the next page be consulted, it will be found that “just and true are thy ways,” which is here connected with King of nations, is interpreted in an entirely opposite manner to what is made of the song of Moses here; and that what is said of Moses’ song here is attributed to the other part, “Great and marvellous are thy works,” as being just what the saints have therein said. But this, though shewing how little moral reason there is in all these assertions, I pass by as assertions that involve no important principle.

The first thing I have to remark is again the oft-recurring expression of the Israel of God, as being the

whole body owned of God in heaven and earth. This has been repeated so very very often, that the reader will have got the habit of using it in this sense in his mind, and so lose the sense that it is quite unfounded. The expression is used once in Scripture, and with no possible connection with the subject, or the millennial state at all. It is found in Galatians 6:16, where, false teachers having sought to introduce Judaism among Christians, the apostle (having closed his reasonings and exhortations on the subject, and shewn what was really valuable, namely, the new creature) says, “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” —evidently in contrast with fleshly Judaism, which the false teachers were seeking to introduce. But they were those then and there owned of God as His Israel; and there is not an idea of the millennium, nor any gathering of all into an Israel of God in heaven and in earth. Such a thought is never found in Scripture anywhere. It is well to remember this—that it is merely an idea, an unscriptural association, of the author.

The church is proved “a constituent part of the Israel of God.” And symbols or expressions prove it. This Israel of God, of which the church forms a constituent part, is a dream of the author’s. It is a scriptural expression, but not used as he uses it, so as to make the church a mere constituent part of some other body. It certainly is not thus that Scripture ever speaks. The church is the body of Christ, and not a constituent part of anything, save (with Christ as head) of the redeemed universe in the time of its glory.

And then what is the proof? Why, that Jewish things are used as types, or symbols as the author calls them. And

what then? Who denies it? Why does the use of circumstances of the fleshly Israel prove that the church is a constituent part of another Israel? We keep the paschal feast typically or figuratively. Well, and what then? I repeat. What does that prove? “Sons of Aaron.” We are priests—everyone owns that: and if it be merely that, in the whole creation, to all on earth, and I add even ostensibly to the unconverted during the millennium, we hold the place of priests: nobody will deny that. We are the children of the heavenly Jerusalem which is above. And what does that prove but just that we are a separate people, having a Jerusalem of our own? As to children of Abraham, and branches in the Abrahamic olive tree—I have already considered it. It is of more importance than the others, which really are of none.

There is one general principle, owned of all who believe John 3, that for earthly blessings as well as for heavenly, a man must be born again, must have the new creature. But it does not follow thence that if this be necessary for all association of man with God, even in the lowest place, that there can be no special place of glory. It would as much set aside degrees in glory as anything else, and I should pretend to be necessarily as exalted as Paul, because I was born again. But this is not so. The principle is quite false. There is a difference, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour, though all be saved and born again.

But, branches in the olive tree and Abraham’s seed. Well, how are we Abraham’s seed? By being in Christ: that is, that we take the place of the promises down here, as Israel especially will hereafter, and therefore succeed them, and they us, as heirs of promises down

here. Yet still God had reserved some better thing for us. We do so in virtue of being in Christ, who is in the highest sense Abraham's Seed. But we are in Him in a way that makes us His body, His bride, as His own flesh. And it is quite clear that the principle alluded to has nothing to do with our highest privileges, because it is, as I have already remarked elsewhere, the own olive tree of the Jews, the seed according to the flesh, loved even in their unbelief for the fathers' sake.

Further, it is a principle which is false in another way. It is only their own olive tree as descendants of Abraham specially called out as father of many nations down here before God. Now all the saints before Abraham will, I doubt not, be in glory. Yet they were not of this olive tree, or else the Jewish question never could have been raised. The question of Romans 9, 10 and 11, is the Jewish question, and so in Galatians, and to which the Israel of God evidently alludes. That the saints will be in a certain relation to Israel yet dwelling in the earth, everyone who has received the doctrine of the Lord's pre-millennial advent believes. But the author leaves the reader here to draw some important conclusion from it as to his system: whereas it proves exactly nothing, and is believed as much by those who utterly reject his system, and believed more accurately and more scripturally: that is all. But it is true of all the world as of Israel. Yet here again this does not put Israel in the same place down here with all the world, because all saints will be born again. Nor does this latter truth set aside the special distinctive promises made to Israel, no more than the far more important distinctions which are true about the heavenly church.

When it is said, Israel will not be of the earth any more than the church of the firstborn, it is partly true and partly false. Israel, as Israel, will be of the earth, and Isaiah 65 proves that some will be wholly so, though such will be cut off when manifested. But the spared remnant, and all who really enjoy millennial blessedness, will be born again, and that life which they receive will not be of the earth. It will be the new creature. But it is true of everyone else then and now, and has nothing particularly to do with Israel. But the very passage (if passage were needed) which specially proves it calls this whole state of things earthly, in contrast with heavenly things which belong to the church; and therefore, though they have a life which is not of the earth, their whole condition and state will be then earthly, in contrast with what is heavenly.

Nor is it at all true that the moment when the church receives its actual, Israel will receive its virtual, deliverance. There is no connection in Scripture between the actual placing the church in its heavenly glory, and the quickening of individual Israelites, which is their virtual deliverance; nor is this latter the placing Israel as a nation or a body in the place of their earthly glory as purposed of God. The statements we have already considered as to the Jews—Ezekiel 20 as to Israel, Isaiah 66— all prove the contrary, as indeed do Ezekiel 36 and 37. It is never said that Israel are to be individually born again at the coming of the Lord to receive the church; nor all individually born again at the same time; nor all restored at the same time, if public manifestation be referred to; but the contrary in the chapters I have cited. That they have their life from Christ, I do not doubt. That the resurrection of Christ

secures to them the sure mercies of David, we are expressly taught in Acts 13. But it is never said they are of the one body, nor the bride of Christ in glory. They115 are not His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

That all things will be headed up in Him in earth and heaven, all admit, and thus far they will have one centre; but so will all creation; and earthly and heavenly are definitely distinguished in this very passage—we having part in the heavenly.

Besides, this statement is a contradiction to itself. In the beginning of the sentence, Ephesians 1:10 is applied to the millennial state of the Jews. In the end of the passage it is said to be a dispensation which is not then yet come, and in which the millennial arrangements cease. In the beginning the author, speaking of the millennium, says, “they will have one centre (for all things have been headed up in Him)” referring to Ephesians 1:10, and a few lines lower down, “when the dispensation of the fulness of times has come, and the millennial arrangements ceased.” It is rather too bad to have two opposite explanations in the same paragraph. It is in vain to say it is in both, because the passage is treated as speaking of a time not come, during the millennium, and in which the millennial arrangements cease.

I do not believe that the passage applies to the post-millennial state, which cannot properly be called a dispensation, for it is eternity; and the heading up all things to be administered by Him in whom we have received an inheritance who have first trusted (or pre-trusted) in Christ (that is before His manifestation in glory), evidently speaks of the special time of Christ’s

administration as the glorified Man, and our association with Him in that glory. The fulness of times itself is not an expression for eternity. That would not be called “times” or “seasons,” and the heading up all things in the man, as administrator, is not God being all in all, and the Son subject, as in 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 21; and this view of the passage is completely confirmed by verses 22, 23. That Christ will be the centre of all in heaven and earth in the millennium is clear; but this does not hinder the church being in the proper, special, peculiar place of the bride, the body of Christ, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all when He is in glory. Israel moreover has its place as Israel, distinct, and in many respects in contrast. “They are” not “together engaged in the government of the earth.”

Nor is it ever said that Israel will govern the earth at all. That they are the favoured glorious nation on the earth, where the government of Christ is placed which extends over the earth, is true: but they do not govern nor judge the earth. It is the heavenly saints who do this. They are governed by Christ, who will be “great to the ends of the earth,” and “all nations call him blessed.” That they will celebrate the ways of God in justice and judgment, I fully believe. But what then? There is nothing at all like the knowledge, the anticipative knowledge, of the mind of Christ, and of His glory, which we find in verses 9-11. When the things are accomplished, they will understand them and celebrate them.

But the peculiar character of the church’s place is to know and celebrate them before by faith—not to know the justice and judgment merely which are the habitation of His throne, but His counsels and thoughts. The mind of Christ is more than the works or the ways of

God in judgment. It is all His counsels in Christ. Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God.” Thus it is we have the mind of Christ—as Joseph yet unexalted was the interpreter of the revelations of God. And Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Power will be displayed hereafter; we have but samples of it now, the display of which confirmed faith. But Christ is made unto us wisdom: and if in infirmity we know only in part, still, as regards the object of knowledge, and the source of knowing, the whole wisdom of God is in Christ, and we have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things—we have the mind of Christ. But it is never said that Israel has the mind of Christ. They will see the displays of His power, recognise and celebrate them. But is that having the mind of Christ as we have it? The Egyptians knew what Joseph knew, when the things came: but had they the mind of Joseph?

The Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh in the millennium. They will prophesy and see visions; but, though the lump is holy, it is not that separate consecrated first-fruits. The Holy Ghost will enable them to enjoy, but will not in identity with the sufferings of Christ make saints the vessel of the outgoings of His heart in the sorrow of a groaning world, nor in the joy of its deliverance by power, as the day when their love is answered. They will profit by the answer themselves, but they will not as in the love which has thought of

others, though in it itself “according to God.” This place they will never have, they can never have. It is reserved for us who have gone before the day of His power, and fore-trusted in Him. Blessed privilege! If sovereign grace has given it us, shall we disown or depreciate it?

“In all essential blessings (we are told) the calling of Israel then so nearly resembles that of the church of the first-born now, that they may truly be said to be its successors. We are the first-fruits, they the lump.” The passage is clearly misapplied. They as to calling on earth were the first-fruits, and we the lump. They are not the lump of which we are the first-fruits in heaven; for in the time of glory we are in heaven, and they are on earth. Nor will they even be glorified together with Christ, whatever their eternal blessedness may be. They have not suffered with Him. This may seem a trifling thing to the author. It is not to the Scriptures, nor I believe to the saint’s heart who is led in this by the Spirit of God.

We have succeeded Israel on earth: are we in the same condition? Israel will succeed us again. But that says nothing at all as to the consequences of the difference of our position as so succeeding. And when it is said, “If the root on which we are now growing gives holiness to us, they will be graffed in on the same root,” etc. It is never said we are graffed in on the same root. It is all a confusion. Nor is it ever said that what they are graffed in gives holiness. If it had been Christ the root giving holiness, could they have been broken off, and then graffed in again? Or how could it have been called “their own olive tree”? The author has confounded the source and root of promises (which indeed gives holiness, makes us partakers of His holiness), and the depositary of them here below, elect and called.

That they will partake of life from Christ, all at first, and all called of God afterwards, is not questioned: but that is not the question here. If resemblance is traced, so is contrast. “Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.” And I wot that those whom Jesus calls blessed are blessed. “That we might be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ.” “If we suffer with him we shall reign with him.” And therefore when it is said, “in whose government they are engaged together,” it is quite contrary to Scripture (and see all John 17).

One thing is quite clear from all these statements of the author, and that is, the anxious desire to reduce the heavenly saints to the level of the earthly. A few casual expressions which may suppose something else may be found, but the constant laborious effort is to say that all are alike.

As to the details, I have no reason for opposing the idea that they are called children, but I do not believe it. They do enter into a place very analogous to that of Christ on earth, except His rejection. They are much associated with Him there. So far from analogy I might suppose it. But it would be questionable if this went beyond those that suffered, and were removed from earth: for, “if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ.” And this during the millennium they certainly are not; because it is to this that is attached the condition “if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together.” All this I leave to the consideration of the reader. The only passage quoted, or which can be quoted, is one from Hosea, which I do not believe applies to them—for this reason, that where Paul refers to these passages of Hosea, he quotes this and

another as to the Jews: when Peter refers to them, he quotes only that other, which has distinct reference to Israel's blessings. This makes me think that the Spirit of God had a covert reference to the Gentiles, and therefore He says "there "when it was said to them. Peter does not quote this when he refers to the prophecy, though he uses chapter 2:23, as does also Paul as to the called of the Jews, as we have said, and as is evident to me, chapter 1:10, of the Gentiles.

This passage being disposed of, there is absolutely no other.116 The nation is figuratively called God's son—His firstborn; and Ephraim, a dear son, a pleasant child. But this has nothing to do with the matter at all. It has nothing to do with individual sonship and the Spirit of adoption. The passage quoted is used of the house of Israel, not of the individuals who compose it. But this is as distinct as possible to the spiritual mind.

As to the quotation of 1 Corinthians 15, I have already spoken of the word "in." That in Christ all will be made alive, and that in the sense" of partaking of life they are in Christ, I do not doubt. Still, the use of this passage is untenable, because it speaks of resurrection, and very distinctively indeed of those that are Christ's, at His coming, which the author insists is specifically and exclusively the moment of His arriving at which they are raised. If so, no other resurrection is spoken of in that chapter. Nor is any resurrection to life spoken of but one —the resurrection of life, and then another, the resurrection of judgment. The truth is, the reasoning is a mere blunder. In Christ all will be made alive is a very different thing from saying all made alive are in Christ; nor does one prove the other. Do not let the reader be startled as if I supposed some were alive who were not

in Christ. But here is the importance of a remark which as to reasoning is undoubtedly true.117 If we take the scriptural use of the term made alive, in 1 Corinthians 15, it applies to resurrection only; and then the fullest distinction possible is drawn between those whom the author seeks to identify. That is, the Holy Ghost applies it to making alive from an actual state of death, wherein there is nothing common to us and them. If it be applied to spiritual life in general, if “in Christ” be used of union, then they are alive already and have not to be made ahve if they are in Christ. Applied to the resurrection, it is very simple. But if it be used of spiritual life, there is no doubt they have it from Christ; but if in Him, they have not to be made alive. The argument as an argument is unsound, most certainly illogical and unsound. About that there can be no difference in those who are accustomed to reason.

If then I take the scriptural use of the passage, I find the exactly opposite account from the author’s; that is, I find a special and peculiar distinction of classes. It is not true that all will die and be made alive. It is never said that the saints in the millennium will: I do not believe myself that they will. The use of the word alive in 1 Corinthians 15 goes to shew that the apostle is only speaking of resurrection. If it be anything else, it merely amounts to saying that the life of Christ is in all the finally blessed, which nobody denies. The truth is, the words “in Christ” do not imply union, though union may exist. This is evident from the passage itself, because “in Adam” is not union. All who come into resurrection to life, do so through the power of Christ, and by the life of Christ; but all do not come into resurrection to life, because we shall not all die. And it is never said that those here

treated of, that is, the millennial saints, will die, nor is their resurrection ever spoken of directly. So that the argument from the passage wholly fails. When the apostle wrote, it was needful to treat this question, because death was not considered as the natural portion of the saints as now: Christ was looked for to come and receive the saints.

It is never said “they are baptised by the same Spirit.” That He will be poured out as the latter rain, I do not doubt. But what is stated here is an unscriptural statement. The unity of the body into which we are baptised will not exist during the millennium. The Jews and Gentiles will be distinct as heretofore. I have already spoken of the olive tree, which is Abraham as heir of promises, and then his seed. They could not call Christ their olive tree, and be cut off, and graffed in again, in a real living spiritual sense. “We are married to the Lord— so will they.” Does the author mean to say that they will be the bride, the Lamb’s wife? If not, why thus, by the vague term Lord, seek to destroy and efface the special blessing of the church? We are never said to be married to the Lord, that is, to Jehovah. It is Christ, the Lamb, who is the bridegroom of the church. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Is not this a different thing from saying, “Thy maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name”? Because the Spirit of God has taken the images of the Old Testament to represent the far superior blessings of the heavenly family and bride, to shew that they had come into the place of blessing, perfectly bringing out the difference, the author would reduce all the plainly taught blessings and glories of the church to an equality with the figures from which illustrations are drawn. Though indeed as to

the marriage, it is from Adam more than from Jewish images.

The differences are merely “circumstantial and official”— that is all by which the Holy Ghost acts in our hearts. All the joy, the privilege, that which Christ has pronounced blessed, suffering with Him, reigning with Him, His willing that we should be where He is, the blessedness and holiness of those who have part in the first resurrection—all, all by which Christ has spiritually touched the springs of hope in the soul, is withered in this system to circumstantial and official differences — unessential—the author does not say none. The best answer is:—The whole New Testament from the gift of the Holy Ghost (even much of it before) is occupied about them, to act on our hearts by them, save about three passages where the eternal state is mentioned, namely, a passage in i Corinthians 15, “God shall be all in all”; 2 Peter 3; Revelation 21:1-8. That the millennial saints will have to look for a new heaven, and a new earth, is true; and evidently it is to the exclusion of our proper hopes by this that the author’s statements tend. It yet remains to be proved, that there will be no difference then. There are very strong passages to shew there will: but into this I do not enter. But even when the author says “So will they,” on what does he found this in Scripture? It seems to me an evil thing, when God has not been pleased to unfold to us the state of soul of the saints then (and He has not) to use our apprehensions of them, even supposing they are just, as a peremptory argument to establish a system whose object is to reduce our feelings and blessings to the level of theirs, and so destroy the influence of the special hopes God has given us.

As to the man-child, supposing there is an allusion to the manner of bringing a people into heavenly glory, and another people into earthly glory, how does this prove that the difference is merely circumstantial? I should rather say the resemblance was circumstantial. Nobody denies that figures of the Old are used in the New, though greatly changed. It is the use of this to destroy the difference in the counsels of God which is so objectionable. Corresponding in figurative circumstances is not denied to a certain extent, though only a shadow, and not the very image. But is that only a circumstantial difference? Aaron's family had an everlasting priesthood; they went into the holy place, not without blood; they had a priesthood of Urim and Thummim; but suppose I were to conclude from all this, that the difference between Christ's priesthood and this was merely circumstantial and official? This is what the author is doing. Because the circumstances are figuratively the same, "the language, types, and symbols," he concludes that there is a circumstantial difference and an essential identity. Would not any reasonable person conclude that there was a circumstantial assimilation, and a real difference, essential as to the state of things, though life might be in all? And the truth is, that in the strict use of the word essential, the differences are essential. An essential quality is that without which a thing would not be what it is; and heaven cannot be heaven if it is earth, nor earth earth if it be heaven. As to Israel's heavenly and glorified priesthood, we have already seen on what it rests. And why Israel's? Are the Gentiles to have none in that day?

As to the note on the Greek, hosios, the word is used for favour, benignity, gracious goodwill. It is this word is used in the expressions, “His mercy endureth for ever”; “forsake their own mercy”; “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever,” Psalm 89. It is interesting here, because it is the same word used in the singular in verse 19: “Thou spakest in vision to [query if it should not be ‘of’ or ‘about,’ as in the title of Psalm 72] thy holy one,” where the word is different from verse 18, the Holy One. The same word is used in the sure mercies of David; Isaiah 55:3. The reading is more doubtful. I am disposed to think the received reading right, that is hosios. The God of mercy or favour, as in Jonah 2:9, and Psalm 144:2: compare Psalm 62:12, for the spirit of the passage we are speaking of. The whole tenor of their song savours very much of the Old Testament, for the Lamb’s wrath is of the same character. The reader may with a concordance search out the passages where mercy and truth are used together in the Psalms. Mercy is always the same word. But as to the reading, these references confirm the conviction that it is hosios. Still there is not quite the certainty which the author presents in the note. The very great majority of MSS read hagios, and one of the three ancient. I suppose the other two read hosios, though they are not actually cited in the books I can refer to. C contains this passage; Griesbach gives it as a questionable reading, but the evidence not such as to induce him to change the text. I would add that in Psalm 43 an “ungodly nation” is a nation “not chased”; not having this character of grace.

“Clothed in fine linen.” All that is said about this, Greek and Hebrew, is mere confusion. Properly speaking, the Hebrew word ‘bad’ (which means originally separated in

parts, or to be alone) signifies thread, and then linen. This, being white, may often be used for purity. The Hebrew shesh means properly white, and thus is used for Linen sometimes, if it be not rather cotton.118 It is used for white marble, Canticles 5:15; Esther 1:6. And in Exodus 39:28 we have Linen breeches of fine twined Linen, that is, breeches of bad or shesh, thus wholly subverting the alleged distinction as in the intention of Scripture. This was for Aaron and for his sons. For which dispensation here bad was of shesh. If we refer to Ezekiel 27:7-16, we shall find that “buz” (from which probably Bussinos119) came from Syria, and shesh from Egypt. The shesh was used for sails, and buz for what was costly. Shesh being from Egypt makes plain its use in the tabernacle, where, observe, it was used for the outward court as much as for Aaron’s robes, as his and his sons’ robes were made of bad as of shesh, yea, of bad of shesh. I apprehend that it is more likely Bussinos comes from buz, and not from shesh. In Leviticus 6:10 (Heb. 3) we have the breeches of bad, chapter 16:4, and so Exodus 28:42, the same word is used, we know that they were made of shesh. Further, in Ezekiel 9, Daniel 10, we have it used for an angelic manifestation as man. So here the angels are clothed with Linen. And how is it applied in Ezekiel and Daniel to this dispensation?

As to Bussos,120it is vain to say “it belongs to the next dispensation when seen,” etc. For it is used in two passages as far as I can discover in the New Testament: Revelation 19:8, 14, and chap. 18:12, 16. Bussos is used in Luke 16:19. In Revelation 19:8 and 14 it is used for the armies that followed Christ. But then its use is to be proved for this; and there is no other passage to prove it by, unless passages where it cannot have this

signification, as Revelation 18, where it is used of Babylon, where, it is hardly, I suppose, used for beauty and excellency of character (in Hebrew, shesh); and in Luke 16:19, an analogous word is used for the clothing of the rich man who went to hell.

Further, Bussinos is used for the Hebrew buz in 1 Chronicles 15:27; byssus for bad (said to mean linon) in the same verse fine linen; and for shesh in Genesis 41:42. Though in the Pentateuch it is used for shesh. The result of the examination, therefore, sustains in no way the statements of the author.

The conclusion from chapter 16:7 is curious. The scripture says, taking the reading proposed as the right one, the altar said; and then it is assumed that it was the souls spoken of before, and that shews that they were still in their disembodied state! Well, I should think it was the altar if Scripture says so, and not the souls. If it implies anything, it implies that they were gone. But it implies nothing about them, that I see. The altar, which had witnessed all the blood of these sacrifices for Christ, bore witness of the justice of the judgment that fell on their persecutors. Conclusions thus drawn are indeed easy to arrive at.

The note on the throne of the beast is almost equally without force. The king of Babylon says that he will set his throne above the stars of God, and that he will sit at Jerusalem: but why that makes Jerusalem the throne of the beast, it would be hard to tell.

As to the note on the kings of the East, it will come under Babylon; only I remark that what is given as “I think,” in the note is stated with certainty in the text (page 227). I will only say in passing that Isaiah 13

being the day of the Lord, the saints must be gathered before. But the author is mistaken, I have no doubt, in his division of Isaiah 13, and in his use of “day of the Lord”: but this I reserve for the discussion of Babylon.

As to the note on Armageddon (see Judges 5:19), I have touched on it already. They are gathered to the battle, and they are gathered to Armageddon, which is a symbolic name. There is no such place mentioned in Scripture. I apprehend it is so of Jehoshaphat. I also dissent from the interpretation of Daniel 11. However I once thought myself that the passage did relate to Antichrist, but I believe it to be the king of the North who is spoken of.

The use of the Greek translated “the habitable earth” for the Roman world, we have seen is entirely unproved. I see no reason at all to think it is. It is very much oftener used in another sense; but all these uncertain points are necessary to the author’s system, because this is his counter gathering against the Eastern kings. If they fall, his system falls: but they are wholly unproved.

Chapters 17, 18

We now arrive at a most important subject—one which has as much carried away the readers’ minds with it as anything else, and has more characterised the system in those who are attached to it. I believe it entirely wrong, and I proceed to examine it with the reader, and give him the result of my own enquiry into the validity of the statements made. And here I must begin with a remark to set things in their true light. No one doubts the influence and progress of the commercial principle. “These and other connected principles have marked a character so distinctive upon the present period, as to

be recognised even by those who have never thought of reading these things in the light of the testimony of God." This then is not the question.

I need not here say that for years I have been convinced and have taught that this commercial principle tends to the building up of Babylon, and enters into the scheme of Satan as an element in its structure; because its prevalence is declared here to be known of all as characterising our epoch, although unspiritual men, of course, do not judge its nature. Still, I believe that the author's view of it just ministers to Satan's object in this. And for this reason. There is a certain working suited to the passions and lusts of men such as they naturally are; another of positive deceit and influence over their souls — the more immediate and positive power of Satan. He occupies men with the former, to which they are naturally prone, and which has no apparent evil, which connects itself with social improvement, prosperity, employment of the poor even, and the progress of peaceful civilisation, in order that behind this, and by leading men to sacrifice everything to this, he may exercise over man and advance the other influence by which he may not only completely withdraw these from being accessible to the testimony of God, but thereon establish his own direct and complete authority. His object then is to occupy men entirely with the commercial part, that they may not mind the other which he is introducing behind it.

To this end the statements of the author directly minister. He declares the religious evil, which really is leading to apostasy and giving up of God, to be comparatively immaterial—evil perhaps, but nothing comparatively—the grand affair is commerce. Satan has

raised a blind, to carry on his plans behind it. And the author says, Look at the blind, look at the blind, that is what Satan is raising, that is his grand object, and thus lead's men's thoughts away from what is. He is raising the blind, but as a blind. And the way the author has turned attention to it, and from the other, has only served his purpose. What is the fact? What has the commercial prosperity of these countries been identified with, and helped on? Religious apostasy. Because of that men have acquiesced in the renunciation of all principle. The nation has given up its public outward testimony and protest against Satan's power and lie against Christ's mediatorial glory, and, in helping that on elsewhere, has done much more than that—has relinquished, as a nation, the public profession of the truth itself.

Upon this point I believe the author's system to be as bad, as false, and as mischievous as it possibly can be—a positive help to evil. Let us now examine its exactness.

We find the usual mass of contradiction. In page 241, I find that these principles "have marked a character so distinctive upon the present period" that irreligious men recognise it. In page 251, "The leavening process is proceeding so secretly, that even they who are expecting something to arise, are expecting anything except the right." What they are expecting the author mentions "to shew how utterly unconscious men are of the real nature of the system which is silently being prepared."

I do not in the least admit the alleged order of chapters 13 and 17; nor that one ends where the other begins. One is more generally descriptive, and professes so to be, and the other more historical, giving the beast his

own place during the last three years and a half. But there is no sign (as the author has given no proof) of chapter 17 historically giving what precedes chapter 13. His own system is the only proof, as of so many other things. All through the book it is the proof, instead of being proved.

Babylon having just been destroyed, one of the seven angels calls the prophet to give him a description of it, and thereon necessarily describes the beast on which she rode. It is only so far historical as history is necessary to its description. This may take in events preceding the last three years and a half in the general description, but does not the least exclude these, but the contrary. The beast ascends out of the bottomless pit, is the direct instrument of evil and Satan's power, and it is then he is wondered at. In a word, the chapter clearly enters into what he is, and the conduct of the horns, right on to the close, even to the war with the Lamb: only it is given as descriptive of what he is, and not as history.

If the seven heads and ten horns are emblems of concentrated authority over the whole Roman earth, the latter receive power one hour with the beast. So that it is clear, the whole period of the beast till the end is descriptively given. And it would indeed be strange, that the angel should declare the mystery of the beast that carried the woman, and leave out all the most important part of its history and conduct. But he does not, but goes on to its war with the Lamb, as well as Its destruction of the woman. So that the division of the author, his whole view and system of the chapter, is fundamentally wrong.

Further, it is never said that he holds his authority from and with another. The Holy Ghost could not say so, because, previous at any rate to the last three years and a half, power is from God. She had got on the beast, and sat there; but it is never said he holds his authority of her, nor anything like it.

Next, it is not said that the woman rides Antichrist.121 That Antichrist wields the power of the beast, in its last form, I believe, as verse n: that he may be secularly growing up to this power previously, is probable. But the beast is not Antichrist. The beast is undoubtedly the Roman empire, according to the uniform use of the word, in the prophetic scriptures. When Antichrist is distinctively mentioned, he is a little horn, whose doings characterise and absorb all the power of the beast. There is not one word of what is stated in page 236 in the Scriptures. What is stated of Antichrist distinctively is quite different. He grew up as a little horn behind or after the others. Three of the horns were plucked up by the roots before him. This at least is the power by reason of whose blasphemies the beast is destroyed. The statement of Scripture, that is, is wholly different from the statement of the author. It is practically another revelation which is put before us.

Further, “the system whereby the truth of God has been discredited” have had nothing at all to do with Babylon in the author’s system. Commerce is his Babylon; and what has that to do with the systems against which the saints have previously struggled? what had commerce to do with being sanctified by the name of Christ, or with being thrust into the place of truth? Or how is Romanism leading to commercial greatness? It is the contrary, because the desire of peace for commercial

greatness leads to acquiesce in anything, with the principles of Satan himself, so as to let him go on unhindered to have quiet with all.

Further, it is assumed that the ten horns include the Eastern and Western Roman empires. This is nowhere proved, however. The kings of the North and South in Daniel 11 present a decided obstacle to this interpretation, because they attack Antichrist, instead of giving him their power, and they include the greatest part of the Eastern Roman empire.

When we read that such a system “must be constructed on principles wide as the heart of man, and therefore that all, whatever their creed, etc., are in danger,” etc., this is reasoning on what it must be, instead of learning what it is. It is a fact, that the woman sits by122 many waters. Her association, her connection is with them, of course to seduce them if she can. She has to do with peoples. But, while the fact is stated, the how is not to be reasoned out, but learned from the word. Now I learn from this chapter, that she is the source and mother of idolatry, and the earth’s idols. For no one can doubt that this is the meaning of abominations. This was her real, and to the eye of faith, her plain character. It was written on her forehead, though it was a mystery. That commerce ministers to pride and religious indifference, I do not doubt, and, enlarging its desire, runs after that which God has not given at home, and is thus called fornication, is true. And that this will be found prevalent I doubt not, as in Tyre of old. Still, what God has written upon the forehead of this mysterious woman is idolatries. That is her character. Nor indeed is there any great mystery in men loving riches, and seeking them by commerce. That may assume unusual influence now, but

it is no mystery. It has existed at Tyre, Carthage, Venice, Genoa, Holland, and elsewhere, as a supreme system. Further, it is hard to say how commerce was found to be drunken with the blood of the saints, and of the witnesses of Jesus. That commerce may help to bring in the system that will be so, perhaps more than ever, I do not doubt. But it is not the commercial system that has itself got drunk with blood.

I believe the complete development of this system is future; but I could not say altogether future, because she is rightful inheritress of those who have shed all the blood of saints on the earth. Jerusalem, in like manner, was guilty in a new and unusual way, but it was but the filling up the measure of their fathers.

If the mountains be taken as symbols of seats of authority, there is not a word to shew that they are systems, that is, that systems have this power. Moreover, this is the period, according to the author, when the dragon, not the beast, has power. It is at the close of this period that the dragon gives him his throne. The beast therefore ought not to have the heads at all. The complete possession ought not to be in him on any ground. It is most inconsistent to put it in him and the woman together; but at any rate it ought not to be in him, but the dragon. The crowns were on the dragon’s head. Nor do I see how the Roman emperors did not possess supreme authority in all its extent. They were generals, tribunes, and pontiffs, and consuls even. Army, people, priesthood, and state authority were vested in them.

Besides, the whole statement is lame. We have only six systems given us, stretching to the utmost, and one of

them is the woman herself. The commercial system is to rule, “the supremacy of commercial weath” (page 242.) But this commercial system is one of the seven heads or mountains which the commercial system is to rule. But the truth is, the statement makes confusion of the whole symbol. The commercial system governs the beast (Antichrist, according to the author), and this becomes the executive of its power. This I can understand: but then he cannot wield it as one of his own heads; he cannot serve and govern it at the same time. Commerce controls him, and how then has he the control of commerce as an influence? And where is it proved that religion will be subservient to commerce?

As to the application of Zechariah 5:5, there is not the semblance of the passage being applied to it, or applicable. The prophet is prophesying about Jews and Jerusalem, and the temple, and Zerubbabel, and the candlestick, and the two olive trees. And he turns and sees the contrast of all this in the judgment of the wicked. What this has to do with England’s commerce, it would be hard to tell. At least some proof should be given when the subject of the prophecy is entirely different. I have no doubt it applies to the immorality of the Jews, and the hypocritical outward form. The former is judged; the latter is put in its own real place, Babylon, or at least the land of Shinar. I apprehend “this is their resemblance” should be “this is their iniquity.” But at least its application to a matter wholly foreign to the prophecy ought to be shewn.

As to the restoration of the unity of the Roman empire, in general it is admitted; at any rate what is Roman exclusively, and was not Grecian. Because the fact of the destruction of all the parts of the image by the blow on

the feet supposes rather the existence, in their own national character, of certain countries which yet formed part of the Roman empire taken in its whole extent. How far they may support the king, at any rate for awhile, I do not say; but they seem to exist as distinct powers. But how, if the unity of the Roman empire has been so shattered that it is wonderful it should be restored, can it be said that the progress of human greatness in these empires has been unhindered123 from the days of Nimrod?

Nor do I the least see the control of the religious by the civil power, in the Roman earth: out of it I do most decidedly, but just the contrary within it. Popery is re-assuming its control of the civil power, though in a gentler, more subtle way as yet; while Protestantism is more completely subject to it than ever, viewed as national churches. What is the fact? In England, Protestantism completely subjected, and Popery rising into influence and power; in Sardinia, a monastery having received the daughter of a foreign ambassador, the king avowed his inability to deliver her, because of the independence of the church, and Holland accepted the excuse; in Prussia, the Protestants modelled by the king as his army; in Scotland the same thing as to national Protestants; Protestant bishopricks struck off in Ireland; the Pope’s nuncio having precedence of all ambassadors in the courts of Europe; Spain, which had thrown off the control of the Pope, subjected to it again, and no other religion allowed in the country: in a word, the entire prostration of Protestantism under the civil authority, and the entire independence and growing influence of Popery—these are the evident facts of the day. Where the Greek Church exists in Russia, the same

subjection exists, but the emperor will have nothing else.

And I repeat, in answer to page 242, that, as the facts are historically mis-stated, so Scripture does not note these things as characterising Babylon in the time of the end. To faith, the mystery of Babylon (great and blinding as the evil influence of commerce may be, which I fully believe)—to faith, I say, the character of Babylon is, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; and no student of Scripture is ignorant what abominations mean. The statement of the writer is wholly contrary to the positive express statement of Scripture. No one denies the commercial system exists, nor its widespread influence; but it is not that by which God characterises Babylon, though it may be that by which the devil blinds man to her character; a blindness which I believe the author's statements help on in this respect.

Next, his historical statements are all wrong. To say that the influence of Tyre, Carthage, or Venice, was not felt beyond their own immediate sphere is to deny all history. Every one knows that Tyre and Carthage, though overthrown by military power, did exercise the widest influence over nations; though God subjected it to royal or military power at that time, and did not allow commercial power to get the upper hand. Though in the case of Carthage, a real commercial empire, for a good while it balanced Rome, and was within a very little of subduing it; but God willed it otherwise. But on the other hand, any one the least acquainted with history knows that the commercial municipal liberty of the Italian republics, connected with the breaking up of feudal power by the Crusades, Venice being with Genoa ultimately the representative of this commercial

influence, changed (however silently) the whole state and condition of Europe, and was the root of the modern system. The discovery of the high sea road to India, and of America, and other circumstances, took that influence away from Venice, but merely developed the whole system of which Venice with other cities had sown the seeds.

Further, when the author says that the Chaldean empire was not commercial, he is entirely wrong. Babylon was the grand emporium of commerce. In the East it competed, or more than competed, with Tyre. This is the more important to be remarked, because it is on this complete mistake that the author has founded many of his arguments to shew that the Babylon of the Old Testament must be the Babylon to come.124 Indeed, the statement of the declension of monarchical power is quite a wrong one. The monarchical power in Europe grew up out of a system of nobility founded on war, namely, the feudal system. The king never began to lean upon his nobles, but to get rid of them and put them down; and succeeded everywhere, unless partially in England, and in Poland—perhaps I may add, partially in Hungary. Elsewhere they became courtiers or nothing. The crown absorbed all, save the power of Rome, which was itself curtailed as royal authority made progress. The democratic principle then grew up, and the French revolution, and the subversion of the ancient imperial royal system by Napoleon was the consequence, the ecclesiastical system falling with it. Since then, the constitutional system of popular monarchies having grown up, the ecclesiastical system recovered its influence by being the needed stay of the crown against the popular will, as may be seen in Ireland, Spain, and

France; the crown holding the balance, and using the people or human will against the church, and the church against popular will, and seeking to keep all quiet by occupying the people's minds with commercial interests and prosperity.

Protestantism, save so far as it approaches Popery, is incompetent to act on and lead the masses, and therefore is comparatively useless to governments. It values truth too much, and that is of no use to govern any with save those who love it. Popery, therefore, is what governments cultivate. And by encouraging commerce and filling people with commercial prosperity, principle becomes immaterial, and latitudinarianism leaves the field to popish influences and popish activity. Christians must be a separate people. The principle of dissent, which chimes in with the democratic principle, does not with the government, and will only have public power from a mixture of religious truth with human will, which can never go very far in the long run.

Hence Popery is in every way in the ascendant while the government can hold the ascendant. But its success will ruin it, and I doubt not that the popular unity which commercial enterprise will produce, and by which national feeling is necessarily so far destroyed, will help on what democracy will ultimately demand, and indeed is demanding where ripened, and which political circumstances will render necessary—the establishment of a centre of union, and this will be found in the little horn. The consequence of this will be a subversion of all the peaceable system, and military energies and conflicts, which God will terminate by judgment. All this future every one will judge of according to the light given to him. As to the present facts to which I have

referred, nothing is wanting but acquaintance with what is going on to recognise the truth of what I have said. That commerce plays a great role in this, I fully believe: men's hearts being occupied with it, that the actors on Satan's part may have leisure to do their work behind it, even more than by it. But whatever appears to man's eye and fills its horizon, to faith the name on Babylon's forehead is "Mother of abominations"; on the beast's, "Blasphemy." Look at Ireland, and you will see plainly what is doing.

As a fact, though I believe she is in the front for the maturing of the principles which are acting in evil on the world, France is quite behind all other nations in point of the commercial system.

Germany, Belgium, nay, even Russia, have the start of her. Instead of communicating it, she is with difficulty learning it. She is behind every power in railroads, with the exception of Spain. It is Germany, not France, which competes commercially with England. She cannot even colonise conquered Algeria. So that if commerce be the prevailing system, she is not the artery of it. But then the balance of Popery and infidelity or popular will is the constant unceasing work of the State, and the whole energy and sagacity of her humanly wise king is employed to hold the balance, and to try and turn her attention to commercial prosperity in order to quiet her. Anyone who has paid the least attention to the University question there, and the recent affairs of the Jesuits there and elsewhere, cannot hesitate on this.125 In fine, the blinding of commercial wealth I fully own; but it is blinding to something else which Satan is working out, and which will be judged. Man's lusts are in the one, and so far Satan's power; but Satan's proper

work is in the other to alienate men from God, and raise them up against Him. The delusive power of Satan is religious power, open blasphemous rebellion his last effort. See 2 Thessalonians 2 also as to this, and Revelation 13:12, seq.

The Reformation, while bringing in blessed and fundamental and saving truth, by the marvellous providence of God, succeeded with nations, because Popery had enthralled them, and, secure in its empire, had imposed a burden which all groaned under, and which, moreover, was accompanied by conduct which was below the standard of the natural conscience, and the common comforts and well-being of society. The well known sale of indulgences gave the last insult to common conscience, and God, whose time was come, sent forth His truth in power. But where is this now? It is a national system to defend, not a truth which acts on conscience. Popery has mended its manners where it is seen; while Protestantism is manifested by churchism or rationalism everywhere—dares not or cannot act on its own truths. That grace may do this in detail, I do not doubt; but I here speak of the public state of things. The energy of truth produces dissent in Protestantism now, not Protestantism in contrast with Romanism; and Protestantism is in vain seeking unity by seeking not to push the truth too far, or to bury it altogether.

The system is to be (page 245) a ruling system. But it is precisely a morally or rather immorally influential system, which is what the author says it is not. For what is the meaning of the kings of the earth committing fornication with her, and the inhabitants of the earth being made drunk with the wine of her fornication, if it be not subserviency by immoral influence? If ever

anything described the influence of Popery, it is “a system that has used kings, and made them subservient to its will.” I do not mean here that ancient Popery was the full accomplishment of this prophecy, but merely to enquire into the nature of the influence spoken of. It is just the description of Popery. And I do think a man must have a bold pen to say, in the face of history, that it signally failed.126 The influence then described is moral influence, a cup given to drink.

But, further, it is not said that the horns were “in willing and complete subjection.” It is only said that the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and then at last the ten horns hate her—the inhabitants of the earth are made drunk. She rides the beast, not the ten horns; that is, the body of the empire is her seat; and she is carried by it, as a whole: but that is all. The inhabitants of the earth are drunk with the wine of her fornication, and the cup was filled with abominations, that is, idols. She was drunk with the blood of the saints. What has the commercial system to do with the blood of the saints? And if this be so, how is it that a system which has the fulness of God’s own truth in it (page 251) will be fostered and protected as well as any other? No doubt commerce by itself (though if it reached it, it might spoil it) would let it alone, and despise it. But it cannot be “drunk with the blood of the saints,” and to protect and foster the fulness of God’s own truth in its proper sphere, no question of “what is truth” being allowed to disturb the harmony.

I have already remarked on the quiet application of Zechariah 5:4, which we find again here used as a self-evident thing. And, further, we have now the literal city Babylon identified with it as its centre, the next chapter

describing the outward circumstances of this great city. Here the system and the city are confounded. It supposes the whole of the ancient Roman empire still divided into kingdoms, under the absolute control, not only of the influences of commerce, which would not be very difficult to suppose, but of a positive localised power situate in Babylon. Not merely commerce still, for that would only be a morally influential system, but a local power connected with commerce established at Babylon, to which the ten horns are to be in complete subjection. It is a half popular, half monarchic, commercial system, as definite and palpable as Popery or Mohammedanism (pages 249, 251); but to which monarchs and people are to be subject. But if it be thus an independent governing power, half monarchic, who is the monarch? Because it is not merely the influence of a system. There is a localised headship of commercial government at Babylon which controls the Roman world. Who is the semi-monarch of it? Or is it a predominant Exchange at Babylon on the Euphrates, which is the mother of abominations, which is drunk with the blood of the saints?

And Zechariah 5, which shuts up their wickedness in an ephah with a talent of lead on its mouth, and transports it to the land of Shinar, is the rising up of this immense and glorious system to the height of its supremacy, to govern all the earth. “The land of Shinar, whence civilisation first proceeded, is the place to which it will again return.” Civilisation then is the commercial system, as indeed civilisation and commerce go together. But then we are told (page 242) that commerce was not found in the Chaldean empire, nor the early native monarchy of Nimrod.127 How then did

it proceed from Shinar? It is a little too strong, finally, to accommodate the expression of “the mystery of iniquity” to modern commerce. It may serve, however, to recall our thoughts to the passage from which it is drawn, where certainly it was not commerce as such, nor the influence of a commercial system (save as all worldliness ministers to evil) that the apostle shewed had begun in the church. What he there speaks of, however, which it is very important to remember, was the thing which was to continue, grow up, and result in Antichrist when the restraint was taken off. There was a system then, which had begun to work in the church, which was to result in the apostasy and the manifestation of the man of sin, but which certainly was not a system of commercial supremacy. The scripture speaks everywhere of quite other things as the leaven of evil.

It is not even true that the lid of the ephah was lifted up for the servant of God, or that the ephah had any lid. All this is the play of the author’s imagination. There is nothing of it in the chapter. The ephah and woman are shewn; and a talent of lead, which had been lifted up, is cast upon the mouth, and the whole carried off.

We have seen what an entire contradiction the beginning of page 253 is to the end of page 241. And I can only add, that while commerce will be found in Babylon, Babylon is never the name given by God to a commercial system. The statement is wholly unfounded. The imagination of the author has raised up a system, which is found nowhere in the word; and then he has chosen to say, God has named it Babylon, which He has never done at all. If God has so named it, I ask, where?

It is never said that Antichrist espouses it. The beast may be governed by it, whatever it be, but that is not espousing it. Nor is Antichrist spoken of. When the eighth beast is brought in, it is as destroying it. The kings of the earth commit fornication with it, but are not said to espouse it as a system. Nor is his being ridden by her said to be a step to power, nor very like it either. Nor is being ridden by anything very like espousing it, so as to get on to supreme power. Antichrist's128 power is set up in destroying it.

Here too we may remark that "Roman" is very conveniently omitted after "prophetic" earth. The beast is the Roman earth, the ten kingdoms the self-same ten horned beast as before; but the prophetic is no longer the Roman earth. The reader must remark here that the heads of the beast are entirely different, according to the author, from the seven kings. If they are the same, all his system falls, because he makes the seven heads the systems actually existing; whereas five of the kings are fallen (the woman's sitting on seven mountains being no local allusion to a seat of authority, as elsewhere interpreted even by the author, but these same systems).

The seven kings are merely to direct our attention to the various forms of executive government of the prophetic earth. First, Nimrod. Then "Theocracy—the monarch was independent of, and uncontrolled by those he governed," etc. But why the monarch? They had rejected the theocracy when they asked for a king. "They have not rejected thee (says God to Samuel), they have rejected me, when I was their king." The judges and priesthood time was that of the theocracy. Though surely it is a very strange thing to introduce theocracy as an

executive form of government in the prophetic earth, when it is a history of Babylon and the beast. But if you do, you cannot speak of the monarch as being this, for the reason I have given above. Nor indeed is the description here given of the Jewish royalty very like Deuteronomy 17. But if the monarch be admitted as theocratic government, certainly the judges must; and you have two forms here. Nebuchadnezzar, etc., follow. Nimrod, theocracy, Nebuchadnezzar, Persia, Greece, Caesars, six; constitutional monarchy,129 seven, and Antichrist eight, who is of the seven.

This subject, of course, leaves ample room for conjecture. It has been generally supposed that the seven kings had reference to the beast whose description is given in the chapter. But supposing with the author130 that they do not, why are these selected from those “which have existed, or shall exist, in the prophetic earth”? What principle is followed here? During the time of Nimrod and the theocracy there was no prophetic earth as it is generally understood. That is, the term is generally applied to the scope of Daniel’s prophecies—the image, for example: otherwise we have no limits to prophetic earth. All parts of the earth are mentioned in prophecy. But is “existing in the prophetic earth” applicable to geographical limits, when no prophecy had distinguished them at all, and when the subject of scriptural statement was quite different? The first two never come into the accounts of the prophetic earth. It was formed and begun by the setting aside of the second. And if we take whatever has at any time existed in these limits, then we shall clearly have much more than seven, as the Roman republic, the judges, etc.

Further, the ten kings do not gladly own him as their lord numerically, for three are rooted up.

How is the Babylonish yoke a hard yoke upon them? In page 249 their subjection was as willing as complete, and the kings of the earth mourn and bewail over her destruction. But it is to be remembered that it is not Babylon as a city they destroy (that remains the seat of Antichrist in all its local glory and riches, for it is local Babylon whose riches are described, chapter 18), it is the system. That is, the ten kingdoms and Antichrist destroy commerce and commercial supremacy; and yet Babylon's resources, its palaces, its ships, and its merchandise, will be the sinews of his strength (page 258).

Now mark what is done. They shall hate her (the whore, Babylon) and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. This means that Antichrist will preserve the city and all its wealth, ships, etc., as the sinews of his resources; only the ten kingdoms will not submit to commercial supremacy any longer. Is there really any sense in such an interpretation? Yet it is the very heart and nucleus of the author's system. This woman thus dealt with is "the sinews of his strength, and the adornment of his glory." It is by his and their treating her, as in verse 16, that she becomes so. The woman (that is, the city) is not the city when she is destroyed at all; she is the system.

If Popery were put down as a system, her resources would not continue, though the city where the chief is seated would subsist still. So here, and much more being wealth itself, if commerce be put down as a system, its flesh eaten, and it burnt with fire, how then

do the resources and glory continue, and all its wealth and greatness?

When it is said that this is the system by which Antichrist rises into glory, I beg the reader to remember, that however worldly lusts may make men indifferent to the growth of evil, we know that it is another thing which was to grow up, and, being at last unrestrained, to produce apostasy and the wicked one. We know that what rose up as itself the source and leaven of this was not commercial supremacy—far from it. The author says," it is not an ecclesiastical system—on the contrary, it is wholly secular."

Now I do not believe its proper description is exactly ecclesiastical, but rather idolatrous, though that be ever identified with what is ecclesiastical. But what is the proof that it is secular? It is the merchandise of chapter 18. But this, according to the author, is the city, not the system. (See note to page 258.) There is not one word which states merchandise to have anything to do with Babylon in the chapter which speaks of the system, but, on the contrary, decidedly other things; nor anywhere in connection with her, but in the chapter in which it is said she is described as existing as a city after the system is wholly destroyed. It is not merely that she keeps these things. They are never said of her in any other way or at any other time than when she is merely a city: they characterise her, when as a system she is desolate and burnt with fire. They are never mentioned when she has dominion. And again, is it with her, Babylon, the city, that the mourning kings have committed fornication? If so, how is it with the system, for that had been destroyed long before? And it is evident that chapter 18:9 is the same as chapter 17:2, be it city or system:

131 as it is also certain that chapter 18 is a very strange description of a person, or state of things, or city, which has been treated as chapter 17:16 describes.

When the author says (page 259), “fornication, deliciousness, etc., as much attach to it under the lordship of Antichrist,” he only exposes the absurdity of the whole system. It is with her the kings of the earth have committed fornication. Do they continue to do so with herself after they have made her desolate, and burnt her with fire? The kings of the earth have done this. It is not the wickedness which was committed in the city, but with it. It is in vain to slip out of this by saying “attach to it.” But the ten horns have burnt with fire her with whom the kings of the earth did so. In page 260 the author seeks to divert the attention from Popery (though it be to be resisted) to this commercial system as the grand thing. This is the grand evil of all his theory. It directly diverts the attention from that by which Satan is morally working. I recognise the progress of commerce, its influence, its latitudinarianism, the leading part it is taking in the world’s history. But in Satan’s history it is otherwise, save as an instrument. His weapons are more deadly, more his own (though he may use men’s lusts to make them careless about them); but this statement is just ministering to his end. Indeed, from what I have said on chapter 13 as to Antichrist, it is plain all this prosperity and gladness do not exist in his time. It is a mere drama of the author, while the true Satanic character of evil is again overlooked in the second two-horned beast.

As to the application of Zechariah, I have already spoken of it. That the stork of strong and rapid flight means the progress of commercial principles from west to east,

those must believe who think it proved when they have read the chapter. Nothing here is adduced to prove it. Again, we have it stated to be secretly preparing, though this is hard to understand when (as we have seen) it marks distinctively the present period.

Finally, the description given in chapter 17 of the woman (when, according to the author, she is supreme in commercial supremacy) has not one word about commerce, but she is stamped by God with decidedly another character. When as a commercial system she has been made desolate and burnt with fire, then, and then only, being a city under Antichrist, she is spoken of as full of merchandise, namely, in chapter 18, when, according to the author, the commercial system has been subverted. So that it is the description of the city when the commercial system has been subverted which alone proves, or can be adduced to prove, that she is a commercial system.

Chapter 18

Before I make any general observations, I go on to this chapter. The goodly mantle of Shinar is passed over as easily as possible with “I do not esteem,” and put aside because it is a positive and plain proof that commerce did distinguish that country, so as to give a name to the most renowned articles from the earliest period. It is essential to the author to get rid of this, or some of his main arguments fail.

Nothing is more remarkable than the way the author, having given an opinion, afterwards cites it as a proved general rule. Thus we are told “it would be strange if Babylon were to be excepted from the general rule as to the renovation of the East.” What general rule? Where is

it proved? The author has said so: that is all. It is his system.

His very facts are all wrong. Egypt is not rising by the aid of Western Europe. She was disposed to rise, and France would have helped her; but England put her down. The Lord has said she shall never rise, but be the basest of kingdoms. That these Eastern nations will be upon the scene again, we all believe; but that is all Scripture says. “The like “of what” may be said of Edom, Tyre, Damascus, and the other cities of Syria”?

That commerce will do what it can there, I believe. It has attempted it already, and God confounded them by a whirlwind. But I do not dwell on these probabilities.

It is not said that the king of Babylon “sat,” but that he said he would, and ascend above the clouds too, which I suppose he will hardly do. In that passage he pretends to all Christ really is. But the question is, first, whether Babylon is literally his seat; and next, supposing it is, if the system connected with it be true, and if the Babylon of Revelation be it.

First, as to the use of Isaiah 14. The statements of the author subvert themselves. In page 165 note, I read, “But when Babylon’s system ceases, and Antichrist arises as the leopard, he at once gilds the scene, and, without destroying the utilities, restores the fascinations of human life.”

Here we have this same person making the world a wilderness, and destroying the cities thereof.

That prophecies, based on events of immediate comfort and consolation to the people of God in their trial at the time the prophecy first alludes to, reach out to final

objects of God's counsels far beyond the limits of the occasion which gives rise to them, I fully recognise—what Lord Bacon called a germinant prophecy. But to suppose that therefore there was a direct literal application of its terms to the ultimate object is a complete error. It is into this error the author has fallen, as we shall see in many examples in examining this subject.

That the king of Babylon is characterised in terms which find their full accomplishment in pride only in Antichrist, I believe. But can we apply the account here given to Antichrist? Clearly not; as the reader will at once see. The king of Babylon, of whom Isaiah 14 disposes, is treated in a wholly opposite manner to Antichrist. And therefore to apply it to him as to a literal king of Babylon is wholly untenable. Antichrist, or the beast whom the author treats as such (and this I do not dispute here), is cast alive with the false prophet into the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone, where Satan is cast afterwards. Whereas in Isaiah 14 the souls of the monarchs in hades are represented as meeting the king of Babylon, and taunting him with the humbling fact that he was become as one of them. As to his body, it was cast out of its grave like an abominable branch, not found in burial with the glory of kings. In a word, though shamefully, the king of Babylon in Isaiah died like another man. That is, he is not the Antichrist king of Babylon whom the author makes him. The application of the passage to a future Babylon and its king literally, is contradicted by the passage itself.

But more than this, the principle of interpretation as to literalism, on which the author goes, is quite wrong too. And this it is very important to remark. I am not denying

that these prophecies reach out beyond the temporary circumstances which gave rise to them; I do not doubt they do. But the author's use of them is entirely wrong, and by its abuse makes this interpretation a hindrance to the discovery of the truth, and tends to discredit the use of them for that discovery.

I do not doubt, for example, that these prophecies will be fulfilled as to Israel. But if I can shew that the forced literal interpretation of the rest is clearly wrong, I discredit the plain literal accomplishment of that which is simple, and all is thrown into doubt. If I must take the king of Babylon literally at the end of time, as here described, in order to take the first verses of the chapter so, all becomes impossible. I must spiritualise these verses, or suppose them fulfilled; because the statements as to this king are contradicted positively by what is revealed of the beast's end.

The truth is, in the midst of the immediate subject of a prophet, the Spirit of God launches out to the further and better blessings which God has in His mind; and this we have to distinguish, without saying that all the prophecy, which does not go beyond the present time perhaps in many particulars, applies to the end. It will be said, How can I distinguish? Just as I understand all Scripture, by the teaching of the Spirit of God ("the spiritual man discerneth all things"), and the use of other scriptures.

"I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven." Here the Lord anticipates the whole result of the power of His name, because a few demons were cast out. Some single circumstance gives the key to, and earnest of, God's dealings in power. But that does not make all the details

of what awakens the prophetic strain have a literal accomplishment in the final hour of that power.

Now, the “him and his children” with whose judgment the sweeping of Babylon with the besom of destruction is connected, is the king whose end is quite contrary to the end of Antichrist or the beast.

Further, if Babylon receives “its final visitation at the coming of the day of the Lord,” it is quite clear that the day of the Lord is used in a sense which does not mean the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment, but some inferior visitation, inferior as to the instrument. Because, on the author’s own shewing (and I agree with him here) the destruction of Babylon takes place under the vials of God’s wrath, before the Lamb, King of kings and Lord of lords, comes forth in judgment, nay, before He has received His commission to act (see page 215). So that it is some inferior instrumental visitation which destroys it, and which visitation of terror and judgment is called the day of the Lord.

This order of events is clear, for in Revelation 19 we have the celebration of Babylon’s judgment, and then the marriage of the Lamb, and then the Lord comes forth on the white horse, judging and making war.

As to the sun being darkened, and the moon, the author, as we have seen in the previous examination of the book, makes them one single event introducing the Lord. Here they are accompanying signs of the day. In Joel the sun is darkened, and the moon turned to blood, before the day comes; and I suppose, if the sea in the appointed sphere becomes literally as the blood of a dead man, the moon is literally turned into blood too. But then that is before the great and terrible day of the

Lord in Joel. I quite agree that the judgment of the day of the Lord has not yet come on the world. Though any signal judgment on a locality is called, anticipatively, the day of the Lord on that place in Scripture.

But it remains equally true that, if the final visitation of Babylon be the day of the Lord, the day of the Lord must be before the coming of the Lord; and if Isaiah 2 be this same time, what very serious considerations will arise as to the other events, and the presence of the church on earth during the day or judgment of the Lord! But my conviction is, that the author has misconceived the whole matter, both as to the signs and the day. His system of making the final day of the Lord precede the Lord's coming (for that is the effect of his statement) is clearly unsound.

But let us examine a little Isaiah 13. Now I say it is impossible for an intelligent person to read that chapter and not see that the coming up of the nations against Babylon is the day of the Lord. "They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand;132 it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore," etc. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." And after describing the signs in the heavens, etc., in the day of the Lord's fierce anger, "And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up. They shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. Every one that is found shall be thrust through," etc. "Their children also shall be dashed to pieces." "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them."

“Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

It is quite clear that “the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.” And that the coming up of these nations was the day of the Lord, though I admit that expressions may reach out in general terms (as verse 11) to further facts, as of the king of Babylon. But when Babylon is mentioned here, as quoted by the author, it is spoken of as taken by the Medes.

And note here, it is Babylon, not Antichrist, nor the beast. The day of the Lord is on Babylon, in whatever sense, not on the beast nor Antichrist. While further, in chapter 14 they are identified, verse 4, which they are not in the author’s system, Antichrist falhng at Jehoshaphat, far away from Babylon.

We will now turn to Jeremiah. If we examine Jeremiah

50 and 51 we shall see the very same thing as in Isaiah. The desolation so that none dwell there is directly attributed to the northern nation, verse 3, the full consequences of her fall by them being in view. This is the Lord’s vengeance, verse 15— they flee to their own land, verse 16—Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had broken Israel’s bones, verse 17.

And here, in the view of restoration, the Lord reaches out beyond the present mercy. It is just worthy of God, because He consulted His own thoughts in this, verse 20. Battle is in the land (it is the vengeance of the Lord’s temple), the weapons of His indignation, as in Isaiah

13:5. And her day is now come, the time that Jehovah visits her. A sword is upon the Chaldeans. Therefore it shall no more be inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.

Behold, a people shall come from the north, and the king of Babylon waxes feeble, anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail. See Jeremiah 51:31, messengers tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end. Now, how does the author represent the king of Babylon, Antichrist, at this time? “I should regard the gathering at Armageddon as the result of the threatened confederacy (alluding to Jer. 51:27, 28, etc., see page 234) against Babylon.”

“It,” the gathering, “will doubtless be the fairest scene of collected glory that the earth had ever witnessed.” “What monarch so glorious as that monarch of monarchs?” etc. (page 208). “We can see the hosts of the West and of all the prophetic earth, summoned around their mighty and indignant leader, and resting for a short moment, in all the proud consciousness of hitherto undisputed greatness, at Armageddon.” Is this the poor king of Babylon, trembling in his city (see Daniel 5), whose mighty men have forborne to fight? Read only from chapter 51:27, the verse quoted by the author as the gathering of the latter day against Babylon, and then on to verse 31, and then chapter 50:41-43, and then again chapter 51:33-37, where we meet with the unfortunate word Nebuchadnezzar again, and compare it with the passages referred to in the “Thoughts”; and the reader will soon see that the statements of the author, and his application of the

passages to the latter day, are a pure fiction of his imagination.

Babylon did fall suddenly in the night of Belshazzar's feast. Compare Jeremiah 51:39-41.

The author's Babylon had long ago been actually taken by the beast, and her system and flesh burned and consumed with fire. Nor had she been guilty of anything against the temple. The same king that had overthrown her system had defiled the temple; but she had done nothing against it. It is not true that Babylon prospered under the change. She attempted revolt, and was dismantled, and gradually decayed till she became a park for wild beasts. At the time of the fall of Babylon the whole imperial order of the world was subverted, and transferred to other hands, and Babylon ceased to be the capital of the earth. The truth is, the "suddenly" does not refer to the destruction, but to the fall. The author says "anything rather than suddenly destroyed." But it is suddenly fallen and destroyed. And if the passage be examined, it will be found that the suddenness is attributed solely to the fall. Literally: "Suddenly has fallen Babylon, and she shall be destroyed," or, prophetically, she has been destroyed. 133 And so the exactest translations translate it: and so does the Septuagint. Alexander attempted to restore it, and make it the seat of empire, and perished in the attempt.

As to Hillah, I do not doubt that it is on the site of Babylon: and how do they know this? From the ruins and desolation of the place, where lions and serpents dwell. Babylon was forty-eight miles round: a small Arab place is at one corner of its site. Does that make Babylon

rebuilt or inhabited? Is it not a proof of the contrary, and of its ruin? Were I to make a bungalow in the yet remaining palaces of Delhi, what would that prove of the great Mogul? Would a Coptic village at Thebes say that the city of the hundred gates was destroyed or not?

The insisting on the word “at” Hillah is futile, being evidently meant to designate generally the locality. Anyone who has examined the plans of Babylon which modern researches afford may easily judge of the matter. What was no doubt the ancient palace is two or three miles north of Hillah,up the river. Birs Nimrod is six miles west from the river, on the east of which Hillah is situated. Hillah is not situated between them at all, though within the limits of ancient Babylon. The surface is generally on the west side arid or marshy, and wild beasts render the visits to the ruins dangerous.

On the whole, I conclude that the system attempted to be drawn from Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50 and 51 is entirely refuted by the examination of the chapters themselves. That there will be a visitation of the world, which is alluded to in Isaiah 13, and which is not yet accomplished, I do not doubt. The writer’s use of the expression “day of the Lord” is most surely quite wrong, and that even on his own shewing, because Babylon is destroyed in the vials, which are the wrath of God, before the Lord rises up from the Father’s throne to execute judgment.

Next, as to the Revelation; in chapter 11134 the great city is held to be Jerusalem: here it is taken for granted to be Babylon. Does not this lead us to call in question the precision of the application of these terms?

Next, in the statements of Isaiah and Jeremiah there is nothing at all about the city being divided into three parts, nor anything that would leave room for it according to the sudden destruction alleged. Moreover, after saying the great city was divided into three parts, it is added, “and great Babylon came in remembrance, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” So that there is something peculiar evidently about the great city, which made it necessary to mention it and great Babylon separately; and when one is divided into three parts, the other comes into remembrance. Yet this passage is quoted to shew that the great Babylon is a city. Is it not rather a proof that there is some mystical idea attached to the great city which made it necessary to distinguish it from great Babylon? It would have been more to the point to have quoted “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” But this would not have answered, because then (chap. 17) the woman was the commercial system, which Antichrist had espoused, and which ruled the ten kingdoms; and her being the city spoils the literality of the matter as a city, though as a seat of a system we may conceive the system to go by the name of a city; but that is not the case here, because the system has entirely changed.

Further, what is the great suddenness of destruction on this system? First, Euphrates is dried up; so all her supplies and commerce are stopped before this. Indeed she had already been taken possession of by Antichrist, and her system and rule totally destroyed—just what Cyrus did to Babylon. Next, she is taken by the kings of the east135 (by the way, the nations in Jeremiah all come from the north). Then she is divided into three

parts, I suppose by the earthquake; and then she comes in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of His wrath. What is the peculiar suddenness here, such as the author presents it? and does not the passage lead one away rather from a real city? The great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came into remembrance.

She had been Babylon the great, made desolate, naked, her flesh eaten, and she burnt with fire, by the ten horns, already at this time. She (that is, with whom the kings of the earth had committed fornication, chapter 17:2), and she that is destroyed at the end, chapter 18:9, is she with whom the kings of the earth had done so.

Further, as to Babylon of old—of course Babylon of old is not the Babylon of the Revelation. That is clear enough. Nobody thinks Revelation 18 suits the city of Nebuchadnezzar. I hardly know what was passing in the mind of the author when he reasons thus, save that he has got it so occupied with a literal city. As far as it goes it would prove that Isaiah and Jeremiah do not speak of the Babylon if Revelation, for Jeremiah speaks by name of Nebuchadnezzar, and both of his city.

But he has trodden on unhappy ground here too, in contrasting Nebuchadnezzar's city with "a city of merchants"; because the only time this expression is used, it is used of Nebuchadnezzar's city in Nebuchadnezzar's time. The Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar is specifically designated as a city of merchants, and his country as a land of traffic. On this there can be no mistake: the reader has only to read through Ezekiel 17, where the expression is found in verse 4, he will soon see what Babylon is meant. This

example just shews us what all the theorising of the author is worth, and how far the system built upon such data can be trusted. Scarcely one statement is made in this long account of Babylon which is not subverted by scripture and by facts.

As regards the use of Babylon in the Revelation. It is certain, like all the rest of that book, that it is taken from the Old Testament prophecies, changing what was to be changed, as the description of New Jerusalem from Isaiah 60. The Jerusalem of the Revelation could be much more reasonably supposed to be the earthly Jerusalem of Isaiah, than this the earthly Babylon of that prophet and Jeremiah. There is a literal Babylon, and a mystical one; a literal Jerusalem, and a mystical one.

But to pursue the character of Babylon. It had this double character, commerce and idolatry anciently. First, it was “a land of traffic, a city of merchants”; “the emporium,” as an able writer on these subjects calls it, “of the world.” But Scripture suffices us; and the garment of Shinar at a very early period, and the city of merchants in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, shew us clearly for what the city was famous, as it naturally from its situation would be,136 as Bagdad in a measure since. Next, it was full of idolatry. Isaiah 21:9; so Jeremiah 50:38. “It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.” Hence in Isaiah the controversy between Jehovah and these idols is settled in judging Babylon, and begins, “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth.” Thus Babylon had been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that had made all the earth drunken: the nations had drunken of her wine; therefore the nations were mad. Jer. 51:7; compare v. 15-18.) These two points are taken up in the way of analogy. Let any reflecting

Christian say which is the real full departure from God, commerce or idolatry. And as then the denial of the glory and unity of the divine Being was the aim of Satan and idolatry, so now the denial of the sole glorious and efficacious work of the Mediator is his object—of that by which God brings men back to Himself in grace.

Hence we have the means of judging of the nature of the corruption of the mystic Babylon.

As to the merchandise, as he of leopard grace is to introduce all that characterises him in the eyes of the author, I know not why in the city taste should not be found as well as luxury. Now the description of chapter 18 is of the city. The note seeks to avoid this, by saying they are not the characteristics of her condition: but under the leopard government, when the commercial system had been destroyed, they ought to be. But the real truth is, it is all confusion.

In saying that this trade in souls is only carried on in England, because livings are sold, and thus again screening Popery, surely the writer must be wonderfully ignorant of what is going on where Romanism exists. The sale of livings is bad enough, no doubt, but it is not exactly trading in souls. But what is money for masses? 137 As to the character of the assailants of Babylon, and another unearthly host who give the final blow after Babylon is taken by the Eastern kings, the answer is simple. The unearthly assailants come first in the prophecy, not last. That angelic power may secure success to human arms is possible, as when David hears a sound of going over the mulberry trees; and there seems something analogous in Joel also. That there is accompanying divine power is true. But it accompanies,

and does not succeed. Here in Isaiah 13 it is identified with a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together. Anyone reading Isaiah 13:2-5 will see that it is impossible to make of it a temporal judgment of nations attacking first, and a direct judgment of God afterwards.

I have already remarked that making this latter the day of the Lord is untenable; because, on the author's system, the judgment of Babylon is God's wrath138 before Christ's coming forth in judgment, and the day of the Lord has not this general sense with him; since, though it may set in in heaven, it is one definite limited time, and moreover marked by the Son being "invested with His appointed power" (page 103). Now the judgment of Babylon is on earth: so that the day of the Son's judgment must have arrived there. Yet it was God's wrath before the exercise of the Son's judgment. So that the whole system subverts itself.

Lastly, as to her being drunk with the blood of the saints, first, we must remember that the fulness of God's own truth "will" be not merely protected, but fostered "in its proper sphere by the system of Babylon. Now if, while the commercial system rules at Babylon before Antichrist's actings for himself, a testimony is raised up at Jerusalem, and she gets drunk with their blood, she must go out of her way in bitter persecution, instead of even fostering truth in its sphere. But where in Scripture is it said that there will be this testimony, called in page 6 "its closing testimony against the last forms of human evil"? "Forms" is clearly wrong, because we have seen it is a new testimony which is thus raised up, namely, the witnesses; but where in Scripture is there this bright testimony against the last form but one,

namely, unsubjugated Babylon? Holding fast the truth, I find clinging to the written word in perilous times, not denying Christ's name. But I do not find in Scripture this bright closing Christian testimony. There is a call to come out of Babylon, that we may not partake of her sins. The author says, "I doubt not," but that is all the proof he gives of it.

But then there is another difficulty. Not only is this general character attached to Babylon, not only was it one main thing that characterised her: she was drunk with their blood, so that the apostle was astonished at her (not at commerce being carried from the west to the east, as is curiously alleged, page 240). It is added at the close of chapter 18, at her final destruction, "in her was found the blood of all saints." So that this attached itself specially to her on to the end. She was guilty of all the blood of saints. Whoever might be her instrument, she really was the guilty one. She inherited it; as Jerusalem had from Abel to her day, so Babylon all that, and much more. Surely it was not commerce. In Jerusalem's case it was the ecclesiastical power which was guilty, let kings or rulers have lent their hand or not. And who has been guilty in all ages of the blood of the saints, if it be not ecclesiastical power? Heaven is to rejoice over her, and the holy apostles and prophets. What had they to say to commerce? And even in the closing scene, in the final historical form of evil, and its last energies, who is it causes all to be slain that will not worship the beast? It is the second prophetic beast with horns like a lamb.

Hence it will not do to say "before her subjugation to Antichrist," for in her was all this blood found. It is not merely something at which we cannot wonder that such a thing should be, considering her nature, when

provoked, peaceable as it naturally was; it was characteristic of her at all times, and yet the apostle was astounded to see it should be so. Nay, so was it identified with her that all the slain blood was found in her.

As to the use of Jeremiah 51:63, 64: there is nothing that I see very peculiar in the denunciation. Babylon was to sink, and not rise again. Nor did she ever, though many trials were made. Military power first, and God's providential interference afterwards, ever hindered her rising; for the judgment of God's word was upon her. But this passage rather supposes that, but for this stone attached to her, she would or might have risen, and thus subsisted though fallen. Suddenness is attributed to the ruin of Babylon in Revelation, which the author's system quite sets aside; for, as we have seen, she is taken twice, and her whole system destroyed the first time, before she is finally judged of God. Whereas in Jeremiah there is a regular account of her attack and taking like any other city: and when fallen she was never to rise again.

Taking a stone for a corner is all a mistake of the passage. Save a few foundations, Babylon was not built of stone; it is a mere figure. This is the passage: "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner," etc. This speaks figuratively of the destruction of her power as a mountain, not literally of the materials of the city, which were not stone at all.

As to the Arabian not pitching his tent there, it is evidently, if the passage be examined, his making a settled encampment. It is added, “neither shall the shepherd make his fold there.”

And the remark I may make in passing is, that the Babylon which is thus to be destroyed is the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency. The application of this to the Babylon of that day is evident. But what have the Chaldees to do with this commercial system of the ten kingdoms, which is transported with stork’s wings from the west?

The author urges in the notes that Babylon cannot be an ecclesiastical system, for it would then be called adulteress, not harlot, because Israel and the church are spoken of as married. Now, let it be remembered that abominations (that is, idols) are what characterise the woman, not commerce. But as to the point itself—it is in contrast with the church. It is not the church properly speaking that is called the harlot. But as to the objection itself, it is quite impossible to say here that the church is represented as married, because her marriage is recounted in chapter 19 as subsequent to the destruction of Babylon. Paul’s object was to present her as a chaste virgin to Christ. And the Lord will present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. So that the church is represented, as to its actual condition, as a bride, not as married, though the figure of the love of husband and wife is used as an image of the love of Christ to the church. Nor am I aware of any passage where the church is married, though such an anticipative expression as being His wife I could suppose used by faith. Earthly Jerusalem is called the married wife. The remark therefore of the

author is not only incorrect, but further, the real fact tends to confirm the doctrine he seeks to subvert by its denial.

Drunk with the wine of her fornication is not, he says, a religious yoke. But fornication is the habitual word for idolatry in Scripture, as is well known; and we have found it in ancient Babylon, which (the author says) had not commerce. How did she then, as a cup in the Lord's hand, make the nations drunk? Not by war. Her idolatry was the bane of ancient Babylon in the Lord's eye, commercial as she was. And the author must be astonishingly ignorant of what superstition is, heavy yoke as it is, to speak of it as he does, as if it did not lead more strongly than wealth itself the will and passions of men, as slaves, but as willing devoted slaves, their hearts drunken with it. Let the author go into a country where Popery sways the population, and see what the state of the mass as to it is. It is certain that fornication is the habitual term in Scripture for idolatry, and drunkenness is used for the ancient Babylonish influence; and equally certain that the author must be totally ignorant of the operation or the effect of Popery, galling as the yoke may be, to have penned such a note.

But the next note is important in another point of view. "This woman" "is to the city of man what the woman clothed with the sun," etc. "is to the city of God." Now it may be remarked here, that the heavenly Jerusalem is wholly excluded from relationship with Christianity; for this is what the author makes of the woman clothed with the sun. (See pages 139, 142.) The system of Babylon, or commercial supremacy, is connected with its city Babylon, and Christianity is connected with its city Jerusalem on earth. There is this difference, "when

Babylon's system is separated from its city, it perishes" (though I should think there was commercial supremacy away from Babylon, if the exchanges of our great cities govern (page- 243), so that even this is quite unfounded, according to the author himself): "when Jerusalem's system is separated from its city, as it even now is, it does not perish." It is "to be united to its own city, and to be exalted in the earth." Now here we have Babylon's system connected with Babylon on earth, and Christianity as it now is connected with Jerusalem on earth as its own city. That God may reckon the children to Jerusalem by a figure during her desolation to comfort her, may be. But where this is done, as I believe it is in Galatians 4, the apostle carefully distinguishes Jerusalem above as our mother. Now, what I ask here is, In what plainer terms could Christianity be made earthly, and identified with the earthly Jerusalem as its own city, to the exclusion of the heavenly, than it is here? It may be desolate and cast out now because it has not, but is separated from its own city. But it shall be united to it—and as so united to it, to Jerusalem on earth as its own city, it will be exalted in the earth. Is not the consolation and glory of Christianity, the hope of Christianity, identified with its union with Jerusalem, as much as the glory of Babylon's system is identified with its connection with its own city Babylon? That is, Jerusalem on earth is the own city of Christianity as it is now, and the exaltation of Christianity is its union to it as such.

I confess I have little hope that those who have quietly accepted such a statement should get out of it when all its nakedness is placed before them; because they never could have received it, if their sense of the other thing—

of the heavenly Jerusalem, of the very nature, and position, and calling of the church—had not been already dimmed, if not destroyed. But I do trust that there are yet some hearts, fully as they believe in the exaltation of God's earthly system at Jerusalem, that are not prepared to make the earthly Jerusalem the city of the church of God—who know that the system they belong to has better hopes, and a better city, the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God—the heavenly Jerusalem. This has its relation to earth, and the Revelation treats especially of this (see page 150). But it has its own relationship, and never becomes the heavenly Jerusalem. Indeed, this note is a total denial of the account the New Testament gives of the church's place, and its identification with another Jerusalem, which is not earthly but heavenly.

It is no very great wonder that the author has only an earthly commercial city Babylon for the great harlot, when he has only an earthly city Jerusalem for the church itself. The denial of a spiritual Babylon is no great wonder, when there is an entire setting aside of the heavenly Jerusalem. If we cannot discern the spiritual heavenly nature of the church's system, it is no wonder if we do not see the spiritual evil which has corrupted the earth with its fornications. If the church's hopes and faith are to rest in Jerusalem, and exaltation in the earth, it is no wonder that something gross and palpable, like commerce and a commercial city, arrest the eye as the evil to be feared and judged on the earth.

"Having seven heads and ten horns." I have in part remarked on this. If it was really a question of transferring the power from the heads to the horns, it would be singular that the Spirit of God should shew the

horns uncrowned when they had their authority from God, and crowned when they have it from Satan. But if the heads are systems which govern, how is the beast invested with the concentrated authority? and how Satan? The heads do not govern if they are merely systems used to govern by. The crowns are on the systems, yet the dragon controls by them. But Antichrist has these heads too. But on him neither heads nor horns are crowned, and yet he is merely the executive power at this time; so that they ought to be much more crowned on him than on the dragon, who controls instead of being controlled by them. It is evident that such an explanation and use of the symbol is quite untenable.

That the seven crowned heads of the dragon symbolise the completeness of Satan's authority in the Roman earth, whatever the successive forms of it may have been, is very simple. That the Roman empire in its proper Antichristian form should be invested with this full authority, or at least its identity recognised, while local royalty or authority was divided among ten kingdoms, and the horns therefore crowned, is easy too to understand. That the corrupt system intended by Babylon should exercise a paramount influence, and thus, while corrupting the kings of the earth, govern the beast, having complete authority really herself, though having neither heads nor horns—this also is not difficult of apprehension. The last forms of evil may be historically given in chapter 13; the general outline and description, together with the connection of the beast and Babylon, in chapter 17; but the definite historical relationships attempted to be given in the author's system are contradicted by the symbols themselves. The

heads crowned on the dragon, who uses them as mere systems, and uncrowned at the same time on the beast, whom they govern, and yet at the same time another system (which is yet one of the heads) having the whole authority, cannot hang together.

Besides, the woman (i.e., one of the systems) cannot govern all, while seven heads are seven systems which govern. Moreover, the supremacy of civil to ecclesiastical authority (page 241) having characteristically marked the present period, how can the government of the kingdoms (the horns) by the ecclesiastical system, which is one of the crowned heads, mark it characteristically too at the same time? That is, the supremacy of the civil power over the system characterises the present period in page 241, and the supremacy of the system over the civil power characterises it in page 285, and in other places (as page 177). That the religious system is one of the governing systems may be seen in page 229. It is a wonder, too, that if the heads were crowned because the systems were reigning, the woman, that system of systems which ruled all, should not be; though indeed it seems a complete confusion to make the woman one of the heads, and the woman too.

In the following note we again find this effort to screen Romanism from being the designated corrupter of the earth, guilty of the blood of the saints. “Some peculiar system of evil, such as Romanism or the like.” All the Christians in the country have betrayed their entire ignorance of God’s mind in this matter. The author, that is, alone possesses it. Universal consent is not worth a great deal here, it appears.139 I have already remarked on the gross inconsistency of saying that this system will

foster the fulness of God's own truth in its own proper sphere, and its being characterised by being drunken with the blood of the saints. What has always been shedding their blood, if it be not a priestly system? What but Satan's religious instruments, who to set up his authority had by demons denied the unity of the Godhead, or the unity of mediatorship?

Besides, again we find the proud ecclesiastical systems, subdued by the proud secular power, while this, if secular power means anything, is to be governed by the system. I say means anything, because the war is not between commerce and the religious system. It is not commerce that has been for ages struggling with popish influence; and therefore the "proud secular system" is merely a vague expression to escape a whole mass of inconsistency. And I repeat, When was commerce found drunk with the blood of the saints? When was priestly power not, when it dared? That infidelity many oppose and persecute it too, I dare say: but that is not Babylon. It is the germ of the blasphemous, not of the Babylonish, name.

As to the next note, I must repeat the beast is not Antichrist, though Antichrist become (by absorbing all its power) practically the beast at the end. Besides, if in "was and is not and now is" "the present time were fixed as being at the period when John saw the vision," how ever can the beast mean Antichrist? Is it not a plain proof that it cannot, that it must mean the Roman empire? I do not believe that the words apply to John's time, or indeed to any other time, but are characteristic of the beast. Read verse 8— "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." Now how is this Antichrist?

How did he first exist, and then not, and then ascend out of the bottomless pit?

That the Roman empire, confessedly the subject of these prophetic statements as the fourth beast of Daniel, should be thus characterised if it be to be found again connected with diabolic power, is very simple indeed. That the author, having settled it to be Antichrist, leaves it to time to unfold, I can well understand. But why this sudden influx of uncertainty, save that the attempt to explain this in the same way as all the rest, would have upset the whole system from beginning to end? For here it must be Antichrist executive or governing; but then the passage is inexplicable on this system. It is left for time to unfold. But at the close of the vers.e we have, I think, plain evidence of the descriptive force of this expression. “They shall wonder, seeing the beast, that he was, and is not, and yet shall be present.” This is what occasions the wonder, and yet it does not relate to the then time. They see the beast. But how that he “is not,” save as characterising him? “Is not” can be applied neither to Antichrist in the time of John after the word “was,” nor to the Roman empire in any way. But if these words characterise the beast to those who see it, their sense is plain enough. As prophetically used, the Greek for “shall be present” does not, I conceive, create any difficulty. The use of “one is,” in verse 10, cannot be brought as analogous, because it is explanation, and not symbolic description.

It should be remembered that the ten kings receive power one hour with the beast. That is, that while recognised in their place as such, the beast is recognised in his place as such. The beast therefore cannot be spoken of as wielding all authority under the

woman while the horns are governed by his heads, which are the systems whose power he wields executively, though ridden by one of them. The kings I have already examined. It is in vain that the writer speaks of “assuming their full and proper character.” He speaks of all the forms of government and kingship that have existed in the prophetic earth. Besides, the theocracy departed from its full and proper character when the monarchy arose (not to say anything again of the introduction of God’s own government of His own people in such a chapter as a part of the thing described). As to the ten horns, I suppose no one confounds them with the seven kings. These latter have been generally identified with the heads, but never with the horns. But I take notice of this note for the purpose of remarking that it is never said, that it is when Antichrist is exalted into supreme authority, that he and the horns destroy the woman. That is a statement of the author’s not of the Revelation. It is stated that they will do so, but it is not stated that they will do it then. Maintaining this point is the hinge of the author’s system, because it is the substitution of Antichrist’s for the woman’s supreme authority. But it is a point assumed without any statement of the kind being found in Scripture. Thrown out as a thought to be discussed, I should have no objection; but as a basis of a system, it ought to be proved.

That the event will take place is recognised on all hands. That it is the time of the substitution of one system for another at the moment of the dragon’s giving his throne to the beast is as yet unproved.140 As to “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen,” I have already commented on what is assumed here, the identity of the Babylon judged

in Jeremiah with the Babylon of Revelation— a statement, it seems to me, wholly unfounded, and the foundations of which we have seen to be subverted by the least examination of the statements made. I confine myself here to Babylon of the Revelation.

I have supposed myself that there were two destructions of Babylon in the Revelation. But the examination of the question (to which I was led by circumstances entirely foreign to this discussion) has convinced me that it cannot be sustained. When the great city as a mere exterior thing is separated from the idea of great Babylon, as in chapter 16:19, then indeed I can make such a distinction. But the destruction of Babylon is her destruction. She is utterly burned, chapter 17:16, and chapter 18:8. Her plagues come in one day. The words here used are used in chapter 14:8,141 and the same reason given. There, where an orderly series of events is given, it is evident that the fall alluded to is very hear the close of the history of evil and of judgment.

Further, the ground on which the Babylon of chapter 18 as well as in chapter 14:8 is judged is that by which the Babylon of chapter 17:2 is characterised, her judgment being that which was to be shewn to the prophet. It is the Babylon of chapter 17 which commits fornication. But the Babylon of chapter 18 is judged for this same fornication. The judgment is identical. And when the judgment of chapter 18 is spoken of in connection with this burning with fire, it is added “for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” This judgment with fire is attributed to the ten horns and the beast in chapter 17.

I may add here, that in Jeremiah, the destruction of the Babylon of that day by the Medes is called the work of

the Lord of hosts, His vengeance, His day come, the day that He visits her, etc. I think anyone carefully reading these two chapters must see that there is one judgment described there, as regards the earthly Babylon, with the abiding consequences of that judgment, as when He overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; but that, whoever the instruments, the judgment was God's.

But to return: as regards "the destruction, not of the woman, but of the city," the answer is, the woman is the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth. What morally represents the city is the harlot who corrupts the earth with her fornications, and who was drunken with the blood of the saints: and this is the Babylon destroyed, burned with fire, in whom all the blood of saints in the earth is found. Moreover, if Antichrist destroy her, it is the ten horns or kingdoms as well, so that it is the nations (not of Jeremiah, no doubt, but the nations).

Next, the attempted change of chapter 18 from a woman to a city cannot hold: because Babylon was fallen and become the cage of unclean birds, that is (according to the author), judged as a city, because the nations had been drunk with the wine of the wrath (poison) of her fornication. That is, she is the harlot of chapter 16:2 who is judged. It is another voice which, because of the announced judgment, calls upon the people of God to come out of her, and not partake of her sins, that they may not of her plagues too which are to come upon her in one day.

The rest of the note I hardly know whether to treat as an inadvertency or as confusion.. "In verses 3 and 7 we go back to present time—she saith in her heart, etc. We

may say therefore, that the preface continues to the end of verse 3, after which the description recurs to a previous period." I should have thought "third" a mere mistake (as verses 1-3 may be considered a sort of preface), and paid no attention to it, if verse 3 had not in point of fact spoken of a previous period, though there be not the present form. But then, if verse 3 does refer to this previous period, the Babylon of chapter 18 is identified with the previous chapter, verse 3 giving the cause, as verse 2 the fact, of her judgment. Hence the embarrassment as to verse 3. Nor is there any other than verse 3 to which the remark could apply.

That Babylon embraces more than her mere harlot character is clear, just as ancient Babylon did more than her idolatry; but that on which the judgment fell was not the cause of the judgment, though the latter might be involved in the ruin. The people that were judged, because of their idolatry and the wrong done to the Lord's house, were judged in all their souls clung to. So here: the harlotry of Babylon, her abominations, may be the cause of her judgment, but much more than that falls in the judgment, and causes the dismay of all connected with her. Hence the great city, though the seat of Babylon's wickedness, may be distinguished from it, as in chapter 16:19 is the case. In this respect the great whore and the woman or city are considered apart, but not the woman and the city.

The symbol is not changed in chapter 18 from a woman to a city. The two are mixed up, because in chapter 18 the woman had been explained to be the great city. Verses 8 and 10 need only be read to be convinced of this. No doubt there she is spoken of as a city, but that city is the woman of chapter 17.

As to “Come out of her, my people,” and the time they belong to, it is evident there is nothing about it in the Revelation. It is evident that the statement is founded on the assumption that Jeremiah and Isaiah speak of this Babylon, and this destruction, for there is not a word to found it on in Revelation. Moreover, the passage alluded to as designating the time has no similar call to come out at all. Where there is, as in Jeremiah 50, the passage goes on to speak of “this Nebuchadnezzar.” In chapter 51 is it declared to be the vengeance of His temple. In Isaiah 48, save a probable allusion to Cyrus, there is nothing positively to decide the time.

But is it not strange, while on the very same announcement of Babylon’s fall in chapter 14:8, it is stated that it is a testimony previous to the final Antichrist state—a testimony which ought to be given now—here, the solemn call connected with it is said to be addressed to Israel? And how comes it that this very solemn appeal to have done with her who corrupts the earth, who sheds the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, is applied only to Jews? Here is taking away Scripture from the church in good earnest. Why is it a sin to suppose there may be believing Jews addressed in Matthew 24, when Jerusalem is spoken of, and a virtue to think they are Jews when Babylon is spoken of (that Babylon who was drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus)? Here is a woman who corrupts and sits on (or by) peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, but those called to come out of her are the remnant of Israel: and that during the church period to which the Revelation applies, and who of course are to receive this testimony though in an unconverted state, and who are the persons who have suffered of her, and who are to be

avenged of her. In Matthew, where all is connected with Jerusalem and the hour of tribulation prophesied to come on the Jewish people, this is impossible. And why so? It suits the author's system. Christianity is not to be in the Roman earth recognised at this time.

But if there be any meaning in the previous note, these verses refer to the previous period. So that even on this ground it is all wrong. As to the rest of the note, there is nothing of being on the point of seizing Jerusalem for the last time in Joel 2. In Zechariah 14 Jerusalem is taken.

The marginal reading of Zechariah 12:2 has nothing of the kind stated, but just the contrary. Zechariah 14:14 may be translated as in the English margin. But I prefer the common translation, because of what is taught in chapter 12, which certainly does not suppose Judah to be fighting against Jerusalem, but the contrary. Neither is the writer warranted in saying a part of Judah leagued with the invading Gentiles, because it is said "Judah" also shall fight.

Another reason against the marginal translation (which is no doubt a very good rendering of the Hebrew) is, that the preceding verse speaks of the judgment consequent on the Gentiles fighting against Jerusalem, "a great tumult from the Lord of hosts." Now this would seem a strange time to bring in "Judah also shall fight, as being leagued with the Gentiles." Nor do I think chapter 12:5, 6, will bear the interpretation of the author, as if Judah was then fighting against Jerusalem.

That Israel is God's battle-axe against His enemies, I believe: but how against Babylon, if they are called to flee and deliver their souls because of the day of her

visitation from the Lord? And where is the progressiveness of her desolation, when in one hour she is made desolate—an instantaneousness which was used before to prove that it could not be the judgment on ancient Babylon? Moreover, the passage where the desolation is declared so sudden, when she is utterly burned with fire, because the Lord is strong that judges her, speaks of that very judgment from which the merchants, removed afar because of the smoke of her burning, wail it as come in one hour.

So that all this subverts the plain statements of the word. And if we take the letter of the prophecy alluded to in Isaiah, it refers to the destruction of Babylon by the nations. The Medes are stirred up against them.

But there is another most material objection to the whole of this statement. The events alluded to as Jerusalem are identified with the appearing of the Lord. Thus it is the nations are cut off, and thus it is that the remnant wails. But the judgment of Babylon is the wrath of God before the Lord comes at all. Nor can Israel be the battle-axe of the Lord's judgment while rejected and under wrath.

As to the next note on kings of the earth, there is surely a confusion between the kings of the earth and the ten horns. The ten horns had, long before according to the author, burned her with fire; and I do not see why they should mourn over her burning so much. But they are spoken of here in their character as kings, as the merchants and shipmasters in theirs. Whereas the ten horns are much more the power of the ten kingdoms in their general state. They may burn her, the kings may mourn over her: but the note evidently identifies the

kings of the earth and the ten horns: but then the chapter contradicts itself. I do not feel it necessary to dwell on the last note. Miserable as the manufacturing system is morally, certainly England has done more to fill the world by emigration than all other nations.

On the whole, I conclude that the author's system as to Babylon is untenable, firstly, because the examination of the chapters of the Old Testament proves his use of them to be a violation of their plainest statements, and their application to the results of the latter day, as related in the Revelation, impossible.

Secondly, because the character actually attached to Babylon is another character than that given to her in the chapter itself: his only passage for the character of Babylon as a system in chapter 17 being drawn from chapter 18 which is her condition when the system alleged to be called Babylon is, according to the author, destroyed.

Thirdly, because the Scriptures actually give another principle or mystery of iniquity which is to result in the apostasy or the man of sin, which is entirely different from the one asserted by the author.

Fourthly, because his statements as to the day of the Lord connected with it subvert his own system as to what that day is: the ruin of Babylon taking place under God's judgments before Christ takes the power, whereas the day of the Lord commences when the Son is invested with His appointed power.

Fifthly, because the statements of the author as to Antichrist contradict altogether the passages which he alleges as to the king of Babylon.

His distinction of the woman and the city is equally unsustained. First, because the scriptures say the woman is the city; and next, to allege no other reason, because the kings are spoken of as committing with the woman of chapter 17 the sin for which the city of chapter 18 is judged.

I do not recapitulate all the reasons here—merely what bring into relief some of the great principles. One can hardly over estimate the importance of the error as misleading as to the real evil of the latter day, and unsettling, by the loosest use of Scripture, every principle of sound interpretation. I trust God will keep His saints out of the prevailing snare of commerce. For they that will be rich will fall into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. That a warning against it may be useful in England is very possible; but the simple-hearted saint passes through it as a service, and has done with it—he cannot with idolatry and ecclesiastical authority: it is the net of Satan himself.

Chapters 19, 20, And Part Of 21

We are told here that “the conclusion of each of the visions” “has led us to the period called in Scripture the end of the age (Matthew 13:39; chap. 28:20), when the Lord Jesus will come from heaven with His angels, and take His saints to meet Him in the air.”

We have here “the results of the Lord’s coming, and of the resurrection of the saints, unfolded. I say the results of his coming, and of the resurrection, because neither of these events are themselves described.”

We have here collected together a whole series of proofs of the evil of setting up a system. There is scarce a statement which is not an exposure of the author's own system, when it is examined.

The first I do not cite as very material, but as shewing the way in which the author is exclusively engrossed with what is earthly and of Antichrist. The last three verses apply to Antichrist,142 perhaps we may say the last five. And therefore "the sphere of this chapter is the prophetic or Roman earth." In the chapter the marriage of the Lamb, and the preparation of the church for it, is celebrated. Heaven is opened, and Christ comes forth as the Word of God and King of kings and Lord of lords for universal rule; for I suppose the author will not confine the above titles and the rule announced in Psalm 2 to the Roman or prophetic earth. Yet, though the marriage of the Lamb be sung in heaven, and the Lord come forth from heaven for universal dominion, the author sees nothing but the opposition of Antichrist and the kings of the Roman earth. The Roman earth is the sphere of the chapter. Again, "neither of these events (Christ's coming and the resurrection) are themselves described." This was necessary to the author's system, because of Christendom, whose judgment was to be all settled before Antichrist's visitation, and the author must make Christ come to receive the saints of Christendom. Besides, the marriage of the Lamb had taken place. Now let the reader turn to the chapter, and see what is found there; whether it is merely a result of His coming, or His coming to earth.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war.…

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Now I suppose, when heaven is opened, and the armies which are in heaven follow the Lord, it is something like an account of "the event "of His coming. At least it is generally supposed from Scripture that He comes with His saints. "They that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." And it is by the brightness of His coming that Antichrist is to be destroyed. I know not where we have the coming of Christ to earth more or so much described. Surely seeing heaven opened is not a result of His coming.

But there are other points here, besides this most extraordinary statement. We read, "The end of the age," "when the Lord will come from heaven with His angels, and take His saints to meet Him in the air." And again, "we should have found His coming with His angels and the gathering together of His saints described: and accordingly these events are not passed over in those parts of scripture which do give the history and end of Christendom. (See Matthew 13.) But this is not the object of the Revelation." Now, first, there is not a word of His coming with His angels in Matthew 13. It is only said the Son of man shall send them forth. But, further, the age ends, and the new age begins when Christ rises up from the Father's throne. His receiving the saints, therefore, cannot be on His coming, because the new age has then begun; and, therefore, it is not and cannot be "at the end of this age." For the new has decidedly, according to the author, begun. (See page 11.) Christ cannot come with His angels to gather His saints without its being actually the new age. And this is not a mere question of time. The two ages are characterised

by this difference, God acting for Christ, and Christ invested with His appointed power. This then is clearly totally wrong according to the author's system. The Lord Jesus cannot come in the period called in Scripture the end of that age, because what characterises143 it is His sitting on God's throne and God's acting for Him. It is never said in Scripture, "the end of the age, when the Lord Jesus will come from heaven with His angels." Matthew 13:39 says He will send forth His angels.

As to the command in Matthew 28:20, it is quite inconsistent with the prohibition to preach peace by Jesus Christ enforced on the witnesses. They were to go to all the Gentiles (the identical words used for those to be gathered to Jehoshaphat), and in this mission Christ would be with them to the end of the age. But in a vast portion of the world, the centre of all its energies, the Lord will not be with them at all to the end of the age: the Gentile profession of Christianity will be withdrawn.

Is it not, too, a curious thing that the harvest only applies to the place where the tares have not ripened to full maturity, and that when they have ripened, then there is no harvest at all?

Or, if "the tares are never guilty of any act of blasphemous rejection of God," and if "they remain to the end quietly growing by the side of the wheat," how do those that were tares in the Roman earth commit an act of blasphemy all at once, and so cease to be tares, or to seek admission into the garners of heaven—strange description as this is of the devil's seed in the earth? These last are to be killed in the earth, while the former are taken out of the earth (before even the Lord comes to judge Antichrist) to an unseen place of torment. And

note here the Lord has come144 to receive the saints, and has judged the wicked on the earth, before ever He appears to judge Antichrist. It used to be alleged that we, even the saints, must wait His appearing to be caught up to meet Him. But let that pass. He shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing. Now by the appearing or brightness of His coming He will destroy the man of sin. The coming of the Son of man will be like lightning. Now what is this coming and judgment of the quick on earth before ever He appears at all,145 carried on by angels? When the last trumpet sounds, the final blow is "administered by the Son of man Himself, returning in the glory of His power" (page 129). In this very chapter heaven is opened after the marriage of the Lamb, for the earthly judgment of Antichrist.146 I do not here enlarge on the Scripture statement that the tares are gathered together first to be burned, which the author always assiduously passes over. But either the Son of man does not appear at all for the judgment of the tares and the rapture of the saints, or He does not come like lightning, appearing for the destruction of Antichrist. For, according to the author, after both tares and wheat are reaped, the apostates are found gathered together against Him.

But the truth is, the field is the world in the fullest sense. And nothing can be more absurd or unscriptural than to say that the ripening of the devil's seed makes them cease to be tares. Gathering together the tares in bundles is not taking them out of the earth. It is well for the reader to remember that Scripture never speaks of Christendom at all. It speaks of a certain field called the world, in which Christ sowed good seed and the devil bad seed; but the assertion that when these were ripe, it

ceased thereby to be the field at all (though it is admitted there were saints hidden in caves in it) is the most gratuitous assertion possible.

I do not venture beyond the contradictions which are on the face of these statements, because I believe them to be so wholly foreign to Scripture, that the difficulty is to find thoughts common to both, so as to compare them. But I would ask the reader this, Is, or is not, the coming of the Lord to earth connected with the judgment of the Antichristian power of evil in 2 Thessalonians, Jude, Matthew 24, etc.? If it be, the whole system must fall. Christ has come. It is an event not spoken of here, where Antichrist is judged, because it has happened already. He has not only received His saints, but judged all the quick on the professing earth, or Christendom, and Babylon even in the prophetic earth. The brightness of His coming147 is a thing past. The lightning has flashed long ago, and the great transgressor remains untouched and undismayed. He is come with clouds, every eye has seen Him—yea, seen Him execute judgment too; and there they are undismayed, ready to confront Him in battle. As to the wailing of the tribes, or the standing afar off Babylon's burning, and all the earth being moved at her fall, this may be reconciled as it can. If these things had happened without the Lord coming in clouds, we might well suppose all this. But it is to be remembered He has come. His coming and receiving the saints without judging the earth I can conceive: but the quick have been judged on earth in all Christendom.

But here again the system of the author subverts itself in another point. "They [the saints] are evidently recognised in the commencement of this chapter as being above with the Lord in glory." Hence, of course,

the Lord had come to receive them, and indeed (as we have seen) to judge the tares also. But Babylon, we are told, was at this very moment judged, the final blow given by the Lord at the moment when He takes His saints to meet Him in the air. Now Babylon was destroyed under the vials. But (page 215) “commission to act is given to Christ as soon as the ministration of the vials ends. He will then quit the throne of the Father.” So the Lord has come to take His saints, and has given the final blow to Babylon at the same moment, when He has not left the throne of His Father, and has not yet received commission to act at all. Yet that had passed too, for which “He comes in glory and in divine majesty, seated in the clouds” (page 204).

But, further, “They [the saints] are evidently recognised in the commencement of this chapter as being above with the Lord in glory.” I do not doubt this. The author quotes verse 1 as proof. But why not when the same thing almost word for word occurs elsewhere, as chapters 11, 7 and 14, etc.? There it is anticipative. Here they are evidently recognised as being above. I do not see why it proves it in one place, and only anticipates it in the other. We have seen that according to the alleged order of events the saints cannot be yet there.

The truth is, the author cannot get over the fact that the saints are taken away, and that most important events happen before the Lord comes to destroy Antichrist. By making besides, and before that, a judging of the quick on the earth by the Lord, and a judgment of Babylon, which he has elsewhere placed previous to Christ’s rising from the Father’s throne, he has set aside the plain statements of Scripture as to the Lord’s appearing

in the destruction of Antichrist, and his own statements as to what essentially characterises the two ages, and made confusion as to the fact itself and the order of prophecy. He has chosen to introduce an unscriptural division of Roman earth and Christendom, and thus rejected Scripture, and his own statements too; and borne an involuntary testimony to a rapture of the saints before the judgment of the day of the Lord, and at the same time shewn his own system to be the mere fabric of his own mind.

We have here again the city Babylon corrupting the earth with her fornication. It was a poor time for the saints to rejoice over her as destroyed now; for, as corrupting the earth with her fornication as the great whore, she has been burned with fire years before. It was the mere local city now that was destroyed. And how had they experienced what the earth was under Babylon and Babylon's mighty king? Under Babylon, the fulness of God's own truth had been fostered in its sphere, and under Babylon's mighty king they had never been at all. They had fled before the dragon into the regions of uncivilised darkness. These regions being Christendom, however, at least they could have fled there if they had pleased. Indeed it surely was so—the earth, which for this turn was not the Roman or prophetic earth, having interfered to preserve Christianity (page 149).

"But the hour of the accomplished glory of Jesus had come. He is described in the verses I have quoted, not as in the actual exercise of this power, for the vision is seen in heaven, but as invested with it in order that it may be exercised; and presently afterwards it is

exercised first upon Antichrist, then upon Satan, and then upon these nations which," etc.

Now in page 128 the Son quits (at the beginning or end of the three days and a half that the witnesses lie dead) "the throne of the Father, and is invested with the power, the long delegated power, which now is finally taken from the hands of man." "When the seventh trumpet sounds, this scene has passed in heaven."

Page 207, "As soon as He descends into the air… His first act will be to judge that which is bearing His name… But after the harvest is over, the vintage yet remains." That is, the judgment of what Antichrist cherishes. Here in page 229 He is seen invested with this power in heaven—the "power with which He is invested for the government of the earth" — clearly therefore the same with that of page 128, just quoted. But then (page 207), "His first act will be to judge that which is bearing His name." But here all this about the harvest is not viewed as the exercise of this power at all. The saints have joined Him. All about Christendom is dropped, and the exercise of this glorious power with which "the Bridegroom will be invested in order that He may prepare this earth, filled though it be with enemies, for the habitation of His bride," is "first upon Antichrist." Would it be believed in this account that all the judgment of Matthew 13 had already been executed on earth since He was invested with this glorious power?

One would think it was some other sort of glory, quite distinct; for He had been invested with the long delegated power; but then when He came into the air, having commission from God, He judges Christendom.

Now He is seen invested with glorious power in vision in heaven, and this power is not first exercised on Christendom at all, but on Antichrist, who has been looking on undismayed while Christendom, and even his own second capital, Babylon, has been undergoing judgment by Christ in the other sort of power.

Further, this power (page 299) is in order that He (Christ) may prepare this earth for the habitation of His bride. But then she is never to be introduced into this earth at all, but into the new earth. So that the millennial power which Christ exercises does not prepare the earth for her at all. He has given it up to God the Father. A new earth, the elements having melted with fervent heat, is the scene into which she is introduced. The earth filled with enemies, cleared by His power, though it be to prepare it for her, never sees her in it. Where is it stated that Christ rules the nations with a rod of iron after He has judged Satan? Does the author really believe that Psalm 2 or the promise to Thyatira is the constant character of Christ's government as the Prince of peace? "He does not cease to hold the rod of iron." Let the reader consult what is stated of this in Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:27, or even chapter 19:15, and see if the author's ideas here of the government of Christ are just, and see if the rod of iron is the character of Christ's sceptre after Satan is bound, and when the earth rejoices in His coming, and reposes under the shadow of that great Rock after all its toils.

Here, too (page 301), we find "Him who comes as King of kings and Lord of lords." Before, this was not the event of His coming, He had come before to judge Christendom. The way the author explains this (page 333) is, that Christ first comes as the star. "He will come

in glory strictly unearthly and divine." Afterwards, it appears, He will be the sun rising. The first applies to Matthew 13, and the harvest, wherever found, as Revelation 14:14. But in this glory, said to be strictly unearthly and divine, He is the Son of man, once the sower of the good seed, who judges because He is the Son of man, which the Father does not because His glory is strictly divine; and the judgment of the quick is executed on the tares in this distant and unearthly glory. Indeed in this connection He is always particularly called the Son of man, as in Daniel 7, Revelation 14:14, Matthew 13 (I know not whether this is to shew it is strictly divine); whereas in the passage before us (Rev. 19), which is not the starlike visitations, He has a name which none knows but Himself. He is the Word of God, King of kings and Lord of lords—words which do convey glory strictly divine, as John 1 and 1 Timothy 6 plainly shew. It is going a little too far to say He shall come as the Son of God in His own glory, when the passage runs thus— "of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory."

But to continue: I have not much to remark on the pages immediately following. The application of Psalm 96 is evidently wrong, because it is said, "He cometh," and it is clear that at the time spoken of in page 303 the Lord was come in every sense of the word.

On page 304 I must remark that the dispensation of the fulness of times is surely not eternity. The heading up all things in Christ for the administration, of that fulness of times, is hardly the period after His having delivered up the kingdom: nor does the administration of the fulness of times or seasons signify eternity. It refers to the inheritance in which we are joint-heirs with Christ,

when, having suffered, we reign, having meanwhile the earnest of the inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession. After that, God is to be all in all, and the Son Himself subject, and not reigning as man.

What follows has been already discussed: only I repeat there is never a hint in Scripture of the heavenly saints sharing the glory of the throne of David with Christ. The statement as to those who are raised to share millennial power is clearly unwarranted if taken as exclusive. “This is the first resurrection,” is certainly not merely of those who died under persecution, nor indeed did all the twelve apostles die under persecution, for John himself did not.

The use of Isaiah 65, at the close of page 306, is clearly a misuse of it, as may easily be seen by reading verses 17 and 18; though all recognise that the earthly millennial is not the final state. But of this earthly millennial state—so celebrated in the prophets that the whole earth is to break forth into singing and joy, that they are called to rejoice for ever in that which God creates—we are told, little is said in the Revelation. It is such a time of imperfectness and evil. “The bride of the Lamb” “is kept apart148 from the millennial earth, and is not brought from her heavenly elevation into the sphere below, until the millennial earth and heavens have fully passed away.” And yet Jerusalem is the “own city” of our system. And “the summit of Zion,” “miraculously exalted above the hills,”149 “arising from the earth as if to meet the heavenly city resting over it in the heavens above, will be the place where heavenly glory will be first brought into real connection with this earth.” “It is this earthly and yet heavenly condition of Zion that” “harmonises truth belonging to the earth with

other truths referring to heavenly and unearthly glories" … so "that he who can in this sense say that he has come to Zion must mean that he belongs to those whose glory is not of earth merely." Being "of those who, going from one grade of glory (!) to another, appear in Zion before God." I do not exactly see how heavenly glory is brought into real connection with this earth, if it is kept apart from the earth—if heavenly and unearthly glories come down to Zion, and Zion is miraculously exalted to meet the heavenly city.

As to page 310, the city is not exactly called the bride of the Lamb. She was "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." She is not said to bear the name of bride. Still, that she retained as a figure all her bridal glory I doubt not, and all the freshest affections of her heavenly Bridegroom. But that is not the point here. In this sense bride is not a temporary name for her. But how, if she do still bear it at the end of the millennium, and on her introduction after the passing away of heaven and earth, and all things being made new, into the new heavens and new earth, is it a temporary name? Is it not the proof that that church, seen in glory as the bride at the commencement of the millennium, continues to be so for ever? We are then told that we do not know "what new worlds may be created." That may be safely admitted, and I suppose that we are ignorant if there will be any at all. But, new worlds created or not, "the new earth will be the centre of the economy and order of creation." Where is this revealed? "And it is as directing this economy, and as mistress of this order, that the church is symbolised by this city, and named, wife of the Lamb." Where is this found? or is government the only reason why the church is called wife of the Lamb? I read that

the kingdom will be given up, and the Son subject, God being all in all; so that I see rather the contrary of all this in Scripture; though our eternal blessedness, and the immutable Deity of the Son remain unchanged. But as to the economy and order, it seems quite different, God being all in all. The tabernacle of God is with men. The Lamb is no longer mentioned as to government as such. I see no reason to say that the church ceases to be His bride, His wife. Ephesians 3:21 seems to indicate eternal glory of the church as such. But if a veil is thrown over her relation to the earth, etc., it would have been better, I suppose, not to have said, the new earth will be thus, and the church that, in it.

“It will not lose” … “the glory which Jesus had with the Father before the world was.” Where is it ever said the church is to have this at any time?

I will not here enter into a discussion whether the bride be the highest character of the manifold glories. Children of the Father, the saint knows to be itself a relation full of blessing: it gives the name of nearness to the Father, as that of bride of more especial union with the Son, who has made us to be of His body, His flesh, and His bones. “But one presentation “though this be, surely it is one of singular blessedness. Every possible glory, indeed, is ours: the blessedness that is in God Himself, as far as it can be communicated, for we dwell in God, and God in us; relation blessedness, for we are children; associated blessedness in union with the blessed one, for we are the bride; official nearness and glory, for we are kings and priests; human blessedness, for we shall be perfect men after the image of the second Adam; corporate blessedness, for we shall have joy together; individual, for we shall have a name given

which no one knows but he that receives it, and we shall have the fulness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, unhindered by these poor bodies, yea, clothed upon, by a vessel suited to the power of the divine inhabitant, so as to be able in full largeness of heart to enjoy all this. There is a difference in the sphere of their exercise, no doubt. But when the author says that the name of bride is but one presentation, and that not in the highest sphere, I do not think that the spiritual mind will relish the use of language which certainly means to depreciate this presentation of glory.

Is the bride not the bride of Christ everywhere? And, if she be so in the sphere of His heavenly affections, is she not so in the display of His glory? Is she disowned elsewhere? Is she so kept apart from earth that when she may be, as alleged, on Mount Zion or anywhere else, the Lamb disowns her as such—does not recognise her before these strangers to the heavenly courts?

Further, if the name of bride be "but one presentation in one especial sphere (and that not the highest)," how is it that this city will be the home of the affections of Christ? "It will be His spouse—He will trust in her, joy in her, and find her one who responds to His affections, enters into His thoughts, and adorns Him by her excellencies, even in the courts of His highest glory" (page 321).

I really sometimes feel I am wrong in answering statements made to suit the moment, without an attempt at consistency, at the distance of a few pages. I have only to add here— Where is it said that the saints will be in the heaven of heavens?

As to the notes, we have a repetition of what, though just in general as to division, shews the confusion of the

arrangement proposed by the author. Chapters 6 to 18 are chastisements from the throne of God, which immediately precede the mission of the Lord Jesus in glory. “But now the time has come for Christ to occupy His own throne,150 and to be manifested in the exercise of His own glorious power.” In pages 11-13, we find that it is one of two things, either God acting for Christ, or Christ assuming the exercise of the authority of His own kingdom. “As soon as it” (the footstool) “is prepared, Christ will quit the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and will return in glory.” So that there are but the two things, God acting for Christ, and Christ having assumed the power of His own kingdom.

Now, in chapter 19 the time has come, according to the author, for the latter. The previous chapters were God acting for Christ—what preceded His mission. But in one of these previous chapters, namely, chapter 14, we have had the harvest, or judgment of Christendom (to say nothing here of the vintage) when Christ had come in clouds. Does that precede His mission? We have had in chapters 14, 16, and at large in chapter 18,151 the destruction of Babylon, a destruction by the act of Christ,152 which takes place at the moment of the rapture of the saints (page 298), and therefore when Christ had left the throne of God and come in the clouds into the air. That is, we have the most important events of chapters 6 to 18 before the time had come, for this is in chapter 19. Or is it alleged that the harvest and judgment of Babylon precede the mission of the Lord Jesus in glory? If so, then it is quite clear that, according to the author, His mission and return in glory does not take place when He quits the Father’s throne, but is a subsequent event, relating to His appearing to the

inhabitants of earth, and that before His mission and His appearing in glory; and yet, after His having left the throne of His Father, a series of the most important events occur, even all that immediately regard the church, which is exactly what the author so laboriously seeks to deny. I am not recurring here to the judgment of the tares, or the contradictions of the author as to Babylon, and Christ's appearance as the star, and then as the sun. These I have spoken of. Up to chapter 19 the time had not come for Christ to be manifested in the exercise of His own glorious power. Now it has, and Antichrist is judged by the glorious appearing of Christ.

But then, before this, Christ had left the throne, and time enough had elapsed since His leaving it to accomplish all the most important events in the Revelation, or indeed I may say in Scripture, as to power and judgment—the harvest, the glorifying of the church, the judgment of the great whore that corrupted the earth. That is, there is an interval full of the most important events between Christ's leaving the throne, and His appearing for the judgment of the man of sin. There is an acknowledged difference between Christ's rising up from the throne of the Father and its consequences, and the manifestation of His coming to destroy Antichrist—between His coming (parousia), 2 Thess. 2:1, and "the appearing of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8)—on the denial of which the statements in the beginning of the "Thoughts "are founded, and to subvert which the quotation of Psalm no is applied.

That the Revelation relates to God's dealings with the earth is in general true, and that hence the marriage of the Lamb, though celebrated, is not described, is also true. But it is celebrated as now come, and there are

those that are called to the marriage supper, as well as to the terrible judgment of the supper of the great God. But to say that chapter 14 consists of references elucidated by the chapters which respectively succeed is in many respects incorrect. The harvest is not subsequently described, nor the one hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion, nor the preaching of the everlasting gospel. Even as to Babylon, in the comment on that chapter we were told in general that the events were in order,153 though at the same time the announcement of the fall of Babylon was declared to be a prophetic testimony which could even now be used; and as an event it is here stated to be synchronous with the harvest, the catching up of the saints. The statement here is quite an incorrect one, aiming at neutralising as far as possible the importance of the statement contained in chapter 19:1-10, and their place in the book. “Babylon is just alluded to in chapter 14 … the description is given after.” But she is stated to be fallen in chapter 14, it is not that she is alluded to, but her fall declared.

Here we are told “the wife of the Lamb is similarly alluded to in verse 7,” etc. But it is her marriage that is alluded to, and declared to be come, and it is that that is the subjea of gladness and rejoicing. And here I would ask the reason of the division proposed. The object is to separate the marriage of the church from the coming forth of the same church in power as following Jesus—one was carried on in heaven, and not described, but only its celebration heard. As to the other, heaven is opened, and Christ is seen on the white horse with the armies in heaven following Him. Now, if anyone be minded to close chapter 19 with verse 10, leaving the

connection of it with what follows to the moral perception of the reader, I have not much to object. One gives Christ as Bridegroom; the other, as Judge and King in war (the church having its suited place in each). But then the next proposed new chapter must close with chapter 20:3, because that verse closes in historical order what is resumed in verse 7 in another point of view, and verse 4 takes up again the statements of verses 1-3 under another point of view, as a new vision. The subject is not “strictly consecutive”; for part of the chapter takes up the same period a second time in another point of view. Chapter 19 closes the war judgment of the Son of man, come forth as Word of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Chapter 20:1-3, gives the angelic binding of Satan.154 Chapter 20:4, begins session in judgment and reigning, not coming in judgment, as in “he doth judge and make war.” And though this be interrupted by the loosing of Satan, it is then fire of God out from heaven settles it, not the coming or warring of Christ; and judgment in session is resumed, only above on the great white throne, and of the dead.

This is the real division in sense. The truth is, that, though convenient for reference, any division into chapters is an evil as to the connection of the meaning, because the Bible was not written in chapters. Thus the first three verses of chapter 20 are to themselves as a subject, and yet follow on chapter 19. They belong rather to chapter 19 than to chapter 20; and yet I judge chapter 19 gives a very complete view of one subject, the double relationship of the church with Christ, so that it makes a very good chapter. Chapter 20:1-3 is connected historically, and not in subject. It is a separate

act: verse 4 resumes the subject of chapter 19, i.e., the relationship of Christ and the church—they live and reign—but does not follow historically on verse 3, but, after treating of the same period as verses 1-3 in another point of view down to the end of verse 6,155 the chapter pursues then the history farther on. What I have said would easily shew the natural distribution into paragraphs: chapter 19:1-9; verse 10; verses 11-21; chapter 20:1-3 (4-6), 15; chapter 21:1-8; verses 9-27; chapter 22:1-7. Verse 8 begins evidently the apostle's remarks on the visions and communications which were now closed. As to Scripture teaching by recurrence, it is no more than every history that ever was written does.

The note on "the marriage of the Lamb is come" requires some remark. Christ's wife had made herself ready. But, like the earthly city Jerusalem, this also is a city as well as a woman. "In either case it is a corporate or collective symbol or title, and admits of being indefinitely extended in comprehensiveness."

Now, what the eternal state of blessedness may be, I do not here decide, or whether the bride of Christ, viewed as the Lamb's wife during the millennial period, retains any special position afterwards. Some passages seem to say so, but there is so little said in Scripture upon it, that I affirm nothing with the light I have.

But the object of this note is to shew that the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife, when married to Christ, was not a bit more complete than Jerusalem when taken up as His by Jehovah. And as this latter earthly city could have many inhabitants year after year added to it, so can the bride, the Lamb's wife, who is called a city, and can have as a corporate or collective symbol a constant

accession of inhabitants. But, though the figure of a city is used, is the bride of Christ a place thus adopted of God, whose inhabitants may increase and be added to? Is that the idea we are to form of the Lamb's wife, a city thus owned, so distinct from its inhabitants that others are introduced after the marriage of the Lamb, the city being corporately complete, though many may be added? For I suppose the marriage of the Lamb does not take place until His wife is in some sense complete, "ready." Is this the idea presented in Ephesians 5, of the body of Christ which He cherishes and nourishes as His own flesh? A mere city, having a collective title capable of indefinite extension?

And further, what mean the words "In either case it is a corporate or collective symbol or title"? It is easy to huddle words thus together, so that their distinct meaning is lost. The point here is, that the heavenly Jerusalem, whose symbolical completeness and perfectness is so wonderfully set forth, is just like Jerusalem on earth, as to receiving an accession of inhabitants. To prove this it is shewn that Jerusalem on earth is a city and a woman. In either case a collective symbol or title. How in either case? What is there of a symbol in building up the walls of earthly Jerusalem? How is it in that case a corporate or collective symbol or title? A city has its walls built up: I see nothing corporate or symbolical in that. And when the figure of an enslaved woman is applied to Zion, I see nothing corporate or collective, nor symbolical indeed either: a common figure is used, and that is all. Further, what means "the risen saints as inhabiters of the heavenly city" "are represented" "firstly by a woman," and "secondly by a city"?

But the main point is the reducing the bride, the Lamb's wife, when made ready and the marriage come, to a mere city receiving a succession of inhabitants, and not the complete and perfect bride of Christ—His body, presented to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing— as Eve to Adam by God. And how is a woman a corporate symbol? It is a symbol of the church, which is a body of people, but represents its unity and completeness, not its capacity of being indefinitely extended. The symbol of a body of people is not a corporate symbol in this sense, but just exactly the contrary.

The Greek criticism which follows is again quite wrong. "Those invited" (Greek oi keklemenoi. Matt. 22:8) has purely a present sense.

The aorist would refer to what had been done in calling them in an historical way, as a fact, as a past thing; the perfect, the present continuous state, though supposing of course that they had been called. They were "those invited" at the table: the aorist would have been used if it applied to what had been done historically during the dispensation. In the best dictionaries you may find the Greek means a guest.156 And not only is it an error in general as to the use of the perfect, which is not an historical tense, but the present continuation of the result of a past action, but it is more particularly the case with words of the class in which kaleo stands.157 It is not then "who have been called" (that would be the aorist), but "which are called," or, the guests. It is not the dispensational title which now attaches to the saints of God; for that would give it the sense of the act of calling, or historical sense, and not the present condition at the time spoken of in the chapter.

And then just see the consequence of this false grammar. “They, as well as those who merely profess the name of Jesus, are ‘guests at the marriage supper.’” Now, if they are, in the sense of the chapter we are examining, then the professors who are to be cast into outward darkness are “blessed.” And this is just the effect of taking the perfect tense, which speaks of their continuously and actually enjoying the privilege of the invitation, for the aorist, which refers to the historical fact of invitation and acceptance making a guest. The author therefore is obliged to say, “The blessedness of those ‘guests’ —those of them at least who are duly arrayed.” And hence he confounds it with the parable which describes the act of calling.

And the author goes so far as to say, “The saints are here represented, first as those who have been guests at the marriage supper.” Now this is most positively and unequivocally bad grammar, as no one can deny who knows what the force of the Greek perfect is. But there is no such exception made. The guests, the called, are blest. I should not have rested so long here on a point of grammar, but that it involves the sense of the passage, and that the English translation is quite right, and the critical remark, and all built on it, quite wrong. The Greek for “those invited” in Matthew 22:8 is not “who have been called,” or “have been guests,” but who “are.” It is not an account of what may have been historically done in past time.

As to “heaven opened.” It is clear that the horse was not a symbol of what was to be done in heaven. But “millennial reign” is a little vague, because He hardly reigned millennially before Antichrist was destroyed, and yet He came on the white horse to destroy him. Nor

do I think it will be ever found that horses symbolise reigning, but the providential actings of God in the way of imperial power on the earth. The reigning millennially is in chapter 20:14. This is “making war,” which is not reigning; for a man does not reign where he makes war. A horse then is power for the earth, but it is not reigning. He was coming moreover, though there be no description of it; for the armies in heaven followed him. We have a statement as to those that are with Him, which shews that they are not angels who are spoken of in the war against the ten horns. They are (chap. 17) called, and chosen, and faithful; which words are all characteristic of the same persons. Besides, they were clothed in “fine linen,” which I suppose is hardly angelic clothing: that elsewhere is linon (Greek). In this chapter “fine linen” is used of the righteousness of saints.

The distinction between the sword and the rod of iron is a curious one. The sword slays all. It does slay the armies of Antichrist.158 But why all? This does not seem necessary, for example, in the church of Pergamos. The use of it in Hebrews 4:12 seems to lead one to suppose that it is not necessary. Here the word is ‘smite.’ Still, I should think that breaking to shivers like a potter’s vessel is something like destruction. That is what is connected with the rod of iron. And where is it found as the shepherd rod of governance?

The next note is a mere changing of the passage to meet the author’s views. The apostle saw three things: thrones and persons sitting on them; the souls of them that were beheaded; and those who had not worshipped the beast. All are merged by the writer into one. Persons sitting on them “and” the souls, means that the persons sitting were these souls. And the souls, etc., and those

who had not worshipped, means the souls, specially those who had not worshipped. And thus there can be no doubt that martyrs alone are spoken of in this passage!

As in other places where particular classes are spoken of, he regards those spoken of as representative bodies. But why do those who have come out of the great tribulation represent those who do not? Or those who have testified against Antichrist159 represent those who have not? The author so regards it: that is really all that can be said. And this is the more unreasonable, because the persons mentioned in this verse have been already mentioned as distinct classes (that is, in distinct circumstances previously). In chapter 6 we have those who had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they had held, who are given each one a white robe, and told to wait till certain other brethren who should be killed as they were should be fulfilled. Here they are again in chapter 20. We find certain others killed under the beast, celebrated as having gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image (chap. 15:2) according to the warning of chapter 14:9; and we find them again in the verse under consideration.

Whereas the first words of the verse are quite general for the state all the saints of the first resurrection would be in. I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. Royal judgment was now set in its place, and we know the saints are to be there. If these slain ones might have seemed to have fallen under the power of Satan (as to the body, they might, for there are those that can kill the body till judgment is executed), but they live and reign with Christ when the judgment is set.

The seven churches do not represent all churches. Each church represents a particular moral state. The professing church, or a particular part of it at any given time, may be in that state. Did Philadelphia represent Sardis, or any church in a similar state?

But the special circumstances and position of saints, which the Revelation so carefully brings out, the author of the “Thoughts” is determined at all cost to set aside.

As to Gog and Magog, there is no doubt of course that this is not what is mentioned in Ezekiel. As to the time, it will be evident to one examining it, that Ezekiel (beginning for example from chapter 34) gives the whole history of Israel’s return and blessing, but chiefly in reference to external, rather than internal circumstances; because the four monarchies of the image of Daniel 2 are not the subject of Ezekiel’s prophecies. And I do not doubt that an interval elapses between the first appearing of Christ in judgment of Antichrist, and His Solomon reign—what I may call, to explain myself, a David reign. But then all that is stated about it here is wrong. The period of the visitation of the Lord in Jerusalem is not His manifestation as Morning Star,160 as contrasted with the Sun arising with healing on His wings.

This last is from Malachi, and applies to His visiting the remnant in Jerusalem. While the proud were called happy, they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, etc., and I will spare them, saith the Lord. “Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked,” etc. “For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the

day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Is it not evident here that the arising of the Sun of righteousness on those that fear the Lord is identified with the judgment on the wicked, in the day that the Lord of hosts shall do this? The wicked being as ashes under the soles of the righteous' feet? Is not this the day of visitation from the Lord—this day that burns as an oven?

And now, where is there anything said of Christ's manifestation as morning star in judgment on Jerusalem? No such thought is found in Scripture, nor anything like it. The morning star is found in two161 places in Scripture; in chapter 22 Christ is the bright and morning star, where it has no connection with judgment at all, but makes the Spirit and the bride say Come. And in the promise to the overcomers of the church of Thyatira, when, after speaking of ruling the nations with a rod of iron, it is added as a distinct thing, "And I will give him the morning star."

Certainly the idea conveyed by the day star is something before the day, the portion and joy of those that watch for the morning. The day is a thief and a snare to the whole world, though we are peacefully of it. The day, bright and blessed though it be in result, is never spoken of but as terrible in its coming on the world, as we have seen in Malachi of the Sun of righteousness. The star is never spoken of as rising on the world at all.

All the system founded on this is the mere imagination of the author.

As to the nations confederate with God, the author believes them “to be the nations which are now occupying the districts in the centre of Asia north-east of Persia—Bokhara for instance.” It is curious the effect of living what Lord Bacon calls, in the apexes of divine learning (“inter apices divinse scientiae”), especially when mountains of systems are built upon it. The author had no need to go so far north-east of Persia to seek the confederates. If he had taken the trouble to read the chapter in Ezekiel, he would have found it was just Persia itself, and the nations south-west of it: to give them in their Hebrew names (which I do, because then Scripture will direct us), Cush and Phut. All the district about Euphrates and the Tigris is Cush according to the Scripture, and perhaps large districts in Arabia. See Genesis 2:13; chap. 10:7-12.162 Further, in Jeremiah 46:9, we find Cush and Phut connected with the Egyptian army, that is, with Mizraim, another son of Ham—Lydians also. Persia, Lud, and Phut, were among the mercenaries of Tyre, Ezekiel 27:10. Cush, Phut, and Lud, are again identified with Mizraim or Egypt; Ezekiel 30:5. Cush, Phut, Mizraim, and Lubim (not Ludim), are again together in Nahum 3:9. Lubim I suppose may be the Lehebim, who with the Ludim (whose territory I do not pretend to decide) were sprung from Mizraim or the Egyptians. Nahum shews that Cush and Phut were naturally connected with Egypt.

The fact of the existence of an Euphratean Ethiopia163 settled by Nimrod, and an Ethiopia connected with Egypt, is nothing wonderful when we recollect that all these countries were peopled by the descendants of

Ham. The Abrahamic descendants of Shem having been seated by the Lord's judgment in the centre of them all by the almost complete extirpation of the Canaanitish race—complete, had Israel been faithful.

Hence, however, it is clear that, instead of the confederates of God being the nations to the north-east of Persia, that is, Tartary proper, they are Persia itself, and the nations southwest of it, and perhaps (if we adopt Armenia as the seat of Eden) the north-west. I leave others to determine whether Ethiopia and Libya are to be extended to the countries so called in Africa. The only word which could refer to Tartary is "north quarters," or, more properly, the recesses of the north. But this can hardly be, because he is speaking of countries lying west of the Caspian (for so Togarmah is supposed to be), that is, Armenia and the Caucasian range, and would, if going beyond Togarmah itself, rather mean Russia. Perhaps we should more rightly take it as meaning that Togarmah itself was the recesses of the north. Ezekiel 27 leads one to consider that Meshech, Tubal, and Togarmah, were districts of trade connected with one another: at least they are mentioned in succession. "Many people with him" may of course include Bokhara, or any other country around. On the whole, the district named reaches from the Persian Gulf to Russia, leaving aside the question of Ethiopia and Libya in Africa.

There is another question remains—Gog himself; for we have been considering his confederates. Meshech and Tubal are certainly his dominions. I suppose there is little doubt of the region designated by these words, namely, in general, the country between the Caspian and the Black Sea, though it may go farther into northern Asia and southern Russia164 (Gomer had probably a

wider range). The only word which remains is “chief prince,” or prince of Ross, as some have translated it. The author believes the English translation right; he does not tell us why. The elder Lowth a century ago translated it “prince of Ross” (or rather “Rosh”); the most accurate modern translation does so too. Gesenius gives it as the unquestionable meaning, and adds that without doubt it means the Russians. In the middle ages in the East they had the name of Ross. The English translators have given, as an equivalent translation in the margin, “prince of the chief” (the chief being Rosh in Hebrew). So that the English translation gives both. For my own part, though there may be some difficulty in the accents, and everyone knows how obscure a point that is, I do not see how it is possible to translate it “chief prince.” The Septuagint have it as a proper name, Rhos. If it be translated as a word, and not a name, it surely should be “prince of the head, of Meshech, and of Tubal.”

The reader may be surprised at the introduction of all this geography, or why the author of the “Thoughts” is anxious for the English translation “chief prince.” The reason is this. If Lowth and the other authorities I have mentioned are right, the whole fabric of the author falls together, for this reason—that Russia and her professing Christian dependencies will have been judged already as Christendom, and therefore cannot come here in Ezekiel as still to be judged.

In the next note it is stated that “there are evidently some who stand before the throne whose names are written in the book of life: and they will doubtless be very many.” What the word of God says is, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into

the lake of fire," but not a word of any who were being there. It was the dead only that were there: there is no proof that the saints will die in the millennium. All were judged here according to their works. I know not who should be justified if thus judged. I do not see that Scripture says anything as to the judgment of the millennial saints, if we except some general principle, that corruption cannot inherit incorruption. This judgment of the white throne would not reach those mentioned here. They are there alive in the camp of the saints and the beloved city. We have no account how they are changed to their eternal state; nor need we have.

I have nothing to say as to the sea, but to ask where it is said to mean "barrenness, separation, and the power of death." It is used figuratively for masses of people. In the millennial time I read of the abundance of the seas.

The rest of the note is more important. In the new heavens and the new earth, creation, "whatever shall then be known as creation [not of course the present groaning one, for the elements will have melted with fervent heat] will be enjoying glorious liberty, founded on redemption, similar to that which the heavenly city will be enjoying as soon as the millennium commences." That there will be a certain link of circumstances is all very true. But what means "similar"? The creature in us is to be fashioned like Christ's glorious body. I suppose that whatever is known then as creation will not be that. The residue of the note is most singular. The scripture says the creature is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, groaning and travailing until now, and is subjected to vanity, in hope that the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the

glorious liberty of the children of God. But, according to the author, it is to be freed from the bondage of corruption, but not brought into glorious liberty. Is not that rather a strange interpretation of the passage? The second reason why it waits with earnest expectation for the commencement of the millennium is, that it will behold in the heavenly city … a specimen and earnest of its own future glory. What part of creation does that? This merely means (if it means anything) that the saints on earth then, and of course the elect saints165 exclusively, will see in the state of the heavenly saints that they will be in time as glorious as they. Now, I ask any one, is that to be found, or anything about it, in Romans 8, or anywhere in Scripture? It is only an effort to shew that the bride, the Lamb's wife, during the millennium will in the end be no better off than the rest. It may be so, for I will not reason on it here,166 and that suffering with Him being the path to be glorified with Him is only a temporary ordinance, as well as the blessing announced to belong to those who have believed without seeing. But certainly it is produced here without any proof, and the passage commented on affords no idea like it at all; for the creature is distinguished from elect saints, who are groaning too. And it is accompanied with the singular assertion that, delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of God's children means that it is delivered from the bondage of corruption, but not into the glorious liberty, but that seeing that in others makes it know that it will be; though, as we have seen, this only applies to elect millennial saints, and certainly not in that sense to whatever is known as creation, if there be anything else.

The millennial state is not a final state, as everyone knows, or it would not be a millennium. But when it is said, “to those enjoying its full blessedness,” this can refer only to their circumstances, for they already bear the image of the Lord from heaven. But though it be not final, the statements made here are totally unwarranted by the passage alluded to, and more than unwarranted.

Chapter 22 [Read Chap. 2l] From Verse 9

It seems an ungracious task to examine what, to many at any rate, will seem only a very beautiful development of the glory and character of the heavenly city. But it is but natural that, when the topic is but description even, and so less liable to error, still that the elements of the general system should be introduced, and thus sanctioned; and we owe it to the word of God, however beautiful language may be, to see whether the thoughts contained in it are scriptural. Now, much of what may seem very beautiful here I find mere unbridled imagination, and the system of the author maintained in its worst points. I would cite here, not as containing any particular evil, but as shewing how mere imagination is at work, the following statement from what may seem perhaps the most elevated part of the description: “Nothing can be more transparent than crystal—nothing more bright than the jasper—nothing more resplendent when fully illumined by the light of God.”167 What is jasper fully illumined by the light of God? Just nonsense. I do not attach any evil to this: it is just a proof that it is not the Spirit of God, but the imagination, which is in the description.

The statement that all these glories are diversified presentations of their manifold glory, has been examined

more or less when each subject presented itself distinctly. It is quite certain that in the passages where they are found, distinct classes of saints, that is, distinct bodies in distinct circumstances, are spoken of, and their peculiar position in glory connected with and flowing out of these circumstances. This cannot be denied. One has only to read the passages. But then the author is pleased to say that he regards168 them as representing the whole church, and that therefore they are to be taken as manifold glories of the same one company. But, not to speak of their standing round the Lamb on Mount Zion, this making some in peculiar circumstances representatives of all is setting aside the government of God—the special object of this book. You might as well say that Lot was a representative of Abraham, or Abraham of Lot, because both were believers and righteous, and therefore equally saved, as these distinct bodies of the whole church. Lot was just a representative of what it was to be not as Abraham. Nor is to be saved “so as by fire” (even to come to everyday circumstances) the same thing as an “abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.” Having stated that they are all so, it is easy to conclude that “they are all necessary,” though all be stated without the least scripture proof. Yet even so, all this (as is the case all through this book) is true for the occasion only. The contrary is stated elsewhere. Here the Lamb on Mount Zion is true indeed as one of the glories, but it does not shew “heaven brought into such close systematic relationship to the earth,” as in the heavenly Jerusalem here considered. “It is the vision of the heavenly city that shews us the glory of the saints brought into its closest adaptation to the need of a fallen earth.” “If a metropolis, as in this case it is, it becomes, throughout

its appointed sphere, the centre from which and through which all vivifying influence is diffused." Elsewhere we read:—

"Yet it is in this world that the glory and holiness and happiness of heaven is to be manifested and established.'" "There is one spot in the earth where the righteousness and joy and blessedness of heaven will be perfectly found, and that spot is the height of Zion." "That Mount Zion, in connection with the earthly Jerusalem, which will be builded around it, will become the centre of the earth's legislation and government," etc., "is again and again declared in scripture."

"It will be the place where heavenly glory will be made visible before the eyes of men. It will be the citadel of Jerusalem's strength, because it will be the place of the presence of the divine glory and omnipotent power."

"We read of the heavenly city at the commencement of the millennium so descending as not to be in heaven (for it descended from God, out of heaven), neither on the earth" … "In other words, it will be intermediate, as the holy place should be," etc. "But the summit of Zion, miraculously exalted above the hills (Isaiah 2) arising from earth as if to meet the heavenly city resting over it in the heavens above, will be the place where heavenly glory will first be brought into real connection with this earth. It will be the citadel of the holy ones, the place where the foot of Jacob's ladder may be said visibly to rest." In pages 195,196, in a word, the heavenly Jerusalem is intermediate, as it should be. Heavenly glory is brought into real connection with the earth in the one hundred and forty-four thousand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, for the joy and blessedness of heaven

will be perfectly found on earth. In page 320 it is the vision of the heavenly city that shews us the glory of the saints brought into the closest adaptation to the need of a fallen earth.

There, it is “the earthly and yet heavenly condition of Zion that fulfils the promises of scripture.”

Here it is only one of those “previous visions in which heaven is not brought into such close systematic relationship to the earth.”

In a word, the imagination was filled with the summit of Zion miraculously exalted above the hills there, and the heavenly Jerusalem was only intermediate: here it was filled with the latter, and therefore Zion, however it was then the centre and the real connection of heavenly glory with this earth, did not here bring heaven into as close relationship to the earth, nor adaptation to its need as the heavenly city, which then was obliged to take an intermediate place, as it should. In a word, it is all just the sport of the imagination.

Besides, association with the earth is not in the least the main subject here, blessed as this may be for the earth, but association with the Lamb, and God’s being there. It is not under this aspect that it is first called the bride of the Lamb. That she ministers blessing to the earth is true; but it is a secondary thing at the close. The earth is not mentioned till verse 24 of this chapter, and it is just the first two verses of chapter 22 which give the lovely picture of its associations with the earth in the way of blessing through the leaves of the trees that grew there.

Yet it is stated, “She is however described in this chapter chiefly, I might perhaps say entirely, in relation to the earth.” Is that the case? Read only the chapter

and see. The city, “the bride, the Lamb’s wife,” is itself described, and it is not “what she will be to the apprehensions of the millennial saints who dwell upon the earth “which is described; but what she is to the faith and hope of the pre-millennial saints. “I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple.”

“And the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” She herself is to be the light of the nations, but this is her light, what she enjoys within.

To talk about a metropolis and a centre, “where character is developed, and where habits of thought and action are displayed,” so “that this city will be the home of the affections of Christ,” perverts, fair as it may seem, the whole chapter. It is what it is for us, its glory and its privileges for us, which is described. Doubtless Christ will delight in His bride. But it is not what it is to Him which is here developed. He is the temple, He the light, with the Lord God Almighty in it. The whole principle of the statement is wrong. And if this be not a revelation of the secrets of her excellent glory (for it is not a question here of children of the Father), where is this revelation? There are particular symbolic blessings for those that overcome in the promises to the churches, but no revelation of the glory of the city. If it be not here, where is it to be found? If we have it here, “as in the distance,” “as it were without the walls,” where is the account from within? As usual, things are brought down to earth, and we may grope in the dark after all the rest. If it be asserted that the Father’s house, and being with Christ there, is a higher feeling, I shall not dispute it, or enter on the point. But if the revelation of the interior blessedness of the heavenly city be not here, where is it?

And here in passing I must remark on a statement of page 322. This heavenly Jerusalem becomes “the earth’s new centre of light and influence in the stead of” Babylon. Babylon being, according to the author, an earthly city, it ought, surely, to have been earthly Jerusalem. This shews how ill the whole system hangs together. But let that pass. Here the heavenly city is clearly in contrast with the Babylon who corrupted the earth, destroyed quite at the end; and, as he had made that a city on the Euphrates, it is the place of that city that the heavenly Jerusalem must take. This, people will believe as they like. But if “she had been the great result of the wisdom of ages, stimulated and assisted by the skill and energy of Satan,” how comes it that when Satan gives his throne and power to one, as to whom “we may conceive his adaptation to his appointed work, and the security which the devil feels in entrusting him therewith, by the readiness with which the dragon resigns to him his throne,” who will be “his deputy,” not “an unknown stranger, but one already fitted for the place in which he and Satan were together to act, in parity of glory, for a little season,” how comes it, I say, that his first act is to destroy and burn with fire “that city which had been emphatically from beneath, which had been the great result of the wisdom of ages, stimulated and assisted by the skill and energy of Satan”? Was he divided against himself? Or how did he raise up this person, together with whom he acts in parity of glory, to destroy this result of the wisdom of ages, stimulated and assisted by his own energy?

And now, which Babylon did the heavenly city take the place of, the system or the city? Hardly the system, because Antichrist had taken the place of that. But then,

how was the city as such the result of the wisdom of ages, when its system had all been destroyed? And is it quite fair to say that she, “together with the beast, had ruled the earth for a season,” when she had been in this character totally destroyed some years before the heavenly Jerusalem comes on the scene? And the truth is, it is evident that it is the destruction of the city (according to the author’s scheme), not of the woman, which is exulted over as making way for the marriage of the Lamb. It is the destruction of chapter 18. But this had never ruled with the beast. It was the mere city. For my own part, I am persuaded that the more the author’s system as to Babylon is examined, the more will it be found a complete delusion.

Next as to the precious stones. “We have seen them once on the breastplate of the high priest of Israel, the type and pledge of the moral grace and outward glory which should attach, and one day will attach, to all the Israel of God.” Where have we seen this? What proof has the reader in his mind? That the city will have the glory of God, and be the brightest creature display of it through union with the glorified Bridegroom, and God’s dwelling in the midst of her, is most sure. So far in general I have nothing to say. In general this is attributed to the heavenly city. Her light was like unto a stone most precious. But I do not see that any series of precious stones are used as symbols of the church’s glory; and when it is said, “It is no unintelligible emblem to have one’s name written on that whose lustre is as enduring as itself, and which shines most when brought into nearest connection with the light of God,” on what does the author mean they were written? I suspect strongly that, however easy it may be to say it is no

unintelligible emblem, not a single one of his readers understands it. We read of these stones, that He that sat upon the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. It was external glory.

The author says that the city (or rather the light of it, for it was not the city itself) being like a jasper, as well as He that sat on the throne, “teaches us not merely the nature of that brightness, but whence it flows, and where it is preserved for us, and why it will be in us, even because we are in Him that is true, that is, the true God.” Now, that as a general truth our being in the Lord is the source of all our blessing every Christian believes: But this is never in any case connected with the lustre of precious stones in Scripture. They are a glory which can be put on. The high priest bore the names engraved on them, but there was nothing intrinsic, no principle of union between God and them, nor the high priest and them as to life at all. We must make the stones mean God and the divine nature, not something illumined by it, to mean this. But they were borne officially by the high priest. Take them as certain qualities put upon them, and I can understand this. This may come from life in us. But then I find the king of Tyre clothed with them (Ezek. 28). Were they the proof there, or do they teach us there, that he was in Him that is true, that is, the true God? Every precious stone was his covering. Apply this to Satan or what you will, it cannot mean what the author says it teaches us. The jasper, or any other stone, does not imply being in Him that is true. It is glory, and not partaking of nature, because we find it when the divine nature certainly was not partaken of. God was to look upon like this, and the light of the city was like this. Glory is always the idea attached to these

stones. The priests' garments (and priesthood is not union, though union may co-exist with it) were for glory and beauty. The wall of the city was jasper. This, whatever it was, was her everlasting defence and security.

The paved work under the feet of the God of Israel was like a sapphire stone, as the body of heaven in its clearness. So the throne was as a sapphire in Ezekiel 1. This was hardly the divine nature, whatever the instrument of the displayed glory. And the reader must remember that the jasper and the sardine stone were affirmed of the glory in which the Lord was seen on the throne, as the first and last of the series on the breastplate of the high priest, to shew that all were included.169 And, if we are to take in general "the symbolic meaning of precious stones "given by the author, what is the meaning of Babylon's being decked with precious stones? It is evident, if Scripture be examined, even leaving aside Babylon,170 that the statement of the author is quite wrong. It is again his imagination, and not the word of God. That the stones displayed, not pure light, but what could be displayed of the glory of God in or as seen by a creature, I believe: whether presented to God covenantly as such on the breastplate of the high priest, or identified with the foundations of the city, or in general that one which is specially used as designating the glory of God, and therefore is used of the light of the whole city itself. But here I stop, and I do not think I say too much in saying I do not believe others go much farther.

But I object much to the use made of the symbol here. It is affirmed of the whole of what the author calls, but Scripture does not, "the Israel of God." Of this, as usual,

no proof is given. It is attached, so far as that even is the case, to the city. Its light was like unto a stone most precious. But it is never described itself by the glory and brightness of these stones. Next, it is said, “the church of the firstborn, when the time comes for the heavenly city to descend, will have been brought into full realised union with Him, had been made recipients of His fulness; and will therefore shine according to His excellency. He who is Light will be there; and there will be nothing in her to hinder, nothing to dim, the pure effulgence of His glory.”

As to this oft-repeated expression, “Church of the firstborn,” it is always used to convey the idea that the scripture uses the term church in a larger and more general sense. This is not the case. The most extended idea given of the church is where this is used, firstborn being a title of the whole body called the church. The expression “church of the firstborn “is found in Hebrews 12:23. “The general assembly171 and church of the firstborn who are written in heaven” —the fullest, largest expression about the church in Scripture. The word translated general assembly means the “assembly of a whole nation,” especially for a public festival, or the like. And to make of firstborn a distinctive special limitation of a certain class, who come in before others, is a mere delusion. It is the character and privilege of the only body called the church in Scripture (that is, God’s assembly in the Christian sense of it). Next, why is it said we are brought then into full realised union with Him? We are now, though we have not the redemption of the body, nor consequently the display of glory. And why made recipients then of His fulness? We are now, “and grace for grace.” Just in the same way it is said, pages

329, 330, “How angels may learn therein the manifold wisdom of God.” The scripture emphatically says that they are learning it now. When it is said, nothing will dim the pure effulgence of His glory, it is not true that the reflex of His glory in us will be what we see it face to face. Those on earth will not in that earthly state so see it, and could not; as far as a united glorified creature can manifest it, they will. No doubt they will see in us all that can be conferred in the highest way possible on those who are not one with the Father, Himself God as well as with God; for this is true of the incarnate One only, and therefore He is our light in the city. But, while we bear the image of the heavenly man, this is not to others the glory of God as we see it; and there is something more bright than the jasper (if we must take it so in the creature) when illumined by the light of God, and that is the light of God which illumines it, a light spoken of as in the city in this description, while the nations walk in the light of the city. That which is really essentially precious to us is denied in page 321, and merged in our glory here in page 323. Further, it is never said “She will be the temple of the whole earth” anywhere, nor anything about it, though naos be inserted in Greek as if accurately to explain it.

“Of the Lamb,” attached to “the bride,” is no particular expression of grace in her, but distinguishes her from, and contrasts her with, the King’s wife. She was identified with Jesus considered as suffering, not as reigning on the earth, and now therefore she reigns with Him. The millennial saints on earth never will be identified with them in this character. The Lamb’s wrath is spoken of as well as His grace. It is the character in which He glorified God in suffering, and the church has

been identified with Him in that character of humiliation, in which He came when He came to take away sin. I do not doubt that the heavenly Jerusalem is characterised by the ministration of grace. Still I think, with much beauty of language, the teaching of these pages as to her is not of God's Spirit. "The avenues of sorrow are stopped," it is not said by whom, "and the workings of death checked by the ministration of a more abundant power of life." One might have supposed that this flowed from God and the Lamb, though ministered by the bride. But it is from her they are ministered: "the ministration of blessings from her is unceasing." They are said indeed to be ministered through her, and while, of course, the author cannot deny the plain statement of Scripture that the river came from the throne of God and the Lamb, yet there is complete confusion in the explanatory statement, "There is one that yearneth to give, and need crying to receive; and stores inexhaustible to be given, and grace that has removed every hindrance." In whom is the love that yearns to give, and grace, and inexhaustible stores?

Of course the inhabitants of earth cannot enter into the heavenly city. But here the priests of Israel (i.e., the risen church of the firstborn), are again introduced, which we have so often seen to be a mere picture of the author's mind, founded on a misapprehension of Greek. Besides, following out this symbol or figure as if it were a real city is all mere confusion. The city is the bride, the Lamb's wife. And, therefore, though it may be said in a general way no one shall enter into it but those who are written in the Lamb's book of life, as shewing who can be there, and though there will be visible glory, yet when the author speaks of the priests of Israel, etc., entering

into the city, it sets aside the whole force of the symbols. The city was a symbol of them in the state of glory, as it is considered, page 323, by the author himself. The jasper glory of the city is the display of the divine nature in us. “It will be in us.” This is just the effect of the imagination out-running the divine use of a figure or symbol.

Again, we have the names of the twelve tribes to prove its relation to them, though there is not one word of relation to Jerusalem in the passage. Their names may shew God’s recognition of His ways with that nation which is the object of His electing love, as the names of the twelve apostles His recognition of them in their place; but surely not its standing in a present relation to the apostles; and if not, not to the tribes either. And again, we find their priesthood when only nations are spoken of, so that it was not their priesthood that was wanted. This would have made a sort of double intervention. The Gentiles come to the Jews at Jerusalem, and then their priesthood present their homage. But the truth is, it is all the picture of the imagination. There is not one word about the church being Israel’s priesthood; nor is there any possible connection between Deuteronomy 32:8, and this idea. What has setting the bounds of the people to do with the church being Israel’s priesthood, and the people coming to Jerusalem to obtain its intervention?

Nor is it ever said that the order, dignities, and regulations, of the nations will flow through Israel. Christ is King of nations, as well as King of the Jews, and though the Jews will be the royal nation, so that they will have special dignity, it is not said that the dignities of the nations will flow through them.

Page 329 too, fair as it seems, is all confusion—a confusion of the type and the fact. It is true that the law gave but a shadow and not the very image of the things; and indeed the temple, though never alluded to in detail in the New Testament as a type (because we are in the wilderness), was much more a figure of millennial heavenly blessings, and then the priests did walk on gold. But here, if the priests in the holy place typified the presence of the saints in heaven as Israel's intercessors, does the author mean that they will be in an imperfect heaven, or that they were a type of men partly on earth, partly in heaven, that is, not really in the heavenly courts at all? "Not themselves standing in the power thereof, nor in competency of action thereunto." In type or in reality? Nor can it be said that he uses it of the present state of the church, which is in heaven in spirit, but in reality on earth, because in the most holy place it was the high priest alone went, who typified Christ in heaven itself for us now, entered with His own blood. Does he stand not in the power thereof, nor in competency of action thereunto? Yet he stood on earth as much as the others. Nor is it anywhere said that they stood unshod. And if they stood unshod, it was just because the place was holy—in that sense answering to gold; not because it was upon the earth. The whole statement is a mere confusion of ideas.

Were they unshod because they had a foot that fears "contrast with the transparent purity on which it treads"? They washed their hands and their feet for every service, to signify the purity needed. But it is merely images heaped together without any connection.

The figurative idea of a city is kept up throughout; but, to follow out the image attempted here, it is not the

streets which should have been of gold, but the feet should have been spoken of. But Scripture, while affording by perfect types the general thoughts which give perfect blessing to the soul, never puts them together as if it were a pictorial consistency of type. Nobody would know where to put the ten horns on the seven heads of the beast. It is united in its meaning in the mind, but not in the eye for us. Here, in the city, it was a cube, that is, perfection every way, height, length, breadth, equal. That is an image which presents perfection in the city. But each was twelve thousand stadia, that is one thousand five hundred miles long, broad, and high. But the wall of the city was a hundred and forty-four cubits, or over two hundred feet high. The moment you pass beyond the spiritual idea asserted by the one type given, you spoil all: and this is what the author has done in another way. He has confounded different sets of types together and mixed all up with the natural fact (if indeed it be a fact, and which, if it be, meant the contrary of what it is here used for) and thus has made a string of statements which may move the feelings, but, when examined calmly, mean really nothing at all.

I have already noticed that it is now angels learn by the church the manifold wisdom of God. As to worlds and new beings being dependent on the place, one has only to repeat what the author says to check, as he uses it to fill, the imagination—" We know not."

I hardly know what means "commissioned to act in the power of the same love." Is it meant with as great love?

There is another statement in this page 330 which tends to maintain a false view of service. The prospects of the

world are Babylon, Antichrist, judgment. They afford an occasion of watchfulness, service, and testimony.

The blessing, the throne, the heavenly city, reigning with Christ—are the church's portion.

But is it only the evil that gives occasion for watchfulness, service, and testimony? And why is Christ's coming excluded from the prospects of the church as given in this book? Is there no watchfulness connected with that? Is all our watchfulness connected only with evil?

It must be remembered that the vision of chapter 90, of the word of God, etc., is declared by the author not to be Christ's coming. The prospects and the consequence of those prospects are most untruly given here, taken as a whole, or as to the truth of the consequences, and a very false idea of the true Christian position as regards them. We are as men that watch for our Lord. It is not merely Antichrist and Babylon make us watchful, though we have to watch against evil. Our service and testimony ought to be much more about Christ and His coming, and the glory with Him, than about the evil. Testimony against anything is not the grand subject of the Spirit's testimony; and a service and a testimony which are only against evil is a miserable service. And a watchfulness about Babylon and Antichrist is not the waiting for the Bridegroom which characterises, or ought to characterise, the church of God.

And now as to the words "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," etc. Is it not very plain that these words must refer to some time definitely, when the day of grace properly speaking is over? They mean that, as the author does not deny. There may be some difficulty, at

least at the point of attainment where we all are in interpreting the Apocalypse, in giving the precise application of the passage. But how does the fact of their having passed the lips of Jesus mark “the time when they will be fully ratified as being very nigh,” when eighteen centuries have elapsed since they were uttered? Or how is it that it means at the same time, “that from that hour forward, even till the day of His appearing, there should be no change in the general aspect of mankind “? That is, how is it a proof that the date of its commencement was nigh, and at the same time that it was to be counted in another sense from that hour? That is, moreover, that it proved that an immense change (no less a change than the cessation of the day of grace, and having “the doom of each irrevocably fixed “) would soon take place, “was nigh,” and at the same time that from that hour (the then present hour), forward … there should be no change in the general aspect of mankind? It suited the system of the author to have it as a proof of vagueness of “nigh,” and that everything would remain unchanged till Christ’s actual appearing; though he has taught in this book that meanwhile such a total apostasy would come in as that not only Christianity, but the owning of God as Creator, or in any way, would cease in these very countries. Does not that change somewhat the general aspect of mankind? Or, if it does not, what does? Or how would they remain in all essential features what at that hour they were?

If at any rate this has any real force, it is quite clear that it warrants the looking for Jesus at all times. That is, that as there were many Antichrists, and the churches had begun to fail in their testimony, nothing now

remains but the interference of His own hand. So that, whatever might happen to Jews or others, the church might look for the close of its history at once. For it is evidently to it that Antichrists and failing testimony apply here.

The truth is, there are three statements at the close of the Apocalypse, of Christ's coming quickly: two in connection with the topics of the book more or less, and one after they are quite closed and the church is on the scene in its ordinary hopes and character. (1) Chapter 22:7 is a general statement, connected with the blessing of minding the warnings given in this book. (2) Then verse 10, where, contrary to the direction to Daniel to seal his prophecy, the prophet is forbidden to seal it, for the time is at hand. And then it is stated that (not the general aspect of mankind, but) the personal condition of individuals was to remain unaltered. And this connects the coming of Christ, not with the blessing of minding His prophetic testimony, but with the individual judgment of men according to their work. Then (3), after a closing address to the church and the answer of the Spirit thereon, His quick coming is affirmed, and the apostle answers in his own person in desire by the Spirit that He should. I should say, in reading these passages, that first there were those separated in testimony to blessing—not the churches now, they were done with as things "that are," but such as gave heed to the prophetic testimony, and that then, subsequent to that, it was solely judgment; that men would be left in their then condition to be judged, in two classes on either side, unrighteous ones and filthy ones, and righteous ones and holy ones; and then the statement closes with

saying that He is Alpha and Omega. The subsequent part is composed of closing remarks about the book.

As to the reading, “wash their robes,” instead of “keep his commandments,” I do not oppose the reading. Griesbach and Scholz, however, do not admit it: nor Knapp. Tischen-dorf adopts it, and Tregelles.172 There yet remains the meaning of the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

As to the root and offspring of David, I have nothing to say. I do not believe the force given to the expression exact; but there is nothing which in principle affects materially any interpretation.

But it is then stated, “He has other essential glories of His own. ‘Before Abraham was I AM.’ He is ‘the root and offspring of David, AND the bright and morning star.’ “This, if it means anything means that the bright and morning star means the essentially divine nature and glory of Christ— that in virtue of which He calls Himself “I am.” The appearing of the star then is the appearing of this essentially divine nature. Does the reader believe that this is the meaning of the star?—that “I will give him the morning star” means, I will give him my essential glory, that by which I can say, Before Abraham was, I AM? In pages 150, 151 we read, “when Christ first appears in the fulness of divine glory, in the ‘glory of the Father, His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels,’ He is symbolised by the star; ‘I am the bright and morning star.’ ‘To him that overcometh will I give the morning star,’ i.e., association with Himself in this high character of glory.” So that here we find that the Father’s glory, Christ’s essential glory as I AM, the glory of the holy angels, are given to us. Associated with Him

in it is a vague expression. The Son of man is to come in this glory. The glory given to Him He has given to us. But what is given is not essential. What He receives as Son of man He communicates to us; but what He has essentially as I AM, most surely He does not. His glory He will not give to another. But it is never said the star means this. It is never said Christ appears as the star. All this is an entirely unscriptural use of the symbol. In the passage referred to above I have commented on the use of it, and I do not repeat it here.

But, if the use of this symbol be examined, the statements of the author will be found complete confusion. It is easy to say “the star,” and so by our natural idea of star give an idea of what is distant and unearthly. But it is not the “star,” but the “morning star “which is in question, which is a wholly different expression and association of ideas—not the least what is distant and unearthly, but something that brings the idea of the day near, associated with the coming joy of the day. It is not even really a star, nor associated in thought with stars.

Further, if we turn to “stars,” they are quite foreign to what is divine or supreme.173 They fall from heaven to denote confusion. They are wormwood, and make the rivers bitter. In this last case (page 115) it is called “bringing superhuman agency now operating in another sphere, and subserving the arrangements of the divine order in the created heavens, into destructive application to the earth.”174 Then they are stated “to be continually employed to represent the saints in their resurrection glory, when they will rule over the world.” But the author has forgotten here that this will be the benign reign of the sun. But to return to the use of it

here. “It will be the sudden visitation of strange and distant glory, suddenly breaking upon the abyss of darkness beneath.” Now is there one single idea of this found in the morning star? or in anything ever said about it? Or how does it suddenly break upon the abyss of darkness? Is that the way the morning star appears?

Perhaps the reader will think that this strange and distant glory suddenly breaking upon the abyss of darkness beneath will be visible, when it thus breaks forth, as “to flesh and blood terrible glory.” Not at all. When the “tares and wheat had been both gathered” “for … the tares are not destroyed by any visible judgment on the earth” (page 316). As the Morning Star He treads the winepress indeed, according to this system, and exercises the destructive judgments by which the day of the Lord is ushered in. But the reader must remember that, according to the author’s system, the judgment of Christendom had all taken place before this. The whole field had been reaped and the tares burned in the fire, before this takes place. Yet this terrible glory of the Morning Star must be the same as the Son of man in the clouds of chapter 14, for that is the harvest when the saints are received into glory.175 And in the harvest of the earth and the vintage of the earth, the word ‘earth’ means a totally different thing: one earth entirely excludes the other.

On the whole, there is not the least scriptural authority for the meaning given to the morning star, nor indeed is any proof attempted. The morning star is confounded with stars, a quite different emblem, and used with entirely different objects. Christ is never said in Scripture to appear as the morning star at all. And there is the greatest possible confusion in the judgments with

which it is connected; for the judgments by which the day is ushered in by the star are after it has judged Christendom, tares and all, to whom there was no such terrible apparition at all, though the wheat had been taken up into this high glory. I must leave to the reader to judge of this extraordinary idea of a sort of quiet judgment of Christendom, tares and all, before even Christ appears in glory for the judgment of the apostates. I have already discussed it in connection with the revealed statements of 2 Thessalonians and Jude.

Next, as to the notes. “I have already spoken of the contiguity and connection, like the ladder of Jacob, which characterises the relation of the heavenly and earthly places.” The author adds, “I should regard the new earth as the centre of the displayed government of God over the works of His hands.” Why so? Christ was the centre (not on earth) till, giving up the kingdom, God is all in all. The writer again seeks to fill our imagination with possible new worlds which God may create. But man on earth is to be the centre of them when God is all and in all, or at least the earth belonging to man. Now, where is all this found? Scripture presents quite other ideas. And where is it said they go into the heaven of heavens? Or where is “united to God” spoken of in scripture? And if men go to the heaven of heavens to be with God, why does “the tabernacle of God is with men” mean that the heavenly Jerusalem is actually on the earth?

But here we light on some other important questions. The author, on the ground of there being “some difference as to honour and privilege between the citizens of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of the rest of the cities of Israel,” supposes “there may perhaps be

somewhat of a similar distinction between the New Jerusalem and the rest of the inhabiters of the new earth." But "they must be considered as purely official." But, though the name of Jerusalem be symbolically used, it is the saints themselves in glory, viewed in their unity as the bride, the Lamb's wife, who are new Jerusalem. And therefore the distinction is between new Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife, and men on the new earth, if such subsist. The tabernacle of God is with men. And this was connected with the descent of new Jerusalem from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. So that if this be so, she is seen in this distinctive beauty in the new earth also. The author may be pleased to call this official difference. But to be the tabernacle176 or dwelling-place of God in the eternal state, and in the nearest possible union with Christ, will surely be infinitely precious to the saint who really estimates things spiritually as he ought, be it called official or not. And, moreover, if this be so, what was said about indefinite extension all falls to the ground; for this particular city has its own proper place of distinctive glory, and the rest come under the title of men.177 I have again to notice what is again repeated— "they who are raised at the end of the millennium." Scripture never speaks of any who are so raised. There is no such second resurrection spoken of. The only persons we hear of as being of God at the end of the millennium are on earth, surrounded by the hosts of Satan, once again let loose.

I have again to repeat that "so in Christ shall all be made alive" does not state that they are in Christ at all— no more than "as in Adam" in the same sentence proves them to be in him or implies union. We are all involved

in Adam's fall, but there most certainly is no union with Adam such as there is with Christ.

I am not calling in question here that they have life from Christ, or bear His image. But the ground on which the author rests it is positively and absolutely mistaken. They are not said to be in Christ in the passage; nor does "in "the least imply what the author makes it imply, as I have already proved by numerous examples, and as this very passage would prove, were they said to be in Christ. We dwell in God certainly: there is no such idea in Scripture as being His body. We are in the Spirit, but we are not His body: nor does "in" here imply union. In fine, members of Adam's body we are not: yet in this passage, "in Adam" is used as "in Christ."

Besides, it is said, "They that are Christ's at his coming." So that if the author insists that this is a resurrection at the beginning of the millennium, and that there is another at the end, of members of Christ's body, then there are members of His body who are not His; for they that are His were raised at His coming. And you cannot take "they that are Christ's at His coming" are raised, because then there is no period stated at which they are raised; and you cannot speak of a resurrection at the commencement of the millennium at all.

As to Isaiah 65:17, anyone reading the chapter from verse 15 to 18 must see that there is no such thing as the author states. Verse 16 is joined to verse 15 by "that," verse 17-16 by "for," and verse 18 speaks of "that which I create" of verse 17, adding, "for I create Jerusalem." However, I do not question that there will be a new heavens and earth after the millennium; nor do I know anyone that does who adopts millennial views. As

to the promise, “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas,” let the reader only turn to Isaiah 11:9, and he will soon see to what time it refers. Habakkuk 2:14 supplies the nearly similar passage, which does not, I think, present any more doubt than Isaiah, as to what earth is spoken of. Did eternal blessedness depend on the promises to Abraham simply, I do not know how Abel, and Noah, and Enoch, are to come in. That he will be blessed in the Dew heavens and earth I doubt not; but I think it would be difficult to prove that the world of which Abraham was heir was the new earth; that he should be of this, through his seed, and himself in heavenly glory, is easy to conceive. That, attributed to him as a matter of dispensational glory, was quite consistent with all else. But a specific inheritance of Abraham in the everlasting new heavens and earth when Christ has given up the kingdom, would be a strange tenet, and one difficult, I conceive, to maintain from Scripture. As to the meek inheriting the earth then, I do not contest it. They shall inherit all things. I do not know where it is said in Scripture that the angels dwell in the heaven of heavens. It is really terrible—the multitude of assertions in this book about things in which the glory of God is concerned, without any Scripture to support them.

The author goes on to state, “at the first resurrection we see the ‘church of the first-born’; but it is not till the new heavens and the new earth that we see what ‘the church’ in its fullest sense is.” Where do “we see” this? We have already seen from Scripture that nowhere is so large an expression used about the church as where it is called “the church of the firstborn.” And here I affirm distinctly, that whatever Scripture may teach about the

state of individuals in everlasting blessedness (and I call nothing into question as to that here), Scripture never calls anything the church178 but the saints gathered together from Pentecost to the day the Lord takes them up to Himself, to be with Him when He comes again. This may be called an official distinction, or anything you please, but the fact cannot be denied. Nothing else is called the church. If pious persons have acquired the habit of calling the whole everlasting company of the redeemed, the church, it is all very well to bear with them, using it often with a sound mind as to truth, and for the best purposes. But when a system is formed on the assertions made in this note on the subject, and much built on it, and violent condemnation of those who prefer adhering to the statements of the word of God, then it is well to affirm distinctly that the assertion is wholly unfounded in the word of God, and that the statement has not one single passage of scripture to support it. It is an unscriptural statement. Those who are disposed to receive the author's assertions without Scripture, may maintain it. Those who know the value of the word will not fail to hold fast by it.

Where did the author find that precious stones were the truths with which we are now conversant? And it would be hard to find how "twelve" was active instrumentality in the foundations or gates either; or how the foundations of the city will rest in it. What a complete confusion of symbol with fact there is here! How does the earth appreciate and not defile the twelve foundations of the city? If he means the inhabitants, they are at the time supposed all alike bearing the image of the heavenly Adam.

Again, where is it said that “the heavenly city is itself a temple towards the earth”? Never in scripture. It is curious enough to state an idea of one’s own, and give it as a reason for finding something in Scripture— “and therefore we read.” But where is it said that the heavenly city is a temple where we serve Him day and night? Nor is it said we, but those who came out of the great tribulation, and that therefore they served Him day and night in His temple. It is (where Scripture uses it) a special symbol with its own object, and has nothing to do with the heavenly city. And the symbols so little agree in their use that in the heavenly city there is no night.

I have omitted to state (in page 331) that I do not agree with the sense attributed to the words, “the Spirit and the bride say Come.” The person just spoken of is the bright and morning star, the joy of the bride’s soul. I believe the Spirit and the bride say Come to the Bridegroom, to Christ, Christ having spoken of His coming, the moment that He announces Himself in the character in which He is associated with her, the morning star; for He gives to them that overcome the morning star—she does not wait till He says He is coming. Her desires, sanctioned and inspired by the Spirit that dwells in her, demand His coming. The Spirit and the bride say Come. And to whom does the bride say Come but to the Bridegroom? It is not as bride particularly she calls sinners. As bride she longs for the Bridegroom. But this desire is not a mere gracious but unchastened and unsanctioned affection. That Spirit, whose mind He knows who searches the heart, moves and thus sanctions the cry in her. It is a cry “according to God.”

The passage shews the whole position of the church. Where there is the understanding of her privilege as bride, the presenting the thought of the morning star at once awakens this cry of the Spirit in her. The next thought of the Holy Ghost is to summon those whose ears were opened, who heard, to join in the cry, to say, Come—not to preach. It is not calling every one that hears to preach, but to join the bride in the cry of Come. Then indeed the Spirit turns round, not to urge others to say Come; but, inasmuch as the church possesses, even before the Bridegroom comes, the rivers of living water, the Spirit turns round to those athirst, and says to them, Come. The church can look up and say to the Bridegroom, Come: she can look down or around her, and say to the thirsty soul, Come, yea, to whosoever will to come and drink of the water of life freely. It is a most lovely picture of her whole position. Longing for Christ herself, she stands for Him towards thirsty souls the happy instrument of the grace which she enjoys, and of which she is conscious, in all its freeness and refreshing power; for the stream of eternal life flows in her. Such is her position. Let her know what she will of the counsels of God about beasts and judgment, it is Christ Himself, the morning star, that awakens her desires and unlocks her tongue; and the coming of the Lord is to her not a warning, as to the others, but an answer of the heart of Jesus to her affection. He which testifieth these things, whatever He may have said about them, answers her desire; “Surely I come quickly. Amen.” May our hearts be enabled to join in what sprung forth by the Spirit from the apostle’s: “Even so; come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

I am happy and glad to close with this, as God has in His mercy closed the testimony we have been inquiring into

(a testimony full of sorrow and judgment) with the blessedness to the bride of Him who testified; and, in shutting up the book of the testimony, solemn and important as it was, leads back to the bright and blessed thought of Him that testified. There the church was at home: she knew her own affections, and they were at once called forth: nor did they fail to have the sanction and the answer of Him that had inspired and awakened them.

And here I close. I feel it a sufficient answer to the last note to beg the reader to read the first three verses of the book, and the fifth, and beginning of the sixth chapter.

How thankful I am to have done my task no one can tell. Burdensome as I felt it, it is a relief to have completed it beyond all I could have imagined. Yet I feel that I have done right, and I am thankful to have done it. I do not believe I have exposed half the inconsistencies the book contains, and of this I have no regret: my mind has in general only rested on them when important principles were more or less involved. This itself must, I am aware, give pain to many; and I know the spirit of it has been complained of. But the whole church of God is concerned more or less in the examination of a system which acts with much influence on souls, and pretends to condemn so loudly all who do not bow to it. Besides thinking the system false, I believe Scripture has been sacrificed to system in this book. Everyone will judge of this when he has examined the statements made, and the comments on them. It is possible the author may have been so full of his system as not to see it. But this is no remedy to the evil itself; and I can only say that, if I had sought in this matter to please men, I should not

have been the servant of Jesus Christ. I only ask the reader to examine the statements of the “Thoughts” by the word of God, candidly to weigh what I have said, with his conscience before God, and he shall say of me what he pleases afterwards. My hope will be satisfied if he is brought back, free from mere human ideas, to study in simple subjection the word of God, seeking the help of the Spirit of God; and to have its authority more exalted, its value more appreciated than ever in his mind, so that what he has he may have as faith in his soul, and not as ideas which he has received from some other source than God.

1 By means of the vague expression “the present dispensation,” and calling it “the church dispensation,” in the previous chapter, and giving it the limits and character which are found in page 13, the church, and the kingdom, and the period of government itself, closed by Christ’s coming to earth, are identified without any argument, and the reader is involved in the conclusion before it is stated. Hence the need of unravelling these points. This is really the whole point in question: whether the scripture does identify these things. But here they are identified by expressions adapted to the popular state of thought, and the mind shut up in the conclusion, before it is aware of what it is. I believe this identification of the church and the kingdom to be of the very worst moral effect to the saint.

2 We have here, again, an absolute abstract statement which may be true, or may be false; but which, if once admitted, decides by the statement itself the whole question, without anyone’s being aware of it. It supposes that the whole period in question is divided into two parts— the time during which Christ is seated at the

right hand of God; and the time during which He will come forth in the exercise of the power of His own peculiar kingdom. Now, suppose there was an interval between these two. Supposing I were to speak of the time Napoleon was on the throne, and the time he was a prisoner at St. Helena, as all his history from the time he became emperor. All the time at Elba and all the hundred days would be left out. Now the statement made by the writer here supposes the whole period to be exclusively taken up by His being on the Father's throne or in the exercise of the power of His own peculiar kingdom. I repeat, it supposes—it assumes that. Now that is exactly the point in question which has to be proved. If Christ rises up from His Father's throne and comes and receives the church to Himself, before He enters on the exercise of the power of His own peculiar kingdom—then this statement is false as pretending to embrace the whole matter in this division of the period into these two parts. This is a very common sophism—to involve the conclusion of the matter in question in the statement, before any proof is given.

3 I have spoken thus moderately in the text, because it seems to me, that changing the translation without notice and without reasons given, and then building a great deal upon it, is itself a very objectionable proceeding. But I add here, that it seems to me that the translation given is a wrong one. I am not a good Hebraist—far from it; but, as far as I have been able to examine the books and statements of those who are, I judge the Hebrew will not bear this. The English reader should be aware that there is no such tense in Hebrew as "shall have." It is an interpretation which must rest on the word translated "until," having the force, as it

has sometimes, of “while.” But this supposes the verb used to have the force of some continuous action, until the termination of which the “while” lasts. Thus, “sit until I shall have prepared” means “while I am preparing.” Hence the author has given the sense of “forming” and “preparing” to what is done with the footstool. But, I think I may say that the word translated “make” has no such meaning, and has not a continuous force. It signifies the act of setting something actually, or morally, in a certain position; and if so, the Hebrew would not even bear the sense attributed. Moreover, I think that when it is so used, it is habitually (I am disposed to believe, from all the passages I have been able to find and examine for myself, always) the perfect, and not the (present or) future that is used; sometimes, perhaps, the participle. I do not allude to negative phrases. Moreover, no translation, English or other, with which I am acquainted, so translates, or supposes such a translation of it—neither Horsley, nor the Lyra Davidis, nor the new interlinear translation, nor the German, nor French, nor Gesenius; but on the contrary exclude it. In conclusion, I do not think the Hebrew could be justly translated so; at all events, I have no doubt it is a wrong translation. And, as every translation, critical or other, with which most of us are familiar, translates it as the English, it is surely an unwarrantable thing to impose a new one, and build up a system on it, without any reason given; and silently convert “make” into “preparing” or “forming,” a sense which the Hebrew word, I think I may safely venture to say, will not possibly bear. The reader conversant with such things will find Gesenius (under the Hebrew word fad, 2) using the passage in the sense of present spiritual subjection, as those ignorant of the millennium do, a long column of reasoning

connected with the assertion of its being the “term assigned to a period,” and not the “period during which.” The truth is, it rests in the nature of the act. “Have,” “shall have,” or “do” are immaterial if the act be one act which closes the period. “You shall stay in prison till you ‘have,’ or ‘shall have,’ paid, or ‘till’ you pay,” is all the same thing in English. On the other hand, “you shall stay in the house ‘till your wounds are healed,’ or ‘shall be healed,’ or ‘whilst they are healing,’” would be substantially the same thing; because the “till” here is the close of a continuous act, with whose close the period closes. Now I appeal to any one cognisant of Hebrew if sheeth has this force. At any rate, giving a changed translation, contrary to everyone commonly known, and building a vast system upon it, without the least proof that it is correct, is itself sufficient to render the whole suspected.

4 There is not a word about forming or preparing in Hebrew nor in Greek.

5 This is clearly not the case, because He comes to receive them. The putting of the two statements of scripture together, indeed (namely, that Christ comes to receive His saints; and, that the harvest in which the wheat is gathered in is at the end of the age), demonstrates that Christ’s leaving the Father’s throne and receiving the saints precedes the close of the age. It is not finished when He comes to receive the church. The only other way of taking this is, to say that the harvest applies to earthly saints, and not to the church. But that would only make the case stronger still, namely, that even the earthly judgments are before the end of the age, and would put the receiving of the saints as quite a separate thing, clean out of the question of the

age. In any case the system of the author is demonstrated to be altogether untrue.

6 I say nothing about Israel blinded, because I see nothing particularly about it in the Revelation, save the sealing the one hundred and forty-four thousand. That blindness in part happens to Israel till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, the apostle teaches us; Rom. 11. What is done with the believing remnant after that, or how they are made a great nation, the Revelation does not teach us. According to the author, after the withdrawal of Christians, a work goes on, amongst that part of Israel to which the Revelation alludes, independent of Christianity, which does not bring them into the church, but secures the deliverance of those who receive the testimony when Jesus appears. And this is all that is material to observe; because it proves that, supposing the blindness to remain on the mass till Christ executes judgment (which, I suppose, nobody denies), this does not hinder an effectual work, not wrought by the church amongst that people (beloved of God, though enemies in respect of the gospel) of which the Revelation treats, as indeed of no other work amongst them.

7 See the comparison, Hebrews 10:11, 12.

8 Hence, perhaps, the resurrection is not spoken of in it, save as a recognised fact to enumerate those who have part in it, when the thrones are set, and judgment given to those on them. But, as the act of life-giving power, it is never historically mentioned.

9 There is a very deeply and fundamentally false principle running through all the author’s reasonings on this point. I mean this, that, if life be there, inasmuch as

it is always of God, or divine life, it is always essentially the same, whatever official distinctions there may be as to dispensation. Now, as to the possession of life by man, it must be holy in the principle of its nature, obedient, and have God for its object. So far, it must be fundamentally the same. But this makes man the end and essential object of all this. Then these things, man having life, may be termed “official” distinctions (though, even so, it is most sad to say that those things by which God acts peculiarly on His saints are mere official differences). I do not think a spiritual holy mind that loves Christ can help being shocked at being told that that possession of the Comforter, which made it expedient that Christ should go away—which guides him into all truth—gives him communion with the Father and the Son—which is an unction by which he knows all things, the things freely given to him of God, yea, the deep things of God—which enables him to cry, Abba, Father—by which the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, and by which he knows that he is one with Christ, in Him, and He in him—that all this is a mere official distinction.

But the truth is, this principle shuts God out of the matter, in making the difference as to man the end. These differences of dispensation are the displays of God’s glory; and therefore of all importance, and most essential, because a positive part of His glory. The law maintained His majesty, and title to claim obedience, as the gospel displayed His grace, and gave the obedience of a child. To say that the breaking down the middle wall of partition, and the accomplishment of the glorious work by which it was effected produced only an official difference, because man had life, and man was forgiven,

or forborne with in view of it, is to say that the display of God's glory was an unessential thing: the display of all His glorious wisdom, power, and love, in that mighty work which stands alone in heaven and earth, the object of angels' research. Was it unessential to them, who found scarce even an official difference, though doubtless it affected their position, to see Him who had created them, nailed to the tree in that mighty and solitary hour which stands aloof from all before and after? Let us only remember that dispensations are the necessary displays of God's glory, and we shall soon feel where we are brought by what makes mere official difference out of them.

Besides, the difference is very great indeed as to man. It is everything as to his present affections, as to his life. Because God puts forth power, power too which works in man through faith, according to the display He makes of Himself. And therefore the whole life, in its working, in its recognition of God, is formed on this dispensational display. And this is the field of responsibility too. Thus, if God reveals Himself to Abraham as Almighty, Abraham is to live and walk in the power of that name. And so of the promises given to him. Israel is to dwell in the land as the redeemed people of the Lord—their affections, ways, responsibility, and happiness flowing from what God was to them as having placed them there. So to us—the presence of the Holy Ghost Himself being the great distinguishing fact, with the knowledge He affords. Because all this is what faith ought to act upon, and the life which we live in the flesh we live by faith, for the just shall live by faith. Hence the Lord does not hesitate to say, This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. That could

not have been the life of those before. Had they then not life? Nay, but it could not be stated in that way—their life was not that; and to undo these differences is to make a life without affections, character, responsibility, in a word, without faith. You cannot do it; for to us to believe is to live. The more you succeed in levelling them to one thing, the more you succeed in stifling divine affections, and active human responsibility (destroying, as far as may be, divine communion, and frustrating divine grace), the more the glory and energy of faith is null, and hence God's glory in us.

There is another point connected with this, that I would not leave untouched:—namely, that making a difference of position in glory is setting aside the value of Christ's blood, and making our place on high depend on something else. Now I meet this difficulty in the face. And I say there is a difference in glory; and that difference does not depend on the precious blood of Christ; and that to say that it does, takes away its value from that blood. Difference there is. The Saviour recognises the setting on His right hand and on His left; and many other passages prove it. Now, if this depend on the blood of Christ, this would attribute a various value to it, making it uncertain and imperfect in the extent of its efficacy. The blood of the Lamb gives to all their sole title to be in the glory, and gives to all an equal and perfect justification from sin; and therefore in its effect, there can be no difference. To suppose a difference is to call in question the completeness of its efficacy. But there is a difference. And this (while the title to be in the glory is for all in the blood) depends therefore on something else. It is, in the accomplishment of the counsels of God the Father, given to those for

whom it is prepared; and given (though man is not in the least the judge of that ibour, and there are first that shall be last, and last first) according to the working and energy of the Spirit of God, and faithfulness through grace in service. God does what He will with His own. Still we know that in doing so He displays what He is, and is consistent with Himself; and position and reward answer to the, sovereignty of God, which has given us a position, and the operation of the Spirit by which we have walked in it. It is the sovereignty of God we know from the Lord's answer to the sons of Zebedee, and the parable in Matthew 20. It is the fruit of labour, as we know from 1 Corinthians 3:8; the parables (Luke 19 and Matthew 25); 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20; 2 John 8. I suppose it will not be questioned that this work is through the efficacious operation of the Spirit of God. Suppose, now, the Lord chose to put the Old Testament saints in the position of the four living creatures, and the New Testament saints in that of the crowned elders, both of whom are said to sing the song of the redeemed together; what is there contrary to principle in this? I am not here at all affirming it is so; but enquiring whether there is anything a priori to condemn it. I see nothing at all. It is quite clear that the saints on earth during the millennium are redeemed by blood, and yet as to glory much farther off than the crowned elders. Why in this administration of glory may there not be intermediate positions?

10 That is, Jewish in form, having an earthly centre in Jerusalem—just the statement which has been so animadverted upon as applied to the Pentecostal Church.

11 Note also, in this contrast of Jews and Gentiles, the patriarchal and antediluvian saints do not come into contemplation at all—only the twain, Jews and Gentiles. It is not an introduction into some old thing (this is treated of in Romans 11; the church condition being finished, chapter 8, and the Jews taken up); it is to make of twain one new man.

I take the opportunity here of remarking, what might have been introduced earlier, that the writer much insists on Christ being the new thing in the earth while alive down here. That it was a new thing to have a man without sin in His nature is true, and equally so for the blessed God to be manifest in the flesh. But, as regards us, He was still taking His place with the old thing, made of a woman, made under the law, made like to His brethren in all things; Hebrews 2. As far as man's connection with it went, it was His coming into the midst of the old thing, and not associating man with Him as the head of the new. I suppose that the author refers to the expression in Jeremiah, "For the Lord shall create a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." But supposing this applied to Christ's birth, Christ would not be the new thing, but His birth of a virgin, which was a new thing. It was the woman's compassing a man which was the new thing created in the earth, not what Christ was; to which the words could not apply. But further, I have never seen the least satisfactory proof that the words apply even to the miraculous birth of Christ: and I doubt if compassing a man has any such a sense, or could have it. At any rate, He is not the new thing here spoken of. Nor is Christ incarnate ever called the new thing. Nor is Christ ever said to be the new creature. I doubt much that it is scriptural, either as an

expression, or an idea. Upon this expression of “the new thing” a vast edifice of doctrine is built by the author. He should first shew some scripture for it.

12 None at all but the then Christians (Rev. 1:1) twice (and chap. 2:20); though I see no reason whatever to confine it to them.

13 In the close of Psalm 102 the millennial Jewish saints are called His servants—those who are clearly not the church in its present standing.

14 This view of the character of testimony, i.e., not of the Holy Ghost in the church as such, but of the Spirit of prophecy, is much confirmed if we adopt (as all critical editions do, on, it would appear, the amplest evidence) the reading, “the testimony of Jesus Christ [concerning, or even] all things that he saw—that is, omitting “and” before “all things.” Revelation 1:2.

15 We have seen the prophetic character of this, and hence the assertion (in that otherwise it might have been supposed unconnected with Him and His glory, and serve mere earthly and Jewish manifestation of divine power), “the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.” Without this, the church testimony might have been quite separated from the subsequent prophetic testimony, as if the latter were not of Jesus at all.

16 The italics are the author’s.

17 Appeals too which are to be answered.

18 It is the second time referred to in the same way in the “Thoughts.”

19 I may add that, in Matthew 24:22-28} there are statements connected with the word “Ye” which apply to

a time when the author does not suppose the church to be there.

20 I suppose there can be little doubt that the allusion here is to Daniel 7:9, where the thrones are set; which, being expressed by a word used for “thrown into a place,” has been translated “cast down” in the English translation, but by the Septuagint “set” which, I suppose, is clearly the sense, as received by Gesenius and other learned men, and many interpreters, and agrees with the context. If so, the Greek here is natural enough, and would give much critical force to the observations here. But this I leave to the learned. There is no need of reference to the Hebrew word; as the Greek word is regularly used in the sense in which it is found here: as John 19:29, “There was set a vessel full of vinegar.” Reference to a dictionary will give the use and examples; John 2:6, Matthew 5:14, may suffice, particularly the former.

21 All this is built on the fact of the jasper and sardine stones being assumed to prove that the reference was to the breastplate of the high priest, of which there is no kind of evidence, because no relationship of any kind with anything else is intimated. It is merely that He was like it—the expression of certain qualities in Him. On this is built, that the stones on the breastplate secured the heavenly as well as earthly glory in unity as covenant blessings. Where is all this in Scripture? And of what covenant? What an edifice is here built, without one scripture being quoted, on these two stones being the likeness of God! And note, that the whole system of the author, proving the imperfection of the church’s own glory, and the participation of Israel in it (without saying

that it is inferior, so as to leave all vague), is built, without a scripture proof, on this.

22 The expression has been used most innocently (I dare say I may have used it myself), as the carrying up the mind to the true source of all its blessings. But when a mere human imperfect expression is used as the basis and expression of a doctrine, so as to draw immense consequences from its terms, then the value and accuracy of the terms must be estimated. It is just the way of error to use some inaccurate expression, popular and consecrated to express a great blessing, to sanction the false doctrine contained in the terms employed. Thus it was with “mother of God,” used perhaps at the first innocently, as meaning the mother of Him who was God.

23 We shall see how far this holds good with other statements further on.

24 This is an utter misapplication of the passage. The church is said to be His fulness as the body of the head — “like Him” in personal glory, having the image of the Second, as we have of the first Adam. “When he appears, we shall be like him.” It is what we shall be, not the possession of divine attributes. And when He speaks of glory given, it is given to Him; but He upholds all things by the word of His power; and in or by Him all things consist.

25 Were the angels, too, omnipotent—those ministers of His who did His pleasure? And we are said to be “equal to angels,” Luke 20:36, though exalted above them, through union with Jesus. Cannot Almighty power go with the agents of His will? Does it not do so now, even with poor, feeble saints, where they do it?

26 The throne, I apprehend, is little spoken of in direct known addresses to the church.

27 This is really all confusion, because the throne is surrounded with future glories, and yet is the throne of the present dispensation. It presents the church symbolically in glory, and gives Christ the titles which belong to His connection with Israel in a yet unasserted title; and yet it is hence that precise and definite instruction is given to the church for its present testimony and service. This has been in a measure felt by the author, though laboriously sought to be got over: for, after stating that it is not Christ's church title, but a new relationship, he says, "yet it is not difficult to see the reason why He should be here introduced as the Lion of Judah." Having mingled and confused all the relationships of Christ and the throne with the church and Israel, the reasons for that must be given: but the simple scripture does not need these reasons, nor this justification. He who was on earth the Lamb, and was withal the Lion of Judah, was thus identified and recognised in His own Person in the throne on high. Hereafter He will be known as Offspring of David too.

28 If so, it was not the throne which was the sustaining object of faith during this dispensation.

29 A title, as the writer himself says (page 59), "yet unasserted."

30 After all, this is not the ground of the church's suffering, properly speaking. It is as Saviour and Son of God that the church knows and declares Him, and suffers for Him; though the other be fully owned. But the writer always brings down the church to the earthly title

of Christ. It is characteristic of the book, and that to which the saints have to give heed.

31 See pages 46, 47.

32 [So it was marked in Griesbach's manual edition, Leipsic, 1805, and thus it is represented in some reprints; but in his critical edition it stands only as questionable.—Ed.]

33 Unless one is here uncollated: no one cites it. The passage is wanting in the third. I will venture to make this remark on Mr. Tregelles's book. As far as I can judge, the preface is the clearest and most satisfactory statement, as to the materials of an examination of the text of the Revelation which we have. But having generally given the cursive manuscripts in classes, and merely the numbers which agree, no one can form a judgment for himself, unless he assume the system of recension adopted by Mr. T. His judgment may be very good; but the reader is disabled from judging for himself. Another defect, as to convenience of reference, is, that the hiatuses in C (which no one can be well expected to carry in his memory) are not stated in the margin; so that the reader cannot judge whether it be silent or adverse. In the present case Tregelles's note is a transcript of Scholz's, which states the authorities against, but nothing more.

34 It is then used with the genitive.

35 Then (as here) with the accusative.

36 The question clearly is, not about the existence of God's throne, but to what period the vision applied.

37 I suppose the court of government is meant. It was so much more natural, in reading the symbols found in this

chapter, to suppose it the court of the temple, if in any, that I did not know what to think.

38 It ought to be, “they sing.”

39 Any Greek scholar who has paid a little attention to the point, would know that epi, with words of government or rule, used with accusative, genitive, or dative, is connected with the subject of rule, and not the place of rule. I refer to the following passages as illustrating this: Matthew 2:22; Luke 1:33; chap. 19:14, 27; Judges 9:8, 10, 12-15, 22; 1 Samuel 8:7, 9, 11 (LXX); Matthew 24:47; Luke 12:44. Indeed, with a genitive it has itself the sense of being set over anything, as those set over affairs. The contrast of en reigning in a place, and epi, over a people or land, may be seen in 2 Samuel 5:5. As to epi, “over,” all Samuel, and still more Kings and Chronicles, afford instances without end. Genesis 36:31, of en. See Vol. 13, p. 131.

40 The Greek word phiala is indeed used in 2 Chronicles 4:22, by the LXX, of the hundred golden basons made by king Solomon. But these bowls are never connected in the Old Testament with incense, nor even with what men used to take fire from the altar with to, put the incense on. It is employed for the Hebrew word used in Numbers 7 several times for the silver bowls offered by the princes; Exodus 38:3. (LXX ch. 38:34, Ed. Bos.) Bowls of brass connected with the brazen altar; the same in Numbers 4:14. In Amos 6:6, when used for a drinking bowl the LXX translation is quite different. In 2 Chronicles 4:22 (21), the Septuagint seems to give another word; but a little attention will, I think, make it plain. The word labides is placed by the Complutensian edition, after luknoi. Of this there can be very little

doubt, seeing it is the term used for a part of the luknoi in the description, Exodus 37. (LXX 38:20, or Compl. 24.) There is no word for this in 2 Chronicles 4:22 in Hebrew; the Septuagint adds it. This being so, phialai corresponds with the usual Hebrew word. The general expression of phialai is borrowed possibly from Solomon rather than others. But they had no particular connection with the altar of incense. The censers, or vessels used for that, are translated by the LXX as pureia, as in Exodus 38:3 (35). The same thing is in Exodus 27:3 as to both words. They are used to contain the plagues oftener than prayers. See chapters 15-18, ch. 21:8.

41 See “Thoughts,” page 37.

42 This supposes 2 Thessalonians 2 to be the first beast. It is rather to be taken as the second or two-horned beast; but this does not affect the argument.

43 I believe there is consecutive order in chapters n and 12 in this way. Chapter 12 takes up from its origin, and pursues in its conduct, what becomes the object of judgments which happen under the seventh trumpet, and so falls into the general narrative. But then it was quite important enough to give it a history apart, as it was of Babylon afterwards; because these evils and judgments at the close, which take place under the seventh trumpet, forming the latter part of the Revelation (beginning with chapter 12), are really the most morally important of the whole book.

44 I would here ask in passing, what proof there is that this horse and his rider is Christ at all. I see none whatever. It seems to me much more like some imperial conquest, providentially permitted of God (perhaps of

Antichrist himself, before he assumes that character). This question does not apply particularly to Mr. N.'s system.

45 This point is constantly recurring in the author's statements, and is part of an elaborate system, which makes the Aaronic priesthood of Aaron and his family the type of the heavenly priesthood of Christ and the church during the millennium. Where is the proof of this? It is assumed all through this book. I do not discuss it at length here. There is no proof given of it whatever. Now, it is to me more than questionable if it be true. The proper priesthood of Christ is Melchisedec priesthood. Now He exercises it for the church after the type of Aaron; but there is no proof that He will do so during the time of millennial glory. It seems to me rather inconsistent, on the contrary, with His position as Melchisedec on earth judging righteously. During the time of Satan's power and our infirmity in conflict we have, if any man sin, an Advocate with the Father. Not to make good our righteousness, but to maintain us in our position before God in our walk. The question is, whether, during the millennium, where there is no temptation, judgment is not the consequence of sin in that day in the earth, instead of intercession, as regards actual present dealings with it: It certainly ought not to be assumed that Christ exercises His priesthood in a Melchisedec manner on His throne, and after an Aaronic pattern in heaven, at the same time, and about the same things.

46 I take advantage of the word criticism here to state, that the friend referred to in the "Thoughts "has very kindly communicated to me the information, that, though in Griesbach's Leipsic edition of 1805, and many

reprints, the reading “us” in Revelation 5:9 is marked as spurious, this mark is a misprint. That Griesbach really gives it as only a questionable reading. Mr. Tregelles (for his name is now known by the publication of his book) adds, in his communication to me, proofs that “us “is the right reading. I dare say his reasonings are just, though the one ancient MS is against the reading; I have no disposition to dispute it. My objection is not to the reading, which is the commonly received one (the change is in autous), but to building an immense system on it. But as I had been misled by the reprint of Griesbach’s edition, I thought it right to correct it. It is no wonder I was, as these reprints, misled by the Leipsic edition, so give it: indeed Mr. T. says, “I used to think he had rejected it.” Having corrected the mistake, which I am enabled to do by the kindness of Mr. T., I do not enter further here into the detail of the critical question. No one can deny that the passage is, as to critical readings, in an entangled and unsatisfactory state.

47 See verses 6, 9, and 10, when the signs are connected with the day.

48 Some of the statements, made in the tracts connected with prophecy, shew the most entire ignorance of the political state of things. Certain acts are attributed to the French, for example, as promoting certain principles, which were done solely to destroy their influence. I do not blame the ignorance at all here, but the pretension to interpret events in this manner.

49 I apprehend Luther and De Wette translate it in the same sense.

50 My own present conviction is that there is only one period of three years and a half. No doubt the power to

come makes a covenant for a week; but it is on his breaking it that the evil day and tribulation begins. Deception was there before, but it was not the time of Jacob's trouble. This is the last three years and a half of which the Apocalypse treats.

51 This itself is, I judge, a complete misstatement of the text. It is not at all Christ's at His coming, or not Christ's at His coming (i.e., those who are His at that time, or not) as it is used here to make it a part of those that are Christ's who rise at that time—but, they that are Christ's (rise) at His coming, when from absent He is present. I appeal to any one accustomed to Greek, if it be not so.

The Greek words in 1 Corinthians 15:23, to which the common English translation perfectly answers, "Christ the first-fruits: then they that are Christ's at his coming." The end (as we have seen) is after all resurrections of just and unjust are passed.

52 There is the assertion that every man will rise in his own order; but there is nothing at all about the order of all who are quickened. There are two classes named, of which Christ Himself is one; they that are His another: but there is not a word of order amongst these latter.

53 That is, between the communication of life, and the union of the body of Christ.

54 And I am fully persuaded that the more spiritual discernment there is, the more it will be perceived that (while there was the same life, and grace, and salvation for all believers, and all were in the church) Paul held a place in ministry proper to himself—a dispensation or administration of the grace of God committed unto him, in which he was quite alone, and none at all like him. He recognised all the rest; but he stood, called

independently into an independent place, for a special and distinct service, and peculiar and distinctive sufferings. None other speaks the least like him in his relationship to the saints and churches; while, there is no doubt, he preached the same gospel of salvation. None were the head of a system entrusted to them in the same manner. The special doctrine was Christ among the Gentiles the hope of glory, and the unity of the body the church, with the gathering of all things into one in Christ, and the glory and principles connected with this. It was his gospel.

55 The setting aside the metropolitan order of Jerusalem which had been, as far as it went, the blending of the two systems, and which the author compares with Jerusalem's place in the millennium when this blending will be accomplished, certainly was not what destroyed the power of Gentile Christianity, but, as he himself has stated, set it a going in the person of Paul. The denying the future hopes of Israel, and so blending the earth and heaven in a new popish metropolitan, is quite a different thing from distinguishing the nature of these hopes, and so not blending them. The author has assumed, that not to blend the church's hopes and Israel's, is to deny Israel's; but it is quite the contrary. It maintains them. Whereas, blending them denies what is proper to the church, which is lost when you blend it with Israel: and so does it Israel's too; for each is what it is.

56 In point of fact, I believe the church will be gone up on high.

57 Namely, verses 15-28.

58 In Jerusalem. The witnesses are not in question here. The author speaks of them as coming after this testimony.

59 If, as the writer supposes in the note, page 90, the scene from chapters 7 to 13, is Jerusalem, then I need not add “there,” because then all the actings of the beast against the saints are confined to Jerusalem. All that is said of the faith of Jesus, or testimony to Jesus, is confined to this; except Babylon being drunk with their blood, which is quite general—the blood of all saints being found there.

The only other case of testimony spoken of is general, chapter 6:9.

60 If all this judgment goes on, how comes it that all is so resplendent and full of comfort during the reign of Antichrist, as is alleged?

61 My present thought [1868] is that there is only one half-week in the defined periods of the Revelation. I confess I have been surprised at the clearness of these pages; and have a deeper sense of the evil of the author’s system than ever I had before. The guarded enquiry here has comforted me, as not going beyond assured ground at the time [1844-5].

62 The witnesses may thus testify; but then the church’s testimony is over.

63 Pages 92, 93, of the “Thoughts.”

64 Such is constantly the case with the author, and those in the system of the “Thoughts.”

65 I doubt its being Antichrist’s, though he may coalesce in it. It is the prince to come, the head (I suppose) of the revived Roman beast.

66 The reasoning as to the two periods ending simultaneously is perfectly put as regards the author's system; but I believe there is but the one (or last) half-week in the twelve hundred and sixty days and forty-two months. But it is a Jewish testimony. The beast can only blaspheme those who dwell in heaven. The times and laws are delivered into the hands of the beast in Daniel 7 (i.e., Jewish ordinances, not the saints). He wears them out, no doubt, but the great body escape into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God for them; and, in spite of the beast, God will maintain a testimony. When this is closed, however, the beast will slay the witnesses.

The beast, moreover, is not Antichrist, though helped by the latter. That he is, was at the time of writing these papers a commonly accepted idea. It does not affect this point, save as facilitating the solution of what is a real difficulty, suggested above as an objection to the author's system—how, if there be only one half week, the slaying all who do not worship him is consistent with the existence of the two witnesses. The preservation of the woman indeed shews that this effort of the beast or dragon to destroy all cannot pass the limits set to it by God. For the true Jewish worshippers as a body escape. So in chapter 11, the altar and temple, the true worshippers, are measured and owned of God; and it seems that a testimony also is preserved, two witnesses, or an adequate testimony to the God of the earth. The beast's power is general in chapter 13, over all dwellers in earth. Meanwhile, among the Jews, God preserves a testimony where only the second beast may be.

The two periods do not close simultaneously; but the beast's having power to continue forty-two months can hardly mean he continues in this character eighty-four.

In this the author is right; but as to the nature of the testimony he is fundamentally wrong. The only change to be made in my argument is to apply it to the last half-week, not a previous one. For, whichever half-week it is, the testimony is not the church (according to the author himself), not Christianity. The rest of the reply is all right. The reply is just, but the positive statements are not clear, though guarded; because the existence of two half-weeks is supposed possible; as (see the text above) the difficulty of another interpretation is urged. The difficulty is real; but it is no more than existed in the time of the Lord on earth (for I suppose the same period). Till His time was come no one could take Him; though the power of the beast, and apostate Jews, and Antichrist figuratively were there by anticipation. The positive truth I apprehend to be that, on the casting down of Satan to earth, the power of" Christ's kingdom is so far set up; but this leaves three years and a half of the great rage of Satan, or the last half week—the time of the two beasts' characteristic power—the time when the sacrifice is taken away, and times and laws are delivered into the beast's hands.

The rapture of the saints is quite another matter. This is not the kingdom: we are taken to the Father's house (as in Luke 9 the kingdom was displayed on the mountain)—the church's heavenly place, in the entering into the bright cloud whence the Father's voice issues. As far as this is shewn in Revelation 12, it is in the taking up of the man-child.

I do not attach great importance to the question of one or two half-weeks; but I believe in the Revelation there is only one. In the first half the prince had favoured and deceived the Jews, but wickedly. But if so, the argument

in page 213, beginning “nor does it seem to me,” down to “inhabiters of earth,” is without force. [Note to second edition, 1868.]

67 Effects much more like the end of chapter 6 than chapter 19 is.

68 Unless on the authority of a various reading in Colossians 2. Still here it would be government, and not the church, which is in question.

69 What is the meaning of stated and remaining there silent? Was the mystery silent? If not, if it was stated in the Old Testament, the Old Testament was not silent about it. But the apostle states in Romans 16:25, that it was not spoken of, or stated—that silence had been kept about it: not that it had been silent there, which has no sense. The translation is a wrong one also. It is not “kept silent “; but silence kept about it; and therefore rightly, for the sense, translated “kept secret.”

70 It is not the prophetic scriptures, but by prophetic scriptures; and I have not the smallest doubt this applies to New (not Old Testament) scriptures—a testimony withal of their inspiration, if such were needed.

71 We must remember that according to the author, “The chapter before us supplies us with the history of Jerusalem during the period which immediately precedes its final visitation by the Lord in glory.” Now Antichrist abolishes Christianity and Judaism. How is this denoted by measuring one and not measuring the other? If it be of God, how can Judaism and Christianity be now in any sense outer and inner courts of the same common building, which God has to consider, to shew which He will own and which He will not.

72 I have already corrected the thought of the two half-weeks here recurred to. The general argument remains the same, except the sentence beginning “Nor is it to be imagined” in text above. The view of the author of the “Thoughts” criticised, which insists on Christianity and yet excludes it, is contradictory to the last degree. His object is to keep the church to the end and have no Jewish remnant. Yet he holds it was withdrawn from Jerusalem, and another testimony there, yet owned all the while of God. The same question arises in pages 171, and 183, where it is treated as a collateral question. I need not refer to it again. (Second edition.)

73 The whole argument and structure of that tract, which appears to me manifestly unsound, is based upon an incorrect citation of the passage, “Before all these things shall they lay their hands upon you.” In the English translation (which I have no doubt at all is correct), it is, “Before all these they shall lay,” etc. The difference being that the English translation refers to a distinct specific set of things just mentioned; whereas the writer generalises it, and puts it before another large class of events which have no connection, as he himself recognises, with the other. Now, all the statement of the tract depends on this, the tract bringing in thereby the whole Christian dispensation as in question. Now I believe most decidedly the English translation to be right, and the author of the tract wrong. But at any rate he ought not to give as a quotation what has been changed, without apprising the reader, and giving some reason for it, when the whole argument of his tract depends upon it.

74 There are two parts in the rule: “words … in the Greek rendered by the participle, not by the indicative

mood, and therefore do not imply present time, but an abstract relation." (Note here, the participle is not of the present tense.) Now this part is quite wrong; as John 5:11, 15; 1 Timothy 6:2 (and this would be the easier way of translating Psalm 1:3; Heb. 5:5), and an endless number of instances prove. The other part is, that this rule as to abstract relation is confined to the present and perfect middle. And this is quite wrong too; as Matthew 10:4, and the passage Revelation 11:4 prove. The truth is, the one part of the rule proves the other part wrong. Because, if the participle is abstract, it certainly is not merely in the present and perfect middle that it is so used. Take chapter 10:3, where we have this form twice, once the very same word, and see how either of the rules will apply. Indeed, it is so entirely wrong, and so upsets every real rule about time, which is governed by the tense and not by the question of participle and indicative mood, that it is useless to enter into further details. I should have to cite all the rules of interpretation for the Greek tenses. Neither is the present active with the article always abstract (as Matthew 8:10; chap. 21:9, where you have it twice not abstract, and once abstract). So in the expression "who were" Acts 11:1, and at the beginning of Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, changing case and gender as needed. But I need go no farther.

75 This is the account given of their state, page 112: "They appear to become gradually humbled, and at last, under the testimony, I believe, of the witnesses, thoroughly broken—conscious of the truth respecting the past, and correctly anticipating the future: assured of preservation through the fires, and of subsequent

blessing—but not as yet sprinkled with die blood of reconciliation, nor possessed of the spirit of peace." It is curious that they should be assured of subsequent blessing, and preservation for it, and yet not of the favour of God. That they might know they were not of the church, if the dispensation or time of the church were over, one might understand: but to be assured of blessing by God's favour, and that blessing "acceptance in Jesus" (p. 113), and yet not know God's favour, is strange enough. Certainty of acceptance in Jesus in two years, without peace, is a state of soul perfectly impossible to exist. But let that pass now.

The statement in page 15 of the tract entitled "The day of the Lord," is entirely contradictory of this. "They will reject Him till they shall have been brought through the terrors of that day." Is assurance of acceptance in Him shortly, and consciousness of the truth of what is passed, and correctly anticipating the future (i.e. His coming), "rejecting him"? But it is really impossible to follow all the contradictions and confusion into which following his own thoughts (where Scripture and submission of mind to Scripture are departed from) throws a writer.

76 Can any one believe that during the present period, the church period, present salvation and presence depends (not by man's hindering the gospel, but by God's sending another different testimony) on which side a river a man is?

77 Were it so, that God re-assumed now the power delegated to the Gentiles, all the author's system is confusion and contradiction; because he has stated that the times of the Gentiles and Antichrist's reign close necessarily synchronously with the testimony of the

witnesses. Whereas the power is re-assumed by God only after this, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet—re-assumed even in heaven; while Antichrist's reign was already closed before this on earth.

78 There seems to me much more connection with Micah 5; but this is too extensive a point to discuss here.

79 But nothing at all could commence with Him down here in the flesh, because all Israel, as well as the Gentiles, were unredeemed sinners. It is denying unwittingly the necessity of redemption. Giving of life did not suffice. He must come by blood as well as by water; and this was what always straitened the heart of Jesus. He had this baptism to be baptised with. This was not a dispensational question, but a question of the necessity of redemption for all, in order to the enjoyment of the promises thereby. In the wisdom of God it could be, and was, dispensationally extended to the Gentiles; but it was essentially true that blood must be shed for all. As a Gentile, I could withal have no part till this middle wall of partition was broken down—no part in the promises: and if men are pleased to call it the Israel of God, it is quite certain that Christ could not begin it as regards Gentiles on earth—a Gentile could not be of it. But, as regards Israel also, the sure mercies of David are based on the resurrection of Christ. But "that he raised him from the dead, now no more to see corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." So that, though He might be individually worthy, and have the power of resurrection and life in Himself, He could not commence anything while on earth. It would be life and blessing, without redemption, without blood. And such is not God's way—

we may boldly say, could not be; for it is but asserting man's universal sin and unfitness.

80 And the reader should take notice that this—in which the author entirely contradicts himself, making the Israel of God begin with Christ incarnate (not risen), and, in the same page, a system for which we and all saints have from the beginning suffered—is the main leading point of his whole system.

81 "The calling up on high," Phil. 3:14.

82 That we reckon Mount Zion, in contrast with Mount Sinai, the place of Christ's royal supremacy in the earth Son of David, when all things shall be gathered together in one in Him, and that this may be the nearest point of connection between heaven and earth, is quite true. But to use this in order to bring the church down there as its place of abode, and to take away its calling above, and make it a high calling on earth—to make that the rightful pre-eminence of Christianity, and the system connected with it our mother—is to destroy entirely the whole proper calling of the church, by bringing it down to earth while seeming to admit its heavenly glory, because the heavenly glory is placed there.

83 Page 147 "Thoughts, etc."

84 I do not say the witnesses (though I am disposed to believe it is), because the author puts them in the last three years and a half, and I am here reasoning on what he admits.

85 I ask, in passing, Can that be said of the church of God, as Paul speaks of it?

86 I think it quite impossible for any one, seriously reading in the Lord's presence, Revelation 12, not to see

that the casting out of the dragon, the old serpent, from heaven, and the celebration of the victory, as a past thing, of the brethren, not only by blood, but by testimony, so that heaven and its inhabitants were to rejoice, and the dragon thereon begins to persecute the woman, implies an entire change in the condition of the saints, and testimony of God.

87 I reject utterly the attempt to change the translation here.

88 I do not say that no saints may be among the inhabiters of earth, for I do not doubt some spared, and therefore not rejected of God, and elect, will be mixed up with the earth in that day: but they are not dwellers in heaven, as the church is called to be.

89 As to the critical remark, I am again obliged to say that it is more than questionable. I had not examined it particularly previously, so that I should have been disposed to let it pass as immaterial. But, being stated here, I have examined it. There is no example that I can find of a witness to a person being used with a genitive of the person. It is almost always used with the preposition “peri.” When this preposition is left out, it is the dative, of which there are some examples in the’ New Testament: for the genitive of the witnesses and peri of the subject of witness, they are too numerous to quote. It is said, John bore witness to the truth; and Demetrius hath good report. (John 5:33; 3 John 12; see also 3 John 3, 6.) I may add from Herodotus (2, 18), my witness for the counsel. Grammars give this; but I suspect it is an instance of another principle. There is an additional confirmation of this (even if 1 Corinthians 1:6 were so taken) in the beginning of the Apocalypse,

where Christ sent and signified what He had received of God, and the prophet bears record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ. Here it cannot, I apprehend, be doubted that the testimony of Jesus Christ is the testimony which He gave or sent and signified: and this is confirmed by the "all things [not 'and all things'] that he saw." This testimony of Jesus Christ was the same thing as the spirit of prophecy. It was one and the same testimony. The spirit of prophecy was the testimony of Jesus Himself, in whose hands soever it might be. So that I have no doubt that it is of, and not to, Jesus. This would be so far material, that it would shew that the testimony alluded to in these passages was the prophetic testimony. No doubt the gospel was the testimony of Jesus. He is the truth, whatever the subject or instrument of testimony. But the general thought here was the prophetic testimony. Nor do I think it otherwise even in verse 9, because of the words "kingdom and patience." But I do not insist at all on this, because all true testimony is Christ's testimony. The only ground I can find at all for reading "to Jesus," is the exceptional ground that the preposition peri is sometimes left out, and the genitive retained. Of this I have found one example in a case of witnessing:—when they call Homer as a witness of, etc., leaving out peri. But I think it will hardly be alleged that this exception to the habitual use of the word is uniformly followed in the Apocalypse, in face of the evident force of chapter 1:1, 2. Wahl gives as certain what I have here alleged.

90 In a subsequent tract, by another author, it is said that these beasts symbolise a monarchy bordering on the Mediterranean and having Jerusalem under its dominion. This, though strained as to the

Mediterranean, may be all very true. But morally it has nothing whatever to do with it; because, in Daniel, the beasts come up from the sea, which the first two certainly did not from the Mediterranean. And see page 177.

91 “Dividing the land for gain” is rather the Antichrist, false Messiah, or second beast of Revelation 13. But the identity of the Antichrist and man of sin with the first beast was assumed by all when these remarks were written. The same remark applies to page 175, 176 partially.

92 In page 155 it is stated, “I might perhaps say given by Satan,” but in page 160 it is positively asserted that he is but a poor weak thing apart from him. In the first passage the wonderful energy is seen in unregenerated man, stimulated and aided, perhaps given. Instead of energy, it is asserted positively in the second that he is very weak. All I complain of here is the uncertainty and haste of the statement within five pages’ distance.

93 I feel that morally this is a very important point. To exalt the instrument of Satan in the most glowing terms, ascribing to it the perfect and harmonious combination of every faculty God has given to man, without scripture warrant, is a very serious thing. The evil and impotency of Satan is what is usually spoken of in the New Testament to God’s children. When spoken of elsewhere, the colours are very dark—blasphemy, oppression, pride, unrighteousness, connected with Satan’s lying power, and setting up to be God: these are the characters attached to the beast in Scripture. Nothing of this is found in the author’s description. Nor do I think it seems quite a just expression to say Satan’s peculiar hour,

without explanation of the hour, which is the consequence of his being cast out of heaven for ever, so that all belonging to heaven rejoice in it. That it is the hour of his great wrath on earth is true.

94 Indeed, as far as historical existence is attributed to the beast, it is only the closing period as in chapter 13. The ten horns have power one hour with the beast, in chapter 17:11-14. The “yet is” is the time in which he is presented. I might give an account of Napoleon as lieutenant of artillery before Toulon; but the Napoleon I am describing is Napoleon the emperor.

95 So impossible, that, on that supposition, theocracy is a head of the beast. For theocracy in Israel is one of the seven kings which have hitherto been supposed to answer to the seven heads.

96 The truth is, the most active agent in the East, as in the West at this moment, is popery. In schools and colleges supported by France in the Levant, to maintain its political influence; and by multitudes of priests sent to India and China; and other analogous efforts in central Asia, every catholic has thereby the rights of a French subject in the Levant and Asiatic Turkey.

97 Or what is the mountain of elegant Grecian civilisation? for that is the leopard, from which the bride is called in the Canticles.

98 I should translate the next verse, “And the daily [sacrifice] was given over to an appointed time of trouble, because of transgression.” But I leave this to more competent judges. The change of gender in verse 11, “he magnified,” is much to be noted. “It” agrees with the little horn again in the middle of verse 12. Verse 11

and half of verse 12 are evidently a parenthesis. But I have discussed this elsewhere.

99 I do not believe the first beast to be the Antichrist, but as the twelve hundred and sixty days apply to the first beast, the argument remains valid and the same.

100 Or, as usually pointed, for [it will not be].

101 Some copies read “as God.”

102 Or the hindrance.

103 Some copies omit “Jesus.”

104 Some copies read “consume.”

105 Or “annul.”

106 There is a case where it is probably used in the sense of “instead of,” though Wahl takes it in the sense of beseeching “by”; but as I doubt his correctness, I do not use it as an example to contradict the author. Wahl was led, no doubt, by the known fact that it is the regular sense of huper with words of beseeching, as the translators have taken it. But the presbeuo huper seems, I apprehend, to control it in 2 Corinthians 5:20. So that “I beseech you for Christ” means “in Christ’s stead,” as in the English translation. If not, it is a case in point. The passage is in 2 Corinthians 5, “we beseech for Christ.” One of the Gregorys, however, uses this identical expression for “we beseech you by Jesus.” The author formerly insisted on “on behalf of.”

107 The writer states that “it is frequently used in the Apocryphal books and always in this sense.” I find it from an extract of Trommius used six times in the Apocrypha; two, from circumstances, I cannot find. [The first is by Trommius given as “3 Esdras 5:72” (and by

Schleusner as 47). It is really 1 Esdras 5:46, which reads "when the seventh month was at hand (not near, but) come." The second is in the same book, chapter 9:6. 'All the multitude sat trembling because of the winter then present,' not merely approaching however near.] The other four are: 1 Maccabees 12:44—where it means existing or subsisting; 2 Maccabees 3:17, the same thing, the grief 'he had now at heart,' present then; 2 Maccabees 4:43, there was a judgment or trial (or was instituted); 2 Maccabees 12:3, 'as if no ill will were existing.' "Present" or "existing" is its regular force. Sometimes "set in" might answer, as winter is set in, that is, is actually or fully come. It would be curious if "standing in," which is its etymological meaning, left the question unsolved "where"?

108 Only just apply the author's rule to John 17:7.

109 This assumes the identity of the beast and Antichrist, which I note as before. It does not affect the argument in any way.

110 Though indeed they are not ripe in Christendom—that will be true only in the beast's dominions.

111 I have run through the "Thoughts on the End of the Age," published since on these two chapters. I cannot answer here in detail a tract of near forty pages; but I examined it to see if there were any answers to the objections I have stated briefly here. But it only makes the matter a great deal worse. It is taught there that those who depart as cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, are to come out of it again to stand with the rest of the dead before the great white throne mentioned in the Revelation, and be judged according to their works (Matthew 25 being no

more a judgment than any sinners dying). (See pages 22, 23.) I would only ask any person taught of God to read the passage referred to, and see how truth is dealt with to maintain a system. It is well to mention here that everything is changed in the teaching of the author. The wheat were risen saints staying, however short a time, on the earth previous to their ascension; now they are living ones in Christendom. The saints were to be in the tribulation, and it was a blessing from God to be prepared for it. The consciences of the saints well know this. Now I read of "escaping the tribulation as the saints will" (page 25 of the tract)—a statement which led me to make these remarks. We were to be on earth till Jesus appeared, and to go up to meet Him when we saw Him; and 2 Thessalonians 1, and the Greek word for rest, or respite, as it was alleged (another unfounded criticism, by the by), with other passages, were quoted to prove that the tribulation was closed for the saints by the Lord's appearing. They then got respite. All this is given up, though many saints are still under the influence of this teaching. The tribulation, properly speaking, they are not in. And in fact they do not await His appearing at all, Christendom being reaped, and the saints caught up before the judgment of Antichrist, in which as a flash of lightning He appears in destruction. Judgment, we are told, begins at the house of God. The reader must not ask me to reconcile this with other contradictory statements which subsist. There seems to me no attempt at consistency in the author's statements, more than with the point he is at the moment upon, though here, perhaps, I am wrong. I suspect the secret of a good deal is that, having made his system, and having been forced to correct particular parts year after year because it was evidently contrary to Scripture, it

ceased to agree with the other parts of his own system. At least this would explain a good deal of the contradiction. But this is the effect of having a system to maintain.

112 See the “Thoughts on the End of the Age,” more recently published than the “Thoughts on the Apocalypse.” We have “instead of escaping the tribulation as the saints will!” (page 25).

113 In all the rest of that chapter the earth is treated as Roman earth.

114 This single consideration upsets all the author’s statements about the harvest (absurd enough through the notion that ripened tares are no tares at all): for on his system the angels only are with Him when the tares are judged, which he considers (contrary to Scripture) to be a momentary act. But on all this head one of his statements is only more contradictory than another.

115 I speak here of the millennial state.

116 Isaiah also says in a figurative way, “bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.”

117 The author’s use of it is merely the logical error of converting a universal affirmative into a universal negative: one of which he is not uncommonly guilty.

118 It appears that by recent microscopic examinations it has been ascertained (at least what has been found in Egypt) to be linen.

119 Bussinos (and Bussos, Greek), are used for “fine linen” in Luke 16:19; Rev. 18:12, 16; 19:8, 14.

120 Ibid.

121 The only question here is if Antichrist be the little horn, if it be not rather the last civil chief of the beast.

122 I suppose that the use of “by” for “upon,” which I borrow from the remark of another, will be admitted to be just. I attach, however, no importance to it, as to my present subject. It is not the same structure as upon the beast. It is locality at, or by, or near, not on anything, save as we might say London is on the Thames.

123 See page 157.

124 When the author says (p. 243), “the maritime discovery of Velasquez in the East,” I suppose he means Vasco de Gama, the Portuguese admiral, who first doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and sailed to India. I am not aware of any other Velasquez than a Spanish painter: but I am not well read on these subjects. There is another mistake more important in the tract on Zechariah 14, because it is one of a class of facts used to prove that Western Europe is spreading its constitutional principles over the whole Roman empire, England and France taking the lead. There are cited as witness, “the recent measures of the English and French governments as to Palestine,” and “the operations of the English and French forces against the Egyptian viceroy.” The fact is, that there were operations of England and Austria, with the concurrence of Russia, to destroy French influence in the Levant, which was becoming paramount through the instrumentality of the Egyptian viceroy. I have been told that the note is the editor’s, not Mr. N.’s: of this I do not pretend to judge, as it passes under his name.

125 What is it France has been furthering at Tahiti, in the Levant, at Jerusalem, at Babylon, in New Zealand?

In the East every Catholic as such has by treaty the rights of a Frenchman. If any one turns Catholic, he is treated as such. The French consul is made bishop of Babylon.

126 For an example of this signal failure the reader may consult the note on page 174 of the “Thoughts.”

127 See another contradiction on the same point in page 254.

128 Rather, the beast’s power.

129 These are the horns, however; though the whole is rather vague. For what son of king was between the Caesars and constitutional monarchy, which has come, and is “at this present hour”? I suppose there was some sort of government. Supposing I should claim a place for feudal government, which certainly has held as conspicuous a place, and exercised as much influence in the prophetic earth, as others mentioned here?

130 The beast is wholly set aside in every sense here, not only as Antichrist, but as the Roman empire. I suppose theocracy was never a king in connection with the Roman empire, to say nothing of Nimrod, and Nebuchadnezzar, etc. The reader must judge how far it is reasonable to separate these seven kings from the beast whose description is given.

131 That is, that the attempt to distinguish the chapters into system and city is a pure fiction of the author’s.

132 Compare here Jeremiah 50:40-43, where the effects are ascribed to the nation from the North which are ascribed to the day of the Lord. And note, further, the king of Babylon is there when the city is visited, which is not pretended to be true of Antichrist.

133 It is from the Hebrew of Jeremiah 51:8. See also Isaiah 21:9.

134 I have some doubt about the translation; but I take it as it is given in the translation, and adopted by the author.

135 These kings are not allowed time to establish themselves in the enjoyment of their conquest.

136 So it is said, “The Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships,” Isaiah 43.

137 Quite lately a vast theological printing concern was set up in France, which engaged to supply the priesthood with books in this way. The country priests were to say masses for people. These would come or send to the printing establishment and pay for the masses, the value of which would be sent in the desired books to the priest, who paid nothing but the saying of masses for them. The estabhshment sold thus the priests’ masses, and paid them in books, on which they made their profit.

138 It is found in the vials.

139 I only wish the author were resident a few months in some thoroughly popish state. He would learn a little better to estimate what the power and iniquity of the system is.

140 I have not thought it needful to comment on the note on “the eighth.” I just add here that I think that those who examine the passages will find no such thing. That eight is connected with seven, in the way of supposing the existence of seven before it, it scarcely needs reading Leviticus to discover. But any “springing out of” the previous seven is a rare case, if it exist. How

did circumcising the eighth day spring out of uncircumcision seven days, unless by way of contrast? And so of others.

141 In commenting on that chapter, the author has avoided the question of what Babylon it alludes to, by making it a testimony of saints prophetically, such indeed as may be given at all times, contrary to his own account however of the chapter as an orderly series of facts. Here the same words, supported by the same reason, are made an actual anticipation of her final destruction as a city.

142 Here again Antichrist should be the beast.

143 “There is no characteristic so essentially distinctive as this.” (p. 11).

144 In page 204 it may be supposed He is seen, but it is left uncertain. In page 333, it is strange and distant glory suddenly breaking upon the abyss of darkness beneath. And in page 298 Antichrist has witnessed it. 2 Thessalonians 1 would set all this order aside. But Matthew 24, which clearly refers to His coming where Antichrist is, supposes it to come as a sudden judgment there, and not as if the Lord had already executed in his sight on earth the most important judgment, and appeared some time before in alarming glory.

145 That is, according to 2 Thessalonians 2, and Matthew 24, and the like, to destroy Antichrist.

146 Antichrist has seen it all, and been undismayed by it. It did not come as a thief at any rate on him and his armies. Christ had actually judged all Christendom—had executed His wrath on Babylon, and Antichrist is untouched and undismayed. The stars too have ceased

to give their light, the sun and moon have been darkened, because in Isaiah 14 this accompanies Babylon's fall. In Revelation 6 this same event had confounded them all (it was one of those several visions which had reached thus far.) Here, surrounded by kings and armies, the great transgressor remains undismayed. Was there ever the like confusion?

I would recall to the reader a remark already made, that, instead of these two fields, the Scripture speaks of one—the world, where the tares, quiet or not, grow j that in 2 Thessalonians 2 what began in Christendom grows up to the apostasy and the judgment of the wicked; that in Jude the tares of that day are positively identified with the ungodly who speak hard speeches, and perish in the gainsaying of Core. The whole system of the author on this is contradictory of the plainest statements of Scripture, as it is of himself, and of the plain sense of things.

147 The difficulty of summing up these statements is, that there is the greatest confusion and uncertainty in the author's accounts of this coming. "He comes in glory and in divine majesty, seated in the clouds" (p. 204). One would suppose this was when every eye should see Him, as in Revelation 1. So that the brightness of His coming would have taken place. But He comes in the clouds of heaven (Matt. 24) when it is for the destruction of Antichrist. In page 204 of the "Thoughts," it is the harvest of Christendom. There must be then two comings in the clouds of heaven—one for Christendom, and one afterwards for Antichrist, who has seen the other undismayed. The first would be the star-like appearing of page 333. The reader may believe these different appearings if he can.

148 See page 320. What keeping apart means, where we find it called “close … systematic relationship to the earth” — “the glory of the saints brought into its closest adaptation to the need of a fallen earth” — it is not easy to see. I am not denying that the heavenly Jerusalem does not descend on the earth during the millennium. But close systematic relationship and being brought into its closest adaptation is a strange way to keep apart. God will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and in earth.

149 The whole church will be there, and I suppose the church is the bride of the Lamb.

150 The reader will do well to bear in mind that this change is alleged to take place the instant Christ rises up from the Father’s throne.

151 I am aware that elsewhere the author states this quite differently— that the vials are God’s actings before He gives commission to Christ to act. But I am quoting from page 299. I have met another view of the case in what follows.

152 I omit chapter 17, because the author would make that the destruction of the system.

153 Following each other just in the order in which they are mentioned,” (p. 201). It is indeed said, “in all the instances which imply active interference on the part of God.” This may seem to modify the statement. But then, what does it amount to? Just a proof of the looseness of the statements made. “In chapter 13 no interference on the part of God is mentioned. Evil appears to reign as if God had forsaken the earth,” etc. “But it is far otherwise. God will plead with men both in testimony and judgment: and this chapter 14 reveals” (p. 417,

418). “The character of the events is clear, and their order.” (See p. 200.) “A preaching, etc., a testimony against Babylon, and a declaration of its doom—a testimony against the beast, etc.—an intimation that the time is come for the saints to enter into their rest, etc.—the reaping— the vintage.” Now, there is no testimony against Babylon at all, but a declaration of her doom as accomplished. But, if instances which imply active interference mean acts of God’s unless this fall of Babylon be one, there are, in the whole series, just two, the harvest and the vintage. The rest are intimations, preaching, testimonies. So that the statement really comes to nothing at all, unless turning into a testimony against Babylon what is certainly no such thing, to avoid the subversion of his own system by the plain statement of Scripture.

154 So that, on the proposed new plan, chapter 19 would be verses 1-10 of chapter 19; chapter 20 would be 19:11 to the end, and 1-3 of chapter 20. Chapter 21 would commence verse 4 of chapter 20.

155 Verses 4-6 are really a parenthesis. The history continues regularly in reading verse 7 after verse 3.

156 See Liddell and Scott, under kaleo. The same thing is found in the grammars. Matthiae gives examples in Greek such as, I am married; I married; the city is taken; the city was taken, etc. Rost gives analogous statements.

157 In such perfects the idea of the casual action appears to be almost merged, and they are virtually presents; not however to be confounded with the presents from which they are derived. Of this kind are kektemai (I possess), etc., keklemai (I am called), etc.

158 The beast of Rev. 13:1.

159 The beast of Rev. 13:1.

160 If pages 150, 151, and 3331 in the “Thoughts,” be compared with page 317, it will be evident on the author’s system the visitation on Jerusalem cannot be the manifestation as Morning Star, because the judgment of Christendom and Babylon had already taken place by the Lord in this character. It cannot therefore be at Jerusalem what it is described to be in page 533. I do not repeat the comment I have made in the remarks on each of these places.

161 There is besides “till the day star arise in your hearts.”

162 In more modern times it seems plain that Cush means the African Ethiopia, see Esther 1:1; Ezekiel 29:10.

163 I do not doubt that this is the meaning of “beyond the rivers of Ethiopia or Cush,” Isaiah 18. The power there spoken of as acting in the latter day was beyond the boundaries of the nations then in relationship with Israel, of which the Nile and the Euphrates are taken as the expression.

164 The countries in general described are just the ancient Scythians and their conquests: for they went as far as Egypt.

165 Unless the author means to say that the physical creation will itself have the glory and likeness of Christ, which I suppose need not be reasoned about.

166 In page 335 the author supposes the possibility of official differences; on the other hand, it is clear that the whole family of the redeemed will be with and like Christ in common Second Adam blessedness, the Son

being Himself subject as Second Adam, and head of this blessed family of redemption man, the tabernacle of God being with men, no longer with a separate people on earth, or Himself in a certain sense absent,* or rather we “present in the body, and absent from the Lord.” The distinctive honour or official difference of the heavenly Jerusalem, if such there be then, is a subject too large to enter into here, more especially as I have no very positive judgment about it.

* Nor is it even the millennial way of uniting all things, which still as to the saints maintains the distinction of the heavenly glory and earthly glory: for there is glory celestial, and glory terrestrial.

167 If taken as a symbol, jasper, according to the author, is the divine nature and glory. What is the meaning of that being illumined with the light of God?

168 See page 317.

169 Page 40.

170 I leave aside Babylon, because I think it may be justly argued that precious stones are there used in a lower and more carnal sense. But the author’s statement is without limitation.

171 This is not exact if the original text be looked to. The Greek word for “and” divides each particular; an innumerable company of angels the general assembly, and the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. But the general reasoning is all right.

172 The evidence is this:—

Three MSS out of about a hundred have the new reading, one slightly varying, and the Vulgate (at least the Editions of the Vulgate), which adds, however, words

not found in the MSS. The MSS Vulgate appear to want the added words. Of the three MSS which have “wash their robes,” one is ancient. (Of the two other ancient ones, one wants the passage, the other is not cited.) One of the two other MSS which have the new reading almost always agrees with the ancient one which has it: the other is of the same family, as it is called. It is to be supposed that all the other MSS which do not want the passage favour the other reading. In this state of things I do not pretend to decide. It is a question of the authority of the three Alexandrian MSS against a large majority of those called Constantinopolitan. The African fathers read “keep his commandments.” [Codex Sinaticus reads “washed their robes,” and I suppose it is the true reading altered by the church when redemption was forgotten, and works pretended to.]

173 In pages 332, 333, we read, “He has other essential glories of His own. Before Abraham was, I AM. He is the root and offspring of David, AND the bright and Morning Star. I have already spoken of the star as the symbol of distant and unearthly glories, etc. It is in such glory, strictly unearthly and divine, that Jesus will come. It will be the true light of God’s own glory,” etc. Compare this with page 115, where we find it employed to symbolise evil spirits, and saints in resurrection glory.

174 There it is stated that evil spirits also exercise this power. But if so, how can a star symbolise the glories essentially divine? That the saints may exercise a power, and Christ at their head may exercise a power, now abused by Satan, is true: but then that cannot be as I AM. It is not in that case strictly unearthly and divine. And therefore the star does not mean this: nor indeed did any one before ever suppose it did.

175 And it is into the glory of the Morning Star that the saints are to be taken (p. 333). And in (pp. 150, 151), it is said that Christ appears in this glory (referring to the passage here commented on). “When Christ first appears in the fulness of divine glory, etc., He is symbolised by the star.”

176 I assume here the truth of the doctrine as the author supposes in the note, and, supposing it true, reason on its value. For, though I am disposed to think the distinction kept up in Scripture, I do not feel that I have any certain teaching of God on the subject.

177 It may be remarked here that official and temporary are not necessarily united, as the author makes the abiding distinction of the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem an official distinction in this very note.

178 I am not speaking of local churches here, of course —the church at Corinth, or Thessalonica, etc., nor of human assemblies, for which the same Greek word is used, nor of the Jewish nation in the wilderness. It is quite evident none of these have anything to say to the question. Alleging the last mentioned, as I have heard it done, is a proof of only one thing—that those who did so had no answer to make.

Answer To A “Letter To The Brethren And Sisters Who Meet For Communion In Ebrington Street.”

I confess I have been greatly relieved by the publication of the letter. I did dread it. My heart and head are alike weary of controversy, and I know sufficiently well one’s liability, in the rapidity of reply, to express one’s feelings when we ought not, and to give a handle for a controversialist to lay hold of, that I felt a dread of being plunged anew into a labyrinth of reasoning. The appearance of the letter has relieved me. I have been surprised, after all I heard of the spirit of the tract, that so little could be laid hold of: and as to the argument (save a mistaken reference to Gesenius, which I will notice in its place) it is absolutely untouched. My reply, then, will be happily very short. There is only one really important subject which induces me to take notice of the letter, but I shall just use the occasion which this affords to notice rapidly the objections made, without of course re-arguing the subject. The attentive reader will see that the sixty-three pages of the letter leave the substance of my statements in the “Examination” where they were.

As to the expressions complained of, I should regret, of course, and I blame myself for, anything that was merely personal, however we may be liable to it in controversy. Speaking of things as they are, though it may give pain, cannot be objected to in the same way. Thus, “travelling by an intellectual road “may be considered personal. I can only say as to it, that it was pointed out to me by a brother during the correction for the press, and I went to have it taken out, but it was too late, as it had all been

struck off. I can only express my regret now, that it is there, and that my attention was not drawn to it in time. I will add here, that in getting help in correcting the press, or preparing the MS for it, I have taken out any expression supposed to be objectionable by those who read it over. As to “sophisms,” I really think the complaint (though I am sorry it gives pain) an unreasonable one. I think there are sophisms in the book. I write to examine the book, and shew where I think it wrong. If I meet what is really a sophism, what can I call it but a sophism?179 As to “teaching doctrines which have ‘the very worst moral effect on the saints,’” I state (page 6), I believe the identification of the church and the kingdom to be of the very worst moral effect to the saint. This is no general charge of teaching doctrines, as the author has stated it. I have stated my conviction that a given principle or doctrine has this effect. I think so still. Every saint must weigh this before the Lord; that is, whether this given principle is, or is not, evil, as I believe it. They will judge also whether the reasonings of Mr. N. do so identify them. But saying that a given specific principle has a bad effect cannot be charged as personal. Nor is it in the smallest way equivalent to a charge of “teaching doctrines.”

As to “altering received translations,” the fact cannot be denied. It is the constant habitual practice of the author. That which is objected to is the statement that the object is not avowed. Again I have stated this in a given case (page 13). “There is another, and yet more important object in this translation, which is not avowed either.” It is the statement of a specific fact in the book. Indeed, though the fact itself is unquestionable, I cannot even find180 the expression “altering received

translations." I have reasoned, and I think very justly, on a given case of what is undoubtedly a common practice of the author. As to "silently confounding things that differ," it is again a statement of a fact made into a general charge. I have stated (page 10) that the author silently converts "make "into "formed" and "prepared." And so he does, and very unwarrantably in my judgment. The only expression else which may be fairly judged objectionable is "eke out." My argument is perfectly just. But, as the word is more than a statement of the fact, I do not defend it; though I really do not see anything very malicious in it. However I do not justify it.

I am sorry to have detained my reader on these points. I owed it to the Lord, and to others, and, in two of the expressions, to the author of the "Thoughts," to clear them up, or express my regret that they remained. I did what I could to get rid of one, the other escaped me. But now to the matter. The author charges me with having misrepresented him. Here there is no mistake as to the broad generality of his accusations. I pass them over entirely, every one will judge of their justice, save to say that I rise up from the perusal of his answer with the full conviction that I have not misrepresented him at all.

His statements here have unequivocally confirmed the judgment I had formed of his statements in the "Thoughts."

Silence respecting the truth in question is not denied, 181 though it is implied (page 5) that there is evidence that it was remembered. Positive statements as to the author's views will be found in the course of the "Examination." I confine myself here to the statements in the "Letter."

We read (page 5), “There is perhaps no distinction more important to be preserved in our thoughts, than that between the heavenly relation of Christ to the church as a whole, and His relation to it as a gathered and ordered body upon earth.” Now, if this latter phrase means anything, it means the relation of which the author does intend to treat in his remarks on the Apocalypse; and this is contrasted with “the heavenly relation of Christ to the church as a whole.” Now, it is perfectly certain, that, by “the church as a whole,” as “seated in heavenly places in Him risen,” Air. N. means all the saints from the commencement of the world to the end of time. Be this system true or false, no one can question that this is his meaning of “the church as a whole.” He distinguishes elsewhere the “parts “of this, the church of the firstborn, and the like (the ‘Israel of God’ being an equivalent for the whole body). This whole he recognises as seated in heavenly places in Him risen. Of course the individual members of this body on earth, during the present dispensation, could not be excluded from this common portion.

But then all that can be spoken of the one body can be equally predicated of Abel, Abraham, David, the millennial saints, as much as of those now on earth.182 It has nothing peculiarly to do with any present unity of the body.

But, as regards what the author calls “His relation to it [the church] as a gathered and ordered body on the earth,” this, as the subsequent expressions of page 5 demonstrate, is found in Christ’s relation to the churches. Christ’s relation to the church as a gathered body on the earth, in this dispensation, is His relation to the churches; and that is all. All unity of the body by the

Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is set aside in this letter more unequivocally than ever. The author does not deny the unchangeable and eternal blessedness of all saints, from the beginning to the end of time, in heavenly places in Christ risen. But he does make His relation to the church as a body gathered on earth His relation to the churches.

His excellent relation to such a body (that is, to the church as a body chosen out of the nations, separated to God) is His relation to the churches. And hence, where he insists on having spoken of union with Him in glory, it is not “its,” the church’s union, but “their,” the churches’ union. He does not treat of His relation to the church in heaven, but He treats of the churches in the earth.183(page 7). And is there then no church on the earth?—a church, one as a body down here, in virtue of the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? I repeat, therefore, that every statement I made, and, which is much more important, the real meaning of the author, is fully and unequivocally confirmed and established beyond all question, to any intelligent Christian, by the statement of the letter. The churches belonging to the sanctuary as their proper sphere: but the unity of a body in earth, by the presence of the Holy Ghost acting by joints and bands according to the measure of every part, from the Head Christ, is entirely set aside. He assumes the doctrine of the Ephesians as to the whole church; and he treats the doctrine of the churches as His relation to the gathered body on the earth. I repeat, No intelligent saint can mistake the unequivocal setting aside of the unity of the church upon earth, sitting in its Head in heavenly places. I repeat—what I have said in the “Examination” —the author is

simply setting up the system of independent churches, and setting aside the unity of the body on earth in this dispensation. My expressions may be laid hold of; but there can be no mistake as to the author's meaning.

And he has practically taken his position in this letter on this principle. "I value the relation in which I stand to you as one of your teachers." That the author has been teaching in Ebrington Street, no one, of course, questions. Nor do I now enquire the least as to the value or otherwise of his teaching. But he stands in relation to them as one of their teachers, i.e., a teacher is not a joint in the body according to Ephesians 4 or 1 Corinthians 14, but a relationship to a particular set of saints. I am not here calling in question the existence of teachers in the church of God. I recognise them fully. But I find them in scripture in relationship to the body, one by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, and not to be a relationship with any given body of located saints, though they may happen to be located with them. I know that dissenters thus act on the principle of a given body having its members, and having their teacher or teachers. But in Scripture I find the teachers in the body of Christ, and members of the body of Christ. It is not my business now to discuss this with dissenting brethren; lam only getting at the fact.

Now as to Psalm no.184 First, as to the translation. If the English reader consult Sir C. Brenton's translation of the Septuagint, he will find that he has translated the Greek, "until I set." If he consult his English Bible he will find it so translated also in every case. So that I have other authorities to prove that what was given by the Lord, and Peter, and Paul was what is given in the English Psalter. The author is merely raising another

question on Greek translation, as before in Hebrew, to prove his Hebrew change correct. He changes the translation from the Greek to justify his change of the translation from the Hebrew, and then sanctions this with divine authority. It is given in the New Testament according to the Septuagint translation: and this is rendered by very competent translators, both in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, just as it is in the English Psalter.185 Mr. Tregelles's justification is on a curious basis. He translated it as the English translation till the question was raised, because he was giving "verbal construing, not combined translation." "It does not exclude the full exposition of the words." No, but what we wane first is verbal construing. We will reason on the exposition afterwards. The author has changed the translation; of course with some object. That object is to be ascertained from his reasonings, for he has not stated it. Now, that object gives a force to it, as a combined translation, which I have no doubt is wholly wrong. The question is really one of exposition. For, as I have said, in English "till I pay," "till I have paid," "till I shall have paid "may be interchanged in common use. But if the sense was not changed, why change the translation? If the sense be meant to be changed, I am justified in taking the translation, as given by the author, as meaning what he gives as its meaning in his reasonings upon it: and this is what I have done.

The question is, Does the verse speak of the acting of Jehovah's throne for Christ during, and so as to be characteristic of, a period? This is what is contended for, and which I deny. Let the reader here remember the last note, and he will see that the Septuagint, and the New Testament alluded to by the author, preclude this idea by

the very form of the Greek verb. I do not think—I never said, and I never thought— that setting meant “in process of being placed.” My statements are perfectly correct, “He was to sit till this particular act was done” (page 12).186 Is that merely till it was in process of being placed? It is the exact proper meaning of the verb, and especially in the form it is in—a meaning which the interpretation of the author entirely overthrows.

I may here take up the statement of Mr. Tregelles at the close.187 His argument and critical research, which for the most part may be, I dare say, very just (I shall examine it for my own profit independently of this question) is applied to this supposition. “The supposition is brought forward, apparently, that the exposition of these words may be, or must be, “until I shall be setting,” or “am setting,” and not until “I have set,” or “shall have set.” Against this meaning he directs all his reasonings and criticisms. But then this supposition is all wrong. I had stated the contrary. “He is expecting till something be done.” “He was to sit till this particular act was done.” Hence all the reasonings of Mr. Tregelles come to nothing as to the argument.

The only point that would bear is found in certain quotations in page 61, which would tend to shew that the Hebrew word in question might, in certain cases, be used for continuous action. Now, I do not agree with his remarks, specially on “parata,” which clearly does not in this case mean continuous action. When the Hebrew word in Psalm no:1 is used for “setting in array,” it is not used for the continuous action of arraying the army; but for the fact of its being put in that position before a city, etc. But I have no need to reason this point now, because

the translation sanctioned by inspiration gives it the force of a transient complete action. All the rest of his argument falls with his supposition.

The truth if, it is the author that uses it as meaning a process of being placed, though he may consider that process as completed. The first verse of the Psalm, he holds, describes Christ seated and speaks of Jehovah's acting. Now that acting is the process of placing, bringing his enemies together. He exchanges this, page 15, for "collocation." But it is perfectly clear that all his statements speak of a continuous process during a period. I insisted on its being an authoritative act of collocation. The author says it means a completed action; I had said till a particular act was done: so that this was not the question, but whether setting meant a process of preparing or forming which characterised a period or a particular act of authority at a given time. The author made it the former; I asserted it to be the latter. The additional Greek he refers to clearly shews he was wrong. His notion about the action was wrong; and his collected translation, which furnished the ground for it, was worse and more ambiguous that that of Sir C. Brenton and the English translators, which is justified by the remarks of the best grammarians.

The difference is just this, "until I make, or set, thy foes a footstool for thy feet," and "until I shall have made" would both convey that Christ was to sit there till the act was done. But the latter gives, or gives room for, the idea of a continuous process going on of making or setting: for "until I shall have made" certainly tends to convey the idea of a process going on making; "until I make," an interval which elapses till the act of making takes place. Hence the new translation is the worse one

of the two, because, while both suppose the thing done, the new conveys an idea which is not in the Hebrew, and which the Greek divinely recognised translation will not bear—an idea which the author has taken up and followed out in his reasonings. To proceed, the author asks, Why then, may I not say that the throne of Jehovah is, throughout this dispensation, acting for Christ, with the view of finally setting His enemies a footstool for His feet? I do not here enquire whether the author may or may not say so; but it is not what he has said. What he has said is, that the first verse of Psalm no, which speaks of setting Christ's enemies for His footstool, speaks of Jehovah's throne acting for Christ through this dispensation: that is, clearly, that His acting is setting the footstool. For, if the verse speaks of acting, no other acting is spoken of but that. We have in page 21 and the note, a long reasoning that Psalm no necessarily implies this continuous acting: "otherwise we must say that, for the last eighteen hundred years, the providence of God had ceased to control Satan," etc.; and then the last clause is applied to congregating the enemies as a footstool. It is all very well now to talk of what it implies, and say "otherwise "so and so. In the "Thoughts "we are told that the first verse spoke of this acting of the throne, and that hence this verse was distinctively characteristic of this dispensation. Now Psalm no does no such things. It speaks of a definite "transient action," and not of a continuous one. There is, moreover (I refer to the third division in page 26), nothing about congregating enemies either, any more than forming or preparing the footstool. There is just simply setting or putting His enemies for His footstool.

I say then that the author did interpret Psalm no, which speaks of setting enemies for a footstool, as the actings of Jehovah's throne, during and characteristic of this dispensation: none was so decidedly so. And if Christ's enemies were set for His footstool by the continuous actings of God's throne for Him, God was putting down the foes of Christ during the dispensation. But, further, I have not "assumed" that the author has said so; but that he has not, and complained of him for not doing it, because there was no sense in explaining "setting for a footstool" as the actings of God's throne all through the dispensation, unless it was the acting of the throne as so setting them (this being the only acting of the verse), and that then the statement amounted to putting down these foes. For if setting foes for a footstool signifies the continuous actings of power, it does mean putting them down.

The fact is, the author attributed a meaning to the verse positively which it certainly has not. Now he says it implies it, otherwise God ceased to control, but that it states certain final actings of this kind during a period described in the Revelation. He was wrong. The verse does not state it. It states, or implies, nothing about it. It is not its subject. And, moreover, it speaks of no continuous actions at the close, during a period elsewhere described. The Greek tense used in the divine interpretation of it is not used for continuous actions, but for "an action transient, and considered independently in its completion." And this is all-important to the author's scheme; because it has then nothing to do with the progress of earthly events as he states it.

Next, I have not inserted the word “under”; I have used “putting them under His feet188 for Him to subdue,” as an equivalent to making them His footstool. And it seems to me perfectly unobjectionable. As to the analogy of Psalm 8, the only purpose for which I have cited it is the universal extent given in the New Testament to the word ‘all’ in that psalm, as explaining the universality attributed to it also, in quoting from Psalm no: as may be seen in the passage quoted by the author in the note to page 19.

As to the quotation from page n of my tract in page 20, the language is not drawn from Psalm 8, and the sentiment does not belong to verse 2 of Psalm no. And it is so far from being true that I have not distinguished between verses 1 and 2, that I have argued at length (page 30—the passage the author has just been commenting on), that there must be a considerable interval, such that all that regards the church will have happened between the two; so that the heavenly part of Christ’s actings is omitted in the psalm. And this last is in italics, to shew the importance of the events which happen in the interval. And I still judge that “the authority of His power giving them up to be trampled upon by Christ” is not verse 2, but verse 1. For this simple reason, that verse 2 speaks of sending the rod of Christ’s power out of Zion; verse 1 speaks of His (God’s) setting them for Christ’s footstool (that is, of His power giving them up to be trampled on). Further, the question is not whether Jehovah has been acting to bring about Christ’s glory; no Christian doubts it.

The question is, What does Psalm no mean? Because a particular interpretation of it is used to maintain a system. As to an appreciable interval between the

cessation of Jehovah's throne acting for Christ, and Christ acting for Himself, that is not exactly the question. It should be added, for Himself on earth. Because He may be said to be acting for Himself in coming to receive the church; even supposing that be after His assumption of the kingdom: a point I do not contest here. The system to which the author is opposed is, that there may be an interval between Christ's rising from His Father's throne, and His acting on earth in the destruction of Antichrist; in which interval some have supposed the church caught up, and other things. They have never spoken of an interval between Jehovah's acting, and Christ's acting in heavenly places. Now the author is obliged to admit many important events between Christ's rising up, and Antichrist's judgment by His appearing; as will be more fully seen in the succeeding numbers of the "Examination." The church goes up, the harvest takes place, in one place Babylon189 is said to be destroyed.

And now mark the principle on which the author bases his assertion. "The scriptures always put these two events (the assumption of power by Christ and His epiphany) in close juxta-position;190 and when any two events are thus put in close connection, and the scripture makes no mention of any event transpiring on the earth between, it is a sign that no doctrine or dispensational arrangement can be founded on that interval." It is easy to make rules, of course, which "if true," prove one's case. But apply this rule in two events constantly put into juxta-position, found in the same verse, in the Old Testament prophets, the first and second comings of Christ—so put, that Christ stops in the middle of a verse to apply the half. And there was

silence too as to events transpiring on earth. Was there nothing came between the two? All Christianity came in —that mystery which was kept silent from ages and generations. The rule is composed for the occasion, without an attempt at proof, and is an unfounded assertion. Further, the facts used to illustrate it are wrong. The taking the church, it is said, is after His (Christ's) epiphany. Now, the scripture positively states the contrary. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him. And therefore the taking of the church cannot be after His epiphany— epiphany being used here for appearing. Besides, Antichrist is destroyed by the epiphany of His presence. And the author himself owns that the taking of the church, or harvest, takes place before this.

And if His rising up is the end of the dispensation, and beginning of the new age (see page 11 of "Thoughts"), how comes it that the church is taken up "after this epiphany and at the end of the age"? The end of the age must in that case be after the epiphany. But the end of the age is His rising up from the throne. The rising up therefore is after the epiphany. The author may perhaps here allege he has changed all that here. There is an end of the age in the throne by Christ's rising up; and a visible ending it by the harvest; and an ending it in power by His coming to destroy Antichrist (Christ, for the first time, applying His new power to the nations). This is the author's present statement. It is not found in the "Thoughts." But then this gives a most appreciable interval, and facts between the rising up, or assumption of power by Christ, and His coming to earth in the judgment of Antichrist—nothing less than the whole harvest, by which the dispensation ends itself on earth,

and therefore is an event on earth, to say nothing of heaven. So that there is an appreciable interval, by an event mentioned in Scripture as occurring on the earth between His rising up, or assuming power on the cessation of Jehovah's throne acting for Christ (when the dispensation had changed above, and that the new day had commenced there), and Christ acting for Himself, or Christ for the first time applying His new power to the nations,191 namely the harvest, the dispensation ending itself on earth, gathering out every tare, and His saints caught up to meet Him.

Surely this last is an important doctrine or dispensational arrangement. We have only to compare pages 22 and 25, and we shall see the statements of page 22 subverted, and in the very point on which the author has opposed the views of others, the intermediate rapture of the church. The "Thoughts" spoke of no interval. The statement of page 11 allows of none. Now in page 22 it is not appreciable. In page 25 it ends in heaven, on earth, and by Christ's acting in His new power for the first time on the nations, and becomes appreciable by that which the views of others said it was appreciable—the rapture of the church. The length of the interval may be discussed afterwards. The principle of interpretation and the statements made are abandoned.192 It may fairly then be questioned whether other events may not come in too. In one place the author states the destruction of Babylon by Christ.193 Others may see other events which he does not. The age is ended above when it is not ended below, according to the author.

I am far from agreeing with this arrangement of these events. I do not at all admit that Christ visibly concludes

the age when He receives the saints, for the reason already mentioned, that when He appears, we appear with Him (chap. 3), that this His epiphany destroys Antichrist (2 Thess. 2), and that He comes at the close of the three years and a half of tribulation as lightning, and then His sign is seen in heaven, and that ends the age. But the distinction and interval between the rising up of Christ from the throne, and His destroying Antichrist on earth, is distinctly admitted. It is to be supposed that something happens. It is admitted the church is caught up.

I will not here reason on Appendix A, as being a subject too long to enter on in such a reply, I only say a word on its principle. “The apostles are always regarded and always addressed as persons standing in acknowledged acceptance before God through the name of Jesus.” First, acknowledged acceptance, and acceptance known to themselves, must be distinguished. Such an idea of acceptance as we have in the Beloved never crossed their minds. That God acknowledged them I do not doubt. But so He does constantly the preserved Jewish remannt in the prophets. There is no statement of being accepted through Jesus194 during the time of His presence with them, for the simple reason that the work was not yet done. And they had asked nothing yet in His name. The Jewish remnant at the end may not know present acceptance by the joy and witness of the Holy Ghost. No more did the disciples. Further, it is not true that they were always addressed as accepted; for the sermon on the mount does not so address them.195 This I have examined elsewhere. I do not say that they and the Jewish remnant will be on the same footing exactly. The presence of Jesus must make an evident and

important difference. But so it did between the disciples and the church, in another way. Nor do I say that the precepts of the sermon on the mount are not for us. But I say, on the grounds briefly stated above, that the statements of the author are entirely unfounded. Further, if Peter, James, and John, represent “the saved Christian people of the millennial earth,” they do not represent the church, for they are in quite a different condition from the church; as what is earthly is different from what is heavenly. And, if in their place of momentary privilege on the mount they represented them, the natural conclusion would be that they represented them in their place of faithfulness before the glory.

The writer, in page 35, seems entirely to forget that there will be those owning Christ risen, through the ministry of the two witnesses, who yet will have only glory down here in the millennium.

The question is, not whether gospel precepts belong to them, but warnings and prophecies found in the gospel.

As to the extracted passages, a few words will suffice.

I

The Lord Jesus has never identified the church and the kingdom. The writer has made the body gathered out by God a kingdom, then identified this with the churches, and so with tares, and field, and all. So that the church, in the spiritual sense of it, is identified, as to Christ’s relation to such a body, with the kingdom itself. The author has stated much more than a concurrent course. Nor even so would it be just. For the kingdom does not close when the course of the church is closed. Nor is

indeed the oft repeated statement that Christendom is the kingdom a well founded one. The kingdom takes that aspect under given circumstances. The field was the world.

As to coming in the power of the kingdom. Christ is clearly not exercising the power of the kingdom when He receives the church. He is Bridegroom. The virgins are gone out to meet Him, and do not await His coming to the place He is to arrive at. Judgment and responsibility are connected with His return, having received the kingdom; the joy of the bride, and the blessing of the wise virgins, with going out to meet Him on the way. It is this part the author quite leaves out. And I say, the scripture is express that Christ has not appeared in the power of the kingdom till the church appears with Him. She had gone out to meet Him. The kingdom which Christ had received was over peoples, nations, etc., as Son of man. The first act of this power, the author says very justly, is on Antichrist.

Moreover, the author has not yet proved the identity of the harvest of Revelation 14 and Matthew 13. I do not believe it to be the same thing as a whole at all. And when it is said “seen crowned,” seen by whom? Not down here on earth: crowned He may be in heaven before He receives the church; though I see no scriptural connection of date between the facts: but that is not the question. Luke 19 says nothing of His receiving His church, but of judging His servants, and their receiving their reward on His taking possession of the kingdom, shewing that He had only received the grant before. The bridal reception of the church is a distinct thing from this, as Revelation 19 plainly shews. But I exceed my limits.

II

The answer to this is, No one could have such an impression, for I have cited word for word the author's translation and am reasoning on it in the passage quoted. He has given "form "and "prepare "as the sense or meaning of the word.

III

If what follows in the "Examination" be read, the objection will be evident. That is said to be distinctly characteristic of the dispensation, none of which has taken place during the first eighteen hundred years.

IV

The first part I have already answered; as to the latter part, the verses are not confused, but distinguished. I state that ruling in the midst of enemies is the subject of the Psalm, when Jehovah has placed them under His feet. Now this is exactly the precise distinction between verses 1, 2, etc. Jehovah sets Christ's enemies for His footstool, or places them under His feet. And then the Psalm goes on with His ruling in the midst of His enemies. It is perfectly clear and distinct.

V

My answer to this note is very simple. It is precisely the sense the author has attributed to setting which makes the absurdity. I use "make" because the English translation uses it. But the author, while he uses set, does not use it in the meaning of the Greek. He has declared that it means, or that verse 1 of the Psalm where it is used speaks of, Jehovah's actings all through this dispensation. And I am justified in saying God's

actings in the power of His throne are effectual actings. The absurdity does result. I do not agree with the sense the author gives to setting, but I have reasoned on it; for the sense he gives is, not putting or placing, but, the acting of Jehovah's throne all through the dispensation. I am glad he owns the absurdity which results from such a use of it. I only ask page 11 of the "Thoughts" to be read to see if he does not use it so.

VI

I have no difficulty at all in the phrases, nor need my reader. Telling someone to sit on a seat till I act, does not state my actings at all. It does speak, if he so sit, of someone expecting till another does a certain act.

VII

This has been disposed of, only it is not "setting for His feet," but "for His footstool": and I suppose that means something put under a person's feet.

VIII

I accept the author's justification of himself. He makes setting the enemies for a footstool preparing the footstool— "the preparation of the footstool." The footstool are those enemies, and he has confounded "preparing" and "putting." I still think his statement most objectionable; but I attach, of course, no meaning to it which he disclaims.

IX

He has never said there was anything in Hebrew or Greek about forming or preparing; but he has always

used the words in this meaning, which is not their meaning at all.

X

I should have made no difficulty had the author stated it as he now proposes; though I suspect a good deal would have to be cleared up when the force of the statement was enquired into.196

XI

We get here (after a statement of certain principles and questions, which it is said would sweep away Matthew 24, Revelation, and Acts 3) a warning. Now persons who read Scripture for themselves, and lean on the Lord, are not frightened by this kind of warnings. They may frighten and prejudice simple minds, fearful—justly fearful—of departing from the way of truth. We will examine for such the value of the author's statements and warnings.

All own that these passages are given to the church. The question is, Are they about the church? Now, reader, what do you think is Mr. N.'s opinion about the Revelation? Why, that, during the whole period197 of its prophetic part, Christianity and Christians, and I suppose therefore the church, will be withdrawn from the sphere it speaks of. The sphere of their earthly service will be closed, and another testimony will be raised up. Is that Christianity in its proper condition? He may not think the saints are caught up. But he does not himself think that the prophetic period of the Revelation applies to Christianity in its proper condition. Does it belong in any real sense to the church dispensation

when Christianity will be gone out of the sphere it speaks of?

It is better not to give way to indignation, righteous or unrighteous: so I leave the warning, and turn to Acts 3. The apostle Peter, speaking to unconverted Jews, says, “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” Now, this address happened in the period of the church dispensation, and, in that sense, belonged to it. But, in the church dispensation spiritually and morally and really, are unconverted Jews the seed of Abraham in whom all the kindreds of the earth are to be blessed? Whom does Paul call the seed of Abraham in whom the nations are to be blessed? “He saith not to seeds as of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

Again, the apostle adds, “Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Compare Romans 11, where you will find the elect remnant to be the church work, and all Israel is to be saved, in turning them from ungodliness, when the Deliverer comes out of Zion. Well, then, the expression is not mine; but I see nothing but what is really intelligence of God’s mind in saying that Peter was not doing church work. I do not insist on the expression; but to know how to discern what Peter was there doing from proper church work, I believe to be spiritual intelligence, and not to see the difference, to be want of discernment.

As to Matthew 24 it would be useless to discuss it here. It has been discussed, and I suppose will be discussed. I

have noticed it in the “Examination.” As to Revelation then, the author of the “Thoughts” sweeps it away too. As to Acts 3, it is about the nation; and I suppose the nation is not the church, nor known in the church.

XII

As to quoting from another chapter; I have surely used all the means to gather up Mr. N.’s statements on the same point, so as not to mistake his meaning. They are very likely from another chapter. What then? Mr. N. was not describing the blessings of the church; but he was describing the characteristics of the period he calls the church dispensation— “of the period in which they (the saints) live.” And he confessedly alludes to nothing belonging to the church, as characteristic of it. That is what I complain of; and it is not denied.

Further, he does not say that “the session of Christ upon the throne of Jehovah” is the most important characteristic of the period in which the saints live—of the church dispensation. He says, Jehovah’s acting for Him while He is there, is. That is, secret providential government is the most important characteristic of the present period.

XIII, XIV, XV, XVI

The author’s statement (page n of the “Thoughts”) was that our dispensation ends, and the new age begins, as soon as Psalm no ceased to apply, when Christ rose up from the Father’s throne. Now, it is only a dawn which ends night but is not day. There is thus an interval or period—a period, blessed be God, of the day star given to us. But in chapter 15 it is confessed that this age belongs to “this world.” Now, if it does, it clearly cannot

have finished while Antichrist reigns, because the new age will be the age of Messiah or the Son of man. While Antichrist reigns, it will not be that age. The power He may use to introduce it is not the age introduced. If this age belongs to this world—means a state of things and course of the world down here, as it most surely does—it cannot begin in heaven; though the power that introduces it may be set up there. An age, as here used, is a course of events down here on earth, characterised by a certain principle. Now, till Antichrist is destroyed, the world goes on on the old evil principle, and not on the new. If God had been pleased to have a thousand years go on in preparing the power in heaven, which introduced the age, the age would have continued till the power was exercised. Now, "the first act" of this new power on the nations is destroying Antichrist. And, indeed, all about the harvest and Christendom elsewhere is the mere imagination of the author. The attempt to make three beginnings of the age, and three endings, one in heaven, one on earth, and another in Antichrist, is merely seeking to get rid of a plain contradiction flowing from the plain statement in the "Thoughts." An age which is an earthly thing, as the author does not deny, does not end three times over, once in heaven, and twice on earth. Christianity's continuing is another question.

That the church remains to the harvest, I suppose nobody ever denied. But those who admit that the church so remains do not believe the author's geographical scheme about that harvest, nor that tares cease to be tares because they are ripe and fit for burning. And how carefully the author leaves out that the tares are gathered first in bundles! His whole

scheme is unproved. Nor can I conceive anything more absurd than this harvest of Christendom, all finished by the appearing of Christ, before He appears like lightning. It is said, “then shall they see”: and it is said, “when he shall appear, then shall ye also appear.” It is very easy to talk about the power of the new age. Scripture does not speak so. How is the order of the old age overthrown moral, and outward, when Antichrist is ruling in his glory? I say that the harvest belongs to the old age, because the word of God says so. It is the end of it— a period in which several things are done. It is not the end of the new age, I suppose. The harvest, moreover, is reaped on earth. It is, therefore, the end of that age on earth. And I suppose the new is not begun on earth, when the Scripture speaks of the end of the old. All this reasoning of the author about the age ending in heaven, and “power of the new age,” is a vain effort against the plain word of Scripture— “The harvest is the end of the age.”

XVII

The question is, Do the seventy weeks as a period form part of the new age or the old? I suppose the new age does not come in (and here all is on earth) till transgression is finished, and God’s wrath and indignation on His people are over. Now this does not close but with the close of Antichrist. He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. Is God’s indignation the new age? Jerusalem is desolate till that determined be poured on the desolator—desolate by God’s judgment. Is that the new age?

XVIII

Christ's actings against the nations are out of Zion: but He has not His throne there while Antichrist has, I suppose. Antichrist is destroyed by Christ's appearing from heaven, not from His throne in Jerusalem. That appearing closes the trouble and the age, and commences the new on earth, because thereon God's power, Christ's power, is set up there, though it have not yet accomplished all. The author is wrong in all his statements in this part of his remarks, unless the admitted fact that the church is here till harvest.

XIX

I reject entirely the statement, that Christ's kingdom means professing Christians. The Jews who reject Him are dealt with in His kingdom. The field is the world. Nor do I the least admit that gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, means judging professors. Christendom is not the kingdom of heaven. The apostle's comment on Psalm no is, "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Whatever is called enemy is to be put down, and comes into Psalm no—death even. And I have again to repeat, that it is not by a rod going out of Zion that the Antichristian enemies are destroyed, but by the Lord coming like lightning, His sign being seen in heaven—by His appearing—by the brightness or epiphany of His coming. I have not overlooked the distinction, but I am thoroughly convinced that it is all entirely wrong. Zechariah 12 does not speak of Antichrist, nor do I believe there is anywhere any proof of Antichrist's besieging Jerusalem.

XX

Of course the resurrection of imperial power is a figure, so that the note is all beside the mark. The head wounded, or slain to death, and healed, and the beast, of whom it is said “is not” and shall ascend, give the form of resurrection in Satan’s power to the beast whom he sets on his throne. But, of course, resurrection of power, is not resurrection such as God gives life in. Only it is curious enough the author (page 287 of the “Thoughts”) says, “some have thought from this passage that Antichrist will be a person restored to life from the invisible world, but about this I would express no opinion.”

As to the author’s proofs that the Assyrian and Antichrist are one. I have no quarrel with anyone for such an opinion; I think it a mistake for many reasons; but his proofs are null. The comparison of Daniel 9 and Isaiah 10 shews that a consummation is decreed of God: Antichrist and the Assyrian may be found in this decreed time, but that is the very utmost to be deduced from it. That I believe at any rate to be the case. But the Assyrian, as such, deals with Jerusalem owned of God; Antichrist with it disowned in the times of the Gentiles (though the Assyrian power may have been, and I believe will have been, on the scene before it is owned) —I should apprehend as “king of the north.” On all this, however, I am ready for all enquiry, and glad to hear anyone. The comparison of Isaiah 14:4-25, proves absolutely nothing.

I had nearly forgotten, in consequence of its being in a note, what is contained in that at the foot of page 9. I have only to repeat, on reviewing the author’s

statements, my conviction of the substantial justice and importance of what I have said. My conviction of the import and bearing of pages 14, 15 of the “Thoughts “is not weakened at all after reading his letter, and re-reading them. “Giving,” or “having given,” does not in the smallest degree affect the question to my mind. What the author makes of the church, as a body chosen out of the nations and separated to God, is a kingdom. He has misstated the force of the passage; but for this I refer to the “Examination.” It is of “this kingdom” he is speaking, when he talks of “having given life to qualify it for agency.” I have used giving life in the abstract. It is quite immaterial when I ask, Is that the idea I am to have of the church? That is what the author says he has made it. Scripture indeed says no such thing at all, of which I beg the reader to take notice. But is this the idea I am to have of the church? It is the idea the author gives of it. In the subsequent paragraph of page 15, of the “Thoughts,” the excellent relation to such a body is spoken of as accomplished in Christ’s relation to the churches. Maintaining the church in its right relation to God is spoken of. What Christ has made it is declared a kingdom, etc., to God and His Father. And this His (Christ’s) excellent relation to such a body is found in His relation to the churches. As to the words, the truth is, it is not life-giving union which is spoken of as accomplished in relation to the churches, nor which is the subject of discussion in the pages commented, on but Christ’s excellent relation to such a body; and “as we have seen” plainly shews this, because this topic had been fully and clearly set forth two pages before (page 34), and “His excellent relation to such a body “is the topic actually in hand at the close of page 35, and again two or three lines lower down in this same page (36). If

there had not been the words “as we have seen,” the author might with some show of reason have fallen into the mistake: but “as we have seen” plainly refers to the preceding discussion, all of which turns on the one leading idea of Christ’s relation to the body. All I have brought life-giving union in for, is to shew that, even when the author speaks of this, it does not make him rise higher than a kingdom, the churches, and a governed body. And such is the fact here. He has given that which is a kingdom, life to qualify it for agency. This is what all is reduced to here. “Union with Him in glory” may be introduced; but there is no thought of the body of Christ—the present union of the body, as one body, with Him. Even when owning union with Him the thought of Christ’s body is shut out. The church is a kingdom.

179 Though, after all, the “Examination” does not state the author to be “guilty of sophisms” as a general charge at all. After shewing the fallacy of a certain train of reasoning, I have said (p. 7), “This is a very common sophism, to involve,” etc. The author had put a dilemma as containing the only two cases possible, and proceeded to reason on it to his own and his reader’s satisfaction; whereas the allegation of his opponent is that there is a third case: And, having explained this, I have said, this is a common sophism.

180 It may of course have escaped me. Mr. N. gives no references in all this.

181 See page 4.

182 I do not suppose any one will deny what I here state. Indeed it is impossible to do so if the writings and teaching of the author have been really examined. But if

any one for convenience desire a short synoptical statement of it, he will find it in the sixth part of “A Christian Manual,” by W. Morris, p. 19.

183 The italics are the author’s.

184 I would just correct an immaterial mistake in passing. In saying “Lyra Davidis,” I meant Fry’s “Lyra Davidis.” not Bythner, where the translation would not be found.

185 And here I must add that Sir C. Brenton and the English translators are perfectly justified. This is the statement of Matthiae (English edition, Kenrich, London, 1837, § 501, p. 842), “The aorist in all the moods except the indicative and the participle, is usually expressed in Latin and English by the present.” I had examined this before, only not so fully, and did not feel it necessary to enter into this additional critical matter. Matthiae adds, “But… the aorist designates an action transient and considered independently in its completion, but the present a continued and frequently repeated action,” etc. This remark will be found of every importance on the question of the use sought to be made of the text—that is, as to what the Greek aorist for “I make “(Heb. 1:13) or the Hebrew for this in Psalm 110:1, means. Because, assuming the remark of Matthiae just, we have revealed authority thus for using the act of setting as a “transient action, considered independently in its completion,” and not as “present, continued, and frequently repeated action.” Because the inspired New Testament has adopted the Septuagint translation, where the tense used precludes a continuous action, and confines the setting to a transient action, considered independently in its completion. Now, this is the

question between the author and myself. He says that this verse describes the Lord Jesus as seated … waiting, Jehovah's throne acting for Christ. "There is no characteristic of the present period so essentially distinctive as this." In a word, it is a continuous action characterising a period. But the tense, sanctioned by the use of the Lord and His apostles, precludes this idea. It sanctions that on which I insist—transient action, considered independently in its completion. It is the author, not I, whose question is with the New Testament. He is wrong as to the Greek, as well as in the sense attributed in his reasonings on the Hebrew.

186 This is repeated even more than once.

187 I had almost forgotten to acknowledge, that, from stopping before a quotation, as if it had been the end of a phrase, I have given as general an observation which applies only to the passage quoted after it in Gesenius: however, as I referred to the passage accurately, my mistake was easily detected. Here too I would add that Gesenius, in two words, settled for me the question as to Hebrew, which Mr. T. deals with so elaborately. I do not agree with a few things in Mr. T.'s remarks, as being a sound judgment, in the meaning of texts, what he calls combined translation; but I shall always be glad to get his help in Hebrew.

188 Teschendorf and Lachmann, following many of the best MSS, read (Matt. 22), "put thine enemies under thy feet," in place of "thy footstool." Griesbach gives it as a doubtful reading. So that we have very strong authority for saying the Lord Himself used it as equivalent.

189 In another it is differently represented.

190 It would have been well to have cited some passage for this, for I am not aware of any. In Daniel 7 there is nothing about His appearing, where the assumption of the kingdom is spoken of. In Luke 19, the other passage chiefly referred to here by the author, the nobleman goes to receive a kingdom, and return. But this is a general statement of what has taken eighteen hundred years.

191 This, note, was the power He had received, power over the nations. “The power received before the Ancient of days.” “The sovereignty of the world.” “The power of earth.” This was therefore its first exercise.

192 If it be alleged that receiving the church is the exercise of the power Christ has assumed, I answer, Receiving the bride is not the exercise of Christ’s power over the nations. And, secondly, He does not appear to receive the church. It is positively revealed that when He appears, we appear with Him.

193 See page 298 of the “Thoughts,” where this is positively stated. It is quite true that this is stated entirely oppositely elsewhere.

194 That is, as a distinctive known principle. If taken otherwise, it is true of all. For the preserved of Israel in the latter day are certainly so accepted, nor can any one be in a different manner.

195 Some have excepted to the expression “ground of entry,” used in the place referred to. Had I said ground of acceptance, or means of salvation, there would be reason. But there is really none. If need be, I am prepared to explain it.

196 Note, occupying till I come, or keeping a charge till the appearing of Christ, clearly does not suppose the person on earth till then. Timothy, to whom the last words are addressed, is a proof of it. It does suppose that the appearing will be the judicial manifestation of the results of such conduct. This I believe will be at His appearing.

197 There may be cited, as an exception to this, the description at the beginning of chapter 17. Of course, chapter 19 to the end is out of question in this entirely. The scene of the dragon in heaven introducing this period, in chapter 12, is also an exception. These two passages serve as introductions to the period mainly spoken of. It may be well to add, to avoid all cavil, that, though the author places the sixth seal at the very close of Antichrist’s reign, immediately preceding the manifestation of the Lord in glory, so that some of the preceding seals must be during his reign, he does not actually state when they are. But the observation in the text applies to the whole body of the book.

Answer To “A Second Letter To The Brethren And Sisters Who Meet For Communion In Ebrington Street”

Introduction

As to the three propositions by which Mr. Newton assumes the position of guarding the truth, and the faith of the saints (insinuating at the same time that others have departed from it, or placed it in jeopardy), as far as they are exact, they merely contain a truth which nobody ever doubted, nor called in question, nor even put in jeopardy, unless it were Mr. N. himself; namely, that all the saints will be finally in the resurrection likeness of the Lord Jesus the last Adam. But, beyond this general truth founded on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, held much more clearly and exactly than it is stated here, all, I say, beyond it, in these propositions, like all human articles, and specially the statements so constantly rashly hazarded by the author, is unscriptural and incorrect.

As to the first proposition, if the author simply means that, in the counsels of God, all the redeemed will partake of Christ’s likeness in resurrection in an unearthly state, it is quite true. But if he means, in the very vague expression “resurrection as known in Christ,” that there could be no resurrection but to an incorruptible state like Christ in glory, then he is quite wrong. Of this Lazarus is the proof. At his grave Christ stated that He was the resurrection and the life, and yet Lazarus was raised to an earthly life. Again, if the expression unearthly life means anything, and therefore

if it be taken as an absolute proposition, the author is quite wrong. Unearthly life is an unscriptural and an almost unintelligible expression. The first man was of the earth earthy, and we are earthy like him; but unearthly life is not a scriptural thought. The second Man is the Lord from heaven, and we shall bear His image in resurrection. If the proposition means that resurrection bodies are not to be corruptible bodies, I suppose the faith of the saints is not likely to be in much danger as to this. If it means more, the case of Lazarus proves it false.

Next, that regeneration is in virtue of union with Him in death and resurrection—this, I should think, while it sounds like guarding important truths, is just nonsense. Are we in union with Christ in death and resurrection before we are regenerate? If not, regeneration cannot be in virtue of it. That, Christ having died and risen again for all the redeemed family, they are viewed in the counsels of God as dead and risen again in Him, and, when regenerate, being really in Him, we are personally viewed spiritually as so dead and risen in Him, is true. But being regenerate in virtue of union has no sense at all.198 As to the third proposition, it calls for no particular remark. It is a confused statement of a plain truth. If it be meant in general the power of His life in resurrection, so that they will be ultimately conformed to His image, it is an undoubted truth: but, as to knowledge,and present fact, it is quite clear that it did not in knowledge in the Old Testament saints, save in a very obscure way, though there are glimpses of it then; and, in fact, it clearly will not be in possession of the saints on earth during the millennium. On the whole, these three propositions, or articles, aim at a common

elementary truth, held, I suppose, by every saint, namely, that all the redeemed will be conformed in resurrection to the image of the Second Adam: but it states it in such a way as in some respects to make nonsense or error of it.

We have, further, in reasoning on a plain common truth — that the life of all the redeemed is life communicated from Christ and the same life, reasoning as if some saints denied it and the author were maintaining and contending for the truth— this extraordinary statement (page 14): “I cannot however see why there should be difficulty in receiving this; that He who was the Word of Life, created the new man in every saint, and endowed it with life,” etc. Now, while the truth reasoned on is one believed, I apprehend, without any difficulty at all by all saints, I would ask, What does it become in the hands of the author? or what does he mean by creating the new man and endowing it with life? Is there a lifeless new man created like Adam’s body from the dust and then endowed with life? or what is the doctrine meant to be conveyed here? for the words are plain enough.

My reply to this second letter will be comparatively short, because I shall merely take up what is needful on important points, and not enter into an endless controversy on details. And, first, as to the main subject of controversy in the first number, the author in this second letter gives up the whole point. All he has drawn from Matthias is fully admitted, but is nothing to the purpose.

The remark, “the subjunctive aorist could not be rendered as though it were the present—and this is all I contend for,” etc., is a curious one enough. The question

is whether it can be rendered by the present, which is what Matthiae (English translation) says it is in English. The subjunctive aorist is rendered as though it were the subjunctive aorist, but in English by the present, which is what the author objected to. He has translated many examples given by that grammarian to shew that the aorist is a completed action. This is admitted and is not the point in discussion. We are all agreed on that, as I shewed in my former reply in answer to Mr. Tregelles's letter. The question is, Does the Greek aorist, as Matthiae states, describe a transient action completed, or a continuous acting so that the Greek for "until I make" (Heb. 1:13) should describe and characterise a period? That is the question. Because Psalm no:1 was quoted as characteristic of the present period—nothing so much so as that which it spoke of— in order to connect the actings spoken of in the Revelation with that period (that is, with the present dispensation). My reply was, that there were no actings characterising a period spoken of in the passage, but Christ called up to sit until Jehovah should have done199 a certain act. And that the act which the psalm spoke of was not characteristic of a period at all, but one isolated or transient act of authority at the close, spoken of as completed no doubt, but not characterising a period.

Now at the close of his second letter, the author, admitting the principle of Matthise, states, "I have no objection, therefore, if it be deemed advisable, to express the idea of rapidity in the translation of the passage, and to say, 'until I shall, as in a moment, have set thy foes a footstool for thy feet.'" Now that settles the whole question: because in that case it cannot characterise a dispensation or a period. It is in vain to

say, “I have not said that all this dispensation is employed in setting the footstool.” No, but the author has said that the verse (which speaks of no other actings whatever but setting the footstool) speaks of the actings of Jehovah’s throne for Christ, and that no characteristic of the present period is so essentially distinctive as this; so that this acting (that is, setting the footstool) characterises the period. Now he is obliged to admit that it is not so. He translates, “until I shall, as in a moment, have set,” etc. Now if Christ sits at Jehovah’s right hand until Jehovah shall have done something as in a moment, it is clear that sudden act in a moment does not characterise all the present period during which He is waiting till it be done.

The meaning and bearing of the whole verse on the question is given up; for it is admitted that there is no acting spoken of in the verse but what is done as in a moment. But this is the grand basis of argument200 on which the author builds, and by which he explains and characterises both the dispensation and the book of Revelation itself with which he is occupied.

And, be it remarked that, the question is not whether Jehovah acts for Christ on the throne: nobody doubts he does; but whether Psalm no: I speaks of actings characteristic of the period. And this is the whole matter, because thereon the author uses the verse to define the time of Christ’s quitting the throne, and to prove that the contents of the Revelation precede His quitting it—the actings there corresponding to those of Psalm no. But the subsequent observations of the author put beyond all doubt that the “setting” is the prolonged acting which characterised the dispensation, if the dispensation be not all employed in it; because, in

guarding against the idea that the aorist always supposes rapidity, and stating that it directs our attention to the termination of an action, the whole being summed up in its completion, it is quite certain that all this applies to the Greek in Hebrews 1:13. That is, he is discussing whether the word “set” may or may not be applied to a lengthened period, though referring to the termination of it—in a word, to setting characterising the period, as “keep,” in John 17, though viewed in its termination.

Indeed, all the author’s statements here are wrong still. The aorist has nothing to do with rapidity,201 or want of rapidity. The thing spoken of may have been prolonged and have had no movement implied in it (as “keep” in John 17:11, or the different word used in Luke 4:10). But, as Green observes in the first paragraph of the very rule cited by the author, “in the aorist the idea of duration is excluded.” Now this is the point, because it cannot be used to characterise a period in that case. But the truth is, this part of the argument arose from the attempt to bring in the New Testament [nay, even the Lord], as demonstrating that the author had rightly used the text, whereas it proved the contrary. But the interpretation really rests on the force of the words, which speak of one act (completed, as all agree) which closes, and not of an acting which can characterise, a period. And this latter is what the author had attached to it.

There is another material point—the unity of the church. Now on this point I have still to repeat that the statement of the author does not remove the difficulty. The author says, speaking of the dependence of the churches on one another as members of one body (page

60), “I have taught it as distinctly as if I had written pages on the subject, where I say that the catholic unity of the body would have been marred and lost, the moment one church had forfeited its place, and had its candlestick removed.” “The very thought of the seven candlesticks standing together, and forming one catholic body,” etc. We have then here the author’s idea of unity. It is a union of churches. And so really of churches, that, if one church had forfeited its place, the catholic unity of the body would have been marred and lost. It was clearly then a body made up of churches. One church gone, catholic unity was gone. Is that the unity of the body of Christ spoken of in Corinthians, Ephesians, and elsewhere? It is perfectly clear now, if it was not before, what the author’s views of unity are—independent churches united together. Now this does not in the least degree, nor in principle, present the unity of the body by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I admit that the author has gone farther in this tract than before in his statement of the unity of the body; but he has distinctly made catholic unity dependent on the churches, and the churches members of the body; and he declares its unity lost the moment one church had forfeited its place. I have admitted that the author has said more as to the unity of the body202—difficult to reconcile with what is said in the same page, it is true, but there it is. I say difficult to reconcile, because the author states first “the unities203 as given in Ephesians 4 are unchangeable and unaffected, save as to development, by the failure of the gathered body”; and, secondly, that the catholic unity is lost the moment one church had forfeited its place. But if this contradiction is to be solved, and the author has any definite idea of the unity of the church, it is to be found in page 56. There the author, commenting

on my objection to his making the Gentile churches constitute the church in the way he did, and having asked, “Is it St. Paul’s statement of the church,” answers, “I should think not, because St. Paul speaks of the invisible unity of the church in heaven. I have been speaking of the visible unity of the churches on the earth.” So,204 in page 60 this unity of the churches is the catholic unity of the body. In page 22 of the “Thoughts on the Apocalypse” the author is speaking of the saints at Pentecost being builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, and the church constituted as a visible body on the earth. Jerusalem (page 23) had rejected the testimony of the church. In page 14 we read, “but the church being a body chosen out of the nations, and separated to God”; and then these churches (page 24) constituted the one church of the living God. Here we learn churches were members and constituted the catholic unity of the body. Now “St. Paul speaks of the invisible205 unity of the church in heaven” (and note here that his statements in general are spoken of). Well then, his statements do not apply to the unity of the church on earth as one body in Christ. I can only say now, any such unity of the church is—not silently, but openly, deliberately, and avowedly—dropped into churches. Paul speaks of the invisible unity of the church in heaven; his statements, consequently, are not of the church upon earth. The unity of that was a union and a uniformity of independent churches. And now what is the value of the unities of Ephesians 4, if Paul speaks of invisible unity in the heavens? No doubt that is unchangeable. Or what is the real meaning of the beginning of that paragraph in page 60, if we take into account the positive statement of page 56? What is the one body on earth indwelt in by one Spirit, if Paul speaks

of the invisible unity of the church in heaven? And now let me ask a question, Was I really right or wrong in saying that Paul's statements in his epistles were passed over altogether?

If Paul speaks of the invisible unity of the church in heaven, and the author of the visible unity of the churches on earth, was not that passing his statements over, and passing them over altogether? I repeat the charge, with the addition that the reason given for his having done so by the author in his second letter is incorrect and unfounded. Paul does not speak merely of invisible unity in heaven. The quotation, in the note of page 22 of the "Thoughts," had nothing to do with the matter. The author is there stating the heavenly standing of the church at Jerusalem, as a particular church like the Gentile churches afterwards, and answering an assumed or supposed statement that the standing of the pentecostal church was not heavenly. Now that had nothing whatever to say to the point I was discussing, which was the union of the church with Christ, and its unity as His body. Now he had passed over all Paul's statements on the point in his epistles. I was not discussing the heavenly character of the church at Jerusalem, nor speaking of Paul's statements as to that, for I know not where he had made any.206 The best proof that can be that the author has passed them all over is, that he declares now that his statements were not Paul's, because he was treating a different subject—Paul, unity in heaven; he, visible unity on earth. I have said his reason was incorrect and unfounded. Let us examine this. Does Paul speak of invisible unity in heaven? Were the members of the body in whom the several gifts manifested themselves—the body not one

member but many—spoken of in the Corinthians, in heaven, or on earth? The “so also is Christ” —was that in heaven? The joints of supply by which the whole body fitly joined together and compacted makes increase of the body—the gifts till we all come in the unity of the faith (there is one body, but to every one of us is given grace, etc.)—was all this in heaven?207 The author has not now passed over—he has totally set aside—the statement of Paul on the subject.

I should have a great deal to remark on the paragraph (page 5 of the letter) which follows, but it would require a treatise on the operation of the Spirit connected with the work and exaltation of Christ, and the eternal counsels of God—a subject too important to do justice to here. I would only beg the reader carefully to compare Ephesians 4, based as it is on the whole of what precedes in the epistles, with what is said about “what God did in exalting Christ and the church in Him, and what His servants did in constituting the church on earth,” and to see how far the statements of the chapter accord with the contrast here instituted between God exalting Christ and the church in Him, and what His servants did in constituting the church on earth.

I suspect that the examination of this passage will do more than most else to throw light on the real question; but, as it is only insinuated, I must leave its ambiguity to the discernment of others, though I do not doubt myself its meaning. Those who may not apprehend it I can only urge to examine whether the allegation of the author (that “St. Paul speaks of the invisible unity of the church in heaven”) is borne out by 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.

The author states, pages 16-19, that differences in dispensation cannot be the occasion of official difference. Such differences cannot depend on a dispensational peculiarity for which the saints themselves are in nowise answerable.208 “You will,” says the author (page 17), “ever remember that dispensational differences here do, of themselves, make no difference even in official dignity in the world to come.”

In the “Thoughts on the Apocalypse” we read (page 335) “There may perhaps be somewhat of a similar distinction between the new Jerusalem, and the rest of the inhabiters of the new earth. But whatever distinctions of this kind there may be, they must be considered as purely official.” It is hardly necessary to remark that the distinction between the new Jerusalem and the other inhabiters of the new earth was dispensational.

The author seems to insist however alike everywhere, that this cannot take place in heaven. But there was a passage in Scripture which, in the plain English Bible, presented a great difficulty in the way of this assertion. It is stated at the close of Hebrews 11 that God has reserved “some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” This the author attempts to get rid of, not exactly by a new translation, but by inverting the plain order of the words, and adding a passage one third as long as the whole verse, which entirely alters the sense; saying that it is an ellipse (which means in English that it has been left out in the sense). But the reader must remark that the insertion entirely changes the sense, and makes an inversion of the words absolutely necessary. It is in fact entirely

unwarranted. The sense is perfect, as anyone may see, without what is added. There is no need of inversion, and there is no parenthesis. The English translation is the plain translation of the Greek, and concurred in by such other modern translations as I have access to.

Further, every statement of the author is wrong. There is no need of any cognate word. The Greek in Hebrews 11:40, “some better thing,” is as plain Greek as can well be, and the added word, problemma, is neither wanted nor suited, and would indeed change the sense. Further, there is no such Greek word, that I can find, as problemma. Blemma there is, but it means “a look,” and in the plural “eyes,” or “a countenance,” or “aspect”: what problemma therefore might have meant, had it been Greek, I do not pretend to say.

Next, we are told that the Greek translated “for us” in Hebrews 11:40, is not “for us.” Does the author mean that preposition peri does not mean “for” in English, in the sense in which it is used here? If so, it is as unwarrantable an assertion as he could well have made. I beg the reader to take his English Bible and consult the following passages: Luke 22:32; Ephesians 6:18; Luke 4:38; John 16:26; chap. 17:9, 20; 1 Peter 5:7; Philemon 10; Galatians 1:4; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Hebrews 5:3; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 13:11; 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 10:18, 26. In all these cases peri is the Greek word for “for.” Those who know Greek have only to consult a lexicon, where the sense is regularly given. It is used in the sense of “for “with persons, and with things. See also Matthise, section 589, where he states that peri and huper are often interchanged. (Compare Eph. 6:18, 19.)209 In Wahl this very passage of Hebrews 11 is given as an instance, and the full sense of it stated

just as it is given in English. The Greek reader will find in more than one of the passages, as John 17:20, 21, the construction as here: peri, teuton, hina.

The author is wrong moreover as to aneu and koris. They are used in a general way one for the other. As far as they are distinguished aneu is more than koris. And koris does not forbid the thought of any line of separation being drawn as to personal glory or distinct dignity.

Thus Plato says, Without (koris) fire nothing would become visible, nothing could be touched without (aneu) something firm, nor firm without (aneu) earth.

So both are used in the sense of “except,” as may be seen in any good dictionary. Next,210 as far as there is any difference, aneu is stronger than koris: aneu signifying entire privation of (Compare 1 Peter 3:1), having nothing to say to, to the exclusion of; koris merely separated from. [Examples from classical authors are aneu kentroio, there was no spurring at all; aneu theon,211 without the gods; aneu emethen, “without me” (hence, “without reference to”). Hence it means “far away.” On the other hand, keitai koris ho nekros—the dead lies apart, separate. Koris oikeo, I dwell in another place, or apart. So koris athanaton, away from the immortals.] Aneu in its derivation means privation or nonexistence; koris, incontestably, separation merely.

And now as to the particular case. The reader would have only to turn the passages where “without” (koris) is used into negatives, and he would soon find the absurdity of the rule. But I shall not give him the trouble. I shall give him two proofs of its incorrectness:

firstly, when the nature of the thing shews what is stated about koris to be impossible; and, secondly, when the nature of the thing admits it, but when its use shews the statement to be quite wrong.

First, “without thy mind,” Philemon 14. Here there was no question of line of separation not being drawn. It is just simply he would not act apart from him. Hebrews 7:20, “not without an oath.” The nature of the thing allows no question of identity of glory. So Hebrews 9:7, 18, 22, “not without blood.”

But when the nature of the thing does admit the question to be raised whether there is a difference of personal dignity or official difference, koris used with a negative most certainly does not exclude it.

Thus, John 15:5, “Without me ye can do nothing.” Is there no difference of dignity, or official glory, or power, in Christ and His disciples? Romans 10:14: “How shall they hear without a preacher? “Does this (their not hearing without a preacher) prove that no line of separation can be drawn between the preacher and hearer, perhaps even an unconverted hearer?

Again, 1 Corinthians 11:11: “The man is not without the woman in the Lord.” Nothing can be stronger than this. Because the apostle had been proving the official superiority of the man over the woman, and then asserts that, still, one was not without the other in the Lord. It is an example directly contradictory of the statement of the author.

Having thus disposed of all the criticisms, we may the more easily consider the text itself (Heb. 11:40), as to the supposition that there must be something joined with the comparative, than which it is better. This is not

even necessary: the Greek for “better” is used absolutely, “better things” (Heb. 6:9), “better thing” (Heb. 11:40). But here there is no need for it to be so used, because God has provided some better thing for us (that is, than for them). The sentence is plain, as plain can be, “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect,” Heb. 11:40. If anyone prefer “foreseeing” to “providing,” it makes no difference whatever as to the point in hand. If God foresees a better thing as to us, it is clear He has provided it for us. The only question is, Is there such better thing? Now the plain construing of the Greek (take it indeed first or last, parenthesis or not) is, “God having provided (or foreseen) some better thing for us.” But the position of the words makes it impossible to introduce the sentence added to the Scripture, in order to make out the point. Because if it be a parenthesis, it is clearly complete, and the words he would introduce with a “than” are introduced in the passage with hina (Greek) for quite a different purpose. In his version they are a mere unwarranted addition to the Scriptures. Nor could problemma in any sense be added without changing the plain sense of the word. The thing foreseen or provided is ‘something better.’ It is impossible, if the object of the apostle had been to say that God had in His counsels some better thing for us, to have said it more simply: and I scarcely see how he should have said it otherwise with the same perfectness of expression (as doubtless the Spirit’s word must be perfect). He did not allow them to receive the promises because He had in His mind, He foresaw, something better for us. And yet the word “because,” which I have here used, mars the accuracy; the genitive absolute is much more in place. It was an actual condition of the case rather than a cause.

And I have no doubt that “for us” and “without us” so connect the phrase as to make the last phrase dependent on what is said to be a parenthesis.212 We have seen (page 354) in an analogous case, John 17:20, 21, the same connection of kreitton and hina.213 But if the English and other translations are right,214 we have, by the practical confession of the author in his labour to get rid of it, a positive declaration of Scripture in the teeth of his system. And he has jeoparded all on this; because, if the English translation be right, all that he has denounced as “going far to destroy all sense of personal responsibility,” and “touching the value of the work of Christ,”215 in a word as subverting Christianity itself, is stated in the words of Scripture.216 Not that I in the least accept his statement of the doctrine he opposes; or his suggestion of what others hold, stated by insinuation, in opposing it as evil—far from it: the greatest part of it is a totally unfounded charge. But I take it as it is stated in the tract (pages 19-21). I thank him for recalling this verse which otherwise might easily have passed from my mind. Besides, if dispensational differences produced no result in the time of glory, why does the Lord say, “because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they who have not seen, yet have believed”? Those who see and believe are on another dispensational footing than those who have not seen and believed. And it was not the condition of Thomas merely; for he clearly entered into church privileges. It is a general principle, based on the circumstances which occurred through his temporary unbelief—indicative, I have no doubt, of the difference in the kingdom consequent on faith, before Christ’s return and after.217 The reader may think that saying this is giving up the difference between Abraham and the Old Testament

saints and the church. I have nothing to give up. I believe Abraham had divine life in the fullest and truest sense of the word, and that none could possibly have been saved without it. That he was saved by the blood of the Lamb, as indeed none can be saved without it. That he will partake of the resurrection just as much, and as truly, as we shall. That he will be in the glory of the kingdom, and eternally blessed with Christ, and that we shall sit down there together. Of all this (to which, I doubt not, much detail could be added) I have never had a moments doubt since I believed through grace. That through grace he is worthy of a far higher place than myself I have no need to say. Further, all the brethren I am aware of believe so too.218 There is another point it may be well to touch upon. That the mission of Jesus to Israel was God's last dealing with the old, with the special exception I have stated. I think so still, because God has said so; and this dealing was in vain. After He had sent prophets, and they had stoned some and killed some, God said, I have yet one Son: it may be they will reverence My Son when they see Him. But when they saw Him, they said, This is the heir: come let us kill Him; and the inheritance shall be ours. And they caught Him, and killed Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard. And so Jesus, acting prophetically, found a fig-tree, and sought fruit thereon, and found none, and said, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And therefore He said, "Then have I laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought and in vain (that is, if Israel were God's servant in whom He was to be glorified); yet is my work with the Lord and my judgment with my God," Isaiah 49. I believe that the author has not known how to distinguish responsibility and the purposes of God. I believe that Christ came seeking fruit on Israel and

found none—that He was presented to their responsibility. He piped to them and they would not dance.

But the reasoning of the author proceeds from his not seeing that, had He been received, it would have proved there was good in man—that man was not in an absolutely lost state, just as his keeping the law would. Whereas his rejecting Christ proved, not only that man's flesh would not keep the law, but that even the goodness of God, and sending Messiah, and sending His Son, and light in the world, and love in the world, their king in the world, yea, God, Himself in power and goodness in the world, would not lead the flesh to repentance. And until this trial was put to it, and (specially as regards the Jews) coming according to promise and prophecy, man was not, in the dealings of God with him, pronounced absolutely and finally bad. "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin. If I had not done amongst them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." God never purposed to save by the old man, any more than He expected the law to be kept by the old man. But He did present His Son to man in his former state, and viewed as Israel after the flesh, to shew the hopelessly sinful state of it: and, till He had done this, He did not pronounce upon it as the subject of nothing at all but judgment.219 Now the testimony starts from this ground that all are entirely lost, the world is convicted of sin, because they have not believed in Christ. There was this difference that Christ was leading on in His own Person to something else, which the law, save in a negative way, did not (though, in that way, it

did too; as the prophets by the Spirit of God most surely did, so that all that Christ did was as much stated then as by the Lord Himself); insomuch that, save as to the glory and presence of His Person which presented the thing itself, the difference of the people's condition was not so great in principle. The author, seeing that Christ was leading on, as He surely was, to another thing, supposes He could not have been presented also as a test to the old to prove yet further the absolute need of the new. But in this he is quite wrong.

There is one point more which I feel called upon to explain— earthly things connected with regeneration— which he has afterward cited as if I had said, regeneration was "not necessarily a heavenly thing," "not necessarily more than an earthly thing." What I have said220 is merely what has been taught and explained of old—that regeneration is stated to be necessary for the enjoyment of the earthly promises by the Jews in the millennium; which are, I think, contrasted with the heavenly things which are the portion of the church in glory. I have actually referred, moreover, to the vague sense of heavenly, as meaning coming down from heaven, as an exceptional use, and which is not I believe a scriptural use of it, though I have admitted it in my tract, as I know of no one that ever doubted it. And instead of holding that they would not be endowed with heavenly life in the sense of Divine life coming down from heaven, it was a positive assertion that they must. "The Jews," I had said, and the author quotes it, "taking earthly things of God, must be regenerate." And where did anyone ever think regenerate life came from, except from God, and in that, I still think, vague sense, heavenly from above?

There are other points, discussed in the letter, treated of in the “Examination”; and I do not go over them again here. A great part of the letter I can only consider as violent calumnies against brethren, in the shape of inferences which none of the brethren, sought to be involved in them, believe; and I must decline answering them.221 But not only is scriptural language departed from, but, while professing to instruct all his brethren, and to be the guardian of “the truth,” the author has fallen really into the grossest errors—errors to which I do not attach any great importance, because I trust they are mere confusion, and would therefore be scarcely worth noticing if they were not accompanied with the exorbitant pretension to set everybody else right.

He has really confounded the possession of the divine nature, by which Christ could take the incommunicable name of God, with the life in us which flows from this fulness. Whatever union we may have with Christ—yea, though it may be said that we dwell in God and God in us, yet essential life can be attributed in its very nature to God only. That this was, by the mystery of the incarnation, in the man Jesus, every saint owns. But to talk of this being heavenly life, in the sense in which we possess it, is the grossest confusion, and would be frightful if it were not mere confusion. And here I will ask, Does the writer really believe, or does he wish to make others believe, that any of his brethren doubt, if we are so to speak, about the heavenly, much more than mere heavenly, life of the Son of God? A man is no Christian at all that does not believe in the nature and Person of Christ. But does the author mean to confound this divine Person with the life in us derived from Him? Could it be said of anyone but of him “the Son of man

who is in heaven”? For this “who is” (John 3:13) is really, if taken as a title, the incommunicable name, I AM. It never was, nor could be, said of any man but of Him who, if He was man, was the true God and eternal life. We have life, but we are not eternal life; nor have we it properly, nor essentially, in ourselves. God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

All this is confounded. In the second paragraph of page 6 it is said, speaking of No. 2 of the “Examination,” the author says, “that it was properly heavenly is never said in Scripture.” But to what does “it” refer in this passage in Mr. N.’s letter? To Christ spoken of as “who is”? Does it in No. 2 of the “Examination”? Not at all. I am there speaking of the life of the saints. I have said “nor is it ever said that they were quickened with heavenly life.” And, if it be said, But were not they quickened with the life that was in Christ? No doubt they were. But to confound the derived life in them with what Christ was in His Person, so that it was said of Him “the Son of man who is (the ‘Being One’) in heaven,” is the greatest confusion possible. Could it be said of them “the ‘Being One’ in heaven”? Nay, could it be said, He hath given unto them to have life in themselves? And to argue about the Person of Christ, when I was arguing about the life of the saints, is deplorable confusion. Further, we have, in the quotations of the author himself, the plainest proof that he is entirely wrong as to the saints in his use of heavenly and earthly. He holds now that there was the same life essentially in all of them. With this I fully agree. It was true then of John the baptist. Why, then, if it is necessarily to be called heavenly

because it came down from heaven as in the Person of Christ, does John contrast himself with Christ, and say, “He that cometh from above is above all”; “He that is222 of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all”? The truth is, the Lord and John the baptist do not speak of a life come down from heaven, but of a Person come down from heaven. 223 The author speaks of this essential life becoming (page 7) “connected for a while with humanity,” etc. But was it derived life as in us that did so? Was it not the Word incarnate, the Son of God who came down from heaven, in whom was life, that did so—He who had thus life in Himself? Where does Scripture speak of life coming down from heaven unto us? That eternal life which was with the Father was manifested to us in the Person of Jesus. But He was eternal life. I repeat, we are not, though we have, eternal life.

It could not be said of us, “who are in heaven”; Jesus being a divine Person, it could be said of Him, “the Son of man who is in heaven.” It can be said of us (as united to Him, because we are united to Him for a heavenly condition in glory), “He hath made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ.” This cannot be said of the millennial saints. For, though they undoubtedly have life from Christ, though they have it from the risen Man, so that I doubt not they will be changed into likeness to Him, and, though their forgiveness and their blessings are enjoyed through the blood of the Lamb, yet they do not sit together in heavenly places. They are in earthly places and earthly glory. In the state, of which so little is said, the contrast of heaven and earth is not thus maintained in the family of God: but it is in the millennial state. Nor let it be supposed that it is a mere

inference that Christ and the saints are thus confounded, because life is communicated. After speaking of Him as having this “heavenly life” in humiliation, the author proceeds— “the circumstances may vary infinitely, but it is the same life. Before the world was, He was the word of life, He was the same in humiliation, He is the same now in glory. When on earth He could say, ‘the Son of man who is in heaven.”

First, I ask, was this merely by the possession of a heavenly life? or was it not because He was in His own Person the Son of God, the Word of Life? But to continue: “infinitely important results would flow from the admission that the life possessed and communicated by the Lord Jesus while yet in the flesh, was not heavenly.” Now, I believe it to be only confusion; but there is the most complete confusion between the Person of the Son of God, the divine Being and existence, and the life communicated to the saints which flows from it. What I had written as to life in the saints is referred to it as to the same thing; and, after speaking of the divine Word, the author goes on to speak of the life possessed and communicated by the Lord Jesus, and quotes the passages which refer to the coming down to earth of the Person of the Son of God (who being a divine Person was therefore still in heaven), as speaking of a heavenly life come down. Thus, “but did Jesus think that the life which was in Him, and which He communicated to others, was not heavenly? Did He not Himself say, “the Son of man which is in heaven? And do not these words almost verbally contradict the assertion, that it224 [the life] is never said in Scripture to be properly heavenly… Were they [angels] ignorant of the existence of a life on earth which they had known in the

excellence of its own uncreated glory above? … Were they ignorant that this life had, through the Son, been communicated to persons chosen from among sinful men? And did they not think of those to whom it was thus communicated, as endowed with that which never could find its home in any dwelling-place beneath the heavens? No, they knew the nature of essential life. They knew whence it came, and whither it tended." No intelligent Christian but must see that there is the most complete confusion between the person of the Word and the life communicated to the saints. Have we essential life? I believe it mere confusion, but ill-placed with such pretension to set all the world right, and involving very serious errors if followed out; and, as I have said, I suppose the source of the monstrous statements in the "Thoughts on the Apocalypse." Christianity becomes really a sort of Buddhism.

The scripture never confounds these things. It can speak of Christ dependent, living by the Father, but it speaks of Himself, as sent, and as coming. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father" (and here we can refer in the word 'by' to a common principle), "so he that eateth me shall live by me." But then He is sent, and in that quite distinct. So "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Here the expression comes down very far; it speaks of giving to have, but still to have life in Himself. "I came forth from the Father, I leave the world and go to my Father." It is not heavenly life come. And when eternal life, as such, is spoken of as here, "That eternal life which was with the Father," then all that is said is "was manifested," not communicated. When, on the other hand, eternal life is spoken of, as being given to

us, it is carefully added, “and that life is in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life.” Christ had life in Himself, yea, “in him was life.” If it be said, “He lived by the Father,” yet it is not said He hath life because He hath the Father. He was in union with the Father. He and the Father were one. But, as I have already remarked, union with the Person of the Son of God is not scriptural.

“Our life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ who is our life shall appear,” etc. Here Christ is spoken of as being our life. So we are said to “dwell in him, and he in us” —the strongest expressions, these, that can be. But this is just what makes the difference with Christ, and shews the life is not essential in us. He is our life. He dwells in us. If the author merely meant that it was essentially holy in its nature and the like, it would be all well. But it is not essential life in us; that is the prerogative of a divine Person. I can say “Christ is our life,” but I could not say, the Father was Christ’s life: it would take away at once from what He was in His nature and being.

It may be well to remark, that when the author speaks (page 49) of “the great hypothesis of the system,” to which certain remarks are said to belong, it would have been well to have produced some proof of the existence of the hypothesis, or of any hypothesis. I can only say that what he has stated about it, is, as far as I am concerned, totally and entirely without foundation. I never have said nor taught, nor thought, nor known any one that taught or thought, that one or other of these points did not involve death and resurrection. I have always taught the contrary. For in Matthew the Lord says “On this rock I will build my church.” Now I was arguing that death225 and resurrection is absolutely

necessary to building the church. That is, I am arguing, in the passage the author is considering, directly the contrary of what the author is pleased to state to be my hypothesis. As to John I have never had any hypothesis about it, but the exact contrary of what the author states; and for one simple reason—there is no room for any. The Lord states there that, except they ate His flesh and drank His blood, they had no life in them. So that it was impossible to suppose that it did not involve His death and resurrection too, unless death too has to have dominion over Him. The chapter I judge to be very simple. Christ comes down from heaven the bread of life; His life is given up, His flesh and blood must be eaten and drunk; and, thirdly, He intimates that He must ascend up where He was before. We have His descent; His death; and (which, of course, implies His resurrection) His return into heaven. I can only say, therefore, that the whole statement is the pure invention of the author.

Here the author has not even the slender excuse for these groundless charges of confounding the presenting things to man's responsibility, and the establishing of them by God. Because building God's church is not presenting anything to man's responsibility; and I was actually arguing against the possibility of its being without the death and resurrection of Christ.

The author (page 13) makes me say that Israel can possess the earthly blessings without the cross. I have never held nor said so. They could not, as the apostle reasons in Acts 13, without His resurrection also. Besides the absolute moral need of sinful men, in a special manner He died for the nation. But the reader will judge how far such a charge can be a just one when

he refers to the following passage in the same paragraph in the preceding page: “If man had not been in the state he really was, totally and fundamentally corrupt, so that atonement was absolutely necessary, there was power, living power, in Him … to restore all.” So that I have stated in the paragraph commented on by the author the exact opposite of what he chooses to infer I hold. I have definitely asserted in the passage the impossibility of what he says I am teaching.

The sentence, moreover, that immediately follows what he quotes and comments on, is this, “that God forgave from Adam’s sin downward in respect of the cross is plain, and stated in Romans 3:25.” I shall make no further comment on the author’s assertion, that I hold redemption by the blood is not necessary for some. This is the passage on which he grounds his charge: “The Lord had spoken in John 3 of earthly things, when speaking of regeneration. For the Jews taking earthly things of God must be regenerate. And with this He contrasts the heavenly things, and, when He mentions these, states to Nicodemus that the Son of man must be lifted up.” And so He does. The statement is an accurate representation of what is in the chapter. That I do not speak of life, when I speak of earthly things, is evident from the passage itself; for I have stated that “the Jews taking earthly things must be regenerate.” Regeneration, therefore, is positively distinguished from earthly things in the passage, and declared to be necessary to the Jew when he takes these earthly things; and the heavenly things are contrasted with this (i.e., the earthly state of the Jews)—their “strictly earthly condition,” to use the author’s words. I was not then speaking of life, either in speaking of earthly or heavenly

things, for the best of all reasons, that (though the author chooses to do so, and, in order to justify it, confounds the Person of the living Word with life in us) the Scripture does not; and, being used to draw my thoughts from Scripture, when I use them, I do not, nor am I bound to assume that others will, depart from Scripture. And, though the cross will be the foundation of Israel's blessings as of every other, they will be regenerated indeed, but not having been associated in suffering faith with Christ crucified, with the rejected Messiah, they will, in the kingdom, have only earthly things; whereas those that have suffered with Him will be glorified together, will reign with Him—at least, if we are to believe the plain testimony of Scripture. And I apprehend that this makes a good deal of difference in glory, and that depending on dispensation, call it official or what you like. The saints who do not suffer with Christ will never reign226 with Christ. The writer may treat this with indifference. Of this the spiritual reader will judge. Have these millennial saints what the author calls "essential life"? And is there no difference in glory? I speak still of the kingdom.

One point remains on which charges repeated here have been most widely circulated: that I and other brethren hold that there is a difference in essential life as to saints before and after Christ's resurrection.

The author has enlarged upon it as full of deadly consequences. But I shall only cite two or three passages, as it is requisite that I should be precise here.

"Infinitely important results would flow from the admission that the life possessed and communicated by the Lord Jesus, while yet in the flesh, was not heavenly;

227 for if heavenly life could not be communicated by Him until after He was raised from the dead, it follows that every saint who fell asleep before His resurrection never possessed the heavenly life, and never will possess it; for I suppose no one will say that it can be communicated after death. Consequently, an essential difference as to the nature of the life possessed would exist (and this some have asserted) between those who died previously to the resurrection of Jesus and those who knew Him risen "(page 8). Again, "Will the author venture to say that it is not always essentially the same? Will he say that Abraham possessed a life different from that of Peter, when he believed in Jesus? … I have heard of such things; and if the author intends deliberately to support such a doctrine, he is bound, I think, now that the minds of so many have been exercised on the subject, to state his opinions distinctly and without reserve." It is to this that the author appends the note that he does not wish to charge me with the statements of others which I repudiate. If the author would allege that he charges his brethren with holding difference in glory and not difference in life, the answer is very short. In page 17 he says, "It may appear strange, perhaps, to some, that it should even be supposed that dispensational differences here would of themselves produce differences in glory; but it will not excite surprise when we remember that they who live in this our dispensation are supposed to have a life essentially different from that of the saints who died before the resurrection of Jesus." He then expatiates on the way people have defined this difference.

On the whole I have resolved not to answer here these charges, nor to state anything as to them. As regards a

mass of other statements, in defamation of the brethren's teaching, I pass them by. As to these I make now a last appeal to Mr. N.'s conscience. He knows, as well as I do, what the facts are as to what has been taught respecting the life of the Old Testament saints. I ask then, What would a person who does not know the facts, and who reads the statements I have quoted, think? And what would a person who does know them? I put it here to his own conscience.

Lastly, if anyone doubts, after twenty years that I have been preaching, whether I teach the necessity of redemption through the blood for all and every redeemed soul, I could hardly expect to disabuse him by telling him the contrary twenty times over. In the end such assertions always recoil on the head of him who makes them. But I add, as it is a question in which Christ's glory is concerned, that, so far from any soul's appearing before God otherwise than by redemption through the blood, not only is every saved soul saved by it, and by it alone;228 but, as in the first Adam, all this lower creation fell, either into guilt, or at least into the bondage of corruption, in its head, and the head of evil in the higher creation, the enemy, triumphed in that fall: so Christ therefore must have entered into this place of death by grace, and come under its consequences, to set up the glory of God in the very place where it was marred, or seemed for a moment to be so, and that infinitely more gloriously than ever, yea, perfectly gloriously, and in perfect stability; and thus in death He perfectly glorified Him, and had title to set up the lost creation in blessing in virtue of redemption, and be its Head as delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Through

death He rendered void, brought to nought and annulled, the power of him that had the power of death. This was the central place where all title and power was to be set up, though it was to be displayed and exercised in resurrection. But morally, and for God's glory, it was in death, and therein in redemption, it was set up—that wonderful mystery that is the basis of everything new in righteousness before God. So that, not only is no soul possibly saved without it, but the whole redemption blessing of creation depends on the death and blood of Christ as to His title, God's glory, and its cleansing from defilement if not from guilt. The creation could not be blessed without His death. And if we say His title depended on His being Creator—and Son—and, in the counsels of God on His being man, still, sin being come in, death was needed to make good the title, in the presence and for the glory of God, as His resurrection was the display of that power of life in which He triumphed and will for ever enjoy the glory.

One remark remains as to the application of the term 'church.' We had all been in the habit of calling all the redeemed the church: nor, in a general human way, do I know any objection; because they will be ultimately the redeemed assembly of God; and 'church' means 'assembly.' Still, it is better to speak with Scripture than to use our own thoughts in such a matter. And it has been observed that there is no proof at all that 'church' is ever said of any but the saints from Pentecost to the Lord's coming again.

In commenting on this the writer says "that they have not belonged to the church, as dispensationally gathered and ordered on earth, I know"; and then, further on, says, "wherever then these two characteristics are found

to attach, there I should bestow the name church; unless any part of scripture can be quoted which forbids." He then adds, that the burden of proof rests with those who object. Now this, in argument, is not the case. The burden of proof is always with him who affirms, and not with him who denies. But (not to insist on this) the statement of the author entirely surrenders the point. On such a question as whether we are to give anything a scriptural name and title, surely Scripture must guide us. Not so with the author. He would bestow the name because he thinks it right, and asks for a Scripture which forbids it. Can there be a plainer proof that he has no scripture which proves it? The quotation of one such could have settled the point. But he has none—nothing but his own reasoning—to which no one ought to confide on any scriptural subject. For, if he have even much reason for doing so, if there be many things entirely in common229 between the Old Testament saints and the New Testament, as all believe, still the Holy Ghost has had some reason for not doing it; and that ought to govern us. I see myself the strongest possible reason why it should be so. The unity of one body on earth, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is connected with this exclusive application of the word 'church,' to the saints gathered from Pentecost to the Lord's coming. But my seeing a reason, I agree, is no proof. The proof is that the Holy Ghost does not apply it to others; and therefore the author's bestowing it is presuming above Scripture, and the wisdom of the Spirit of God—of God Himself. I think the answer230 to the author's argument is very simple; but I do not go further here. His remarks on angels seem to me unhappy. For though our exaltation above them through our union with the Lord Jesus Christ is plainly taught in Scripture, "we shall

judge231 angels," yet the contrast is nowhere made that I know between angels and the church, but between angels and man. "Lord, what is man?" etc. Further, I know of no contrast between the ancient saints, and those of this time, even supposing there should be a difference of circumstances in glory. That they are children of God in the same resurrection glory is plain; not from a long process of reasoning to make them the church, but from the positive revelation of God (Luke 20:36232) not to cite others. But, while our union with Christ does give us peculiar exaltation even above angels, still the language of the writer seems to me rash, and to go beyond Scripture. Scripture never speaks of life in connection with angels. They are holy and blessed things (at least, the elect angels), who are God's messengers; and more than this, save that there are some peculiarly exalted, we know little. They are spirits, we are told, and some few other particulars are given. The author says, they have not life from the Son of God. Who told him that? That they have it not as we is quite true; because He has taken our nature, and we have been quickened together with Him; but where is it said, they have not life from Him? It seems to me to be intruding into things which we have not seen. By Him (Greek, in Him) all things exist, or subsist; and therefore the angels. Nay, it is said of all men (no doubt, man has a peculiar place)— "in him [God] we live, and move, and have our being." And I suppose that the Son will not be shut out here, of whom it is specially said "in" or "by him all things consist." And if the word 'union' be insisted on, I repeat that union with the Son of God is not a scriptural expression, nor a scriptural idea, though it may have been used innocently, as equivalent to such expressions as, "He that is joined to the Lord is one

spirit," and the like. The Father and the Son are one. We are one in them, and as them. But for union with the Son there is no scripture; it deifies us, which Scripture never does. Hence, though our place is indeed quite different from that of angels (and blessed be God, for His unspeakable gift!) yet to say they have not life from the Son of God, is going beyond scripture, and positively to affirm things of which Scripture is silent, save in that it says all things subsist in the Son.

I cannot doubt, on further reflection, that the second of the propositions in page 12 is deliberate error, and not confusion (an error held by many dear saints, but still a doctrine unsus-tained by Scripture, and which becomes important here, because it is pushed to its consequences of mischief)—I mean that union exists where there is no life at all—the confounding God seeing us in the eternal thoughts of His heart in Christ, and our union with Christ—indeed calling our being so seen of God union. Hence an unregenerate ungodly man (suppose a drunkard, or unclean person) is, if elect, united to Christ! in union with Him when he has no spiritual life at all, and receives that spiritual life, or, in the words of the author's proposition, is regenerate in virtue of union with Him! The note (page 7) on which I will by and by add a remark or two, besides abundance of oral teaching, fully confirms the statement that this is the author's view. Now, the word of God never speaks of union other than living union. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Is that true of a drunkard, or an ungodly man, because he is elect? Clearly not.

Passages are quoted which speak of being crucified with Christ, buried with Him, and the like. The answer is simple. They are invariably, and exclusively, applied to

living saints, who, having received life from Christ, can apply, as true of and to themselves, all that was true of Him who died and suffered these things effectually for them. To suppose anything else would make union without life. The question is not really whether there is life without union, but whether there is union without life. The author affirms that there is, and that we receive life in consequence of a union which existed without it. And see the figure by which he illustrates it. What a strange mysticism it involves! Christ and His members—union—is compared to a grain which is united to what is produced as a plant afterwards in some mysterious way within itself, and so produces that plant by dying and rising again. So that Christ really contained, though in a mysterious233 way, all His members in Himself before He died and produced them out of Himself in due time. Does Scripture ever speak in this way? Is this the use it makes of the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying?

In the Ephesians, which the author cites, the distinction of the elect dead in trespasses and sins, and those quickened together with Christ, and the application of the “quickened together “only to the living regenerate saint, to the believer, is as plain as possible. “What is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believed, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.” It is real, quickening, living, life-giving power; not union without life at all. So, “When we were dead in sins he hath quickened us together with Christ,” etc. Were we in Christ dead in trespasses and sins?

I read, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature”; and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none

of his." That they were written in the book of life of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world, I bless God in believing, and that thus God sees them in Christ, so that, when quickened, all that is true of Christ can be affirmed of them; but this does not state that there is union without living power exercised towards them. So in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ" (for here again the authorised translation is more accurate than the author's; it is the perfect, not the aorist); "nevertheless, I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." That is, it is Paul in living real union that can attribute to himself all that had been done in Christ, and that because really united to Him as the Head. So in Romans 6, it is applied to the baptism of the saints. They were baptised into His death and should walk in newness of life. Colossians 2:12 is as clear and plain as the rest—if possible still more so. "Buried with him in baptism, in whom also ye have been raised with him through faith of the operation of God who raised him from the dead; and you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he hath quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." The scripture statements therefore (though the author's statements may catch an ear taught in the school of rigid and systematic high Calvinism) subvert entirely the article of the author, that we are regenerate in virtue of union. It is wholly unscriptural.

And here I will add that a new translation, much insisted on at the close of Romans 4, is, I judge, entirely wrong too. As substantially it resulted in the thing in the mind, I have never felt it necessary to controvert it; but, as we are on the point, I will do so here. As the efficient cause of our justification was the work of Christ, though we

are only justified when we believe, the mind can rest on either, or rather on both together, with truth. But as a translation, and as doctrine, “raised again because of our justification,” in the sense because we were justified, is quite wrong. The common translation is the true one— “raised again for our justification.” Because the noun used has an active sense, as all others of that form in Greek, and others derived from the second person of the perfect passive, as all scholars know; and may be rendered in English “for our justifying.” Were it because of our having been justified by Christ’s resurrection, it would assuredly have been dia to dikaiothenai hemas, or dedikaiosthai if expressing its present continuing efficacy; but rather the former. And hence this form is used when we are actually justified by faith— dikaiothentes oun ek pisteos.

I would make another remark here: we are never said to have been one with Christ in death. The hymn, “One234 with Him on the cursed tree,” I judge to be unscriptural: sung harmlessly, I do not doubt, because viewed as there by God, and therefore by faith, because He was there for us. But it is not doctrinally just. Scripture never states it. And, though I do not doubt both its author, and many who so speak, as sound in the doctrine of substitution as myself, yet we have to take care of statements of the kind, because they really do militate against the distinct force of substitution. Christ was alone to bear the wrath for His church. In conventional language we may say they were all there when He was; and we all understand it as a most precious blessed truth; and so, when I hear a Calvinist speak in this way, my heart can go along with him, my soul really leans on the same truth and work as his, though I may think his expressions inaccurate. But

when this is used to state as a doctrine, that there is union before and without life, and that we were really one with Christ in His death; and to pretend that this is guarding and saving and suffering for the truth, when it is really totally unscriptural, it is going too far, and it is well to sift what it is worth.

The importance of it to the author is this, that he can thus set aside anything special as to the church in the present dispensation on the point of union: since it is not a living consequence of what is wrought by the living power of Christ, but as true before those united lived, or existed even by a natural life, as when they are regenerate. Hence the sitting in heavenly places in Christ has been said to be by faith merely; and its being so stated because of their Head being there, with whom they were now really and livingly one, so as to sit there in Him, has been treated as mysticism. Hence the desire of the author to affirm that “raised up together “is in Him as much as sitting together—a construction the author would find it difficult to prove, though, for my own part, as it is affirmed of those actually quickened, I am aware of no scriptural principle against which it militates. All I desire is that the attention of the saints may be drawn to the source of this statement, that regeneration is in virtue of union; namely, that there is union without life at all. Nor will I go further than to ask, how far such a tenet can be considered as the safeguard of “the truth,” and a ground for denouncing as subverters of the truth those who do not hold it? The present living union of the saints as Christ’s body being thus really set aside—regeneration being in virtue of union, which clearly therefore is not living union—the church becomes either all saints from the beginning to

the end of time; or a sort of model or pattern frame-work formed by the labours of God's servants down here: and such passages as I Corinthians 12 either this or a local church. The whole doctrine of the epistle to the Ephesians is thus entirely lost, as the chapter in 1 Corinthians is merged into a local or pattern church or body down here; and the power of the doctrine of the church's union with the Head as a real living vitalised body united to Christ, and filled with the Holy Ghost, is wholly lost. I would much press upon the reader to examine Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12. He will soon be set clear in all this. Compare page 5 of "Second Letter." "If I confound between what God did in exalting Christ and the church in Him, and what His servants did in constituting the church on earth." Did not God constitute it as the living body of Christ by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?

In recurring to the letter I find the following extraordinary statement, which may further open the bearing of the author's views, and how far he apprehends the work of God's Spirit, and its connection with that of Christ. "Its [unity in heaven] preciousness is to be valued… because it is the evidence of the grace given in Christ overcoming all differences that may have existed here, whether differences in the Spirit, or differences in the flesh, and bringing in everlasting oneness." Grace given in Christ overcoming differences in the Spirit! One is really led to doubt how one taught of God can use such language.

It may be well the reader should remark the extraordinary admission of the author in page 54. "Observe, I do not say that there was the same character of union as afterwards in resurrection." Now I

do ask and appeal solemnly to the consciences of all the saints, what is the meaning of the indefatigable efforts to calumniate and denounce brethren long known in the church of God after this statement? Does not the author very well know, that they hold, and always held, that all saints received divine spiritual life from the Lord, and that they would not listen to any contrary doctrine? And what they have ever said which was in any way more than the author's statement here?

198 See note at the end.

199 My words were (p. 15), "He is expecting till something be done"; and again (p. 16), "till the next thing is done," etc. This shews plainly that I treated it as a completed action.

200 This is the author's way of stating the verse: "Jehovah said unto Him, Sit thou at my right hand until I shall have set thy foes a footstool for thy feet." This is his comment on it: "It describes the Lord Jesus as seated for a season on the throne of Jehovah, waiting—and speaks of the power of the throne as acting on His behalf—Jehovah's throne acting for Christ. There is no characteristic of the present period so essentially distinctive as this. As soon as this verse ceases to apply … our dispensation ends and the new age begins." Now, Christ's waiting is stated in these words: "Sit thou at my right hand until," etc. Now, reader, take the verse and see in what words it "speaks," in the remainder of it, of the power of the throne as acting for Christ. Is there anything at all else but setting foes for a footstool? What is it then that is characteristic of the present period?

Now compare the new translation: "Sit thou at my right hand until I shall, as in a moment, have set thy foes a

footstool for thy feet." Is the acting here characteristic of the dispensation; or of a momentary act of authority, which places the enemies under Christ's feet at the close?

201 Matthiae says nothing about rapidity. He uses the words 'instantaneous' and 'transient,' as he elsewhere says "a single point of time complete in itself." The author speaks of rapidity, of even the dispensation itself being always treated as a span, of occupying a space of time inconceivably short. The answer is, Duration, short or long, is not the subject of the tense; nor does the acting spoken of in the verse characterise the period spoken of.

202 See page 60.

203 If this contradiction be sought to be avoided by saying these are unities in heaven, firstly, I would beg the reader to see if they do not apply to earth too in Ephesians 4; and, secondly, the unity on earth is thereby given up. And what conies of the previous phrase, "on earth we are all one body indwelt in by one Spirit"? Thirdly, he quotes this same Ephesians 4 for the dependence of churches one on another as members of one body, as he does for the unchangeable unities. The truth is, this page is inextricable confusion.

204 There is then no unity of the church, as the body of Christ, on earth; for invisible unity in heaven, which is Paul's subject, is contrasted with the unity of the churches on earth, which is the author's. But is unity of the church on earth never spoken of as the body of Christ in Scripture?

205 There is considerable difficulty in citing what the author has said, from the way in which he contradicts

himself: so that if you cite from one place, he can prove it is not so by citing the contrary from elsewhere. Here, for example, he states positively that Paul speaks of the invisible unity of the church in heaven. Were I to say that this was his view, he can quote page 22, where he has said it was constituted as a visible body on earth, and referred to Paul's statement of the saints being builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. But then this, we find after all, was not the unity of the body, but metropolitan unity, and the unity on earth is, as stated in the text, that of churches.

206 And the author really speaks in the quotation merely of individual standing: "They had been quickened," etc.

207 See also Romans 12.

208 Further on I will touch on the total exclusion of God's sovereignty here.

209 This is not the place to discuss any nice shade of difference between huper and peri used in this sense. The fact that peri means "for" as the object of prayer, kind intentions, being interested in, acting in various ways for, sacrifice for, is beyond all controversy. It is unintelligible how the author can hazard the statements he does.

210 If we take the usual reading we shall find them used one for another by comparing Philippians 2:14, "without (koris) murmurings," and 1 Peter 4:9, aneu. If we put a comma before aneu in Peter it would be a proof of its stronger use: "Let there be no murmurings."

211 Compare Matthew 10:29.

212 That is, a better thing for us, that they without us.

213 Apparently this should read ‘the same connection of peri and hina.’

214 I may add that there is no variation in any English translation (I quote from Bagster’s Hexapla), that of Rheims also giving, as is well known, the Vulgate.

215 See page 19. The reader will do well to pay attention to this passage, because it would certainly “go far” to destroy all title of sovereignty in God. For this reason; that a dispensational peculiarity does depend exclusively on that sovereignty; and this is objected to as producing any difference in result, because it “is something altogether independent of ourselves.” I do not doubt God acts by His Spirit in forming for glory according to His purpose; but compare the statement of pages 18, 19, of this second letter, with Matthew 20:21, 23, or the parallel passage, as to the principle advanced. If the blood of Christ necessarily gave the same glory to all, that would be as true for the same dispensation as for different ones, and all must be exactly the same in present glory. But this is not pretended. Hence the value of Christ’s blood is not in question at all. If any alleged there would be a difference in justification, or acceptance (perfect, full acceptance, or favour with God), then indeed the blood would be in question. Or, if it were supposed that Abraham, etc., were not with the saints in glory in the heavenly kingdom, this would subvert the truth too. But, while partaking of the glory of God, and likeness to Christ’s glorious body, is true of all the redeemed, and while the value of the precious blood of Christ is not touched for any by those whom the author opposes, but estimated, as far as any one dare say so, in all its fulness and all its bearings, though doubtless infinitely below its true and immeasurable

preciousness—while, I say, this is untouched by those whom the author and his followers accuse of it, the sovereignty of God the Father, and the connection of the Spirit's work with glory, is seriously affected by the author's teaching.

216 The question which may perhaps be raised on this text is not at all on its translation, for which there is no sort of pretence, but, whether the "better thing "provided be not down here in the present advantages of the church dispensationally. I prefer mentioning what may be a reasonable doubt in Scripture (for the force of Scripture is a sacred thing) to maintaining an argument successfully by merely disproving the author's reasoning. And therefore, though his reasoning supposes that the verse in its present shape overthrows all his system, as it most surely and entirely does, if it extend beyond present dispensational blessings, which there is very strong ground to believe it does, still I feel I am more true to the sacredness of God's word in saying that there may be some doubt whether it does extend beyond present dispensational difference. As to the author's translation I do not judge it, when examined, worthy of another thought.

217 So "that we might be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ," literally, "who are pre-trusters"; though this passage could only rightly apply to the saints of this dispensation, on account of its being the perfect tense.

218 The only point which could even give occasion to the allegations of error which have been made is the supposition that there may be in some respect a different form, or circumstance, of glory in the kingdom

— what has been called by the author “official.” This he believes there may be in the new earth. This, which may be more doubtful because Scripture says so very little about it, still, I am not disposed to dispute; because there are passages which seem to say so, though, for reasons analogous to many of die author’s, I feel it much more doubtful on account of Christ’s being then (as man) subject as the head of the new family. But how, if he admits official differences in what is eternal, which I doubt (though I do not dispute, nor occupy the saints with, from the rarity of positive scripture testimony as to it)—how, I say, if he admits it in what is eternal, can he charge his brethren as he does because they think a similar official difference possible merely in the kingdom of glory? Though I do not know, after all, any that have any very fixed thought about it. I charge the author with nothing at all here. I suspect that he, and all of us, are sufficiently ignorant, to hinder us, if we are wise, affirming anything very dogmatically about the matter, though it may be a very interesting subject of enquiry. As to the pretension of holding the truth, and guarding the truth, it is a pretension which must be left to those who make and those who believe in it.

Another point occurs to me which may have given rise to this charge: namely, saying that an Old Testament saint could not say, as a then present thing, I am united to a glorified Man in heaven, because there was none there. This I still believe, and that it is important for the saints to remember it.

219 The author states, page 26, that God is always “dealing with the old in the sense of acting on it, with the view of gathering into other and more blessed condition.” I should say that God was never doing so.

The old can have no lot but death: believers count it so, and do not look for God to act on it. Up to the death of Jesus He was putting man and Israel in the old state to the test to prove its hopeless badness; but He never dealt with the old as acting on it with the view of gathering. For God knew that man in the flesh was hopelessly bad. It was always “anew,” John 3:3, from its very outset and origin, a new thing to which blessing could attach; though this was not fully brought out till Christ came, nor even till His resurrection.

220 This part of the author’s argument is based on his unscriptural use of the word ‘heavenly.’ I use it in the sense of condition in which a thing is enjoyed, which is its scriptural use if we except the divine Person of Christ; the author, in that of the source from which it flows. I have said, “that the Divine life came from above I do not doubt,” and “unless we use it in the vague sense, that everything from above is heavenly.” Most certainly in John 3, the Lord does not use heavenly in the author’s sense. The author says, that the Lord so speaks to Nicodemus, because regeneration takes place on earth (p. 9). This I do not believe; while, in the sense of Divine life from above, I have positively stated that it was from above, and I have distinguished this from a heavenly condition. Nor, though I have no objection to it in this sense, is “heavenly life” a scriptural expression; and I am accustomed to follow Scripture, nor am I disposed to be driven from it, by the accusations of men. I have not the least doubt that Divine life comes from above, comes from God, and from the Son, and by the power of the Spirit; but I do not think Scripture calls it heavenly, and I still prefer Scripture to the author’s statements. I believe Scripture uses “heavenly”

habitually in another way, and I prefer using it so still. I believe the Scripture use of terms perfect and accurate; and I think in swerving from them, we are in danger of obscuring and confounding the truth, as I judge the author has done. The author has departed from Scripture phraseology here, and I have not. At least, I have searched both my memory and a concordance, for the terms he uses, and I cannot find them. But I freely say here I do not believe he intends any error by the expression. I admit further that men may object to human expressions to avoid the truth meant under them. But I have stated over and over again, that I believe Divine life comes from above, from God. And the author must well know that this belief is that of all the brethren.

221 A note has been referred to by Mr. N. as disclaiming charging me with anything I repudiate. But it only "keeps the promise to the eye." He merely allows me to repudiate "any statement made by others." So that if I repudiate it, "others" remain implicated by these false inferences, and Mr. N. will press all his inferences on me, let me repudiate it or no.

222 I have supposed it possible, on reading over this, that, to make good the point, this may be denied to be applicable to John the Baptist; but this I leave to every saint to judge of. I may add to the question in the text, Why does the author say, speaking of the millennium, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem and of Immanuel's land will be strictly in an earthly condition"? I believe so; it is the right use of earthly. So the saints above are said to be "heavenly persons." Yet those in a strictly earthly condition are regenerate.

223 See John 3:13, 31. It is, perhaps, this confusion which has made the author attribute omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, using these very words, to the saints hereafter.

224 I was speaking of “their being quickened with heavenly life,” that is, of the saints, when I say ‘it.’

225 My words (amongst others) are these (p. 45): “It is a serious thing to make the death of Christ necessary only to the ordering of the church, and not to its founding and existence.” It is the author (p. 52, letter 2) who, though he admits, seems at the same time to be unwilling so to state it. So -in page 42 of “Examination” — “Without His death and the presence of the Holy Ghost, this could not be,” and all that follows there. Indeed the reader has only to pay attention to the passage cited at the head of the note I am here examining, to see that I am arguing precisely against what the author says is my hypothesis—at least as regards Matthew.

226 I do not speak of reigning here in the sense of eternal blessedness, but of the kingdom.

227 We have already seen that the whole train of thought here is unscriptural. The scripture never speaks of heavenly life.

228 This expression, of course, leaves the Spirit’s work, in giving faith in it, in its place and full value.

229 Nor am I here questioning that all will be hereafter.

230 The kingdom, and heavenly glory too, was the subject of Abraham’s faith; the church was not. It was kept secret. And so of John the Baptist. Only it may be reasoned here, that Abraham did look for a city which

hath foundations, and thus saw the church in glory, even if not its union as bride. That I do not contest at all: nor have I clear light from God as to its full and exact force. Provided the real glory of the church itself be recognised, I enter into no contest whatever as to the Old Testament saints being in it. I do not admit that all who are saved by Christ's death are necessarily in Christ's glory in the kingdom; because it is written, If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him. We suffer with Him that we may be glorified together. And, during the millennium, the saints on earth will certainly be saints in virtue of Christ's death; and as certainly they will not be in heavenly glory.

231 This is the passage nearest to such a contrast.

232 Here however, though perhaps only in a particular respect, we are said to be "equal to the angels," Luke 20:36.

233 This may be said figuratively in a peculiar way, as in Hebrews 7:10. But this is not union as the body with the head, which is the point here under consideration.

234 This in some editions has been altered.

The Principles Displayed In The Ways Of God, Compared With His Ultimate Dealings

It seems to me that the examination of the great principles which God has brought out in His ways, in the history given us in the Bible, would facilitate the intelligence of His ultimate dealings with men and the understanding their prophetic announcements, the accomplishment of which will be the establishment in power of the principles which God has already displayed and taught historically in His dealings of old. I send you therefore some thoughts upon the progressive development of these principles. In the very outset of creation we have one of the last importance, and which gives in figure the ultimate results of God’s ways in His dispensations towards men, a kind of exhibition that what begins in thought is to be the end in action.

Adam was created in the image of God, and was set to rule over the works of God’s hands, the centre of a vast system subordinate to him, and over which he had universal dominion. He was, says the apostle, the image of Him that was to come; and the same apostle takes Psalm 8,120 which, in the letter of its application there, would be limited to the first Adam, and applies the universality of its terms to the full dominion of the second. No doubt the dominion of the Second Adam is far more extensive than that of the first, because, having Himself created all things, He is to inherit all He has created; but it is not the less true that the first Adam, as image of God, as centre of the system in which he was placed, as having dominion over the creation by which

he was surrounded, was the image or type of the Lord Jesus, Son of man, Head over all things. Other accessories enlarge this resemblance. Eve, partaking of a lordship to which she had no right of her own, but which she enjoyed as one with Adam, is the liveliest picture of the church, and so used beautifully by the apostle in Ephesians 5. We have also, according to Romans 5, in Adam fallen, the head of a race involved in his sin and all its consequences, as in the Second Adam, when righteousness was accomplished, the Head of a brotherhood or family which participates in all that He is, as the Head of it in the presence and sight of God.

I pass over the time before the flood, whose general character offers a sad contrast to the time when righteousness dwells in the new heavens and the new earth, without a government to maintain it and make it good against the opposition of an adverse nation or the weakness of a failing one. Neither one nor the other can properly be called dispensation. They are both another world from that in which we live.

With Noah we begin the course of dispensations, or of the manifestations of the ways of God for the final bringing out the full glory of Christ. These ways regard the earth, and are founded, so far as they are conferred blessing, on the sacrifice of Christ. Enoch indeed had been taken out of the midst of a corrupt world and had a heavenly portion, while he testified of the judgment of the world, out of which he was called, by the coming of the Lord with His saints—a very remarkable anticipation of our portion in Christ. But Noah was preserved through the deluge, to begin a new world, of which he was the head and chief.

The name Noah is expressive of the rest of the earth, comfort concerning the work of men's hands, because of the ground which the Lord had cursed. Three especial features accompany and characterise this position: the sacrifice which turned aside the curse, the restraint of evil, and the pledge of secured blessing to creation while earth lasted. But, as regards dispensation, Noah was the head of a new system, where evil was, but where evil was to be restrained, and the curse relieved under which the earth groaned.

The next important principle brought out is calling and election. The earth was not only now corrupt and violent—it had departed from God. It had not liked to retain God in its knowledge, and served other gods. God, in sovereign election, calls Abram to follow Him apart from the world; and separation from the world for the enjoyment of promise by faith becomes the divine principle of blessing. Abraham is the father of all them that believe. He has to quit all on the supreme claim of the Lord—country, kindred, and father's house—for a land only in promise, which God would shew him. Brought there, he has still to walk by faith in patience, not yet inheriting the promises. When in possession of them in pledge, in Isaac he has to give them all up, as held in the present life of Isaac, in unquestioning confidence in God, to receive them in the power of One who raises the dead.

We have election, call, promises, by which the believer is a stranger in a world departed from God. To this we may add the distinct principle of receiving the promises by the power of God in resurrection. This special position made of Abraham in a peculiar manner the father of the faithful—of all them that believe—the father of many

nations before God in whom he believed, the heir of the world. The detail of the promises (whether of the blessings of the nations, only given in Genesis 12, and confirmed to Isaac in Genesis 22, or of a numerous seed according to the flesh, and of the land of Canaan)121 are not properly our subject here.

The latter leads, however, to the next important step in the ways of God, the formation and deliverance of a people from the power of their enemies by judgments and an outstretched arm, by which they were set apart as a people of dilection to God on the earth. Israel's coming up out of Egypt is, I need not say, the event in which this was prefigured. Long subject to hostile and oppressive Gentiles, and particularly at the close, when God was about to deliver them, His arm, who had already given the blood of the Lamb as the safeguard against His righteous judgment, delivered the people with a power which none could dispute, executing judgment on the proud enemies who oppressed them and defied His majesty.

Joseph and his Egyptian wife had given meanwhile the remarkable type of a rejected Christ exalted on high and His Gentile bride, who had made him to forget all his affliction and his father's house.

But the deliverance of Israel gave occasion to the introduction of an entirely new principle, not the prefiguring the ways of God, but the putting of man to the proof on the revealed principles of what he ought to be, and that, when thus delivered and brought near to God, as a favoured people guarded of Him with every motive and means for walking before Him who had thus borne him on eagles' wings, and brought him to Himself.

In a word, the law came in. Immediately broken, Israel is anew, through intercession, placed under it as a condition, with the added revelation of all the graciousness and goodness of the character of Him under whose government he was placed, and who would act in that government on the principles thus revealed. Still he was placed under law, and held the blessings under the condition of his own obedience. This, as the apostle states, came in by the by—added because of transgression, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made. The law in itself could do nothing but convict man of his incompetency. But it gave in general the principle of a rule of God's will, to be written afterwards in the heart of His earthly people; in obedience to which, maintained in their hearts by God, they would enjoy the blessing conferred by Him on His people on the earth. But on the principles of government declared by God to Moses, and announced in Exodus, the people were placed on the mediation of the priesthood, under the immediate government of God. The priesthood was there to maintain the blessing if there was failure, where it was not departure from God, or sinning with a high hand; and Israel, in obedience, would have had their peace flow like a river.

But Israel (incapable of walking by faith and trusting God, even when the blessings were immediately consequent on obedience) prefers being like the nations, and demands a king, when God was their King. However, this gave occasion to the revelation of another principle of God's ways with men, the establishment of royalty in Zion, a royalty whose sway should extend much farther, and in which the Gentiles should trust. However royalty is established, and in Zion, and that by

grace, after the failure and ruin of the people through disobedience to God, under His immediate government. The priesthood itself loses its place, and the faithful priest is to stand before God's Anointed. The king is now the anointed of God, The principle of this royalty is on one side the throne of the Lord (Solomon is said to sit on the throne of the Lord), and on the other, it is strength out of weakness. See Hannah's song. It is the re-establishment of Israel in blessing when hopelessly ruined, by the means of the rejected but God-fearing king, who delivers them from their enemies and subdues the heathen. This re-establishment by royalty has a double bearing—the blessing of the people after their ruin, by the deliverance wrought, and then re-established in accepted worship after the guilt (the temple after Shiloh, and that in a peculiar manner in grace, after the numbering the people). There were three stages to this royalty: when rejected entirely in Israel; when the ark was placed by David on Mount Zion: the energy of victory in connection with the assured covenant, but not yet the blessing of peace—this was the third state, which was Solomon's. Christ, I doubt not, has filled up, or will fill up, all these—the rejected, the victorious, and the powerful King. In general, we have the important additional principle of a human ordained king, in a royalty established by God over His people, said to be seated too on the Lord's throne.

This, as we know, in man's hands failed like all the rest, and gave rise to another and large modification of the principle of royalty, the confiding the power of universal dominion, wherever the children of men dwell, to man on the earth. This was sovereignly conferred beyond the

limits of Jewish promise and dominion, acquired by no faithful service in suffering, but divinely bestowed by the God of heaven. This also fell, and more than fell. Substituted for the Jewish royalty, it united with the Jews and their ecclesiastical rulers in the rejection of the Son of God and King of the Jews; one of which titles, 122 in its lowest acceptation, is the character in which (above all descent from David, though that be at the same time true) Christ is to have the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; and the other of which expresses evidently His title among the Jews as the Anointed, the Son of David. We have thus far all these features:—

Adam, centre of the earthly system under God.

Noah, head of the earth blessed after the curse, restraining evil.

Abraham, called by election out of the world, to which promise is annexed.

A people redeemed and formed as such, as belonging to God on the earth.

The law, the rule of the people so formed, and the path of blessing as the will of God.

The royalty of Israel in the family of David, the anointed king; and the royalty of the Gentile world, sovereignly conferred by the God of heaven.

All these will be made good in Christ, in Person, or for His people. He is the second Adam; the head of the earth, restraining evil after the curse; the chosen one separate from the world, in whom all the promises are yea and amen; the head and uniter of redeemed Israel, the true vine, the son called out of Egypt, the one in

whom the law was magnified (these two facts will also have their accomplishment hereafter in His people); the Son of David; and the head of the Gentile world established such by the sovereignty of God. Hence all this progress of development closed with the rejection of Him in whom all was to be accomplished.

The testimony of the Holy Ghost in patience called to repentance them who had put Him to death, but the call was unheeded and the guilt remained upon them. And thus closed all God's dealings with the earth, as presenting means of blessing, to their acceptance, and Christ the Lord, the Son of man, must return, sent by the Ancient of days, before the principles of blessing held out, and the revealed means of relationship with God, could be made good in power and available in blessing.

In all this, it will be evident that the church of God does not at all enter. The scene had for the time123 closed in which these various principles were developed on earth, to be resumed in power when Christ returns there to whom all the title and blessing belongs. Meanwhile He is hid in heaven, and unites to Himself a heavenly people outside all these ministrations, to be associated with Himself as a better Eve, when He shall take the inheritance and accomplish all that God has held out to man. Yet in one point there is connection (that is, in Abraham). Although there be higher principles of blessing which never formed the subject of promise (such as being united to the Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones), yet Christians do come in under Abraham as heirs of promise, as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, walking by faith, called out of the world. Thus they fill up the gap during

the power of the Gentiles, guilty of rejecting the Lord, and the setting aside of the Jews for their despisal of Messiah, until called to take their place in the heavens with the Lord. In Christ we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise, though God has reserved some better thing for us. But as the church, she is entirely outside all this, unknown and a mystery, till the time Israel was set aside, and there was nothing but what unknown and sovereign counsels might introduce, until God too keep Israel again for repentance and blessing.

This very plainly shews the distinction of the church from all earthly position and promise, though manifested there until God shall again begin to act from the throne on the nations, and take up again His questions with the earth then in judgment, as heretofore in grace—judgment, to which men will be callous, as they have been to grace, till it assumes a character which there is no escaping, and when despair will be as complete as revolt and self-will were before. It does not enter into the subject of this paper to treat of the details of that day. The judgments on the Gentiles are the subject of the Revelation; the state of the Jews, of the Old Testament prophecies chiefly. After a moral preparation in the hearts of the Jews, the presence of the Lord Jesus will at once bring, not only in the accomplishment of promises made to them, but the concentration in His Person and kingdom in the power conferred on Him, of all the scattered elements of the divine ways previously revealed.

It may be remarked, that I have left prophecy out of the list I have given of manifestations of divine intervention. The omission was not forgetfulness. A prophet was one

by whom God sovereignly maintained His relationship and connection with Israel, and even in a measure with the world, when there was entire failure. It took place in every dispensation, and was not properly one, but ran through all, though God wrought by it in emergencies. It revealed God and foretold Christ, but evidently was to cease when the things it spoke of were accomplished, for then it had no place. Its character was the sovereign intervention of God, not the development of His ways. Hence it was in exercise at all times, when, as regards those ways, man had failed. It shewed and reproved the failure, and encouraged the faith of the Jew, faithful among the faithless, in the enduring fidelity of the Lord, pointing out with an increasing fulness the intervention of God in power, when the faith that made its way through the power of evil would be no longer needed, because that evil would be set aside by power. Hence we find it in Enoch before the flood, in Noah, in the patriarchs, and, in a particular manner, in Samuel when Israel had failed under the theocracy, and in Israel departed from God, and in Judah become unfaithful in her kings.

I do not touch here on the character of prophecy in the church, as spoken of in the epistles. The church was based, as we have seen, on the failure of everything; and to it, and in it, the mind of God was specially communicated. To that which takes a definitely prophetic form the above remarks, however, fully apply in principle. Only the church, counted faithful, is made the depositary. We have prophecies in Thessalonians, Timothy, Jude, and Revelation. In the latter case, the part fully and properly prophetic treats of the world and the apostasy, or of the Jews; so that it takes a distinctly

prophetic character, and returns to the principles124 stated above. The prophetic character was accomplished in the Lord at His first coming, as far as regards His Person.

The priesthood does not enter either in its Aaronic character into the ways of God with man. It was the means of approach of man to God, and subsisted in connection with the existence of His people without a king and under the kings. It supposed an accepted earthly people, so far as it was in daily exercise, though there might be particular failure. So far as the acceptance of the people was in question, it was hidden within the veil. In this character it is Christ's present position with regard to Israel, for we know the acceptance, the veil being rent. It existed under different dealings of God to maintain individuals in their position, and was not positively itself one.

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120 It is very interesting to observe the righteous man under law and Messiah the king, in Psalms I and 2; and then (after being rejected with them that were His, and in trouble) the far larger glory of the Son of man resulting in Psalm 8, which closes and crowns the series; as we find in the Gospels also the transition from His unadmitted Messiah title to the fuller one of Son of man, suffering and glorified. (See Luke 9:20 and following.)

121 The cases of Lot and Abraham furnish, on the one hand, the deep moral lesson of the impossibility of walking to the end in the presence of temptation by accompanying another's faith—our own, sooner or later, will be put to the test; and on the other, a new and interesting type of the privilege of the heavenly-minded

church to enjoy communion with God and the knowledge of His thoughts concerning others, far from the trial and judgment; while Israel, attached to the earth, are saved out of them, and so as by fire, and perhaps others besides Israel, though for heaven, as those found on the sea of glass.

122 I am quite aware that the Jews rejected Him religiously as Son of God; and Pilate politically as King of the Jews: but I speak of the real import and value of these titles as to the government of the earth. Psalm 2 does not, I believe, refer to the character of Son, as given in the gospel of John and elsewhere, though this higher sense may be the necessary introduction to the lower; but Psalm 2 speaks of the Lord as in time.

123 I say for the time, because it is evident that the age in which Christ was upon earth (though suspended, so to speak, to let in the heavenly body, the bride the church) is not closed, and will be resumed in the dealings of God with the Jews and the kings of the earth, who stand up against the Lord and His anointed, and, as is evident to me, before the manifestation of the Son of man. Meanwhile, the apostasy of professing Christendom will have taken place; and it is the putting this and the Jewish state of things in their place which creates the chief difficulty of interpretation, because it is the developing, in point of time, of two different systems, which unite, however, in their rejection of God and His Christ. Patient waiting upon God will clear up this, as all else revealed in the word. The death of Stephen and calling of Paul, and the rapture of the church, are the boundaries of the time of full light in standing before God. I do not speak of man’s profiting by the light, but of his position.

124 There are two kinds of prophecy in the Old Testament: prophecy addressed to the conscience of God's people while owned, or at least subsisting as such; prophecy revealing God's ways when He no longer owned His people. Daniel is the example of the latter. His prophecy is not addressed to Israel. The former kind of prophecy does not occur in the New Testament in the church, because the occasion of it had ceased. The church was united to Christ in heaven, and the character of communication was to the members of His body enjoying unity with Him by the Holy Ghost; it calls for what suited that; and the coming of Christ was the object of highest affection where there was no failure, but He was possessed, not prophesied of. The second character of prophecy, confided to the church but not addressing it, is found in the Revelation, and depicts a time in which God would deal with the world of which the church was not. Israel has its place in the sum of prophecy which is necessarily the earth, and hence was addressed in it; the church has not. Hence the character of the Lord's prophecies. They address the disciples in this condition, and, though more simple and intimate in their nature, as we might suppose, partake of the character just spoken of in reference to prophetic addresses to Israel.