

Miscellaneous Writings, Volume 2

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Introduction to Miscellaneous Writings - Volume 2

Christian Holiness

The immediate occasion of the following pages has been a recent attack upon "the theology of the so-called Plymouth Brethren" by a professor of didactic theology in Boston University, in which what many beside the present writer regard as some of the most precious doctrines of the Word of God are stigmatized as antinomianism. This will account for whatever controversial character may be found in them; a thing scarcely to be regretted if it serve, as it does undoubtedly serve, to bring out and emphasize the fundamental questions, as well as to exhibit the strength of the arguments on either side. Truth will only suffer if there should be found in this a spirit of acrimony or a contention for the mastery rather than the truth: both which, alas are apt to be engendered by controversy. This, if it should be found in me, I shall not beg my reader to excuse. Holiness is not a theme to be discussed in a manner so essentially unholy.

I do not think Dr. Steele will deny my competence to speak in behalf of the doctrines he incriminates. If he has studied them, as he tells us, for ten years (p.100), I have done so for twenty-five; and while he has done this from an outside (if not a hostile) stand-point, I have known them from inside, estimating them by internal experience (a very different thing), and bringing them daily to the test of the Word of God. I speak of this the rather, because I do not propose to bring forward in general the testimony of men, but to appeal to the Word

itself throughout, while yet I shall have again and again to disclaim Dr. Steele's representation of the views he has attacked, of which I must say he has still very partial knowledge. If he dispute my own, I am ready to meet him on that ground also. In the meanwhile, I am sure that those who are acquainted with the writings of those referred to will confirm my presentation of them.

It is Dr. Steele who should have proved that the views he attacks are really the views of representative writers among the "so-called Plymouth Brethren." He has certainly not done so with any thing like the care that might be expected in so grave a question. With the exception of a quotation or two from Mackintosh's "Notes," and one from the "Eight Lectures on Prophecy," he has given little or nothing with which one can properly credit "Mr. Darby and his school" (p. 86). Some of his quotations are without clue to the writer; others are from the large number of (supposed) "sympathizers" (p. 30), as to whom nothing is given to show how far their sympathy extends, or that the doctrine presented in them is really that of those they "sympathize" with. Dr. Steele speaks of Mr. Darby as "their leading mind" and the head of the school.

He has studied their writings for ten years, knows of course that Mr. Darby's own fill thirty-seven volumes of near six hundred pages each, and it would be reasonable to expect that he would quote largely from these so far as I know, there is not one quotation. Dr. Steele's "Darbyism" somehow leaves out Darby! And this is all the more strange, because he brings forward six times what that "venerable Christian scholar" said to the writer (pp.18, 60, 131, 158, 181), which of course we

have no means of verifying; but not one line or sentence from his written books!

But Mr. McDonald, in the preface, has quoted Mr. Darby: "Any thing which looks like church prosperity is, with Plymouth Brethren, a delusion. 'The year-books of Christianity,' says Mr. Darby, 'are the year-books of hell.'" (p. 15.)

Yet even this is given without a clue to whence it is derived. I have taken some trouble to find it, but as yet without success. Mr. McDonald may be surprised, however, to learn that it is from a Romish historian (I think, Baronius), and not from Mr. Darby at all; although it is used by him somewhere to show the state of the professing church. This is not an extreme specimen of that kind of mis-representation of which the book before us has many instances. Intentional misrepresentations I do not mean, but the effect is the same for readers of such things. Take one example from Dr. Steele himself as proof:- "At my request, Mr. Darby gave an exposition of Matt. xxv. 31-46. What pitiable makeshifts to explain away this most solemn and awful passage in holy Scripture 'It was not a final and universal judgment, but a review of the Gentile nations. Individuals are not here judged, but nations other than the Jews.'" (p. 185.)

This is all put within quotation-marks, as if it were the very words used on this occasion. In fact, it is only Dr. Steele's impression of what was meant, and a very false one. Take the written statement of the Synopsis (vol. iii. p. 164), as evidence: "It is the judgement of the living, so far at least as regards the nations - a judgment as final as that of the dead." And if any one will turn to his tract upon eternal punishment, he will find this very passage

argued upon in proof of it. "Eternal life and eternal or everlasting punishment answer to one another, and mean the same in either case he punishment of the wicked, then, is said to be of equal duration with the life of the blessed." This settles the question conclusively as to whether in Mr. Darby's thought individuals or nations (as such) are before us in this text. Inasmuch as it is with him a final judgment to eternal life or eternal punishment, there can be no question that it is of individuals. "All the nations" means simply "all the Gentiles," as he affirms.

It is a strange excess of prejudice that can cause gross misconceptions such as these. And then with thirty-seven volumes that lie open to criticism, to prefer to give judgment upon private conversations! Assuredly no honest mind will accept Dr. Steele's account in defiance of published statements such as these. I am sorry to say that it is not only in such ways that Dr. Steele shows the spirit that can animate one who "is not ashamed to confess with tongue and type and telegraph and telephone" that he believes in "a genuine CHRISTIAN PERFECTION." (p. 25.) Not only are sentiments imputed to the objects of his attack which they refuse and abhor, but immoral practices also. They are stigmatized as Antinomians, who believe that the sins of Christians are not real sins (p. 89), that the efficacy of faith is concentrated into a single act of assent to a past fact (p. 50i), who are indifferent to inward and outward holiness (p. 101), concealing the offensive features of their doctrine with Jesuitical cunning (p.130), and soon. Perhaps the title of Dr. Steele's book should have prepared us for such charges. It would have served his purpose better to have proved them; especially as

somehow these people "insist on deadness to the world, and entire devotion to God" ! (p. 55.)

But we are sanctified only by the truth: if, then, the doctrines in question are not truth, we must concede they do not sanctify. Our business at this time is wholly with the doctrines.

Chapter 1 - Antinomianism: Where Is It?

Mr. Fletcher's definition of antinomianism a curious illustration of the value attaching to names of this kind in such controversies. Luther invented the term to designate the views of Agricola, who denied the use of the law to produce conviction and repentance, as well as sanctification. Mr. Fletcher's statement would condemn Luther himself, and it was intended to include the chiefs of the Calvinistic evangelical party of his day. Dr. Hodge says ("Outlines of Theology," p. 404), "Antinomianism] has often been ignorantly or maliciously charged upon Calvinism as a necessary inference by Arminians,"- such as Mr. Fletcher and Dr. Steele; and he retorts the charge upon them thus: "It is evident that all systems of perfectionism, which teach (as the Pelagian and Oberlin theories,) that men's ability to obey is the measure of their responsibility, or (as the papal and Arminian theories,) that God for Christ's sake has graciously reduced His demand from absolute moral perfection to faith and evangelical obedience, are essentially Antinomian." (p. 526.)

Thus it seems the Plymouth Brethren have companions under the same imputation with themselves. As I have said, Mr. Fletcher's definition was admittedly not made for them, but for such men as Hervey, Toplady, Romaine, Whitefield, and others,- men with whom it would be an honour to be condemned, but whom Dr. Steele seems anxious to associate with those who "decry that evangelical legality (!) which all true Christians are in love with - a cleaving to Christ by that kind of faith

which works righteousness"! And, reader, you are, according to the definition, an Antinomian, unless you expect to be justified before God by your own personal obedience, and not by the obedience of Christ, in the great day of final account. (pp. 31, 32.) That is the test of antinomianism for Mr. Fletcher. - Dr. Steele, in summing it up, however, adds new features, which are some of them indeed part of the creed of hyper-Calvinisni, while some of them probably no one would own in the present day, and none but a fanatic could ever hold. Let Dr. S. produce, if he can, from the thirty-seven volumes of the "leader" of the school, or from the numerous writings of C. H. M., or Wm. Kelly,- wide enough scope, if this be the Plymouth doctrine,- the least intimation that "my faith is simply a waking up to the fact that I have always been saved or that "a believer is not bound to mourn for sin, because it was pardoned before it was committed, and pardoned sin is no sin;" or that "by God's laying our iniquities upon Christ, He became as completely sinful as I;" or that "no sin can do a believer any ultimate harm;" or that "the conditions of the new covenant, repentance, faith, and obedience, are not on our side, but on Christ's side, who repented, believed, and obeyed in such a way as to relieve us from these unpleasant acts." (pp. 35, 36.) After ten years of patient inquiry, an accuser cannot be guiltless in putting out such things in a book professedly against the Plymouth Brethren without guarding his readers against attributing them to them as they would do necessarily otherwise. It is true Dr. S. has not directly charged them with them; but this is the creed of an Antinomian, and they are Antinomians. The argument is too simple and necessary not to be made, and he must know it would be.

We now have a historical sketch of antinomianism, which is of no special importance for our purpose. It only needs to remind the reader again that the doctrines attributed to one and another in it are not to be supposed transferable to that class of people in whom we are told it has been in these days "revived." They are responsible for their own views, but for nothing more. And the association with Dr. Crisp and others only can avail to stir up feeling and create prejudice before the real cause is taken up. Dr. Hodge states as to Crisp, that he denied the inferences put upon his doctrine ("Outlines of Theology," p. 404), and certainly it is hard to believe that he actually wrote or said, "Sins are but scarecrows and bugbears to frighten ignorant children, but men of understanding see they are counterfeit things" (p. 141). If he did say this, it is altogether needless to bring him up from merited oblivion.

It is strange, however, that whereas Agricola, Tobias Crisp, and such like come conspicuously to the front, as do "John Wesley, the apostle of experimental godliness and of Christian perfection," and "the seraphic John Fletcher," we are not once told with whom these contended in their day, or with what.

On the whole, we are well pleased with Wesley's definition of antinomianism. According to its root idea ("against law,") the only scriptural definition must be "the doctrine which makes void the law through faith." (p. 38.) We have, then, to find the real Antinomian to take the New Testament doctrine of the law, and inquire who makes void the law? who refuses to take it for whatever purpose God has given it? who perverts it to any other use? who takes off the edge of its requirement? Searching along these lines, we can

scarcely fail to find the Antinomian in the only proper sense.

What, then, is the office of the law according to Scripture?

It is (1), to give the "knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 20), not only by putting it into account,- reckoning it up as the items of a bill (Rom. v. 13), and making it exceeding sinful, as breach of plain command (vii. 13), but also by detecting it in the heart in the shape of lust (vii. 7) and giving it power by the very prohibition (vii. 8, 9).

(2) Although ready to justify the doer of it (Rom. ii. 3), yet requiring complete obedience (Jas. ii. Gal. iii. 10), and finding none (Gal. iii. 10), it only condemns and curses and never justifies- (Rom. 3: 19; iv. 15 ; Gal. ii. 16, 21 ; iii. 12 ; V. 4).

(3) Its principle is not faith (Gal. iii. 12), and it cannot be added to or disannul the promise of grace, which 430 years before had declared the way of blessing for all the earth (vv. 17, 18); being given for a certain time and purpose till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made (v. 19).

(4) For those under it in the day of judgment, there can be therefore no escape (Rom. ii. 12 ; iv. 12).

(5) As to holiness, sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under it, but under grace (Rom. vi. 4); it is the strength of sin (1 Cor. xv. 56), even to those delighting in it (Rom. V. 22); in order to live to God and serve Him, we are delivered from and dead to it by the cross (vii. 7, 6 ; Gal. ii. 19), and dead, that we might belong to Christ, and so bring forth fruit to God (Rom. vii. 4); we cannot have the law and Christ, as a woman

cannot have two husbands at the same time (vv. 1-3.) The "righteousness of the law" is thus, and only thus, fulfilled (viii. 4).

This is the Scripture-doctrine of the law, and to the whole of it the so-called Plymouth Brethren fully, and with a free heart, subscribe. It will be difficult, therefore, to prove them Antinomians. As for their "rule of life," it is most certainly true that they do not believe it to be the law, but to result from their place in Christ, a new creation. This is what the epistle to the Galatians explicitly teaches: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (ktisis, creation). And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy" (chap. vi. 15, i6). Thus the exhortation is, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk ye in Him" (Col. ii. 6). Or, as the apostle John says, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (i Jno. ii. 6). This manifestly includes the "righteousness" - all the practical, moral excellence - of the law," as the greater includes the less. Or, if Dr. Steele will say it does not, he will no doubt let us know it. But, in fact, Dr. Steele evidently does not speak the whole truth about the objects of his attacks. He only permits you to see partially, and then through coloured glasses. I am not aware that once throughout his book he speaks of the "rule" which the Plymouth Brethren acknowledge. Yet their writings abound with exhortations as to it, and he has studied them for ten years! Why this utter silence, when he can permit himself to say of the "consistent Antinomian," and they are such for him, "He thinks that the Son of God magnified the law that we might vilify it; that He made it

honourable that we might make it contemptible; that He came to fulfill it that we might be discharged from fulfilling it, according to our capacity" (p. 34). On his own part, it is only simple truth to say, nothing that can vilify is omitted; nothing that could brighten the picture is allowed to be seen.

But the antinomianism is here, that we "affirm that our evangelical or new-covenant righteousness is in Christ and not in ourselves," and that we are not under the law-modified to make it practicable (here is Dr. Steele's own real antinomianism) as a rule of judgment. For the opposite view, he quotes Baxter (Aphor. Prop. 14-17,)-
"Though Christ performed the conditions of the law (of Paradisaical innocence), and made satisfaction for our non-performance, YET WE OURSELVES MUST PERFORM THE CONDITIONS OF THE GOSPEL. These (last) two propositions seem to me so clear, that I wonder that any able divines should deny them. Methinks they should be articles of our creed, and a point of children's catechisms. To affirm that our evangelical or new-covenant righteousness is in Christ and not in ourselves, or performed by Christ and not by ourselves, is such a monstrous piece of Antinomian doctrine as no man who knows the nature and difference of the covenants can possibly entertain." (pp. 92, 93.)

So we must give up "His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) We must give up that Christ "of God is made unto us wisdom, and RIGHTEOUSNESS, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 20.) To affirm that our righteousness is in Christ and not in ourselves is but a monstrous piece of antinomianism! Do Wesleyan Methodists indeed hold this? Let them speak out if they

do not, and disown this attempt to take from the Lord of glory one of His "many crowns"! For our part, the name of Richard Baxter affixed to this bold heresy will be of no avail to make it truth, nor weigh the lightest feather-weight against the NAME we are thus called to renounce. Be it so, we are Antinomians for it, then Antinomians we will be, and one of our proudest titles it will be forever Do we believe, then, that we have not to "perform the conditions of the gospel"? If this means that Christ repents and believes for us so that we need not, away with the utter absurdity, and saddle it where it belongs! If Dr. Steele can find a sentence or hint to this effect in any of the writers with whom he has been ten years familiar, then we give up the man to the scorn and condemnation of all sane, moral men. But neither repentance, nor faith, nor both together, are the righteousness in which a believer stands before God. Faith is but that in which we rest in Another,- the hand with which we lay hold upon Him. Repentance is the acceptance of the divine sentence upon ourselves which leaves us hopeless except in that other. Thus they are both included in true conversion, and never found separate. As conversion is a spiritual turning round, so if the back is turned on self, the face is turned to Christ, and vice versa. These are, if you will, conditions of the gospel, although sovereign grace alone brings about in any the fulfillment of them, but their fulfillment leaves us just as much Christ as righteousness,- the only righteousness in which we are accepted.

Dr. Steele's comment upon Baxter contains the full endorsement of these errors, with others of his own :- "Thus speaks this pious, practical, well-balanced dissenter against the fatal errors arising from

confounding the Adamic law with the law of Christ, the first demanding of a perfect man a faultless life, the other requiring an imperfect man, inheriting damaged intellectual and moral powers, to render perfect, that is, pure love to God his heavenly Father through Christ his adorable Saviour, with the assistance of regenerating and sanctifying grace." (p. 93.)

There are here about as many mistakes as lines, and they are serious ones. Where does he find this Adamic law demanding of a perfect man a faultless life? From Genesis to Revelation there is not even a hint of it. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This, as I understand it, was the law to Adam. Was there a *lex non scripta*, different from this? Where have you it, Dr. Steele? But there is small danger of confounding this with the law of Christ, methinks. Theology perhaps may affirm what Dr. S. maintains; but theology has fallen on evil days: we have learned *nullius in verba magistri*, save of our "One Master," Jesus Christ. Now for this "law of Christ" cited, once more to the statute book, Dr. Steele! We know that the apostle says to the Galatians who "desired to be under the law," but were biting and devouring one another, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 2). And we concede fully that the will of Christ is law to the Christian. We believe fully that we are "inlawed," as it has been literally expressed, "to Christ." (1 Cor. IX. 21.)

But all this fails to show that peculiar character of law which our reviewer insists on, that immoral law (as it would surely be) that lets off easily a man of damaged

moral powers, and allows him to proclaim aloud "with tongue and type and telegraph and telephone" his "genuine CHRISTIAN PERFECTION." Oh, sir, if this be all, you should, methinks, take your way more humbly into heaven; and if this is the righteousness in which you hope to stand accepted before God, allow us to thank Him that for you and us He has provided a better,- even in Him whom you, alas! refuse as that.

This is fairly and fully the very antinominism with which Dr. Hodge, not without cause we see, charges the school of perfectionists to which our author belongs. And notice, that while he contrasts his strict Adamic with his relaxed law, which we will not call the law of Christ, the only law which God gave to man, what is called such in Old Testament and New, contrasted as such with the gospel and its grace, that law on which the apostle in Christian times insists as of unbending holy requirement,- this law escapes somewhere into the darkness, evaporates, and is lost.

With Dr. Steele, thus, there is no right standard of holiness; the Christian is let off easier than the Jew while there is no true "salvation of God" at all. God puts man in a salvable state, that is all; his final salvation is of himself, with God's assistance. As for peace, upon this system none ought to have it, and, indeed, Dr. S. does not say any one ought. "The removal of the wholesome safeguard found in the fear of being morally shipwrecked and cast away, must tend to looseness of living in not a few cases. It is possible that a few might suffer no detriment from embracing such a theory, but they would be exceptions." (p. 96.)

And this is for people in whom no "sin in the flesh" remains,- in whom spirit and soul and body are entirely sanctified So that along the easy road of the relaxed law the perfect Christian requires to be driven with a scourge of this kind! And these are they - for the absurdity cannot be left incomplete in this strange and incongruous mixture of contradictory things,- in whom perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment!

In fine, we have neither peace, nor salvation, nor law, nor grace, and certainly not holiness. Such is the really Antinomian law-gospel of Dr. Steele.

Chapter 2 - Holiness Rooted in True Atonement

The questions that are now to occupy us I prefer to take in their real sequence rather than as presented by Dr. Steele. The doctrine of atonement is fundamental to that of holiness, as he evidently admits. We begin, then, with atonement. And here we have a right to complain that, instead of taking the "Plymouth view," as given by a "Plymouth" writer, he takes a representative from the large group of supposed "sympathizers," for all whose statements we are held responsible. How would Dr. S. treat us if we were to take our views of Wesleyan Methodism, not from Wesley or Fletcher or any acknowledged authorities, but, let us say, from Oberlin Presbyterianism instead ? Yet this last is in very evident "sympathy" with it. Why should our author, after ten years' study, prefer to take his own views from Dr. Bishop rather than from Mr. Darby, the head of the school? It is plain what would suggest itself to most; but we would rather leave the question for himself to answer. Why will he not accept our own statements of doctrines with which he charges us? Surely it is not a righteous course.

Moreover, what Dr. S. charges upon us as "Plymouth" doctrine is no more that than it is of all the many who hold a true satisfaction for sin,- a true substitutionary work in the cross of Christ. As elsewhere also, he often charges us with what we do not hold at all. He quite expects to have his word taken for proof, if there be no other. Yet he is not consistent. On p. 40 he says,- "Theologians who state the doctrine of the atonement

with proper safeguards, are careful to limit its vicarious efficacy to the passive obedience of the Son of God, His sufferings and death. His active obedience constitutes no part of His substitutional work. The germ of antinomianism is found in the inclusion of the latter in the atonement!" Now it is notorious that the "Plymouth" doctrine is completely cleared by this, and no germ of antinomianism can be found in it! For the people in question, it is well known, hold precisely that the Lord's sufferings and death were vicarious, but not His life, and they do not include the latter in atonement!

But they are not allowed to escape so easily. On p. 121, the charge is quite a different one. Here he says,- "The basis of the doctrine of imputed holiness is that theory of the atonement which represents that Christ, Jesus, the sinless Son of God, in whom He was well pleased, was literally identified with sin so as to be 'wholly chargeable therewith, that we might be identified and wholly charged with righteousness.' This quotation is from Dr. Geo. S. Bishop, who proceeds to say, 'The atonement which we preach is one of absolute exchange, that Christ took our place literally - that God regarded and treated Christ as the sinner, and that He regards and treats the believing sinner as Christ. From the moment we believe, God looks upon us as if we were Christ. . . . We then are saved, straight through eternity, by what the Son of God has done in our place. . . . Other considerations have nothing to do with it. It matters nothing what we have been, what we are, or what we shall be. From the moment we believe on Christ, we are forever, in God's sight, AS Christ. Of course, it is involved in this that men are saved, not by preparing first,- that is, by repenting and praying, and reading the

Bible, and then trusting Christ; nor the converse of this - by trusting Christ first, and then preparing something - repentance, reformation, good works,- which God will accept; but that sinners are saved, irrespective of what they are - how they feel - what they have done - what they hope to do - by trusting on Christ only; that the instant Christ is seen and rested on, the soul's eternity, by God's free promise, and regardless of all character and works, is fixed.' (pp. 121, 122.)

Now, as I have said, Dr. Steele has not the least right to demand that I should defend all this, any more than he, as a representative of Wesleyan Methodism, could be forced to defend all that Dr. Mahan or Mr. Finney might say for Christian perfection." Nor do I at all maintain that Dr. Bishop has guarded his words from abuse, as they might easily be guarded. Dr. Steele, on the other hand, has, after his usual manner, told us nothing as to whence he has derived this passage, or we might have found the necessary guarding in close proximity to what he has quoted. Again, I say, I am not concerned to defend it. Dr. Bishop would very likely refuse for himself with perfect justice to be held as representing the views of Plymouth Brethren in the matter. For the sake of truth, however, and to meet fairly all issues, I am not going to shelter myself from Dr. Steele's attack thus, but to state freely for myself how much I hold of this, and why I hold it. I prefer, however, to let Dr. S. state his objections, as he does at length, and to examine them one by one, as he states them. We shall thus have all before us whereon to found a judgment.

"1. Repentance is not necessary to saving faith." This I have, in fact, already answered. There is no true faith without repentance, no true repentance apart from faith.

God has, in His perfect wisdom, provided for this. It would indeed be impardonable to represent God as if He were careless about repentance; and I am sure that Dr. Bishop would earnestly disclaim the thought. But nevertheless, what atones for sin, expiates it, purges sin from the soul, is not at all repentance, - nay, not even faith, but the precious blood of Christ. And the essence of repentance itself is that real rejection of the filthy rags of our own righteousness, no less than of our sins. Thus the eye of the convicted sinner is to be fixed, not upon his own repentance, as if that were any thing, but wholly and altogether upon Christ. And this is what is absolutely necessary to make repentance itself real and availing. Dr. S. will thus see that I contend folly for the necessity of repentance, and I can only trust that here, as often, his own heart is sounder than his creed.

Fix a sinner's eye upon his repentance, as if that were to be a makeweight in the scale of his acceptance, yon will find, if he be real, that he will never be free from the torturing doubt, "Have I sufficiently repented ?" On the other hand, let him flee from all the vain refuges of his own performances to Christ as Saviour, here is the best evidence of a satisfactory repentance. Christ, not repentance, is the Saviour, not a half not a whole one. What does not wash away my sin can never save; and a blessed thing it is to be enabled to torn a poor convicted one away from self in every shape - repentance, faith, or any thing else, to the blood of Jesus.

"It is not thy tears of repentance, or prayers,
But the blood that atones for the soul
On Him, then, who shed it, thou mayest at once
Thy weight of iniquities roll."

Does not Dr. S. believe this? In spite of his words, I most believe it of him. Otherwise what becomes of that initial justification which the "seraphic Fletcher" preached, but to which he was not indeed, any more than our author, always true,—"by faith without works"? Good works, as the fruit of saving faith, and proof of its genuineness, have no place in this scheme of salvation, and are distinctly repudiated ; and well they may be, since by the first act of faith, as a bare intellectual, impenitent apprehension that God punished His Son for our past, present, and future sins, 'the soul's eternal salvation, regardless of character and conduct, is FIXED.' 'What we shall be matters nothing, since we have a through ticket for heaven. St. James is an impertinence in this scheme of salvation, and his epistle may well be called 'straw!'"

Here is, indeed, the most serious objection to Mr. Bishop's language, while I am sure he would refuse the interpretation which I must say is here quite naturally put upon it. But the truth is, that He who fixes the salvation of the soul, fixes in this way no less its moral condition also: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii.) Blessed it is to know that a poor lost sinner coming to a living Saviour finds a salvation secured for him which is internal as well as external, from the power of sin as well as from guilt and from wrath. Will Dr. Steele say this is unworthy of Him? or that it is impossible to Him? And if it be possible, is it not most worthy? would he not be delighted to find it true? Dr. S. can put his hand upon no writings of "Plymouth Brethren," that I am aware of, that consider the epistle of James as a "strawy" epistle,

or depreciate good works as the fruit and test of saving faith. They are surely both, but that does not for a moment make the works to be saving. Nor does it imply that we are to rest upon the works. "Lord, when saw we Thee a hungered and fed Thee?" is a distinct repudiation of good works in this respect on the part of the righteous, exceedingly significant for Dr. Steele, since we know he accepts the "sheep" here as Christians in the day of judgment. Peace is through the work and word of Christ, and will never be found in any other way; while, if "sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace," we are right to press this as fully against laxity on the one side as on legality on the other.

Again, we do not account that saving faith is "a bare, intellectual, impenitent (!) apprehension" at all. And I boldly challenge Dr. S. to prove we do, not by fragmentary quotations from nameless writers, but by honest proof from accepted leaders among us. Yet again and again he asserts something similar to this. We all believe that a fruitless faith is no faith, and the best proof that Dr. S. has NOT found faith to be defined as a mere intellectual assent in our writings is that he has not produced it. The writings are easily to be found. They are in honest black and white, and know not how to prevaricate or deal falsely in the matter. The charge on Dr. Steele's part is a rash and unworthy charge, and nothing else.

We go on to his third objection:-

3. That God regarded and treated Christ as a sinner, in other words, that He actually punished His Son because He was guilty of our sins." This language, again, I

repudiate with all my heart. God did not "regard" His Son as a sinner. He regarded and treated Him as the Substitute for sinners. Nor was Christ "guilty of our sins," or punished because "guilty" of them. "Guilt" - at least in the sense in which we ordinarily use the word, - is not transferable, but penalty may be. "The chastisement of our sins was upon Him," says the prophet ; "God hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." We alone were the guilty ones; the punishment was of our sins, but it was punishment. What avails it to quote Martin Luther against us, or an ex-president of the Y.M.C.A.? Dr. Steele's title-page says, "The Theology of the Plymouth Brethren Examined and Refuted." Luther, we had thought, at least, dated some centuries before. Some Calvinistic text-books use very much the language Dr. S. condemns. With what fairness could this be called the theology of Plymouth Brethren if even some of these may have used it? And this their accuser never undertakes to prove!

But his own theology is much more erroneous :- "We indignantly repudiate the monstrous idea that Jesus on the cross was a sinner overwhelmed with the bolts of the of Father's personal wrath. What we do affirm is that His suffering and death were in no sense a punishment, but a substitute for punishment, answering the same end, the conservation of God's moral government and the vindication of His holy character while He pardons penitent believers." (p. 124.)

This is what is called the "governmental theory" of atonement. It is indeed a theory, nothing else ; and a theory against which Scripture is decisive. The one text which Dr. Steele cites and seeks to explain- 2 Cor. v. 21: "He was made sin for us who knew no sin," - is not only

not the one argument, but not even the most conclusive one.

Yet, even here, if he would look a little below the surface, he might see that, granting the word "sin" to stand in this place for "sin-offering" (which the analogy of the Hebrew may be held to justify), there must yet be a reason for so significant a fact as that the same word stands for both these very different things. Why should this be, but because that which is made sin becomes thus the sin-offering.

And if we look at the type in the Old Testament, what means this, that in the highest grade of it we see the beast so offered carried without the camp and burnt upon the ground without an altar? It is the thing, as the apostle in Heb. xiii. remarks, that makes the blood of the victim able to penetrate into the sanctuary,- that is, really to sanctify the offerer. "Without the camp" was the place outside of all that was owned of God ; and without an altar, shows that that which sanctifieth the gift is absent; the victim is in the awful place of sin upon which a pure God cannot look. This, at the cross, the darkness shows,- the withdrawal of light, and "God is light ;" while the Lord's voice out of it interprets for us,- " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?"

Beside, however the word in 2 Cor. v. 21 may by itself be capable of the rendering "a sin-offering," yet if we look but a little further we shall see clearly why the Revisers did not so put it here. It is that "sin "is contrasted with "righteousness," as well as connected with the same word, "sin," following: "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made God's righteousness in Him."

Thus Dr. Steele has by no means justified the proposed rendering, nor if he had, has he got rid of the idea that is plainly to be found in the passage before us. "Common sense exegesis" is here at fault, as it often is, for what it means often is but a superficial, off-hand view, without the need of true spirituality or careful study of the Word ; and such, I grieve to say, is often the character of Dr. Steele's interpretations. But apart from this passage, what does Dr. Steele think of the passage in the prophecy already adduced,- "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him "? or of this: "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all "? Or of this from Gal. iii. io: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us "? Or this from Peter (1 Pet. ii. 24): "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree "? Was not the curse on sin the punishment of sin? And this special curse,- so unaccountable in itself - that "he that hangeth upon a tree is accursed of God ": how can we view it, save as typically designed to mark out this one "death of the cross," which for those who realized the glory of the Sufferer would seem to be impossible to bear this character?

But Dr. Steele openly rejects the teaching of Scripture. His fourth objection is,-

4. We have insuperable philosophical and ethical difficulties in the way of receiving the statement that the guilt of the race was transferred to Christ. Character is personal, and cannot be transferred. Sin is not an entity, a substance which can be separated from the sinner and transferred to another and be made an attribute of his character by such a transfer. Sin is the act or state of a sinner, as thought is the act or state of a thinker. Neither can have an essential existence separate from their

personal subject, any more than any attribute can exist separate from its substance." (p. 126.)

Much of this is mere misconception. The guilt of the race was not transferred to Christ. Could it have been, all men would be necessarily saved. Nor was guilt transferred, but penalty, as I have before said. Sins were laid upon Him, borne by Him,- transferred to Him therefore: so the Word (and we have quoted it) directly says. But they were laid upon, borne by Him, as a burden,- i.e., in their penalty. Sin was not made an "attribute of His character ;" who ever supposed it but Dr. Steele?

Thus his fifth objection we may for the most part pass over as already answered, and we shall leave Dr. Bishop to defend himself as to what is replied to him. Our author contends, however, that "while it is true that Jesus is our substitute, He is our substitute truly and strictly only in suffering, not in punishment. Sin cannot be punished and pardoned also. This would be a moral contradiction. . . . Sin was not punished on the cross. Calvary was the scene of wondrous mercy and love, not of wrath and penalty." (pp. 128, 129.) Yet Scripture says, none the less, "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him." Delitzsch says of the word emphasized, "We have rendered 'musar' 'punishment,' and there was no other word in the language for this idea. . . . David, when he prayed that God might not punish him in His anger and hot displeasure (Ps. Vi. 2), could not find a more suitable expression for punishment, regarded as the execution of judgment." (Isaiah, vol. ii., p. 318.) Think of any one saying of the dread cross of our Redeemer, "Calvary was not the scene of wrath and penalty "!

But "sin cannot be punished and pardoned also: this would be a moral contradiction." Not in the least! If the person who sinned were punished, this would be : but he to whom the due of sin is remitted is pardoned, though the due of his sin has been paid. For He who paid is He who remits.

If it were otherwise, and the due were not paid, there might be pardon, there could not be justification. Justification is only possible in one of two ways: either by the proving of innocence, which on our part is impossible, or by the proof that the punishment of sin has been borne. This is our case: we are "justified through Christ's blood." (Rom. v. 9.) Justification and pardon are in the same way opposed to one another, as are punishment and pardon: contrasted, indeed, in thought, but not contradictory in fact, in God's wonderful plan of salvation. All this, on Dr. Steele's part, is ignorance of plain Scripture. His closing sentence we shall have to look at further on. I only say that the "imputed holiness" with which he there charges us, we repudiate as much as he does.

One last objection remains

6. A limited atonement is the inevitable outcome of the doctrine that sin was punished on the cross. Whose sin?

If it be answered, That of the whole human race, then universalism emerges, for God cannot in justice punish sin twice. It must be, then, that the sins of the elect only were punished. Hence, at the bottom, this system rests on the tenet of a particular, in distinction from a universal, atonement." (p. 130.)

And the writer goes on to inveigh against the "Jesuitical cunning" of those he is attacking in not confessing their

Calvinistic tendencies, closing with a report of a conversation with Mr. Darby, in which he answers a question upon election, in the frankest and most outspoken way possible!

But the truth is, the Plymouth Brethren in general do not believe in "limited atonement " in the sense in which this is usually understood. They accept Christ's being a propitiation for the whole world, in the ordinary acceptation of "world;" and in ten years of study our author should have discovered this. Nay, in another place he does give us some inkling of the truth. "They make a distinction," he says, "between the death of Christ for all, and the blood of Christ shed only for those who are through faith sprinkled and cleansed thereby. By this means God saves believers, and presents an 'aspect of mercy' toward all mankind." (p. 59.)

Dr. S. will allow me to put this in my own way, without meaning to pledge all my brethren to acceptance of it. I do not believe in what he calls "the old and exploded commercial theory - so much suffering by Christ equals so much suffering by the sinners saved by Christ." (p. 59.) I believe that Christ paid the penalty of sin, not an "equivalent" penalty merely, as even those who believe in a true "satisfaction" are mostly content to say. No, it was the PENALTY ITSELF upon men - death and judgment, the full wrath of God. True, He could not be holden of it. The Holy One of God could not remain under that which for the glory of God He had taken. He was "heard for His piety," "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." But though necessarily and in righteousness delivered from it, He went into it, bore sin in its dread penalty, vindicated God's holiness as against it by submitting to its real due, glorified Him fully so.

The value of this obedience unto death is infinite. It is not a quantum of suffering - so much for so much sin; but God glorifies in a true Substitute drinking actually the sinner's cup; not Himself one, but a substitute.

For whom then a substitute? For the world as such? No: that would be universalism. For the elect as such, a definite number of people marked by this election? Again, no : that would be a strictly limited atonement, which would give no basis for a universal offer of salvation, and would not allow of Christ a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world."

These are the two alternatives of Dr. Steele: is there no other possible? There is, and it completely answers all demands. It is here: "Upon the seed of Abraham He taketh hold. Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. i6, ii.)

It is for His people, for the seed of Abraham, for believers, the atonement is made,- a satisfaction available for all the world upon condition of faith; actually such for all believers. It is an atonement unlimited in value and availability for all men ; limited only by the unbelief that slights or rejects it. This must be to Arminians at least a very intelligible thought. It answers, as I have said, all demands, and removes all difficulties.

Thus only when one believes does he cross from the place of condemnation into that of acceptance with God, and find sin really removed. "My faith" is NOT "a waking up to the fact that I have always been saved" (p. 35), as

Dr. S. represents it for me, but a faith by means of which I am actually justified; although that which is the ground of justification is the blood of Christ simply and solely. And it was not God's laying the sins of believers upon Him that did or could remove mine UNTIL I was a believer. I grant this is opposed to the "commercial view" of atonement - so much suffering for so much sin, which Dr. Steele would insist on my defending. This would require just a definite number of foreseen and exactly appreciated sins to be laid on Christ,- mine, and no other's - in order to my salvation; and then it might be justly argued, I was justified before I was born. Scripture refuses this, and I refuse it. Yet as a believer I can say that my sins were really laid upon Him, and that He put them away from me by the sacrifice of Himself.

Upon a subject so central and fundamental as atonement I desire to be very plain, and I trust Dr. S. will find these statements free from the Jesuitical cunning which he so freely imputes. Is this the love that thinketh no evil? Is it not unworthy of himself?

Chapter 3 - Justification and Acceptance in Christ

We are now to look at the question of justification, and to see what is the righteousness in which the believer stands before God from the moment of his being such. Here again it will be found how far from accurate are Dr. Steele's representations of the views he has been so long (vainly, it would seem) studying. Thus he says, - "The idea of justification is not that it is a present act taking place in the mind of God in favour of the penitent believer, but it is a past, completed, wholesale transaction on Calvary ages ago." (p. 60.)

This, understood in the way I have already stated it, would not be so bad; but the trouble is that Dr. S. applies it evidently in such a way as to make it clash with present justification by faith, as if we did not hold the latter. I confess the connection between the two things has not always been clearly put or conceived by writers among us. But the fact is, that, instead of the two things being contradictory, the one naturally and necessarily proceeds from the other.

We may put it as a syllogism, thus:- The blood shed on Calvary was the justification of every true believer A man becomes today a true believer; He is now, therefore (and not before), justified through faith.

And this shows, as plainly as possible, the different sense in which faith justifies and the blood of Christ justifies. My justification by faith is only my entrance by faith into the sphere in which justification by blood applies to me. It is not as if my faith were a meritorious

somewhat added to the work of atonement. The work remains in its own peerless transcendency, while faith is the way I come into the provision made for me,- made for all the world as well as for me. Election does not touch the fullness of the provision. It secures that (spite of man's rejection of it naturally), there shall be fruit of Christ's work.

As believers, then, we are justified by the blood of Christ,- by what was done more than eighteen centuries ago on Calvary. "Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Did He not? Was not the bearing of them accomplished then?

Moreover, as "He was delivered for our offences," so "He was raised for our justification.(Rom. iv. 25.) His resurrection is the public act of God on our behalf: the testimony that the burden is gone, the sin removed, the debt cancelled. Justification for believers is not an act merely "in the mind of God," but a sentence openly given on our behalf. "If Christ be not risen,- ye are yet in your sins." (i Cor. xv. 17.)

Faith, then, has the work of Christ and the Word of God to rest upon; and this it needs to be faith. Frames and feelings apart from this are absolutely untrustworthy. The work of the Spirit is, to take of the things that are Christ's and show them to us. (Jno. xvi. 14). Apart from this, what we may regard as an "impression from the Holy Ghost" (p. 105) may be only a delusion. It is not, as Dr. Steele puts it, that feelings are to be scouted, but to be tested and certified. It is certain that Scripture says that we are justified by faith, never by feelings. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv.

5.) This is the Scripture method of assurance. Joy and peace come in believing (Rom. XV. 13), and it remains for Dr. S. to prove that they come rightly in any other way. From Scripture he has not attempted to do so, and I believe he will hardly attempt it. It will be time enough, at any rate, then to listen.

This justification by the blood of a substitute, how far does it go? Is it from sins past, present, and to come? (p. 34.) Is it, as some would define it, simply the pardon of past sins?

The latter is founded upon a wrong view of Rom. iii. 25, 26 ; where the "I say" of the translators, not found in the original, confounds two distinct and contrasted things ; " the passing over of the sins done aforetime" (R. V.)- of believers up to the cross;- and, now that God's righteousness is fully shown forth in it, the justification of him that believeth in Jesus.

On the other hand, it is freely admitted that Scripture never speaks of a justification from future sins; and that for very obvious reasons. It does not speak as if there were to be future sins for a believer;- certainly not as if they were tolerated or of little account. It would be the language of license, not of divine holiness, and I refuse and condemn it altogether.

But yet Scripture does not leave the future doubtful, or the standing of the believer uncertain for a moment. First, justification by the blood of One standing in our place before God,- our Substitute,- means His death counted to be our death. We have thus died with Him: and though we live, it is in Him we live. The force of these expressions we shall have shortly to examine, but it will be seen at once how they carry out and complete

the thought of justification by death meaning Christ's death our death.

If, then, in God's sight in the death of Christ we died, let us consider that death is the limit of man's natural responsibility. In the day of judgment itself men are only judged for the "deeds done in the body." There is no such thought, save in theology sometimes, of any sins in the disembodied state, or in hell, to be accounted for. Thus, if we have died, we have passed beyond the limit of accountability as sinners: our responsibility as saints is another matter. Justification by the blood of Christ is thus complete and eternal. No wonder, then, that the apostle declares, "Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved through His life." (Rom. v. 9, 10.)

Here the completeness of the justification in the present settles triumphantly the question of the future, and the life of the Lord in heaven,—"Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jno. xiv. 19),—is the abundant guarantee of the continuance of the reconciliation by His death. In Him we live, and this is eternal life.

Dr. Steele mixes up this question of standing with another,—that of "imputed holiness." The last, I refuse most fully and earnestly. It is nonsense, and worse; only Dr. S. must prove that Plymouth Brethren hold it. Of this at another time ; but standing and acceptance are very different from it, and Dr. S. has apparently confounded them together. He says, "The phrase "in Christ" is perpetually quoted as a proof-text to sustain the

doctrine of imputed holiness an attribute of Jesus Christ regarded by God as belonging to Christians, even when they are unholy in character and wicked in conduct. The theory is, that Jesus Christ is standing today in the presence of the Father as a specimen and representative of glorified humanity, and that faith in Him so intimately unites us with Him, that all His personal excellencies become ours in such a sense as to excuse us if we lack them"! (p. 151.)

This abominable doctrine, if it be true that Plymouth Brethren hold it, should have been proved against them by decisive quotations, and fastened as a mill-stone round their neck to sink them forever with Great Babylon itself under the reprobation of all decent persons. Dr. S. need not then have written a book of 266 pages to expose their views. Yet, strange to say, this most necessary thing he has neglected to do Mr. McDonald has, indeed, tried to remedy the deficiency, and given us an extract, from whom, he knows best himself. (p. 19.) I simply desire him to give the name, and let us know where he belongs. Meanwhile, those who make these charges without proof expose themselves to reprobation only. No man has a right to fling such charges broadcast without fullest evidence of where they belong.

I speak of what I know when I say that imputed holiness is not a doctrine of Plymouth Brethren. Holiness is state, not standing, and Dr. S. is witness that they keep these separate. They never say that people may be "in Christ" either without being new creatures, or God's children without God's image, or born of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit. That "there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus" they quote for what it

says, not to prove any thing of this sort. And let me tell Dr. Steele, if, alas! he does not know it, that if God's eye could be turned from Christ for us, to accept or reject us for what He saw in us, not one of all of us could stand in His holy presence for a moment. Take the standard - that we walk as Christ walked, and. let him say, if at his best (not worst) he dare face the eye of God in this manner.

"In Christ" is not "used to prove an actual incorporation into His person," - at least by those intelligent as to it. Nor is "an actual incorporation into His person" an intelligent expression. We are by the Spirit baptized into His body, - not His actual glorified person, but His mystical body, as we are accustomed to say. This is union, which "in Christ" does not express, but identification. Dr. S. is therefore in a wrong contention, while it is plain the phrase means for him as little as possible. It meant much for him who said "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," however; it involved the whole fact of justification. But think of one who can quickly paraphrase, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," thus he is quoting Meyer: " But truly it is God's work that ye are Christians, and so partakers of the greatest divine blessings, that none of you should in any way boast himself save only in God " ! That Christ is made these things to those "in Him," drops thus out of the account.

If Dr. Steele had looked a little further into Romans, he might have found that the expression here points out Christ as our spiritual head, as "in Adam" speaks of our natural one. By life and birth we come to be in Adam; by

spiritual life and new birth we come to be in Christ. As in Adam we inherit corruption and condemnation only; in Christ we come into possession of a new nature and a righteous standing,-"justification of life." (Chap. v. r8.)

The expression, then, is a simple one, and full of blessing for us. Its meaning can never be decided by Scripture handled in the fragmentary way in which our author handles it. God's Word may thus mean almost any thing or nothing, according to our taste. It does not mould us, but our thoughts mould it. Dr. Steele's treatment of it is as little reverent as may be.

Take a text Dr. S. is venturous enough to quote ; it may surely stand for a scriptural definition; "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v.) Here, first, any one in Christ is a new creature : by a new birth he belongs to that creation which replaces the old one. But then also "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Will Dr. S. say this is true of every one born again as such ? In Christ, it is true of him indeed, for in Christ - identified with Him,- his standing is perfect, absolutely so. In Christ,- represented by Him,- God's holy eye itself can find nothing but perfection.

Chapter 4 - Is There Such a Thing as Being Born Again?

We are now arrived at the question of holiness,- a question which divides, however, into a number of others. Before we can consider the motives to it which the Word of God supplies,- for we are all agreed that it must be a free and voluntary disposition of heart acted on by these,- we must consider who and what the man is to whom they are addressed. What is it to be a child of God? and who is a child of God?

Dr. Steele gives us an answer from his favourite Mr. Fletcher, which, for its evaporation into nothing of blessed Christian truth, is scarcely to be exceeded by any thing we have met in the whole range of theology. It is a special invention to meet a special difficulty with the Arminian creed, which converts and reconverts any number of times that may be needed to save its free-will theory from shipwreck. What do you think, child of God, if such I am addressing,- what do you think that this precious term implies? Relationship? Any real affinity, such as, in nature, your being your father's child suggests? Well, then, you are mistaken : it is just an orientalism, a figure of speech Had you learnt Hebrew in your youth, you would have been better instructed.

"But I thought I was born again? People are not born again to be children of the devil, are they?"

Ah, you are uninstructed! "Born again"! Why, you should remember what a mistake "honest Nicodemus" made about it. Are you carnal enough to think of any

thing real in it? It is all the oriental mode of speech, dear friend: a figure, just a figure!

"They ask, 'Can a man be a child of God to-day and a child of the devil to-morrow?' . . . The question would be easily answered, if, setting aside the oriental mode of speech, they simply asked, 'May one who has 'ceased to do evil' and learned to do well to-day, cease to do well and learn to do evil to-morrow?' . . . If the dying thief, the Philippian jailer, and multitudes of Jews in one day went over from the sons of folly to the sons of wisdom, where is the absurdity of saying, they could measure the same way back again in one day, and draw back in the horrid womb of sin as early as Satan drew back into rebellion," etc., etc., etc.? (p. 135.)

Yes, why not even ten times a day? It is all very easy to the imagination, if - let our author still pardon the doubt;- if new birth be only a figure of speech, and man is converted by his own will simply, or the Holy Ghost's work be just like a friend's words in the ear, and nothing more!

So it must be for Dr. Steele. He simply makes nothing of it. "Common sense exegesis" does not too narrowly scan texts, nor are God's ways so unlike human ways, it seems, for this to be any great objection!

But we have Dr. Steele's exposition, with the help of some of his favored exegetes, of the doctrine of new birth as found in the crucial passage (Jno. iii.):-. "Two natures coexisting in the believer, in his best possible earthly state, is proved by Jno. iii. 6, which is amended to read thus: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and remains flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' This is quoted to prove that the single nature is

untouched in the new birth, while an entirely new nature, or rather new creature, is created and associated therewith." (p. 114.)

His own exposition is found in his objections

1. That John uses the term 'flesh' in the Pauline sense, which, as Meyer says, is strange to him, while Cremer, in his 'Biblico-Theological Lexicon,' quotes this passage as an instance of John's use of *sarx*, 'flesh,' to signify merely that which 'mediates and brings about man's connection with nature.' He finds six shades of meaning to this important word, the last only embracing the idea of sin. He excludes from this meaning all passages in the four gospels in which the word occurs."

Bold it may seem to take up again what Cremer and Meyer have thus settled for us. No need to give their reasons, even ! Yet, spite of the temerity of the undertaking, we are going to look at the passage for ourselves. Let us, however, now go on with the objections:

2. It is assumed that such writers as Weiss and Julius Muller are in error when they say that the meaning of Jesus is, 'the corporeal birth only produces the corporeal sensual part.'" (p. 115.)

Dr. S. and his commentators seem to forget one thing essential to all exposition of a text,- the context. The question raised here is, Why cannot a man enter the kingdom of God without being born again? It is no answer to say, "The corporeal birth only produces the corporeal sensual part." What, in fact, do these words mean? That the human spirit is not the product of natural generation? That has nothing to do with the matter; for then it would mean that the work of the

Spirit was needed to produce the higher part, and the Lord would be talking throughout of natural birth, not of being born again.

It is plain that man as he is cannot go into the kingdom of God; he may have spirit and soul and body, as every natural man has, yet he must be born again. 'That which is born of the flesh must be, then, the whole man; and the whole natural man-spirit and soul and body - is only 'flesh.' This is not, therefore, "what mediates and brings about man's connection with nature," as Cremer says ; it is the proof that he is a fallen being. Spirit and soul and body are all only characterized by their lowest part; and that is, the fallen, the sinful state: men must be born again. Let us hear the next objection.

3. There is a confounding of birth with creation out of nothing. 'For, as generation,' says Dr. Whedon, 'is a modification of substance or being, imparting to it a new principle of life, conforming it, as living being, to the likeness of the generator, so regeneration is a modification of the human spirit by the Holy Spirit, conforming the temper of the human to the holy.'"

But Scripture calls new birth a creation, Dr. Steele. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. ii. 10.) A natural birth must not be confounded with a supernatural. A supernatural birth means for man human nature raised to a higher plane, even to the likeness of the Generator, as Dr. Whedon well says; thus "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

This is, as Dr. Steele quite truly says, not the creation of a new man put into the believer, but the impartation of life to one before dead in trespasses and sins. I grant to him that this language about the new man is a mistake

often made, but which many of the Plymouth Brethren have a good while since protested against. A new life and a new man are different thoughts. But a new life means a new nature. In this way, however, it would be plainly wrong to speak of a change taking place in the old nature. It might give place to it: how far it does so we must prove, not assert; and to say that "soul, body, and spirit" are "born again by the endowment of spiritual life" (pp. i i6,) is to go beyond Scripture. "If Christ is in you," says the apostle, "the body is dead because of sin." (Rom. viii. 10.) This is too plain a text to admit of controversy. The question of the two natures I reserve for the present.

But this new life given of God is not merely a moral change,- a ceasing to do evil and learning to do well. It is a real new element of being in the believer, though it may be impossible to define; and no wonder, for natural life is impossible to define. By it we are actually, not putatively, the children of God,- really born of Him: "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (Jno. i. 13.)

Change there is as the result of it,- real, moral, permanent. "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (i Pet. i. 23). "Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (i Jno. iii. 9.) This is not stated of a special class among Christians, as it is often applied - a class who have attained a perfection which others have not, but of all that are born of God. And it announces as clearly as can be the permanence of the change which new birth produces. It is impossible for the child of God to go back into the

condition from whence he has been delivered. His seed remaineth in him. The life which he has received is "eternal life."

But what is eternal life? Alas, that among Christians the question should yet need to be asked, and that the answer should be received by many with controversy, instead of joy and worship "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "In Him was life ; and the life was the light of men." (i Jno. v. ii ; Jno. i.) It is the "divine nature" of which we are made partakers (2 Pet. i), which in Him displayed itself in undimmed brightness amid the moral darkness of the world, a darkness which comprehended not the light. In us, it is indeed dimmed in manifestation; yet we have it,- already have it,- have "passed out of death into life." (Jno. v. 24, R. V) It is eternal life, because in Him it never had beginning; and having it, though dependently, "in Him," its possession constitutes us really "children of God."

Thus we see why, in the one born of God, His seed remaineth. There is no condition here as Dr. Steele would have it, nor do we "see at a glance," or see at all, in the Greek, as he declares, the conditions of continuance or perseverance, where the Lord says, "He that heareth My words, and believeth . . hath everlasting life." The Greek, if we are to be precise, simply says, "He that is hearing and believing hath." It is not, therefore, that "if these conditions are fulfilled, the new life inspired by the first act of evangelical faith becomes everlasting" (p. 132.) It is not so said, nor does this give the true meaning of everlasting life at all. "This is the commonsense view," perhaps,- the loose, careless view, as these words so often mean. The truth of eternal life is gone, or rather, never was in the author's mind. New

birth, there is none. Moral suasion by the Holy Ghost upon the natural man, this is all the divine work in it.

It is plain to see how in this way it is as easy to turn one way as to turn the other way, for a saint to become a sinner as for a sinner to become a saint. Nay, it should be easier, for gravitation is only too natural. The descent to hell is easy.

And thus where these views are entertained, after every "revival" you will find a numerous host of backsliders; people who are scarce ever taught to doubt the truth of their conversion, though their goodness was like the early dew: who think they have known all there is in "religion," though for them it did as little as possible. But if they want it, it can be obtained again where they got it before; and they must be more careful that they keep it. Not so, Dr. Steele : new birth is indeed a "creation." It takes the power of Omnipotence to accomplish this wondrous work. And into God's new creation no new curse shall ever enter: there shall be no more return to night and chaos. Are not these the terms of the new covenant: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people; . . for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Chapter 5 - Christian Security and Its Moral Results

"Salvation!" "Saved !" O blessed, peace-inspiring words to him who knows the reality of them! What do they mean? Do they leave still the doubt that after all by that from which we are saved we may still be overtaken, overcome, and perish? Then, for pity's sake, and in the interests of truth itself, let us not use the words,- let us not inspire a hope which may be so mistaken!

But Scripture, which uses the words, is not responsible for the doubt, preaches not the uncertainty. Its "hope" is not one which possibly may make ashamed; therefore there is patience in it: "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." We can wait with patience just because it is sure. "He is faithful who promised." Yes, He is faithful, but we? Well, when we came, helpless and hopeless, to Him, was it not just part of our intense misery that we could not trust in ourselves? Had He not to teach us that faith's object was not ourselves, but Himself? that every particle of self-trust was only robbing Him by so much of His due? But are we now as Christians to go back to that principle from which we were delivered?

Not so! "This is the right gospel frame of obedience: so to work as if we were only to be saved by our own merits; and withal so to rest on the merits of Christ as if we had never wrought any thing." (p. 142.) Yes; but if indeed we had never wrought any thing, would we be entitled to "rest in Christ"? Ah, that would be perilously near to antinomianism, would it not? For we are to be

justified at last by works altogether, are we not? How then rest in Christ as if we had done nothing?

Nay, is not fear - fear lest we should perhaps be lost - a wholesome and needed motive to work? Is it not the check that the Arminian has to deter him from sin, that he "is told that the holiest saint on earth may fall from grace and drop into hell"? And do you not say that "human nature at its best estate can never be safely released from the salutary restraint of fear"? (p. 86.) How then can we rest in Christ as if we were not doing what if we did not, we should assuredly "drop into hell"?

I see you confess it is "a difficult thing" to unite these things together. (p. 142.) And I note too that you say elsewhere, "Nor are true believers, who have received the Spirit of adoption, under the law as the impulse to service. They are not spurred on to activity by the threatened penalties of God's law. Love to the Law-giver has taken the place of the fear of the law as a motive. This is specially true of those advanced believers out of whom perfect love has cast out all servile, tormenting fear." Yet you add, "Before emerging into this experience, there is a blending of fear and love as motives to service. But the law is put into the heart of the full believer, and its fulfillment is spontaneous and free." (p. 108.)

Why do you say, "Into the heart of the full believer"? Is not that one of the promises of the new covenant? Is it not true in principle of all those, therefore, of whom God says at the same time, "And I will be their God, and they shall be My people and again, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"? Why, then, do you insert this

"full" believer? Is it on the warrant of Scripture, or of experience?

But how is it, then, that "human nature at its best estate can never be safely released from the salutary restraint of fear"?

And how can you say of the greater number even of believers, they are "not spurred on by the threatened penalties of God's law"? and "they are not under the law as an impulse to service"?

Yet it seems that they are exposed to these penalties, or the possibility of them ; that they are (most of them) under the fear of these that it is a salutary thing and that they need the spur!

Truly it is a difficult thing to unite these things together.

I do not forget that you tell us that "we are freed from the law as a ground of justification. Our ground of justification is the blood of Christ shed for us." This we might rejoice in if you had not before defined this that "all mankind are, by the atonement, forever freed from the necessity of pleading that we have perfectly kept the law in order to acceptance with God." (p. 108.) And you have given us elsewhere the "evangelical form in which it was defined by His adorable Son, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." (p. 4!.) Thus, it seems, Christ's work has put us under the milder condition of only loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. This you call "the evangelic form." The Lord justifies us, then, by His blood (correct me, if I should misunderstand you), and puts us under this milder law - the law of Christ, to be judged by; and you say that in the day of judgment we shall "be judged by works only" (p. 29), so that the blood of Christ

shed for us will not be the ground of justification then. This is "salvation," as you say, "not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition."(p.45.)

Now if this be so, there are some serious questions, which a good many beside myself would probably like to have answered.

(1) Is it to be shown that we have obeyed this law perfectly?

(2) If so, for how long ?- from the time of our justification? or how much later?

(3) If not perfectly, how far perfectly? where shall the all-important line be drawn?

(4) If the day of judgment is to decide where we are, for whom is it to decide it? Not for God; that cannot be. For ourselves? then can we be sure before it comes? or is it decided before it is decided?

Surely a thing of such solemn moment should not be left with so much haze upon it. Nor can you say that Scripture has left it in this condition. Scripture, blessed be God! is as plain as possible. It is theology only that is responsible for it all.

We know, then, how far our freedom from the law as a ground of justification goes. It certainly does not go far enough to entitle any one to rest wholly in Christ in view of eternity. Faith in Dr. Steele is, I doubt not, better than his creed, but it is the creed we are speaking of. After all, the great thing is, What says Scripture? And here we are in another atmosphere, and under clear and luminous skies. "He that heareth My words, and believeth on Him that sent Me," saith the Lord, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is

passed out of death into life." (Jno.v.) It will not do to say, even with Alford (p. 88), "comes not into (krisis) separation, the damnatory part of the judgment." Krisis is the common word for "judgment," as every one who knows Greek knows. Dean Alford is interpreting, not translating; and even his interpretation does not avail. For "separation" in this sense would apply to the whole judgment-work, not necessarily to any damnatory part. But we are not left to argument. How are the dead saints raised? The apostle answers : "So also is the resurrection of the dead : it is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (i Cor. XV. 42-44.) Now it is beyond controversy, that he is speaking here simply of the resurrection of the saints. How are they raised? I ask. In incorruption, power, and glory, are they not? And "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, . . the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed "- the living (v. 52).

When shall this be? "Every man in his own order," adds the apostle, "Christ the first-fruits; afterward, they that are Christ's, at His coming" (v. 23).

And again: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep ; for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first ; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (i Thess. 1V.

15-17.) Thus "them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him," and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." (Col.iii.3.) It is plain, then, not from the interpretation of a single text, but from the plainly given character and "order" of the resurrection, that the saints, dead or living when Christ comes, are caught up in one glorious company to meet Him in the air; and when He appears for the judgment of the world, they appear with Him. Thus, before judgment can possibly take place, all is decided. Into judgment personally they do not come.

Yet we shall all give an account to God, all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receive for the things done in the body. But it should be already plain that the separative judgment of the sheep and goats cannot have to do with us. And think of Paul, John, and others waiting to be picked out in this way from unbelievers! Is Dr. Steele really waiting for this? I do not think so. Why then a judgment to decide which does not decide?

No: all is decided here. Here men are lost or saved, and he that believeth on Christ shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life. And that life is eternal life: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand." (Jno. X. 28.)

Those who would put conditions or exceptions into such texts as these should mark that they belong to a class into which these never are put. There is many an "if" in Scripture : when professing Christians as such are addressed, they are often tested in order to prevent the fatal deceit which men may practice on themselves; but

never are those singled out and pronounced upon as having eternal life, or salvation, or justification, or being born again, or children of God, or any thing analogous to these, put under conditions, as if it were doubtful how they would turn out. This is surely noteworthy, and should go far itself to establish the truth. If Scripture makes no doubt, should we? But we can say much more than this. In every way, from every side, we are thronged with assurances as to the safety of the saint.. . . .

If justified, or reconciled, much more shall he be saved.

If he has eternal life, he shall never perish.

If born of incorruptible seed, his seed remaineth in him.

Whom He calls He justifies, and whom He justifies He glorifies.

If the apostle speaks of apostasy, better things accompany salvation.

If a man draw back, we are not of them that draw back.

Neither things present nor to come can separate from God's love in Christ.

Conversely :- -

He that loveth not his brother is in darkness even until now.

They who go out from us are proved by the fact not to have been of us.

Because the plant has no root, it withers away. He that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.

I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.

What avails it to interpolate certain texts with conditions, when this is the web and woof of Scripture?

What profit indeed in limiting the wonderful grace of God which pledges itself in Christ to the poor and helpless, beggared in self-assurance. "I will NEVER leave thee, nor forsake thee." Blessed, blessed grace! without it, who that knows himself could have peace a moment?

Sad would it be, then, to find that the more this grace abounds, the more man will abuse it. It is not so the apostle speaks. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. vi. 14.) The real knowledge of grace it is that is the spring of holiness, as the "strength of sin," on the other hand, "is the law." No doubt there are those who, secretly or openly, would make God's precious grace a cover for licentiousness. No doubt also there are many who, through lack of knowledge of deliverance, find to their sorrow the law of sin authoritative, to the blighting of their practical life and testimony for God. Yet all true Christian experience agrees with, if it is not needed to confirm, the apostle's testimony. We must not slight grace because men have little learned or abused it. We must not supplement it with legal conditions in order to make it effectual. We must hold it more simply and learn it better.

Grace cannot assimilate with legal conditions. It is their essential opposite. "If it be of grace, then it is no more work; otherwise grace is no more grace." (Rom. xi. 6.) No relaxation or modification of law can make it assimilate with it. As to moral content, the law is holy, just, and good. As a principle of fruitfulness, it is a necessary, fully announced failure. The Christian is dead to and delivered from it, not that he may be justified merely, but that he may bring forth fruit to God.

Baptize it as you may, you cannot make it Christian. Relax it, you have spoilt it as law without making it gospel. Call it, without warrant, the "law of Christ," your apparent scripturalness will not hinder the necessary result of an adoption of what is not of Him. "The law is not of faith; but the man that doeth them shall live in them." (Gal. iii. 12.) Now the gospel most surely requires obedience to it, and Christ's commandments admit no relaxation and lack no authority. But commandments and obedience do not constitute law in its essential principle, its absolute contrast with grace. And grace is the one power for holiness, the only thing that can deliver from the dominion of sin.

A moral law supposes a sinner as the one to whom it is given, and it works by the influence of fear, its authority being maintained by penalties. It requires: it does not enable for the requirement. The fulfillment of the law is the thing impossible to the law.

This is what the apostle insists on in Rom. viii. 1-4, which Dr. Steele so little understands, that to him it makes no difference whether you find "who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" appended to the first verse or the fourth ! (p. 153.) If the words be found, what matter the connection in which they are found? Certainly no matter, if Scripture be a collection of fragments without relation to one another. If a relative clause even does not depend upon its antecedent, then indeed it is no matter. But if sentences acquire any meaning from their relation to one another, then it does surely make a difference whether our walk as Christians be introduced into the question of "no condemnation" or into the statement of how grace enables us for what is impossible to the law.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

The law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and the conscience approves this; but though it say, Do this, or thou shalt die, the terrible alternative can never prevail to set my affections on Him from whom they have wandered. "We love Him because He first loved us" (i Jno. iv. 19) is the Christian experience of grace as certified by an apostle, fulfilling in us the righteousness of the law. Sin in the flesh is condemned for us in that cross of Christ on which He died to redeem us, and thus we find deliverance from the condemnation and the power of it together.

Now if this be the principle of Christian fruitfulness, we must adhere to it consistently. The effect will not be found except as we allow that to act which will produce the effect. It will not do to mingle grace and law,- that is, to cancel the grace by an inconsistent addition to it,- and then declaim against grace as if it were itself unholy. It is thus, in fact, with a large number of those who professedly accept it. On the other hand we must of course distinguish grace from laxity - from the result of an indifferent and careless spirit which may use the language to cover its laxity.

"The law is not of faith," and faith is the character and power of the child of God as such. It is the working principle, so that the faith which has not works is dead,- it is not true faith at all. With all our heart we accept and emphasize this teaching of the apostle. With all our

heart we reject Dr. Steele's assertion for us, that "its efficacy is concentrated into a single act of assent to a past fact." (p. roi.) Such statements scattered through his book, proved by fragmentary sentences no one knows from whence, are a dishonour to the one who makes them. Our author who claims so much for law should heed the law. If a witness is put upon the stand in any court of justice worthy to be called one, he is first asked his name, and where he belongs. Dr. Steele seems to care nothing, and to argue that his readers will care nothing for these things, without which his book is, however, a mere string of unsupported assertions, and will be rated by an upright mind as that.

On the contrary, faith is the character of the new nature, necessarily continuous as such, and the working principle in every one who has it. Nor does it only "grasp past and finished acts" (p. 59), but cleaves first of all to a living Saviour. "For you are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) Instead of setting aside faith in the way charged, I would press it as of all importance in the question before us. It would be a sad and terrible thing to be told that faith might justify and yet not purify. We have read our Bibles at least enough to know that the heart is purified by faith (Acts xv. 9), and we believe and thank God that it is so.

But "the law is not of faith:" it does not appeal to or recognize it. Its principle, fear, tormenting fear, is not in love: "there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." (I Jno. iv. i8.) Our author uses often enough this text no doubt: has he apprehended its significance in this respect? Does he remember, not only that faith it is that worketh, but that "faith worketh by love"? (Gal. v. 6.) How is it, then, that

this works, where he upholds as the Arminian check upon sin, the knowledge that "the holiest saint on earth may fall from grace, and drop into hell"? Is it not already one fallen from grace who can think and speak so?

Is this the grace which does not allow the dominion of sin? Is the fear that hath torment banished by it? Does it not rather make it a thing impossible to be banished by the holiest saint on earth? Nay, is it not openly contended that "human nature in its best estate can never be safely released from the salutary restraint of fear"? Is this the doctrine of Scripture, or an open break with it?

Talk no more, then, of fruitless faith, while you boast of a "perfect love" fruitless as any Antinomian faith could be! and while you set aside faith as fruitless, to take up terror to do its work instead. O sir, your theology halts where it should walk upright; and your holiness of the whip will never reach, nor come in sight of a "GENUINE CHRISTIAN PERFECTION." With all my soul, I turn from the perfection you present to me, to realize, if I may, that rest of faith which God's Word calls me to, and find a yoke for which "the joy of the Lord," not the terrors of hell, can be "strength." If, then, these are the divine principles of holiness,- if faith it is that worketh, and worketh by love, and a perfect love is to cast out fear, then the gospel of eternal security is also the gospel of holiness. We are set free from self-care to care for Christ and serve Him. The things are wide as heaven and earth asunder.

The more you work for salvation, the more you work for self: is it not so? a sad and foolish work, breaking the

Sabbath which God has ordained, and for which He has provided. Please Him you cannot, while you set aside the efficacy of that one peerless work which secures all for the believer.

"The life which I live in the flesh," says one of old, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 20. 21)

Chapter 6 - Sin in the Believer

We are come now to the discussion of one of the the most sorrowful of topics. That, spite of grace, sin should be in the believer; that, spite of perfect power over it provided, (for in the Spirit of God dwelling in us there must be perfect power,) sin should prevail, so far as it must be acknowledged it does, over the mass at least; that for absolutely sinless perfection in any, few will contend this is surely a dark and difficult problem to solve,- a sad and humbling fact to contemplate.

Dr. Steele's confession, that "human nature in its best estate can never be safely released from the salutary restraint of fear," is surely as humbling as any. While his doctrine of perfection is one that only adds difficulty to the problem, instead of throwing light upon it.

"He is confident that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus does now 'make us free from the law of sin and death,' although it does not, this side of the grave, deliver us from errors, ignorances, and such innocent infirmities as St. Paul gloried in without detriment to his saintly character." (p.25.)

Again : "If he will confess his lost condition, God is faithful and just, not only to forgive, but also to cleanse from all sin ' actual and original'" (Bengel) (p. 24).

Original sin is thought to mean the corruption of nature as born of fallen parents; so that Dr. S. admits in these cleansed ones "no defiling taint of depravity, no bent toward acts of sin." Yet he cannot "be safely released from the salutary restraint of fear"! Perfect and free from everything but errors, ignorances, and infirmities a saint may glory in, and yet -! The passage referred to in i

Jno. i. cannot by any possibility be made to apply merely to a certain class of "advanced Christians." If one confessing his lost condition is cleansed by God from all sin, actual and original, then it is surely plain that every Christian must be so cleansed for where one who has never confessed his lost condition?

If, however, every Christian is not thus cleansed (and Dr. S. cannot but allow this), then, as God cannot be unfaithful, it is perfectly plain that cleansing from all sin cannot go as far as this. But this does not necessitate that "judicial clearance or justification" must be in that case understood." (p. 106.) It is plain from ver. 7, which is parallel to ver. 9, that cleansing by blood is meant, and this is not, that I am aware, ever applied to inward sanctification,- holiness. This latter is by the Spirit, and the truth, "washing of water by the Word." (Eph. v. 26.) Cleansing by blood is not justification either, but its effect, "the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience." (Heb. x. 22.) "How shall not the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God" (chap. ix. 14)?

But Dr. Steele would still urge that "this involves St. John in the Romish doctrine of good works as a condition of justification 'If ye walk in the light'. This is certainly a course of good works prescribed as a condition of cleansing." (p106)

But this is not so it is not how we walk, but where. "That which doth make manifest is light." (Eph. v. 13.) And "God is light" (i Jno. i. 5)- said only a few verses before. It is of a soul before God, brought to conviction in His presence, that the apostle is speaking. Here sins are

brought out only to be removed; and that, in fact, as charged against us, and so for the conscience also.

As for 2 Cor. vii. i., God's cleansing and our "cleansing ourselves" are somewhat different. But the first is not justification, as I have said.

This is the place also to say that "it is of the utmost importance that we accurately distinguish between sin in the flesh and sin on the conscience" (p. 82), and that where the apostle says, "There is no more conscience of sins," he does not mean "no more consciousness of sins." "Conscience," says Dr. S., "is nothing more than consciousness when the question of right or wrong is before the mind." (p. 81.) As usual, he has not a thought of looking at the context.

"For the law," says the apostle, "having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the corners thereto perfect : for then would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." (Heb. x. 1, 2.) Now here it should be plain that it is all a question, not of the commission of sins, but of the efficacy of the Jewish sacrifices to purge or perfect the conscience as to them. For Dr. S., it should be a most convincing lesson. Why should not the sacrifices have been offered year by year? Not designed, of course, to put away again the old sins, but those of the year since the last, why should they not? Because the conscience could never be perfected after that method. One year's sins would hardly be put away before another's would begin to accumulate. Sin would be always thus, not merely in their consciousness, but

on their conscience. But that could never be the divine thought. No, the worshippers once divinely purged would have complete settlement and perfect rest; they would have had no more conscience of sins.

Consciousness of sins, no doubt, is the work of conscience ; but conscience of sins means not to be at rest because of them. A perfected conscience should be, according to Dr. Steele, a conscience made fully alive and sensitive to right and wrong; a perfected conscience, for the apostle, means a conscience completely at peace through the blood of atonement.

As for sin in the flesh and sin on the conscience, it is hard to see how any one could confound them although we might not all agree - as I could not,- to use the passage in John cited in proof of the distinction. I must not be expected to defend this use of it therefore.

We have in fact discussed sin on the conscience, and looked at the divine way in which it is met. Sin in the flesh is our present theme. It is of course sin in the nature; and Dr. Steele must allow that Gal. v. 17 is at least a convincing proof that in many Christians it is thus yet found. The Galatians were backsliders, he contends; in them, the flesh might lust against the Spirit. It does not, I suppose we are to infer, in him. But has he observed that where the apostle enjoins "Walk in the Spirit," he does not say, and you shall not have the flesh, but "you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh : " a very poor result for a modern perfectionist! Moreover, the fact of the conflict is stated in direct sequence to this: "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Thus it seems surely to follow

that those lusts of the flesh might indeed be there, though they walked in the Spirit.

In Romans also, if the apostle does say, "The law of the Spirit hath freed me from the law of sin and death," that is another thing from the presence of sin in the flesh. Moreover, he definitely states, as we have seen, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." By and by, . but not in the present life, "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal body." (Rom. viii. 10, ii.) Not till we are raised or changed, then, shall the body partake of the new life which the Spirit has received. As a consequence of this, the apostle exhorts, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye, through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." So again in the twelfth chapter: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,"-a sacrifice in life, and not in death,-" holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

And again in Col. iii.: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth,- fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

It is plain from these passages,-

1. That the body and the flesh are connected, though not confounded. Indeed it is evident that the "flesh" as a name for the old nature is derived from the body.

- 2 That the new life received in new birth has yet not been communicated to the body, nor will be till our final change comes.

3. That however sin is not of course to be conceived of as if it were a material thing, nor the body, as if it were unconnected with the soul, which is ever in Scripture the seat of its lusts and appetites.

4. That never in this life can sin be extirpated from the person, so as that the body shall not be "dead because of sin," to be rendered up therefore a sacrifice, not to be treated as a living thing, but a passive instrument by which under the control of the Spirit of God, He may be glorified.

I have no thought that this goes to the bottom of the question or covers the whole ground. I merely give what is enough to show that the perfection which Dr. Steele imagines is not the scriptural one. And he himself conclusively shows this when he cannot allow that these perfect ones, in whom "no bent toward the acts of sin" is conceived to remain, can be safely freed from the "salutary restraint"- restraint upon what?- of fear as to their ultimate salvation!

All the terms in which this sinless perfection is described are taken from passages in which, not a special class, but all the children of God are spoken of, who yet are confessedly not in the condition which they are supposed to picture: a conclusive proof of how imaginary the condition is.

While, to accommodate the experience to the condition supposed, "lusts of the flesh" are constantly, by perfectionists, ascribed to Satan, and spoken of as temptations when they should be judged as sin.

The standard is always and necessarily lowered: for who that admits that "he that saith he abideth in Him ought

himself also to walk even as He walked" would dare to prate of a perfect fulfillment of this obligation?

These are marks of essential antinomianism in all who profess a perfection such as Dr. Steele so loudly trumpets forth.

Yet it does not follow that because sin in the flesh is admitted, it is at all admitted that there is the least apology to be made for sin ruling over any. We should surely realize a "law of the Spirit" which set us "free from the law of sin and death." There is no doubt that the strength of perfectionism lies in the revolt of the conscience from the thought which makes the experience of the seventh of Romans the proper and inevitable Christian state. A loyal adherence to Scripture will not consist with the maintenance of either of these positions.

Chapter 7 - God's History of His People

There are thus two natures in the Christian. There is in all a "flesh" which "lusteth against the Spirit." The experience which does not conform to this is a delusive experience.

It is thus undoubtedly true that in this respect "the believer's state can never correspond with his standing." (p. i6.) His state would have indeed to be perfect to be just what his standing is. His standing is in Christ, and therefore as Christ. To quote "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 Jno. iv. 17) as Dr. Steele does (p. 68)- to show the actual state, is monstrous, even though he is not by any means alone in it. The apostle connects it with "boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world"! Think of Dr. Steele finding boldness for that time in the assurance that he is morally perfectly like Christ Such utterances require, not argument, but rebuke.

So he "translates into the Plymouth idiom" John Wesley's very moderate and scriptural caution, "Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit which is separate from the fruit of it," thus:- "Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed standing in Christ, while his actual state of character is not RADIANT WITH ALL THE EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST." (p. 87.)

It is hard to realize the state of those who can thus speak. But "not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." The testimony of most Christians would be very far from this,

that they were "radiant with all the excellencies of Christ," and the testimony of Scripture as to them is assuredly very different I would like to ask our author what proportion of Christians, if he look the centuries fairly in the face, he can suppose to have realized the experience he contends for, or to have held the doctrine which matches the experience. He may plead that the latter is the reason of the former. But account for it as he may, it is certain that a very small proportion has had either the one or the other. While this negatives the application of all the passages he cites, it is in itself a thing worthy of examination. As we look back along the ages, from the beginning to the present time, what is the reflection we should naturally make upon them? I shall perhaps be considered a pessimist if I say that, with a certain number of stars shining out all the more brightly on account of it, the impression is one of darkness, not of brightness, - not even growing into that. And I am not now speaking of the world as that, but of the professing people of God themselves.

In the Old Testament, the stars are seldom in galaxies. The generation before the flood came under judgment in a manner which testified of almost universal departure. Thence on to Abraham, the history of the family of saved ones is almost a blank, where it is not worse. Babel and idolatry are its most conspicuous features. Abraham and Melchisedek are then twin lights, though not seen equally. Lot is but Abraham's designed contrast. Isaac, bright in his early years, falls into decrepitude. Jacob's life at its latter end is bright, but his many days are in his own estimation "few and evil." Joseph stands out once more in contrast with his brethren.

We turn the page, and Israel has become a people; but in bondage less to Egypt's monarch than to Egypt's gods, and not knowing their deliverer. In the wilderness, two persons wholly follow the Lord their God ; the rest of the generation are cut off in it. In the land, Joshua's life ends with a noble appeal to a halting people. The Judges give us, in the deliverers themselves, the failure of the choicest. Samuel is a pillar upright amid ruins. David's history is one of trial and of triumph, then of a terrible fall and its bitter consequences. Solomon lapses into idolatry, the fruit of a heart given to strange women. Then a divided kingdom, struggling against itself, on to a fall delayed only by God's long-suffering. In Judah there are pious kings generally with some marked defect specially pointed out for us. Asa seeks not the Lord, but the physicians. Jehoshaphat leagues with the guilty house of Ahab. Uzziah invades the high-priest's office. Hezekiah even fails in the matter of the king of Babylon. Josiah is one bright exception. Then the end comes.

In Israel it had come long before, though here are seen the great figures of two mighty prophets who might have availed, if any could, to avert destruction. But even Elijah knows not of God's seven thousand hidden ones, and Elisha with many disciples has no successor. Need we speak of the feeble remnant of Ezra's and Nehemiah's times? Malachi sums up against them.

Save for the increasing light of prophecy, the day of Old Testament glory ends in darkness and sorrow.

But this is under the law? It is four thousand years of the world's history. What seems its one lesson as to man in his best estate? Is it not that he is vanity?

Since then, near two thousand years of Christianity have passed. The sixteenth century was signalized in God's mercy by a Reformation. The eastern Church for her sins had been almost engulfed in the floods of Mohammedanism. The western had passed through her dark ages, never darker than when the spiritual power had the most unquestioned supremacy. Since Protestantism, Germany, Switzerland, England, have passed through phases of rationalism and infidelity which would we could say were ended. And now we hear of a downgrade among the most orthodox, which, as it comes to light, appears "ten times more widely spread than" at first it was known to be. And of another large orthodox body in England we hear that scarcely a minister is sound as to eternal punishment. Dr. Steele can speak, no doubt, of many counter-balancing things, and the wide evangelization going on may make those hopeful who can forget the centuries that are past. Scripture, for those who are able to read, declares the end from the beginning, and a Laodicea to follow the revivals of Philadelphia. But in all this it may be said, we judge from our own stand-points, and we judge very differently. Be it so, and let us turn back, not forward, and look at incontestable facts as to the primitive Church itself. We shall gain in exactness here by taking the epistles chronologically, although they embrace but a history - apart from those of the apostle John, - of about fifteen years (A. D. 54-68.) Small time, it will be thought, for declension. The Revelation epistles are considered to come twenty-eight years after this (A.D; 95-96.) John's own epistles may come a short time before this. Of Jude's we have no date.

The epistles to the Thessalonians claim the first place. They were converts of somewhat over, a year's standing, and their faith was being spoken of through the world around. In his first epistle he exhorts and charges them, supplies them with an important doctrine for their comfort; but has no rebuke. The second epistle, written the same year, speaks even of their faith growing exceedingly, yet there were some walking disorderly, and he directs them as to these. What he has to say as to the state of things, however, is already solemn. Before the day of the Lord an apostasy is to come, and the mystery of iniquity is already working among Christians, with a present hindrance, indeed, which when removed, the man of sin will be revealed, and strong delusion carry away those who had not really received the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The Corinthian epistles stand next in order. The character of the first is well known. In from three to five years from their conversion, a spirit of division had begun among them, the product of worldliness; along with this, the toleration of evil such as was not named among the Gentiles, going to law with one another, sitting at meat in idol's temples, drunk at the Lord's table, and a denial, on the part of some, of the resurrection of the dead. In the second epistle, Paul is comforted with the effect of the first, yet with a joy not unmingled. He is afraid that if he came he should not find them such as he would, and he would have to bewail many who had "not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they had committed."

In the same year, it is supposed, the epistle to the Galatians was written. Among them, legality was at

work, introduced by Judaizing teachers. They seemed already (in some six years) removed from him that called them into the grace of Christ unto a different gospel. He was afraid lest he had bestowed on them labour in vain. The rapture of their conversion was gone, and a legal spirit was engendering pride, censoriousness, and strife with one another.

A year after follows the epistle to the Romans - a doctrinal treatise in the main ; but their faith, in the world's capital, is reported throughout the whole world. We find no reproof; but he has to warn them of those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine they had learned, and bid them avoid them.

Four years pass, and the apostle is now a prisoner at Rome. Thence he writes to the Ephesian church as faithful in Christ Jesus. To the Colossians also, praising their faith and love. Finally, to the Philippians, no less faithful; but he had grievous things now to say of those at Rome. He hopes to send them Timothy, for he has none beside who will naturally care for their state, but "all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ," and "many walk of whom he had told them before, and now tells them even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Somewhat later, it is thought, the epistle to the Hebrews was written. It was hard to utter the things he had to say, seeing they were dull of hearing, and had need to be taught over again the first principles of Christianity. Some had already apostatized (chap. vi. 6, R. V.) Others were forsaking the Christian assemblies. They were to look diligently, lest any one lacked the grace of God, and

not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

The pastoral epistles come latest, and here it is easy to see the decline which has set in. In the first epistle to Timothy we find that he had been left at Ephesus to charge some not to teach another doctrine. Some had set up for teachers of the law. Hymeneus and Philetus had made shipwreck of the faith. Others had gone astray through love of money. He warns him finally of apostasy in the latter times.

Titus is full of warnings as to the connection between truth and godliness. The Cretans, among whom he is, are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies, and must be sharply rebuked. Finally, the second epistle to Timothy closes the Pauline series,- brightly, for he knows his God, and is now going to Him, but with a solemn survey of things around, and a still more solemn outlook for the future. All they which are in Asia have turned away from him; the faith of some is being overthrown, and there are vessels of dishonor from which one is to purge himself. Already there were resisters of the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. Demas had forsaken him ; at his first defence no man stood with him.

As to the future, evil men and seducers would grow worse and worse, and the time would come when sound doctrine would no more be received, they would turn away their ears from the truth and turn to fables. In the last days perilous times would come; men being "self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy lovers of

pleasures more than of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Such being the times of the apostle Paul, we can expect no difference when we open the other epistles. We may be therefore briefer. James and Peter both address themselves to the circumcision. And in James we find in the Christian assembly the poor man made to give place to the rich, even though he might be an unbeliever; and the insisting upon the works that are the fruit of faith is an indication of the tendency to mere orthodoxy.

Similarly speak the blessing and cursing from the same mouth, the evil speaking, the friendship of the world, the boasting of the morrow.

The first epistle of Peter, written to the dispersion, gives a favourable picture of the Christian character. The second contemplates the inroads of evil, false teachers with damnable heresies and covetous hearts, turning back into the world those that had escaped from its pollutions; scoffers, walking in their own lusts, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and unlearned and unstable men wresting the Scripture to their own destruction.

The epistle of Jude, coming apparently shortly after this, carries it further. Here the men of the second epistle of Peter are already crept into the Christian ranks, and their course is traced to full apostasy, and judgment at the coming of the Lord. John's epistles come a good while later. There are now many antichrists, by which we know it is the last time. He marks them out for rejection. Finally, in the assembly a Diotrephes receives not the apostle's word, nor the brethren, and forbiddeth those who would, and casteth them out of the church.

One glance more before the New Testament closes, and here we find the Lord Himself among the seven candlesticks, Gods light-bearers for the world, judging them. His voice it is we hear, and seven times we are solemnly and emphatically called to hear it.

Seven actually existing assemblies, representative of the state of the Church then ere the last apostle leaves it, and the voice of inspiration is silent. A sevenfold successive unfolding of the Church's history, as many believe it, until Christ gathers His people to Himself.

First, Ephesus, now, alas! declined from its first love.

Then Smyrna, under the twofold, the open and secret, assault of Satan.

Next Pergamos, dwelling where Satan's throne is, with its Balaam-teachers and Nicolaitanes.

Then Thyatira, under the rule of the false prophetess Jezebel.

Fifthly, Sardis, with a name to live, but dead.

Philadelphia, with still a little strength, and cautioned to hold fast.

And last, lukewarm Laodicea, with Christ outside ready to spue it out of His mouth.

Make of it what you may, here is the closing picture, the last view of the Church on earth left with us. Does it give the impression of an overcomer, though there are overcomers? Of triumph? or, alas! of failure and defeat?

And what is this story of man from the beginning? of man even when God's way of grace has been revealed? of the people of God at all times? Does it not seem one of the deepest mysteries of His ways that He should be (if

we may say so,) content to have so little apparent result, on the earth-side at least, of all His wondrous works among the sons of men?

Does it not seem as if ever the lesson was to be, "Cease ye from man"? Does it not seem as if we might still say of it, in the sense Dr. Steele objects to, "I have seen an end of all perfection"? Is this condemnation and setting aside of man really a lesson of holiness that it is so enforced? It would surely seem to be so. God's lessons are all holy lessons. Let us take up the Word once more and see.

Chapter 8 - The Moral Application for the Christian

Therefore let no man glory in men," says the apostle (i Cor. 21) ; and he says it of such men as "Paul or Apollos or Cephas." And of himself he says, "To me it is a very small matter to be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self: for I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." (Chap. iv. 3, 4.)

How simply and decidedly has Paul accepted, as we may say, the lesson of this long, sad history! How he disclaims the very ability to form even a really trustworthy estimate of himself ! Not in the least to set aside the necessity of self-judgment: "Herein," says he, "do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." (Acts xxiv. i6.) But having done all,- searching and finding nothing whereof to accuse himself, instead of pronouncing as to his condition, he refers that to Christ's judgment, and not his own.

And to this all Scripture seems, as if with one voice, to call us. On the one hand, it puts before us a perfect standard, the very highest,- to walk as He walked. When also it speaks of a Christian according to the divine thought, it draws a perfect exemplar,- no blots, nor defects. For a copy, it would not do: we should copy faithfully the defects: and this is what Dr. Steele has forgotten, easily and conclusively proved by this, that the picture is of the Christian as such,- not of a certain class. Then, on the other hand, if you look at the actual men and women, it seems as if your attention were to be

specially called to their imperfections, and worse than imperfections. Scripture biographers differ from human ones so in this respect that it has been the subject of common remark.

So with the dealing of the Spirit of God with us individually. Do we dream that He is going to exhibit us to our own eyes "radiant with all the excellencies of Christ"? It would indeed be perilous: "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness" (Ezek. xxviii. 17), it was said of old. "Lest, being lifted up with pride," says the apostle, "he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (i Tim. iii. 6.)

No; there is one place indeed in which we may contemplate ourselves without danger, but that is in Christ: the very thing which Dr. Steele so refuses. "I knew a man in Christ," says the apostle again: . . . of such an one will I glory; but in myself I will NOT glory, save in mine infirmities." (2 Cor. Xli. 2, 3.)

Holiness God seeks and requires from us, and He means it be real - imparted, not imputed. But God's way of it is still by faith, and in Christ for us in this sense, that it is as "we all with open face behold as ,in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Cor. iii. i8.)

It is just while we have our eyes thus upon and are occupied with Christ that this effect is found. It is just because all legal effort means occupation with ourselves that it avails nothing to produce the holiness it requires. This is the true lesson of Rom. vii. 4. To find deliverance from this experience, and power for a right walk, the "law of the Spirit,"- or, as I would suggest it may be

more clearly read, "the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus," is what sets us "free - from the law of sin and death."

For this deliverance, we must know that in the cross God has not only put away our sins, but has put us away in all that we were and are as sinners; and this is what is meant by our old man being "crucified with Christ." It is not true for inward experience, for sense, or feeling. It is true for faith alone. And as " Christ died unto sin once, and in that He liveth liveth unto God," so are we told, not feel or find, but "reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus."

It is thus we are set free from the necessity of self-occupation, and given ability to turn away entirely to Him whom God has made to us not only "righteousness," but "sanctification" also. It is faith realizing this that says, in words so misapprehended by Dr. Steele, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal.2: 20.)

We shall now take Dr. Steele's objections to all this as he conceives it, and his own very meagre statement of his own views, as they lie, scattered with very little order through his book. We shall thus have the main points in controversy fully before us, and with this, so far as holiness is concerned, our task will be at an end. We must go back to the doctrine of the two natures first;- he says, reporting the views he is condemning, - "In regeneration, the new man is created in the believer, and the old man remains with all his powers unchanged" same as the new man, nor of course the old nature synonymous with the old man. Nature and person are essentially different. Scripture does not state that the

old man exists side by side with the new in the believer, but that we have put off the old man and put on the new.

The old man is myself as I look back upon myself - a sinner in my sins. The new man is what I am now in Christ Jesus. It is manifest that these two things could not exist together. This leads us to what must be our next quotation. "The doctrine of the two natures is not completely stated till the fact is brought out that neither is regarded as responsible for the acts of the other. For they are conceived of as persons. If the flesh of the believer behaves badly, that is none of the believer's business."

This is an inference, and not at all the doctrine of those Dr. Steele is reviewing. It gains plausibility from that confusion of nature and person which I entirely refuse. Accountability belongs to a person, not a nature.

It is not the flesh that sins, but the man ; and if a believer does so, he comes under the divine government as liable for it "The time is come," says the apostle Peter, "that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous be with difficulty saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 1V. 17, IS.) "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." (chap. i. 17-19.) "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of

the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (i Cor. xi. 31, 32.)

Thus it is not true that there is not accountability, but it is to a Father's holy government, and any needed chastening is itself the fruit of grace.

As to the distinctness of the two natures, it should be plain that they must be distinct and opposed. The good is from God,-His nature and His gift. He could not be or communicate a half-evil thing. Life, it is true, we cannot define; how much less a life which is spiritual: but it is life we receive, and eternal life.

Moreover, we are absolutely assured that "the mind of the flesh,"- not, as in our version, "the carnal mind,"-"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom.viii.7.) Flesh cannot be changed into spirit, nor spirit into flesh: they are opposed ever and only.

This may be difficult to understand psychologically. But as far as experience goes, Dr. Steele will not deny it to be the experience of most Christians. Even supposing it not to be his, and that he has never known it, this would have to be accounted for as an anomaly on his side.

It will be seen, therefore, that I do not adopt the "favorite method of exegesis of i Jno. iii. 9," which, our author says, "is, to substitute 'whatsoever' for 'whosoever,' and to say, 'That part of our nature which is born of God doth not commit sin,' the unregenerate part will continue to sin." And as to the illustration which follows, he should have informed us whether it is his own putting into words the thoughts of others, or from what nameless writer he derives it, or why he cannot give the name. It is "whosoever is born of God doth not

commit sin," and applies, therefore, to all the children of God. It is their character, not that they are always (alas!) consistent with themselves.

The questions which follow (pp. 65-68) are all therefore set aside by this, where they have not been answered. We turn to the passage which shows us God's way of power in this condition.

"Says McIntosh, 'It is no part of the work of the Spirit to improve human nature,'- that seems to be past praying for,- but to make a brand-new man to dwell in the same body with the old man till physical death luckily comes and kills the old Adam, who had successfully defied all power in heaven and earth to crucify him. Henceforth the new man has the entire possession of the disembodied soul. How different this from the holiness bearing its heavenly fruit this side of the grave.

The only scripture cited for this doctrine of death-sanctification is Rom. vi. 7-' He that is dead is free from sin.' This evidently means (see ver. 6), He who has died unto sin is freed, or justified (B. V.), from sin" (pp. 60, 61).

I must not question Dr. Steele's uprightness. I can only, therefore, say that his incapacity for even understanding what he is opposing is indeed phenomenal. I never, that I can remember, heard the text in question quoted for "death-sanctification" in the sense in which he speaks of it. Nor does he appeal to any particular writer, but says it is so. The writings of the "Brethren" in general are to be, I suppose, the proof. Then I say, it is simply, and without any qualification, an untruth. Let Dr. S. meet the challenge, and show proof. But it is a little too gross to say that we do not believe in "a holiness bearing its

heavenly fruit this side of the grave"! If nothing less than "freedom from all sin, original and actual," be holiness, then the charge is true; but no more true of us than of the mass of Christians. But will even our author contend for this? The fact is, that the use of Rom. vi. 7 is in the interest of present holiness, and always for this end. The application of it Dr. S. makes is true as such, that "he who has died to sin is justified from sin;" but his thought about this is another matter. He supposes that to have died to sin is to have ceased from it practically and altogether, whether actual or original.

"He finds St. Paul's inspired unfoldings of the gospel-germs dropped by Christ to be the exact fulfillment and realization of these predictions, when the apostle asserts that 'our old man is crucified with Him '-that is, in the same manner, and with as deadly effect - that the body of sin might be destroyed '-' put out of existence' (Meyer) ; so that every advanced believer may truthfully assert, 'It is no longer I that live'" (p.25).

Thus, then, it is only "the advanced believer" who can be "justified from sin"! Is that true, Dr. Steele? There is, then, in this case, no such thing as the justification of the ungodly ! Or is this another thing from justification before God? or is it a second justification of the believer, not the first?

I know that it is maintained by Mr. Fletcher that the sinner is justified by faith without works, but the Christian is justified by faith and works, and by and by in the day of judgment _to be justified by works without faith! But even Mr. Fletcher hardly maintains that a Christian can only be justified by absolute freedom from sin. If it be indeed so, then it must be the case that every

one who is first justified by faith without works must be immediately cleansed from all sin, actual and original, and his justification thereafter must depend upon his maintaining this condition. But a consequence of this will be that instead of its being an "advanced Christian" who can speak as our author, every Christian who is not perfect must have fallen from perfection; and, in the same act, fallen from justification. There can be no justified Christians but these perfect ones! And those so fallen must begin again as sinners, and be justified afresh! Justified how often also must the mass of Christians be! One would think, upon this plan, as often as you shake a friend's hand in the street you would have to ask, Do you belong to Christ today? and that Methodist pastors must find it their chief labour to bring back souls to justification! As for the rest of Christians,- the imperfect ones,- there are none. It ought to be earnestly protested against as a delusion that there can be such!

I should not impute such consequences to Dr. Steele except that they seem necessarily to result from his view of i Jno. i. 7, which we have considered. But if this is not his thought of justification from sin, he should surely tell us what it is. Can it mean simply that you cannot charge with sin a man who is practically dead to it,- if it refer to the past, this is not true: former sins might still be charged ; if it refer to the present, it is a mere truism. Think of the apostle solemnly telling you that a man who had no sin could not be (properly) charged with any!

So that we are tired of finding meanings for Dr. Steele: very unnecessary work, no doubt; only he seems to want to be (and to suppose that he is intelligible. It remains that if "justified from sin" cannot be taken in the way he

takes it, the door is open for an interpretation that will stand the test of intelligibility and of Scripture. The truth is, that "he that has died is justified from sin" is simply an appeal to fact. Death cancels all possible indictments. He who has died is passed beyond them. The death to which he applies this is our death to sin. How, then, are we dead to sin?

The fundamental basis of all the reasoning here is in the latter part of the fifth chapter,- the doctrine of the two heads. Adam, the head of the old creation, is the figure of Christ, the Head of new creation.

Our relation to the first Adam is by life, a life actually communicated from him, and by which corruption of nature becomes ours, and death the stamp upon a fallen being. Our relation to Christ is by life also, real and holy in its nature, as we have seen,- a life eternal, upon which death can never pass.

But this would not be enough if it were all. There must be also complete atonement for sin, and justification.

Death is the removal of the fallen creature from the place for which he was originally created, the sign of divine displeasure, by which the old creation comes to an end in judgment. Christ's death for us on the cross glorifies God in this setting aside of the old creation; not, therefore, to restore it, but to separate us from it, as those who have their part in new creation with Himself.

For those, then, who have life in Christ, that they are "dead with Christ" has the very deepest meaning. It speaks, not of an inward change, but of a change of relation. It is that in which our relation to the old creation is judicially ended. In this sense, as a question

of liability on this ground, we have died to sin, and to have died to sin is to be justified from it. This, then, is the fact for every child of God; but it is a fact, not to be felt or experienced, but reckoned; not for sense or of attainment, but a basis - fact for faith. "In that Christ died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. So," as the word is better, reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus " (vi. 10, ii, R. V.)

Immediately there follows, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body." Not, let it not be, but Let it not reign: a very meagre result if we were actually and experimentally dead to it. But this is to be the moral result: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed "- or rather, spite of Meyer, - " annulled," made to be as though it were not, - " that henceforth we should not be slaves to sin" (vi. 6, Gk.).

The power is in this, that we are thus freed from all need of self-occupation. By the cross, for faith, our old self is set entirely aside; not that we may be occupied even with a new self in its place, but with Christ, in whom we live, and who, as this is practically realized, lives in us. This is the true meaning of what Dr. Steele quotes: "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 19, 20.) It is certain, therefore, that Dr. Steele is again under misconception when he represents us as saying that "those scriptures in which the old man is to be crucified, mortified, or killed are all understood to imply a life-long torture on the cross, - a killing that continues through scores of years" (p. 62). Not merely do the Plymouth

Brethren never speak of a life-long torture, but, with Scripture, they absolutely never speak of the old man as to be killed at all. "Our old man was crucified," and we reckon ourselves, not dying, but dead. The seventh of Romans shows the working of this practically, in contrast with legal effort and self-occupation.

Deliverance is by turning from it all to Christ, in whom we are, that beholding His glory we may be changed into His image. "To me, to live is Christ" is necessary holiness ; " To me, to live is holiness" leaves out Christ.

On my side, to sum up:- I object to the system Dr. Steele advocates, first, because its relaxed law for men of "damaged moral powers" is really and manifestly Antinomian.

Secondly, because in it righteousness in Christ is repudiated, and our own obedience to this law as a "rule of judgment" is substituted for it.

Thirdly, because Christ's work, according to it, merely puts man in a salvable condition - does not save him.

Fourthly, because the penalty of sin is not really borne, and God, therefore, as inflicting it, not really glorified.

Fifthly, because new birth is made merely a work of moral suasion, to be undone as easily as it was done.

Sixthly, because fear, which would have torment, is made an essential means of holiness, and perfect rest in Christ is made impossible.

Seventhly, because, to maintain perfection in the flesh the standard of walk is lowered, and sin in the believer is palliated or denied.

These are grave charges. They have been sufficiently substantiated by his own words, and I have, I trust,

faithfully and fully examined these. It is for our readers now to judge by Scripture, and in the presence of God, where the truth is. The question of practical holiness is one of the greatest importance, and connects itself, as we have seen, with the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It is the outcome of these when wrought by the Spirit of God into the life. Well may it be, then, a test of any creed, how it provides for this. As such, we may not shrink from it, although able to make no such pretensions as Dr. Steele makes for himself. We dare not say that in us the flesh does not lust against the Spirit. We dare not claim to walk up to our standard, Christ's own perfect walk. We are unfeignedly thankful to find thus in the cross that which has set aside for us the need of a self-occupation which we have found fruitless in the accomplishment of deliverance from the law of sin; and in Christ risen from the dead, an absolute acceptance and an object for the heart which we are persuaded are the only power for holiness practicable to man, Occupation of heart with One who has passed into the heavens is deliverance from self, from the world, from sin. In Him there we have an eternal satisfying portion, which frees from the corruption which is in the world through lust. But we are feeble and dependent, and all Scripture unites in pressing this upon us; our wisdom is, to know how truly so. Weakness is not discouragement when a God of infinite resources and unfailing power bids us take hold upon His strength. And this gives Him also His place and glory: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," becomes thus indeed a blessed reality.

For this He would remove all tormenting fear out of our hearts, that He Himself may be trusted fully, and dwell fully in them. Faith worketh, not by fear, but by love.

Chastening itself is from a Father's hand, and a token of sonship: "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Thus we may indeed need to be recalled to ourselves and to Him. But "work of faith, labour of love, patience of hope," these are the three tokens of our "election of God."

Imperfectly I have expressed all this, I am sure; but Dr. Steele has attacked as the theology of brethren what is truth, and vital truth. What the "brethren" hold may be in itself quite unimportant - save indeed to themselves. What is the truth on the great themes we have been discussing is of the greatest importance. May the Lord guide His people in judgment!

Of "brethren" themselves I have designedly said nothing. Those who are interested in this can easily have their desire satisfied. Only I would say that they should be judged by their own statements, and not otherwise. Upon the matter of prophecy also I do not enter. It is a wide subject, there are plenty of helps to be obtained, and the attention of Christians is being largely, thank God, directed to it.

Chapter 1 - Its Meaning and Implications

Hope of the Morning Star

We are going to take up, the Lord willing, a question (or questions) which of late seem more and more to be dividing those who alike look for the coming of the Lord as near at hand. The question is not, therefore, whether that coming be personal and premillennial or not: for, those for whom I write are equally assured that it is both; and the number of those who possess that assurance is, we may trust, becoming greater every day. For those who may still have question even as to this, there are now everywhere at hand abundant means of satisfaction. Nay, they have only, when once inquiry has been awakened with them, to examine their Bibles with a free and honest heart, to find it. They need but to give credit to Scripture for speaking with the same straightforwardness as we use with one another. They need only - not to confound Israel and the Church; death or the taking of Jerusalem with the coming of the Son of man, and that in the clouds of heaven, and with all the holy angels with Him. To those simple, and not confused with unnatural interpretations, the word of God will become simple; and the great hGpe of the Church and of Israel will shine out with unmistakable plainness; nay, with a lustre lighting up every other part.

It is not as to this, at any rate, that we are now to inquire. The question before us is one that will take more attentive consideration to answer. There are apparent difficulties on the face of Scripture itself with that which nevertheless we must accept as the true one;

and there are correspondingly objections which require full examination before we are entitled to do so. Especially as they seem to have led many who not long since held it to abandon it for another.

The hope of the Morning Star may sufficiently characterize the view before us. Christ Himself is the Morning Star, and as such promised to the Christian overcomer. The morning star as such precedes the sunrise; does not enlighten the earth, but is lost in the beams of the sun when it arises. In Scripture it is the seal upon the closing page of the New Testament, as the Sun of righteousness is the seal upon the last page of the Old. It is connected with heaven alone; while the Sun in its rising brings heaven and earth together. We hold, as many have held it, that Christ's coming as the Morning Star is the hope of the Christian, and introduces him to the enjoyment of his place with Christ in heaven. The dead saints of all the past are raised; the living are changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air along with these. And this is the first thing now to be looked for, whatever signs may in fact be given before it of the Lord's approach; as even now there are many.

This "rapture of the saints" necessarily closes what we call the Christian dispensation. The true Church is gone from the earth, and what is left is a mere corrupt profession, now to be spued out of Christ's mouth as utterly distasteful to Him, and which is soon to give up even the profession, and, not having received the love of the truth, to fall under the terrible delusion of Antichrist. Darkness is then covering the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; and this is the time, and these are the

circumstances under which the light begins to break for Israel. The day of the Lord begins amid such utter darkness, and not before we are gathered to Him. As long as the gospel is still going out, Israel are "enemies" (treated by God nationally as such) "for your sake" - that is, for the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 28). Now the darkness begins to disperse, and instead of the remnant among them being added to the Church, as in the present time, they "return to the children of Israel" (Mic. v. 3): to Israelitish hopes and promises.

Prophecy as to the world, broken off with the breaking off of Israel, begins again, and time, which ceases to be reckoned when she is wholly (though but temporarily) given up as the people of God, now is reckoned again. The "end of the age," which is in fact the last week of Daniel's seventy, brings with it the ability to reckon prophetic times, and thus amid the gloom to calculate the nearness of deliverance. And they will need and value it, while having to endure to the end, to find the promised blessing: for this is "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7), Israel's travail-time in which the nation will be born to God, when at last every one written among the living in Jerusalem shall be holy, "when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. iv. 3, 4).

Terrible will be the time they come through, 'great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be' (Matt. xxiv. ii; Dan. xii. i). It is the time of Antichrist, of the abomination of desolation in the holy place: when the world is permitted to show itself in its full character, the

restraint upon the development of evil is removed, Antichrist shall replace Christ in the worship of the nations, and the "abomination" in the temple of God in Israel, challenge Him also in His Old Testament character, as well as in His New. The denial that Jesus is the Christ will accompany the denial of the Father and the Son (1 John ii. 22).

The end will be delivering judgment by the coming of the Son of man from heaven, as the lightning gleam in the storm of judgment, from east to west over the heavens. The nations assembled against Jerusalem meet with complete overthrow; the leaders in the great revolt against God being cast into the lake of fire, Satan shut up in the bottomless pit; and the saints who have come with Christ to the judgment of the earth taking the place of rulers with Him over it during the thousand years of peace that follow.

Of course, this is not even a proper sketch of what takes place during and at the close of the interval thus indicated between the taking away of the saints to meet the Lord and His appearing in glory with them. The question before us is not of details as to the events that fill up the interval, but of whether it exists at all; whether the rapture of the saints and their return with Christ are separated by any appreciable length of time; whether or not the Church goes through the tribulation; whether the dispensations can so far overlap as to permit of Jewish saints, with hopes and worship corresponding to this, to co-exist upon earth with Christianity and the heavenly hopes that accompany it; whether the calculation of prophetic times is designed for Israel or the Church, or both; whether we are to look for the events or some of them, which admittedly

precede Christ's coming in glory, as to take place before we are caught up to be with Him? The last point seems to be perhaps in special contention, one very vigorous writer regularly characterizing the view against which he contends as "Any moment Adventism." But our decision as to this will be best reached as the final result of answers given to the other questions, which manifestly all so bear upon one another as to make the decision of one very much that of all; while yet they constitute so many distinct lines of proof which, if they agree together in what answer they yield, confirm each the other as well as the whole view. They will be, not a threefold, but a fivefold cord, not quickly to be broken.

But before we take up such questions, in seeking answer to which the full strength of the objections made will be seen and tested, let us take into consideration the proof as to the whole which we may gain from a brief review of Scripture. It is perfectly plain, and is said in so many words by the apostle, that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). It is quite clear, therefore, if we may take Scripture in its full force, that the taking up of the saints to be with Him, as described in i Thess. iv, must be before the appearing. This indeed still leaves it uncertain that any sensible length of time elapses between the two. Yet it argues that the Lord's descent into the air to the gathering place for His people is not an appearing. It is so far an unseen stage of His coming, and the rising of His saints to meet Him likewise would be unseen also: for when He appears we shall appear with Him, and "those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

What is connected with these two phases of His coming it is important to notice. With the first, Christ's reception of us to Himself, and the joys of the Father's house (John xiv. 2, 3). With the second the reward of works, which is in the Kingdom. With the first, thus, the fruit of Christ's work; with the second, the fruit of our own. The order is noticeable. The first is the hope of the Morning Star, Christ Himself the Christian hope, but which leaves the world unblessed. The second is the daydawn for the world, the "Sun of righteousness. The coming of the Son of man, as in Matt. xxiv., is manifestly the appearing. He comes in the clouds of heaven, with all the holy angels with Him, and the comparison with lightning shows plainly the approach of judgment. Now what connects itself with this in this chapter? First, the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" - the Jewish holy place, for when they would see it, those that were in Judea were to flee to the mountains. Secondly, and given as the reason of their flight, "For then shalt be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no, nor ever shall be." This unequalled trouble is to be as short as severe: for "except those days should be shortened no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake these days shall be shortened:" Thirdly, immediately after this, "they shall see the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth" - or "land" - "mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Now, here we find, in the last days, a Jewish remnant with some knowledge of Christ it must be supposed, for the exhortation addressed to them implies that they will be listening to His words, and yet so little Christian as to

be under the strict law of the sabbath (ver. 20), and liable to be deceived by false reports of His being in the desert or in the secret chambers (ver. 25): just such as those disciples were whom the Lord then addresses. What has become of Christians and of Christianity at a time when this is possible, and when once more the holy place is recognized as in Jerusalem? Yet this is before the appearing of Christ, and some little while before, however grace may limit the time of tribulation spoken of. Does not this look as if Christianity were gone from the earth at this time, shortly before His appearing?

If we look further, this impression deepens. Our Lord has just referred us to Daniel. We find the equivalent of the expression for the first time, chap. ix. 27: "for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate." A better translation would be, "because of the wing of abomination, a desolator ;" but for our purpose either rendering may suffice. This is in the well-known prophecy of the seventy weeks, and in the latter half of the last week. At the end of the whole period would come the blessing, for Judah and Jerusalem, of which the angel speaks: for then would be made an end of sins, and reconciliation for iniquity, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and the holy place anointed (not made desolate); and yet according to the prophecy desolation continues up to the very end of this time. The blessing must come, then, suddenly indeed. In Matthew we see how it comes, by the appearing of Christ for them, and as in a moment.

The prophecy in Daniel is an instance of that non-reckoning of time, which has been already referred to as characterizing the present period. The seventy weeks are but 490 years. Sixty-nine of them end (483 years)

when Messiah first comes. He is however cut off, and has nothing (so we should read the twenty-sixth verse): He does not bring in the blessing, and a time of confusion follows. Plainly the last week has not been fulfilled, and it is of this last week that the Lord in Matthew speaks. Here the doings of the "prince to come" are described, and it is not Christ, but His total opposite. A comparison of the chapters makes this absolutely plain. From the time of Messiah's cutting off until this prince appears there is only a gap of time, the length of which is in no way indicated to us; but we know that all the Christian centuries have in fact come in in that break. The nation of Israel has been set aside, and the heirs of heaven are being gathered. With the seventieth week Israel again comes into prominence, and time begins once more to be reckoned: but instead of blessing there comes for her a time of unequalled trouble until the last week is run out.

Notice the time from the setting up of the abomination till the full end: half a week of years, "time, times and a half," three years and a half; forty and two months; according to Jewish reckoning, 1260 days. We see how divine pity has in fact shortened the days. These numbers are of importance to us just now as a link of connection with other scriptures which will presently come before us. The covenant also made by this Gentile prince - we should read here "he shall confirm a covenant with the many," (the mass of the Jewish people,)- which he breaks in the midst of the week, enables us to understand better the sacrificial worship going on in Israel according to such agreement, and the idolatry ensuing: "the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,

and the abomination that maketh desolate set up" (Dan. xii. ii).

Thus far it is plain that the prophecies in Daniel and in Matthew throw light on one another. Let us put by their side a third, which links the time of this Jewish distress with the last days of Christendom. I refer to 2 Thess. ii. for the full scripture, which with the help of what we have already got, we shall now easily understand. The prophecy of the man of sin has been so long applied to the head of the Romish superstition, that Protestant Christians are very jealous of another application. Yet the apostle makes the revelation of the "man of sin" to be the sign of the "day of the Lord being now present," as the Revised Version rightly gives it, while popery has been fully manifested, for those that have eyes to see, more than 300 years. Moreover the "day of the Lord" leading us to Zechariah's prophecy of Israel's last trouble (chap. xiv.), and Zechariah leading us to Matthew and to Daniel, the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" is so simply explained by one who "sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (Revised Version), that an unprejudiced mind can hardly refuse the identification of one with the other.

Every other circumstance corresponds. We find this man of sin the leader of the grand final apostacy of professing Christians from the faith of Christ (vers. 3, 9-12): God at last giving over to strong delusion those who believed not the truth when it was there,- an awful climax to which everything is surely tending now. Moreover, just as in Matthew the Lord appears at the end of the time of trouble, so here the wicked one is

"consumed with the breath of His mouth, and destroyed with the manifestation of His coming" (R. V).

Thus Christendom is apostate, or apostatizing from the faith at the very time that the company of believing Jews, which Matt. xxiv. shows us, are suffering in the great tribulation. Jewish and Christian apostacy unite together at the close (i John ii.22). Now where, we may ask again, during all this time, are the saints of the present day? Where are the real Christians, when the mass of mere professors have become apostate, and the saints of Jerusalem are plainly once more professors of Judaism? and in that "end of the age" which, as the last broken off week of determined times for Israel, is unmistakably Jewish? The apostle beseeches the Thessalonians "by the coming of our Lord Jesus C'hrist, and our gathering together unto Him," not to be deceived: and we ought now to understand such an appeal.

But this is by no means the full weight of evidence.

The book of Revelation as a whole may be brought forward as proof, the most detailed and elaborate that could be given, perhaps; and can only be rightly understood with what we had already before us. We must look at this, however briefly, or we could have no idea how full the proof from Scripture is.

Revelation is divided, and that by the Lord Himself, into two main parts, "the things that are," and "the things that shall be after these" (meta tauta). "Hereafter" is not sufficiently explicit, and so far misleading: these divisions give us, as we shall see, the "present things," the time in which the Church of God is upon earth; the "things after these," that which begins when the true

Church has been removed to heaven, and God's dealings with Israel begin, for their recovery and final blessing.

Each part has a prefatory vision which is the key to all that follows. "The things which thou hast seen" (i. 19) are the first of these: Christ's own inspection of the Churches (the candlesticks), His witness for Himself during the night of His absence. The candlesticks are seven, the number of completeness; and while they are, in the first place, the, seven Asiatic churches, yet these are clearly representative of the Church at large. Only in this way do the addresses in the next two chapters attain due relation to the universal character of the rest of the book; only in this way do we understand the emphatic call at the end of each address, to every one who has an ear to listen; only in this way, question it however we may, does the Church of God on earth come at all into the prophecy. Moreover, it is anything but a new thing to say that these churches, as successively brought before us here, will be found, by any one who seriously inquires into it, to present the characters of the Church in successive stages of its history to the present time. Thus we can see how more and more urgently, from the address to Thyatira onwards, as warning or as encouragement, the coming of the Lord is pressed; until to the Philadelphia overcomer is given the assurance of being "kept out of the hour of temptation which is to come upon the whole world, to try those that dwell upon the earth." And then, indicating the way of accomplishment of this, the announcement now is made, "I come quickly." How else should they be kept out of the very "hour" of a universal trial, but by being taken up to meet the descending Lord? After which Laodicea gets a

final threatening to be spewed out of Christ's mouth; He, though still knocking, being already outside the door!

Thus the "things that are" end, and a new vision begins, with a Voice as of a trumpet calling up to heaven. The scene entirely changes, and the seer becomes in the Spirit afresh. A throne set in heaven is before him; and there are thrones around the Throne. These thrones have human occupants, who are priests as well as kings, and sing the song of redemption when the Lamb appears (chap. v. 8-xo). Through the scenes that follow they are still in their places round the throne, "all the angels" being seen again round them in an outer circle. Other redeemed ones take their place "before" that Throne, but not "around" it (chap. vii. ii, 15).

But let us look at the Throne itself: it is a throne of judgment; "lightnings and voices and thunders" proceed out of it. The earth is threatened; nay, but the bow of promise, of the color of new verdure refreshed by rain, assures us that God's covenant as to the earth is not forgotten; rather, it is coming into remembrance, as if anew. This storm is to purify and bless. Heaven's open doors having received the multitudes of heavenly saints, the time of the earth is come; and therefore Israel's. The book of God's counsels as to the future is opened: who can open it? The Lamb! Yes, assuredly it is the Lamb; but notice His character now: "The Lion of Me tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the book" (chap. v. 5). Judah's, Israel's, conquering King it is who opens the future now, and this makes doubly clear that that which is to follow concerns the earth and Israel.

Pass on: the lightnings flash and the thunders utter their voice; but four angels stand upon the four corners of the

earth to keep back the winds from every quarter, until, as the voice of the interpreting angel declares, they have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads (vii. 1-3). And who, then, are these? "A hundred and forty and four thousand out of every tribe of the children of Israel." Can these be simply symbolically such? No: Judah's Lion is opening the book. The Gentiles are not indeed forgotten: look at the vast multitude out of all nations that, in the next vision, are seen before the throne. Ah, the great throng of the redeemed of all time are they? No, says the interpreting voice again, "These are they that come," not "out of great tribulation" simply, as our common translation has it, but "out of the tribulation, the great one," as it literally reads. They are a multitude gathered out of the time of the end, as we have seen it; and of Gentiles, separate from the multitude of Israel's sealed ones: both joining together in testimony as to the period we have reached. The church-scroll that Peter saw let down from heaven, has been taken up thither again. Jew and Gentile are no more united into one body, but are in different spheres of blessing; the Jew having the foremost place, and becoming the communicator of blessing to the nations round; Israel becomes Jezreel, the "seed of God." Surely, in all this, it should not be hard to determine the doctrine of Scripture as to the coming of Christ for His saints, or the hope of the Church as the Morning Star. With the last week of Daniel's seventy, the greater part of Revelation is concerned. What very definitely marks this is the frequent specification of the very time before mentioned, the half week or half-weeks, whichever way we take it, of the last week. It is variously connected (i) with the maintenance of a special Elias-like testimony, the two witnesses, in the time of the end (chap. xi. 3-8);

(2) with the flight of the Jewish remnant into the wilderness ,and their protection there (chap. xii 6, 14); and with the "practising" of the Roman "beast," when the little horn seen by the Old Testament prophet has become the 8th head of empire as seen by the New Testament one. Here no essential mistake seems possible. In the i9th chapter, after the marriage of the Lamb has taken place in heaven, we see Him descend with His saints to the judgment of the earth. Here from the closing portion of the book, as before from the beginning of it, we have witness that the taking up of the saints precedes by some time, at least, His appearing with them; but this the other passages that we have examined, not oniy confirm, but develop fully.

For all this, there are many opposers of this doctrine; and we are now to look at the arguments by which they would substantiate their opposition.

Chapter 2 - The Old Testament and the New

Israel and the Church; and the Relation of Prophecy to Each Of fundamental importance to the discussion before us is the consideration of the distinctive difference between the Old Testament and the New, and as connected with this, of the unique character of the Church of Christ. And this will be found to involve a special relation in which it stands to prophecy. These are indeed matters which have been often taken up, and it would seem as if apology were due for taking them up again. The necessity for doing so could not perhaps be shown more plainly than in the following quotation from one who takes the opposite position to that for which we are contending here; and for this purpose I introduce it in this place. The writer says:- "It is a pleasure to quote the following admirable words from Dr. Gebhardt, to confirm what we have stated, that this term 'end' is applied to the present age: 'Christianity is nothing and will be nothing else than the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, or the realization of the eschatology of the Old Testament prophets, throughout the whole New Testament time, until the Lord comes - and even on to the final glorification of the world.' Prof. Volck is more definite and to our purpose: 'Since the ascension of Christ we stand in the last days until the Lord comes.' With still greater definiteness, Dr. Hobart, another profound student of prophecy, says: 'The whole of the New Testament times is called by the apostles, and by the Lord Himself, the 'end.' It is expressly stated that at His first advent Christ appeared at the end of all

preceding ages - an 'end' to be closed up by His second advent. In this sense our whole Age in the New Testament is conceived of as the end of all the ages that went before."

One can hardly imagine that the words we have emphasized here can be intended by the writer or taken by him who puts his seal so strongly upon them, in the full sense which they would bear for the ordinary reader. "Christianity nothing else than the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy"! All the New Testament, therefore, so far as relating to this, adding nothing even to the Old! Can that be intended? All the mysteries "hidden from ages and generations" and "now made manifest to the saints" blotted out by one stroke of the pen; and the deed applauded by one who would join the apostle in saying, "Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God"! No: we must refuse to believe that this can be really meant in its entirety either by Dr. Gebhardt or the one from whom we quote him.

But that the writer does diminish greatly the character of these mysteries will be evident by another quotation :- "There is no foundation whatever for the assumption that 'the Church which is His Body' is to be made up of the believers between Pentecost and the Parousia. A new body was not formed on the day of Pentecost. The fact that all Old Testament saints had divine life through faith in Christ made them members of His Body. The special revelation given to Paul, - 'the mystery' revealed through him - was that believers from amongst the Gentiles, without taking a place in subordination to the Jews, as they will do in the Millennial Age to come, are now, in this Age, heirs to the inheritance, members of

the body, and partakers of the promise given through Abraham to the sons of Israel. This is the new thing - Israel set aside from national supremacy during the present gospel period, and all nations evangelized in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the next Age these national distinctions will again be resumed."

Thus we see that the questions connected together at the beginning of this paper are in fact in intimate relation to one another, and that the old contentions still have to be maintained. We may well begin with asking ourselves, Is it the fact that this equality of Gentiles with Jews in the things noted,- things which all believers in Israel already possessed - is the "new thing," the "mystery revealed through Paul?" If so, there must be, it is plain, a large measure of truth in Dr. Gebhardt's assertion that we are living only in the last days of the Old Testament prophets; with this reserve, that Gentiles have a co-equal place with Jews which the prophets did not contemplate. Are we prepared to accept this as the fact?

The three things belonging to the mystery of Christ revealed to Paul which are referred to, are better stated in the original Greek of Eph. iii. 4-6 than in the common or revised translations. There is indeed a difficulty in putting it into English that is not awkward or else periphrastic. The most literal would read, "that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and a joint-body, and joint-partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel." It is strange enough that in the reference just made (though it is true it is not given as a quotation) the last important words should be omitted, and the "promise given through Abraham to the Sons of Israel" should be substituted for- "His promise in Christ through the

gospel." No doubt it may be said the promise was always in Christ, and the gospel is the same gospel. Indeed, the last is said, (p. 90;) though proofs of the opposite have been often given, Why should they be disregarded?

The Lord had been preaching the gospel (Matt. iv. 23; Mark i. 14) from the beginning of His ministry; yet it was only at the time when, being rejected, He charged them that they should tell no man that He was the Christ; that Jesus "began to show unto His disciples that He must go unto Jerusalem and be killed, and be raised again the third day"

(Matt. xvi. 20, 21). Now Paul tells the Corinthians (i Cor. xv.) that precisely that was the gospel he had preached to them, which they had received, and in which they stood, that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again." Yet the Lord had not even to His disciples mentioned this before; and when He did, "Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be to Thee."

Doubtless for us there is "one gospel, the only gospel": in that we shall all agree. If any man preach a "different gospel," as the apostle wrote to the Galatians, it is "not another": for there is no other. Doubtless, also, in type and prophecy Christ's death had been foretold, and the glories that should follow; yet, speaking of this very thing, the same apostle tells us, to whom at first it had been so strange and so unwelcome, that "of this salvation the prophets enquired and searched diligently," and to them "it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things." To us indeed they minister these things now; but how has

this ministry been made available to us? The apostle tells us: They are "reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

This gospel, then, which is our gospel, has indeed its roots in the Old Testament, and to us ministers its blessings. For all that, it was not the gospel of the prophets' days, though faith might and did realize the goodness of the Lord at all times. Now that it has come, it necessarily stands out as if there were no other; and so the apostle says of Israel, "As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake"- for the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 28). They are treated as enemies,- as having accepted the responsibility of that death which they inflicted, and which the gospel proclaims. Nationally, they are thus enemies; and not until the gospel ceases to go forth, will Israel come to salvation. For, as the prophet is witness, it is when "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, that the Lord shall arise upon "Israel," and His glory shall be seen upon" her (Isa. lx. 2). The light of the gospel must have gone from the earth for such gross darkness to exist.

Thus "His promise in Christ through the gospel" would by no means be that to the sons of Israel, but Paul the apostle to the Gentiles it is who claims it in some special sense as his: "my gospel." And it has been long since pointed out that no other besides Paul gives us the doctrine of justification, or the full development of the place in Christ. The promise here spoken of is the blessing flowing out of this, and (although it be true that "if ye be Christ's ye are Abraham's seed,") goes far beyond anything promised to the sons of Israel. It must

do so, inasmuch as the place itself is entirely unknown in the Old Testament.

Then as to joint-heirship, with whom are we joint-heirs? No one can have a doubt, who goes to the New Testament for an answer; none can have the least knowledge, who goes to the Old. Abraham was "heir of the world," but is that our measure? No, we are "joint-heirs with Christ;" and it is Paul again who declares this to us (Rom. viii. 17). Had the "sons of Israel" ever such an assurance? No, in no wise: we are here again not introduced as Gentiles into Israel's blessing, but, whether Jew or Gentile, into what is immeasurably higher.

Lastly, the "joint-body" is, as we are well aware, the "body of Christ." Scripture, and indeed the apostle Paul again, declares that the Church is Christ's Body, and that by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles" (i Cor. xii. 13). Thus, while it is true that "all Old Testament saints had divine life through faith in Christ," we may not say, unless in the teeth of Scripture, that this "made them members of His Body": for only the baptism of the Spirit does this. And again, though our author says that "a new body was not formed on the day of Pentecost," yet the Lord Himself tells His disciples that they would be baptized of the Holy Ghost then. What then are we to make of this positive assertion?

If, then, a new body was formed at Pentecost, it was certainly a body unknown to the Old Testament Scriptures, which has nothing of the "sons of Israel," even those converted to God, being the Body of Christ. The only passage for it that has been produced, so far as

I am aware, is Isa. xxvi. 19, which reads with the omission of the words supplied by the translators, "Thy dead men shall live; my dead body, they shall arise." The word used here has no plural, but is joined to a plural verb, and is therefore in the revised version, as by Delitzsch and others, taken as a plural, "my dead bodies." Here all semblance of application to what is before us is lost. But if even the singular were to be preserved, and Jehovah really calls dead Israel "My corpse," when He brings her out of her grave, we may well wonder at the boldness that would apply such a term to the Body of Christ; especially when the whole claim of Israel to be this is to be founded upon it. It is hardly worth while to discuss it further.

But the Church of Christ, as indwelt of the Spirit, is also the "House" and "Temple of God"; and here again is what Israel never was, nor any part of Israel. While, if Israel was indeed the Bride of Jehovah, and is to be again married to Him after her long divorcement, as Hosea declares (ii. i6, 19, 20), the similar relationship of the Church to Christ in no wise can make them identical (Eph. v. 32). The latter is part of the "mystery" of the Church; the former, a well-known truth of the Old Testament.

The Church is heavenly; Israel, earthly. If they are identical, then the Church and Israel have no separate interests, and there is accomplished, though in a different way, the same gross confusion as long prevailed, and still prevails very much, among post-millennialists. With them Israel's promises were made over to the Church; in this the Church would be merged in Israel.

Thus the marriage of the Bride of the Lamb takes place in heaven (Rev. xix.) before Christ descends with His saints to the judgment of the earth. The Christian book of prophecy, Revelation, is all through concerned with the connection of the Old Testament in this respect with the New. Everywhere it adds the heavenly to the earthly side of the last things; as, conspicuously, in its view of the "thousand years" in the following chapter. There we have no details of earthly blessing. Neither Israel nor the Gentiles come into the scene. But what have we? The reign of the heavenly saints with Christ over the earth, and the defining and limiting the thousand years themselves, giving them their true relationship to the eternity which follows. In connection with all this we find a Jerusalem indeed, but it is the new and heavenly Jerusalem and not the earthly city.

Thus the Church, spite of denials, begins at Pentecost and is complete when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in and it is taken up to meet the Lord in the air. That the Old Testament saints share in heavenly blessing and in the reign with Christ over the earth has always been maintained; but that does not identify the one with the other. On the contrary the epistle to the Hebrews clearly distinguishes between "the church of the first-born ones whose names are written in heaven," and "the spirits of just men made perfect"- Old Testament saints, who as a body have been subjected to death (Heb. XII. 23). The Church here has the same relation to other heavenly saints as Israel upon earth to the nations there; and this the words describing it point out.

How impossible, then, that "Christianity" should be "nothing else than the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy," when the fact is that it never appears in Old

Testament prophecy! As having place in those mysteries which are characteristic of the New Testament, and which were "kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matt. XI. 35; Rom. xvi. 25; Col. i. 26) it lies hid in a mere gap of time only indicated in connection with the judgment upon Israel. In the prophecy of the seventy weeks, for instance, it comes in between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks; and the only event marked there is the destruction of the city and the sanctuary by the Roman people (Dan. ix. 26). In Micah v. we have what is, no doubt, the fullest statement in this connection, where Israel's judge, the Bethlehem-born ruler, being smitten by His people, this is followed by their being given up "until the time when she who travailed has brought forth: then," it is added, "shall the remnant of His brethren return unto the children of Israel." Here it is certainly implied that the brethren of the King had in the meantime been detached from the nation and its hopes; but what they had turned to in place of these is still not indicated.

There is another reason for this omission: that with Israel the hope of the world is for the same time set aside. Israel it is that is to "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6). Good reason is there, then, why with her setting aside time should make no progress. Dates are connected with her; the determined times are upon Daniel's people and the holy city; and the centuries of gathering out a heavenly people go all uncounted.

A striking proof of this is found in Corinthians (2 Cor. iv. 4); where Satan is called, not the "god of this world," as the common version has it, but the "god of this age."

Christianity is not reckoned as an "age," among the world-ages, or assuredly this could not be said. A world that has cast out Christ, Israel uniting with the Gentiles to do so, may be still that out of which grace saves, but nothing more. As the Lord said to the Jews that took Him, "This is your hour and the power of darkness" (Luke xxii. 53), so "the age of this world," as the word really is in Eph. ii. 2, is "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Satan is the "god of this age."

Hence "the end of the age" in the divine sense is, as has been already said, the last week of Daniel's seventy, broken off from the rest, and still to come. And thus also, Christ's death was for us who stand in this gap "the completion of the ages" (Heb. ix. 26, Gk.), and upon us "the ends of the ages are come" (i Cor. ii, Gk.). That does not mean, as Dr. Gebhardt supposes, that we are in the end-times of Jewish prophets, but the contrary; though the spiritual value of those ended ages is surely ours.

The reaping of this spiritual value of the ages past is indeed a thing of the greatest importance to note, for those who are disposed to even Christianity with any promises through Abraham to the sons of Israel. According to the apostle some at least of the prime factors of Israel's history happened to them for types, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come." Such words are surely not intended to make us feel that we occupy but a place in the latter days of the Old Testament prophets; but rather that all times previous were intended to minister to the present, as (in some sense) time to eternity; the ages (for us) being completed when Christ died. We are not in

any Jewish "end" at all. And though it is true that Abraham sought a "better country, that is, a heavenly, yet our portion as "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus " (Eph. i. 3) is only in contrast with any promise through Abraham to the sons of Israel that can possibly be shown. Abraham himself in this relation is the "heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13), and the sphere of Israel's blessing is distinctly defined in the same way: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord: the earth has He given to the children of men" (Ps. cxv. x6).

Chapter 3 - The Resurrection of the Saints and the Great Tribulation

It is evident from what we have been considering that the writers from whom we have been quoting are involved in the same great error. Over-looking the meaning of the time-gap in which we are, and ignoring or belittling the mysteries which give Christianity its distinctive character, we can be said to be in the "last days" of Jewish prophets, and "partakers of the promise given through Abraham to the sons of Israel." There is but one passage that I know which may seem to assert the first, and that is the quotation of Joel by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. i7). But that is quoted to the Jews over whom through Christ's intercession the mercy of God was yet giving time for repentance (Luke xiii. 8.), so that if even yet they repented nationally, the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord, and He would send Jesus Christ again to them (Acts 19-21). This was soon ended by the rejection of the message. That "in the end of these days" (of the prophets, Heb. i, Gk.) "God hath spoken to us by His Son" says nothing of our place in them, and no more than Heb. ix. a6, which asserts what in reality is very different. The sanctuary could not have been opened for us if the ages of probation had not been actually ended for us; nor could the history of Israel have disclosed its types, if for us the "ends of the ages" had nbt "arrived." Yet the "end of the age" has in the prophetic sense not yet arrived (Matt. xiii, 39; xxviii. 20): so that we cannot be in it; and the age to come has still a probationary character for men at large. For us the cross of Christ has

already manifested the character both of the flesh and the world, and we need nothing else to manifest it. But how important for us to realize the gap in prophetic time in which we stand. We are now to go in company with some other writers who have given us their refutation - to themselves such - of the views for which we are contending here. If they come to us in fragmentary, and perhaps disorderly fashion, the responsibility is not our own. It is due very much to the lack of seriousness with which the subject seems to be taken up. As Mr. Cameron affirms, "None of the learned students of prophecy in Germany seem to think the modern vagary of a secret rapture of the Church before the end-time is reached is worthy of serious consideration." We can but lament the influence which the attitude of these learned Germans seems to have exerted over others in this matter, even when they can afford some brief moments to it. Their language is too often tinged with a scorn which might be spared without injury to their arguments, and which can only impress favorably those for whom the larger part of the argument is the man who uses it. Their method seems to be to gather up a sheaf of statements in denial of what they are dealing with, point them with scripture references, and launch them at the unwelcome doctrine; leaving the point and propriety of the application often to be determined or taken for granted as suits best the temper of the reader. We shall have occasion to point this out as we proceed; but it certainly makes less easy the examination of arguments which have often to be first discovered, and perhaps unsuccessfully. A tract is lying before me of twenty-one small pages, fourteen being taken up with an enumeration of the texts which have the words to show what the Scriptures say as to the question, "Can the Parousia (Coming in Person) of

the Lord be separated from His Epiphaneia (Shining upon); or from His Apokalupsis (Revelation)?" The writer (Mr. Robert Brown) cautions us at the outset, "that positive and absolute statements of the Divine Word must of necessity be received before, and must therefore override, all inferences from other passages which seem to contradict them; as such inferences are, of course, merely human." He concludes with some inferences of his own, which are, of course, as open to question as those of any other, and which we shall take up as such, but in the order which may be most convenient for us, and putting along with them the statements of other writers, as far as they may serve to give completeness to the subject before us. But in the first place the question in the title of his tract is misleading, and as a consequence the classification of some of his texts likewise. For no one, as far as I am aware, would contend that the coming of the Lord could be separated from His manifestation or revelation. What is contended for is that the coming of the Lord into the air, as announced in 2 Thess. iv., takes place previous to, and in fact some time previous to, His coming on to the earth with the saints He has gathered to Himself before. Both would be His coming; and therefore the merely quoting texts with the word "coming" in them would settle nothing. But the passage itself declares that those who sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him; when He appears therefore, they shall appear with Him. That the Thessalonians needed to know, that the dead had not lost their place with Him in that day. How then would this be accomplished? The dead would first be raised and the living then changed and caught up, with them. And so they should be ever with the Lord. It was in fact a new revelation, and so the apostle announces it as

what he said "by the word of the Lord." The twenty-fifth of Matthew had shown that the living saints would go forth and meet Him, but had said nothing about the dead at that time. The apostle adds as to the dead. Dr. West indeed declares with his usual strong assertion, that "the word of the Lord" here is nothing but the Lord's "Olivet discourse" (Matt. xxiv.; xxv.). "It corrected the Thessalonian error as to the 'any-moment view.' Paul appeals to it to decide the question. He calls it the 'word of the Lord.' He had it on his table when he wrote both letters to the Thessalonians(!) He uses its very language. The seventieth week covers his own words in 2 Thess. ii. r-8. " But that settles nothing as to what is here. Where is the declaration in the Lord's prophecy as to the resurrection of the sleeping saints? One can only suppose that the gathering together of the elect from the four winds is taken to mean this; but the proof of it must be found, if found at all, elsewhere. Moreover the apostle does not speak as if he were citing. In i Cor. vii. ro, where he does cite, he says, "not I speak, but the Lord." Here it is the phrase used for a special revelation (See i Kings xiii. 2, 32; 2 Chron. xxx. i2; LXX.): "I say to you," but "by the word" or "a word of the Lord," (for there is no article,)-that is, by a revelation. Our assurance of this will be still more confirmed if we consider that Paul it is to whom especially belongs the revelation of the "mysteries" (Eph. III. 3- 9), among which is that of the Church as the body and bride of Christ (Eph. V. 32). Could there be a thing which required less (as we would suppose) a special revelation to make it known to him, than the institution of the Supper of the Lord? It is narrated by three of the evangelists, and as the common feast of Christians was known to every one; and yet, as showing forth in the

participation of it the unity of the Body of Christ (i Cor. x. i's), and thus coming into the special sphere of his commission, it has to be the subject of a special revelation to him (i Cor. xi. 23). It is therefore in perfect accordance with this that the taking home of the Bride (Eph. v.27) should be in like manner the subject of a special communication. Thus everything unites to refute Dr. West's assertion. He has more, however, upon the subject of the resurrection of the saints which we must look at as nearly concerning us here. "Its time-point," he says, "is given with the utmost precision in the Scriptures. It is the time-point of the Second Advent for the salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked, even as at the one time-point Noah and his family entered the ark, and the ungodly perished in the flood; and Israel was redeemed when Egypt was whelmed in the sea; and the Church fled to Pella when Jerusalem was destroyed. It is a time-point for both judgment and salvation. Asaph calls it the "shining of the Lord (Ps. 1. x-6). Isaiah calls it His 'appearing' (lxvi. 5) in order to raise the holy dead, deliver Israel, destroy the Antichrist, and bring to victory the Kingdom. Five times in the Old Testament this illustrious Parousia of Christ is described, (1) as the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 13); (2) of the Conqueror from Bozrah descending over Edom (Isa. lxiii. i-6); (3) of the coming of the Lord to Olivet (Zech.xiv.5); (4) and to Zion (Isa. lix. 20); and (5) in clouds both for Judgment and Salvation (Ps. i. i-6; xcvi. i xcvii. 2-8; xcvi. 1-9; cx. i-v; lxxii. 2, 4, 18, 19; cxiii. 2-17)." That is not the whole, but we pause here for the present. It is a good specimen of the style of argument on the part of one of the liveliest opponents to what he calls the "Any Moment Theory." One naturally supposes that all these

references are to establish the time-point of the resurrection of the saints. That is what he is speaking of; but by a turn which, if we are not to call "dexterous," we must ascribe to his perplexingly involved style, a number of texts which merely speak of judgment and salvation at the appearing of Christ, come to look as if they were proof-texts of what he is seeking to establish even the Church's flight to Pella when Jerusalem was destroyed! Let us examine, however, as far as necessary, what he has set before us. And first as to Noah and the flood, we may frankly admit the application to the coming of the Lord which He Himself makes (Matt. xxiv. 37-41). "The one shall be taken and the other left." But we must handle such things more carefully than Dr. West: "taken" how and for what? Those whom resurrection takes out from among the dead are saints and taken for glory. At the rapture of the living saints, it is the same. In Noah's time, "the flood came and took them all away;" those taken are the judged and not the saved. When the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, there will be a real correspondence with this. When the purification of the earth is in question, as it will be then, "the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend." But that is neither dead nor living saints. The application here, therefore, fails entirely. But Dr. West has forgotten Enoch; though, as a living saint removed to heaven before the judgment of the earth, he occupies a sufficiently striking position to attract attention. One who actually prophesied, Jude tells us, of the coming of the Lord, and seems to fill the gap that would otherwise be left in what is really a very striking picture of the times that are at hand. But the application fails Dr. West. If Enoch had been taken away at the time when those

shut up in the ark were nearing deliverance, how readily would he have seen and seized so fair an argument. But Israel was redeemed when Egypt was whelmed in the sea! True; but I see nothing that points in that either to the Coming, the Resurrection, or the (Editor's Note: Our source cut off the chapter here...sorry for the inconvenience)

Chapter 4 - The Tares, the Wheat, and the Harvest

Mr. Brown brings forward in further proof the Scripture statements as to the end of the age and the harvest; but these we shall better consider as more fully taken up by another writer, B. W. Newton, to whose arguments I therefore turn. The parable of the wheat and tares will come before us in this connection, and he believes it decisive as to the whole question before us. I think it will be found that all depends as to this upon how the parable is to be explained. But we must go carefully through his arguments which touch many questions and a considerable range of prophetic scripture. He says:- "I have long felt the parable of the tares to be quite conclusive of the question we are considering Whatever else may be true, the Lord's explanation of the parable must certainly stand. We have in it a period definitely, and I might also say, chronologically marked, commencing with the sowing of the Son of man, and ending with the separation of the children of the wicked one. It is said that this separation shall not take place until the harvest; consequently until the harvest the field has some wheat in it. 'Let both grow together until the harvest.' No words could be more plain than these. They could not grow together until the harvest, if all, or even some of the wheat were gathered in many years before the tares were fully ripened; and they will not fully ripen until the time of Antichrist; indeed, it is expressly said that the tares are to be gathered first; and let it be remembered that not one tare is gathered except by angels sent forth; not one is gathered except at the time

of harvest; not one is gathered without being rooted up; that is, taken out of the world. The meaning of the gathering of the tares is not left to our conjecture, but is explained by the Lord Himself : 'As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of this age. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom [this is the explanation of the gathering] 'all things that offend and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire:' this is the explanation of the burning. The wheat and the tares are to grow together until this is done . "How can any one doubt after reading this parable that the saints of this dispensation (for to them alone the name of wheat, as contrasted with tares, belongs) will continue in the world together with the professing visible body until the end of the age, that is the harvest? for it must be remembered that the harvest is not said to be in the end of the age, but that the harvest is the end of the age." (Pp. 18-20.) This is the whole of Mr. Newton's argument; which he defends, however, at the close of his pam-phlet from objections drawn in part from some very natural mistakes as to his doctrine, which will serve to keep us from falling into them, while some of them with his answers we shall have to consider further on. First of all, as to the "end of the age," a term which we have already considered, and which is of very great significance in relation to the whole matter before us, he guards us from the mistake that lie takes it to be "one definite moment, marked by one event, and that the saints remain until it is entirely over and passed away." He regards it "as the name of a certain period, perhaps a considerably lengthened period, during which many events will occur. But this period," he remarks, "must have a beginning, and as

soon as ever that beginning comes, we may say, 'the end of the age' has come. I have never said that the saints will remain on the earth until the end of the end of the age." (P. 95.) One may agree then thoroughly with this, that the saints of the present time will remain upon earth, neither resurrection nor rapture will take place, until the end of the age arrives. The Lord's concluding words in Matthew are alone sufficient proof of this: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." Nay, more, they should make us also expect that this would be the precise measure of the time in which we should need such an assurance. When the end of the age arrives, we may infer that the period of the Church's stay upon earth will have reached its limit, and His coming to take us to Himself will be no more delayed. It has been already shown that the "end of the age" can in no way be taken as the end of the Christian age; for there is no such age: times and seasons are now not being reckoned, but we live in a gap of time, a blank in Old Testament prophecy, which has Israel always in the foreground. Israel it is that is to 'blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit' (Isa. xxvii. 6). Israel then being nation-ally set aside, it is not hard to realize that all is at a stand as far as this is concerned, until she is again taken up. What, then, must be the significance of times beginning again which are specifically times determined upon Israel to bring her into blessing! Such times we find in Daniel's seventy weeks, which are to end with this, sixty-nine having already passed when Messiah the Prince having come and being cut off, the downfall and ruin of the nation followed, and all was indefinitely suspended. The one week that remains is naturally and necessarily therefore the end of the age, the last seven years of these determined times. The

beginning of this period means that God's thoughts have once more returned to Israel; consequently, that the Church period is just at an end. With the beginning, therefore, of the end of the age, the hour strikes for her removal to heaven. Of all this Mr. Newton has nothing to say. For him the Church and the remnant of Israel are found side by side during at least a considerable time towards the end of the Christian age, as he considers it, - a view which we have to consider presently. We have seen already, however, how differently the whole structure of the book of Revelation speaks. But the Lord's words: "So shall it be at the end of this age; the Son of man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather together out of His Kingdom," show that now the Kingdom of the Son of man is come, and the present time of the Son upon the Father's throne is already over. But this is the Lord's interpretation of the parable, and not the parable itself, which ends short of any actual coming of the harvest. The householder tells his servants what will take place when the time of harvest shall have come, but this is when he is comforting them for their own impotence in undoing the mischief that has been done. They are not competent to remove the tares that have been sown amongst the wheat: but angel hands shall do it effectually at a future time. The time is future: the action of the parable does not go on to it. Notice now another thing: the interpretation of the parable is cut off from the parable itself, and begins a second section of the whole series, which is thus divided, as commonly with a septenary series, into four and three. Four is the number of the world, and the first four parables, as spoken in the presence of the multitude, give us the public or world-aspect of the Kingdom in the eyes of men; and not one of them goes

on in its action to the end. The three parables which follow (the number being that of divine manifestation) give us on the other hand what is told to disciples in the house; and in them we have the divine side, the secrets whispered in the ear of faith. Thus the parable of the treasure gives us the purpose of God as to Israel; that of the pearl, the Church in its preciousness to Christ; that of the net, the going forth of the everlasting gospel among the nations after the Church period is over. It is with this second series that the interpretation of the second parable has its place, and thus we come in it to the "end of the age," as in the last parable of the draw-net; for we are in both beyond the present time. The interpretation, therefore, carries us beyond the present, and we must not hastily assume that the gathering the tares out of the Kingdom and casting them into the fire is simply the equivalent of the expressions in the parable itself. Indeed upon the face of them they are not so: gathering into bundles to be burnt is not the same as the actual burning, though it may be preparatory to it; just as again the gathering the wheat into the barn is not the equivalent of the righteous shining forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Mr. Newton even allows this, although he does not carry the difference out sufficiently, as we see by the answer he makes to an objection. The Lord Himself explains, he says, the gathering of the tares as gather-ing out of His Kingdom all things that offend. And to the objector who urges that "All the tares being burned before the saints are caught up at all, nothing remains to be judged," he answers, "I have never said that the tares would be burned before the saints are caught up. I make a distinction between gathering them into bundles, and burning them." (P. 100.) This is true, but how far does the distinction go?

for he says of the gathering, "Not one is gathered without being rooted up; that is, taken out of the world." Thus the objection is not really met: for the meaning would be the same if it were put: "All the tares being rooted up' out of the world before the saints are caught up, nothing remains to be judged (on earth)." Then his only reply would be what follows: "Even if the tares were all burned," (or rooted out of the world), "there yet remain Jews, Apostates, Heathen Nations, to be judged." (P. 100.) He says again: "'Gathering' does of itself imply removal from the field; for the reason given for allowing the tares to grow with the wheat until the harvest is this, 'Lest while ye gather (evAAeyn,-the same word) the tares, ye root up the wheat with them." (P. xoi.) Thus the tares he takes to be really rooted up out of the world as the first thing; then the wheat being gathered into the barn, the field of Christendom is entirely empty. Before we go on to consider what he says is left in this case as objects of the judgments afterwards, let us see if this idea of gathering as rooting out of the world he in this case warranted. We are told in the parable that the servants of the householder, as soon as they discerned the tares among the wheat, inquired if they should go and gather them up. Are we to suppose that their question meant, should they root them up out of the world - exterminate them? No doubt, Romanists have attempted to do so, and illustrated the inability to separate the tares from the wheat; but is that what the servants wished really to suggest? had they no thought but of killing the heretics that had come in among the orthodox? Alas! the tares were found much earlier than the time in which the Christians could have used or thought of using the arm of flesh to accomplish such a purification; and they must have sought it in

other ways than by carnal weapons which both our Lord and His apostles so emphatically condemn. Was it not, in fact a rectification of the Kingdom which they desired, rather than of the world? a kingdom which, however easy it may be for us now, primitive Christians would never have thought of identifying with the world, or any portion of the world! May not this put us upon the track of what the gathering of the tares would mean in the interpretation? Of course, before harvest-time the riddance of the mischief could only be by the hand, and the rooting up would be what would take place. But at harvest-time it would not be so. Reaping would be ordinarily at least with the sickle, and there would not be rooting up at all. Rather it would be a severing from the root that would take place, which might imply a separation from the doctrinal faith, of the heretic from his heresy, but not for good, so that apostasy would be the outcome. Angelic hands might accomplish the severance, - events might take place even which would make it impossible to retain the heresy; the apostasy would be their own. Thus two of Mr. Newton's classes would be one: a thing which Rev. xvii. would indicate as probable, and which would naturally lead to the Beast throwing off the woman, and the kings of the Roman earth helping to destroy her. The "strong delusion" of 2 Thess. looks exactly in the same direction, except Mr. Newton has proof that the professing Christians that fall into the snare of Antichrist are not "tares." Certainly the present antichristian systems should furnish followers for the Antichrist to come; and his rise in connection with the great head of the revived Roman empire, must make us think of Romanism and kindred systems as those out of which the great mass of these followers come. Are not these tares, who become apostates? if

not, what else? It is easy to see, then, why Mr. N. should have to speak as he does of the great book of prophecy in the New Testament. "I see comparatively little," he says, "about the judgment on the tares in the Revelation; it appears to me to be concerned almost entirely with the means which lead to the consummation and the consummation itself of Apostasy. But that apostasy is the result not merely of Christianity first perverted and then renounced, it is also the apostasy of man as man ('worship him who made the earth), and also of the Jew; a threefold combination of Apostasy." No intelligent student of prophecy doubts the combination of other elements with it; but what is this "Christianity perverted, and then renounced," but virtually tares becoming apostates? Nay, but, says Newton, "I also see that angels and not saints, are sent to the Tares, whereas saints come with the Lord against Apostates." "On the Tares [judgment] is by angels sent forth while they are growing quietly with the wheat." Certainly in this manner we can make plenty of oppositions, by comparing things that cannot rightly be compared. A wheat-field is, no doubt, a very image of quietness; but one may well doubt whether that is what we are meant to gather from it. And angels come with Christ against the apostates; as Mr. Newton himself says: "'His army,' i.e. saints and angels." (P.) As to the exact part each may have in the judgment, Revelation does not seem to say. But to return to the parable: the binding in bundles must come after the reaping, if the figure is to be preserved. Would one naturally think of it as something to follow death? If so, one can hardly expect to translate it into any distinct meaning. If, on the other hand, the tares (though dead as tares) are still viewed as in the field of the world, then we may imagine a various compacting of

men loosened from the hold of their religious systems, in ways that are not pointed out, but which lead them on toward their final doom. The gathering out of the Kingdom of the Son of man, as in the interpretation of the parable, goes, I believe, further than this: for the Kingdom of the Son of man is not local, but over the whole earth. It is a gathering after that of the parable itself, and immediately to judgment. Mr. Newton's own interpretation is different in so many respects from this, that there would be little profit in proportion to the labor of any extended comparison. For him the end of the age is the Christian age, and although in the tract from which I have quoted, he allows that the "end" may be "a considerably lengthened period," yet elsewhere he charges those with endeavoring to avoid the force of the argument from this parable, who suggest that "the end of the age may mean an indefinitely (?) lengthened period." He replies that it is definitely marked as "the harvest," quotes the interpretation of the parable as if the gathering and casting of the tares into the fire were the whole matter, and asks, "Is Antichrist to arise after this?" But we shall apprehend his system better when we have reviewed his arguments as to the Jewish and Christian remnants at the time of the end.

Chapter 5 - The Saints in the Tribulation - Who Are They?

We have already briefly considered the structure of the book of Revelation, and the evidence that it gives us as to the change of dispensation that is impending. The argument is a connected one of many arguments combined. We have in the first chapter the Lord in the midst of the candlesticks, the Christian assemblies. In the addresses to these which follow in the next two chapters, emphasized in each case by a solemn appeal for our attention, we find what is in fact the history of the Church of God on earth. As they progress from the address to Thyatira onwards, the promise or the warning of His coming is more and more enforced; ending with the threat of Laodicea being spued out of His mouth, and immediately after this a Voice as of a trumpet calls, and the apostle is caught up to heaven. There he sees thrones around the throne of God, - a throne of judgment circled by the bow of God's covenant with the earth; and, while the company of kings and priests sing their redemption song to the Lamb slain, he is told that this is Jndah's Lion - the King of the Jews - who has prevailed to open the book. We look upon the earth again as the book is being opened; judgments are being poured out upon it; there are saints there still and martyrs; presently a company sealed out of all the tribes of Israel; then an innumerable company of Gentiles also, but who have all come out of the great tribulation; by and by we see the actors in this, - the last beast of Daniel, and the lamb-like, dragon-voiced beast who leads men to worship him; times are reckoned, the half-

weeks of the last week of Daniel; and looking on beyond the judgment of Babylon the Great, we see the marriage of the Lamb is come, and presently the Lamb Himself, with a glorious train of saints who follow Him, descends to the judgment of the earth.

Now this is simply the story of Revelation, with scarce a word of comment, and none needed, one would think, to make it plain. Through all this latter part we hear nothing of the Church of God on earth. The Lion of Judah opens the book; the book gives us Jewish scenes, Israel, Jerusalem, the time of Jacob's trouble, the instruments of it, the false woman and her doom, until after the marriage of the Lamb, He comes with His saints from heaven. Does this fit with Mr. Newton's views, or Mr. Brown's, or Dr. West's, or with that view which they all oppose? What have they to say about it? what arguments do they use against it? I can only speak as far as my knowledge goes, but as far as I know, they use no arguments; they simply ignore it. They give us proofs of their views, or what they conceive proofs, from Revelation, as from other parts of Scripture; but face this long line of witnesses they do not. We have seen what has been so far offered; we are going on still to see what Mr. Newton offers; but it is well to keep in mind how much of positive testimony for the views they are opposing they leave aside.

Mr. Newton hopes he may now assume, upon the warrant of the parables of the Tares and of the Fishes, and the Lord's parting words in Matthew, that saints marked by the characteristics of the present dispensation will be found on the earth until the end. He urges that their testimony will be most needed, and suffering most glorious in the times preceding the end.

He finds that "On all past occasions of destroying judgments, whether on Sodom, or the world at the flood, or on Egypt, or on Jerusalem, some testified and suffered, though all were removed before the threatened judgment fell". He urges also that "all who have thus testified have not been either ignorant of or enemies to the truth peculiar to the dispensation that was closing in; for how then could they have testified at all?" (P. 25.)

He does not notice the Lord's assurance to Philadelphian overcomers that He would keep them "out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. io), nor that the tribulation to come at the end is "Jacob's trial," although it may involve others also, as we have seen. He does not understand that the end of the age is not part of the present dispensation, but the time of darkness covering the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, when the light begins to dawn on Israel (Isa. lx), and that God's testimony for that time is an Elias one (Mal. iv. 5; Rev. xi. 3 - 6,) and not that of the Church. He does not know that he can "find with any degree of accuracy the extent of this testimony"(!), and that on account of that of which he does not know the signification, that "the recorded facts of prophecy have always Jerusalem for their centre;" and he needs to remind us that "a Christian in Jewish circumstances is a Christian still"!

Another strange thing is that he has to go to Old Testament scriptures for the main part of his proof of Christians giving this testimony, and to justify what seems strange in this, he has to refer to Rom. xvi. 26, taking, as many do, the "prophetic scriptures" there, as being those of the Old Testament prophets. (Comp. Eph.

iii. 5.) He illustrates this by types, however, which we should all admit, and some other passages which show a singular lack of knowledge of the calling of the Church which he says they reveal. But I cannot dwell on this. From the Old Testament he brings forward Daniel. Here he interprets for us the "wise," who "instruct many" among the Jewish people, without being able to prevent their fall "by the sword, and by flame, by captivity and by spoil many days." This he calls, though we may well doubt it, "the moment of Jerusalem's ratified desolation," and thinks we can be therefore at no loss to understand them to be "Christ and His servants; nor from that time forward would the Holy Spirit give the name of 'understanding ones' to any but those who acknowledged Him and had received His Spirit."

But on the contrary, most commentators refer this to the Maccabees, and with apparent reason. We have not time to argue as to it, it is plain; but proof-text it can hardly be when all depends upon a very questionable interpretation. The "wise" or "understanding ones," with this special meaning forced upon them, are then found by him in the time of Israel's great tribulation following; and so his point is proved. But to merge Christ among the "understanding ones" is certainly not the way of the Spirit of God; and the presence of Christians depends entirely upon this. On the other hand "the two witnesses" of Rev. xi. would certainly have this character of "wise," while as certainly they are not what we should now call Christians. All here is mere rash assertion and not proof. That these understanding ones (as illustrated by the witnesses) will be worn out by the Little Horn, (identified at the last with the Beast itself,) is seen in Revelation, and being raised from the dead they will

have a heavenly place contrasted with Israel's earthly one. That these are, in fact, the saints of the high places, of whom Daniel speaks, and who are Mr. Newton's next and remaining proof of Christians in Jerusalem, we have no need to question. He makes no distinction between "heavenly" and "Christian"; but he must certainly know that those he is opposing do make one, and that for them all that he gives for proof is entirely futile.

This closes his argument from the Old Testament: he passes on to Revelation, which he rightly takes as in its "central part" relating to the same period as (much of) Daniel. Here his first argument is from persons being mentioned "who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus"; and again in chap. xiv. : "here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." No doubt there is difficulty in defining in any perfectly satisfactory way what either expression may mean. "The testimony of Jesus" is said, in the book of Revelation itself, to be "the spirit of prophecy" (xix. in), and this will be found in the saints of those days. There is no excuse for confounding this with Church testimony. "The faith of Jesus" will be, no doubt, imperfect enough in the darkness of days from which the light of Christianity has disappeared, and the Spirit itself as now known and enjoyed in Christianity. I presume He will be known as Messiah, not in His own proper glory as Jehovah; and this will be the discovery that will bow them in humiliation and repentance, when they look upon Him whom they have pierced. The next text (chap. xiii. 7), if parallel with Dan. vii. 20, is nevertheless also, as we have seen, of no importance whatever for his argument.

Again, those on the sea of glass (chap. xv. 2) are saints martyred under the beast, and having got victory over him in this way, and the passage in chap. XX. 4 - 6, which Mr. Newton rightly associates with the former one, shows that such have their part in the first resurrection, and reign with Christ for the thousand years of the Kingdom. All this is very familiar truth to those whose views he is opposing; and he certainly must know it. There is nothing about the Church in either passage. As a specimen of what a more minute interpretation would give, he adduces chap. xi. i, to urge that the worshippers in the temple of God (the sanctuary) must be Christians. In his argument he says rightly enough that the temple consisted of two inner courts, but speaks as though this were proof that for worshippers in it, the holiest of all must be accessible. There is no proof of it whatever. For the priest in Israel the veil was not rent, but he could worship in the temple in the outer holy place, and once a year the high priest went into the holiest. There is absolutely no token of Christian worship: the "clear evidence" of it, of which he speaks, does not exist.

But while all this is to him clear, the witness of the whole book of Revelation, as I have briefly given it, passes absolutely without notice. And yet when he wrote this he must have known quite well that it stood at least to be accounted for. Of the Jewish remnant of the last days which according to Mr. Newton exists side by side with the Christian one he says:- "They must have an intermediate standing: not Antichristian, for they would be consumed; not Christian, for then as suffering with and for Jesus, they would also reign with Him, and stand upon the sea of crystal in heavenly glory; whereas they

are destined, after having passed through the fires from which the Christian remnant are altogether delivered, to be God's witnesses on the earth: . . . I now request your attention to the following passages which show that this remnant is not owned by the Lord, nor has the spirit of grace and supplication poured on it, until after the Lord has appeared, and they have been carried through the day of His judgment" (Pp. 43, 44). He quotes for this, first, Isa. x. 12, 20 - 22; of which he says: - "The passage teaches us that they are not regarded as returning' and 'staying themselves' upon the Lord, until after He has accomplished all His work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem." (P. 15.)

I can only answer that to me it says nothing of the kind. It does say that in that day there will be no going back on the part of the saved remnant, to repeat the sad story of declension, so often recurring in the past. They "shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but stay upon the Lord." Then the truth of their return is affirmed: "The remnant shall. . . unto the Mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall return." There is nothing about their only returning after God has accomplished His work. It does not mean that He delivers them in an unbelieving condition, and then they believe. That is certainly not God's ordinary way of delivering, but to wake up a soul to faith and then answer it. Nothing contrary to that is said here. The next passage is from Zech. xiii.: "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined . . . they shall call on My name and I will hear

them: I will say, It is My people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

This expresses only the full confidence reached as the result of purification; but it is because they are "silver" He refines them. No one ever refined into silver what was not silver; and that is not what is done here. The third passage, Zech. xii. 9 - xiii. i, shows undoubtedly that an amazing discovery is made by them when they look upon Him whom they have pierced; and I think that will be, as before said, when they realize their rejected Messiah to be Jehovah Himself. That they own Jesus as Messiah seems clear from the guidance given to them in His own prophecy of the end of the age (Matt. xxiv.); but the "Man, Jehovah's Fellow" may be yet unknown. As to what is said about their having to believe nationally, and the nation being born in a day, Zion travailing and bringing forth, he is surely wrong in taking that as new birth, a truth of which as such the Old Testament never speaks. That at the time of their deliverance, the remnant will come to the birth, as the new nation of Israel, is true, and is what is meant by this. The implication that as individuals they were not born again before is unwarranted and false.

Again, the principle is a very simple one, that in the Psalms and prophetic Scriptures, we may take out all that is bright and happy and confident, and apply it to a Christian remnant, while we relegate all that is gloomy and querulous to a co-existing Jewish one. It is a short road to interpretation, but a most unsafe one, The Psalms, for instance, are expressive of the whole education and purification of a Jewish remnant, through all the trials of the latter days, until they are brought into full blessing. Of this the five psalms, from Ps. iii. to

vii., are an introductory epitome, which shows this very clearly. But they begin with faith (Ps. iii.), the joy of which they can contrast with the restless seeking of "any good" on the part of the ungodly around them (Ps. iv.). Here they reason and plead with these, but in the next, as the evil grows more determined, plead against them (Ps. v.), assuring themselves of the distinction God will make between them and the wicked. But the gloom darkens and the shadow falls upon their own souls (Ps. vi.). The prevalence of the evil makes them dread divine displeasure, and the confidence they have had changes into a cry for mercy. In the seventh psalm the shadow passes, they can maintain again their innocence as far as their persecutors are concerned and look for divine intervention; which in the eighth is come.

This is only an introduction, of course, but it shows the character of the book, which the arbitrary invention of contrasted remnants completely destroys. All these fruitful exercises become but the wailings of unconverted men; all the expressions of faith belong to another people! This is indeed a "higher criticism" of a peculiar kind, which by taking texts here and there and applying the moral test, putting in juxtaposition passages of diverse character, from different places, and apart from their context, can make it at least a tedious and difficult thing to expose its unsoundness. And this is made worse by misleading comments scattered here and there throughout, in which truth itself can be so applied as to give apparent countenance to what is error. Who would not agree, for instance, that "to suffer for righteousness' sake in conscious fellowship of spirit with God, is something very different from suffering penalty under the rebuke of His heavy hand"? But apply this to

the case before us, - a remnant of converted people making part of a nation which as such is away from God, and going on to complete apostasy; suffering penalty thus, and involving these in their sufferings, who from sharing their guilt at first have been gradually awakened, with the light increasing for them, but allowed of God for their good to be thoroughly exercised as to everything. Plowed up as to their sin, they find their way amid the promises and threatenings of His word, without firm footing as to the gospel; and in a time of trouble such as never was !

These various exercises, the conflicts of faith with unbelief, the many forms of trial, are given for their help, and for the help of multitudes in any similar ones, as poured out in the utterances of the Psalms and prophets. Think of a criticism like Mr. N's, which ignores these varied and subtle differences, and makes it all a question of the highest Christian communion or of suffering penally! Why the Psalms are a human resolution largely - under the control and guidance of God - of problems of the most difficult character. Are they suffering penally? there is sometimes their perplexity. They reason upon it all round: the clouds break and return; but no: we are to use the scissors, it seems, separate what is not fit for the Christians, and give it to these poor, unconverted Jews! and the practical use and beauty of the Psalms are largely gone for us. How much shall we value the miserable experiences of mere unconverted men!

We may close then with this: for here is the rest of his argument, and we have no interest in following Mr. Newton's further account of how, according to his thought, a Christian remnant is not found in Jerusalem

at the last, which we have not been persuaded exists there at all. But it may not be without profit to have seen how destructive of Scripture at large is this system which makes hypothetical differences which do not exist, only to ignore those that are real and vital. There is only one more point, therefore, that we need to consider in this connection, and that is his argument from the eleventh of Romans. He says: - "I would briefly notice these things: -"

1. That it speaks of Israel as blinded for a season by the judicial infliction of the hand of God. It is important to notice the judicial character which attaches to their being broken out of their olive-tree.

2. The blindness thus judicially inflicted has never been, and never will be anything more than 'in part'; that is, it has never rested on every individual in Israel, but there has ever been a seeing remnant. Some, not all, the Jewish branches, have been broken off.

3. The fact of there being a seeing remnant during the blindness of Israel, is a proof that Israel as a nation is still under the infliction of the hand of God.

4. That this judicial infliction cannot be continued after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in." Thus, he says, "it is proved beyond a doubt that Israel's Antichristian period (when as a nation they will be emphatically blinded, though there will be even then a seeing remnant) cannot be after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. Observe, I do not say that as soon as all the elect Gentiles have been gathered in, all Israel will instantly be filled with light and knowledge; but this I affirm that the positive action of the hand of God in blinding them will not be continued after the period

which He has been pleased to fix - i. e., when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in. Consequently, the period of their deepest and most fatal blinding cannot be after the period which He has fixed for the ceasing of His wrath against them. There can be no seeing remnant in judicially blinded Israel; no election out of Israel, and therefore no Antichristian period to Israel, after the fulness of the Gentiles has come in; therefore all such conditions of Israel must be before the fulness of the Gentiles has come in." (Pp. 63 - 65.)

Now, I apprehend that the writer has spoiled his own argument. For if he had maintained that, as soon as ever the fulness of the Gentiles had come in, all Israel would "instantly be filled with light and knowledge" that would have been consistent at least. But he could not say so; only that the positive action of the hand of God in blinding them will not continue. But that would seem to infer that there would or might be still a seeing remnant for awhile among them after the judicial blinding was removed. Let us see then what in fact takes place. The beginning of the "end of the age" or the last week of Daniel, shows that the fulness of the Gentiles has indeed come in; it shows also that the judicial hardening of Israel is at an end by this week being the return of times determined upon her to bring in her blessing. Israel is now going to be saved; and as a pledge of this, those now converted are no more brought into the Church, but remain Israelites, grafted back into their own olive-tree. Yet this is the time of Antichrist, as Daniel and Revelation unite to show us, and the nation that is to be is refined and purified in a furnace of affliction. It is the remnant that becomes the nation, the rebels and apostates being separated and purged out. It is a

mistake, surely, to look at Antichrist as a sign of the "nation "being "emphatically blinded," when in fact, it is Israel's travail-time; and presently it will be found, when the followers of Antichrist have received their judgment, that "he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. iv. 3, 4).

The fulness of the Gentiles having come in, and so the end of the Church-period, is the very thing which allows this remnant to be formed, which is the nation.in embryo, and to which Antichrist in Jerusalem is Satan's power in opposition. The man of sin in the temple of God there, instead of showing that the judicial blinding of the nation is going on, shows that God is taking up Israel once more, and that the determined times are bringing on her blessing. Christianity and Judaism, hopes heavenly and hopes earthly, the body of Christ in which is neither Jew nor Gentile, alongside of Jews and Gentiles (if the sheep and goats apply to these last),- all this owned of God alike and going on at one and the same time: this is Mr. Newton's theory; the very statement of which might assure us that it is only theory. Scripture condemns it in every particular.

Chapter 6 - Secrecy, Manifestation, and Signs of Imminence

All that remains to be considered can be stated in few words. As to the secrecy of the rapture of the saints, it is a point of small importance, reached only by inference, and need not be discussed at all. It is "when Christ our Life shall appear," that "we shall appear, (or be manifested) with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). Thus we may argue that we shall not be manifested before. But it affects no point of all that we have been looking at, so far as I am aware, however it be decided.

As to the manifestation, or appearing, or revelation of Christ, it is that which is most largely spoken of in Scripture, as we might expect, for various reasons.

1. It is that which connects itself with prophecy and the blessing of the earth. It is the rising of the Sun of righteousness in contrast with the simple heavenly radiance of the Morning Star.
2. It connects thus with the rights of Christ as to the earth, the place of His rejection.
3. It connects with the rewards given to His people, so far at least as these have to do with the kingdom and its displayed glory. And thus we can understand that we are to "wait" for it, as that in which every one will "receive his praise from God." Timothy's being exhorted to "keep the commandments without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of Jesus Christ" (i Tim. vi. 14), while often urged to the contrary, in fact shows how such things are to be taken. The appearing is the goal of responsibility; the time between this and the end of the path here

would not affect the matter of the exhortation; and no one would contend that the apostle meant to guarantee that Timothy would live until the appearing.

Signs are all connected with the appearing necessarily, but yet so far as they are manifested, will only be more forcible for those who are expecting to be with the Lord before it. We are not taught that we need them, but are not certainly to ignore what is before our eyes. Times we cannot reckon, inasmuch as we are in that gap of prophetic time in which all Christianity has its place. Our Lord has also given us warning with regard to this (Acts i. 7). In the same passage we find Him telling His disciples that they were to be His witnesses "to the ends of the earth." That this and other declarations implied some lapse of time before His return is undoubted. We must remember, of course, that this did not imply for them what it does for us, and that Augustus Caesar could command "all the world" to be taxed (Luke ii. i). In the parables of the talents (Matt. xxv. 19) "after a long time" the absent lord returns and reckons with his servants; but it is with the same servants whom he left when he went away. Nothing hints to us as a delay of generations long. We are in other circumstances, in a world that widens no more, looking back over the Church's history as Revelation has at last unfolded it to us, and finding ourselves certainly near the close, and how near we cannot say. Is there another page yet to be written? We do not know; but certainly of all men that ever lived we should be "as men that wait for their Lord."

A clear view gained of what is prophesied as to the end, with the knowledge of what the Church of God is, and its

place amid the dispensations, will make all else clear as to what in this respect may not have been considered.