

USOZ

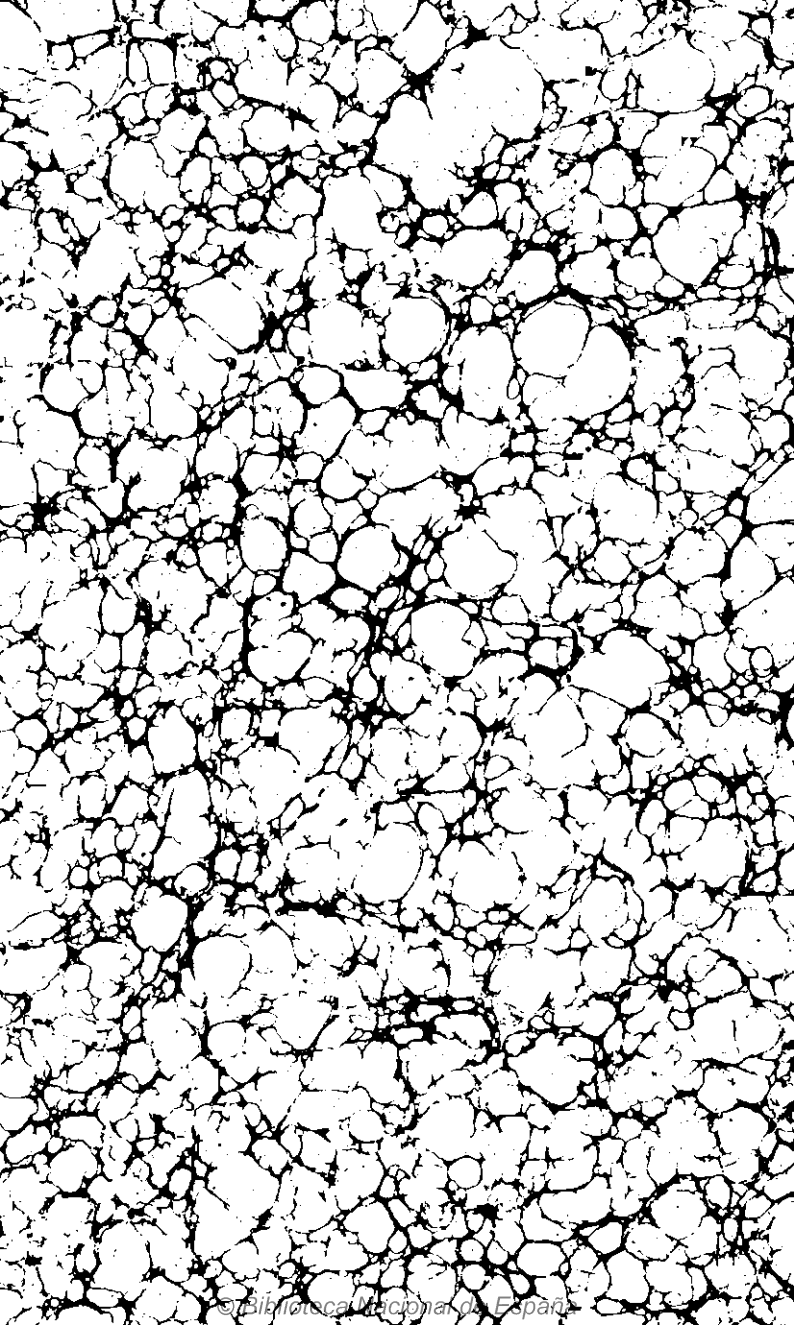
8258

U

10255

USOZ

8258



~~Abad~~

4-17-7

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
ON PROPHECY
AND
THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.

ANSWERS

TO THE

QUESTIONS CONSIDERED

AT

A MEETING, HELD IN PLYMOUTH,

ON

SEPTEMBER 15, 1834, AND THE FOLLOWING DAYS ;

CHIEFLY COMPILED FROM NOTES TAKEN AT THE MEETING.

SECOND EDITION.

PLYMOUTH :

TRACT DEPOT, 5, CORNWALL STREET,

1, WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON.

1847.





ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE origin of the following pamphlet, is stated in the Introduction which the compilers prefixed to the first edition :—at that time, there was no need for any remark to be added with respect to the Meeting in Plymouth, at which the questions were considered.

It may, however, now be well to state, how the Meeting itself originated. From the year 1831 to 1836, there was a meeting held every year, in Ireland, at which many brethren in the Lord were present by invitation, with the object of considering questions mostly relating to prophetic inquiry and Scripture teaching with regard to the Church : such questions were transmitted to those to whom invitations were sent.

In the year 1834, some who were prevented from attending the meeting in Ireland, believed that it might be profitable for them to consider the questions which had been transmitted from that country ; and accordingly four Brethren, J. L. Harris, B. W. Newton, H. Borlase, and T. Dowglass, arranged a meeting in Plymouth, to which many Christian Ministers were invited as well as others, and many attended.

From notes taken at the meeting, the following answers were prepared by B. W. Newton and H. Borlase, containing, as they state, not an outline of what was said at the meeting by different speakers, but simply what they believed to be profitable truth.

In the course of 1835, this pamphlet became out of print, and there was an intention of reprinting it with various additions from the notes taken at the meeting, so as to speak more explicitly on some of the points; one point in particular was the introductory statements to the answer to the first question;—these were to have been enlarged and revised. However this was laid aside, and the reprint did not take place; this was partly, if not wholly, in consequence of the individual to whose charge it was in some measure committed leaving Plymouth.

In now reprinting it, the original notes are no longer obtainable, and it has been judged best to make no alteration in the text of any kind, except the correction of evident errata, and in a few places the amendment of a citation of Scripture where there was some verbal inaccuracy; the text, therefore, exhibits precisely the original pamphlet, and the teaching both on Church Order and Prophecy which those who drew it up, and those who circulated it, considered to be profitable twelve years ago.

The Editor has, however, added a few notes which are marked as additions; these relate either to passages of Scripture, which require to be ap-

plied and used in a manner different from that which is found in the pamphlet itself, or to the correction of some statement. It has not, however, been thought needful to add a note upon every thing of the kind, but only upon those of some importance : some points have also been let to pass without observation, as the Editor has had the opportunity of entering into them elsewhere. For such notes the Editor alone is responsible, although the sentiments stated in them are shared by others.

The word "lately" in the original title page, ("questions *lately* considered") has been omitted as no longer applicable ; this is, however, the only verbal alteration, besides those specified above.

In thus republishing what the Editor found twelve years ago, to be profitable truth to his own soul, truth which led to much and close searching of the word of God,—it has been his earnest desire and prayer, that it might be used of God to instruct many, and that they might be indeed aroused to a right apprehension of those prospects which the Scripture presents both to the world and to the Church. 1 Thes. v. 3, 4.

S. P. T.

PLYMOUTH, *February 6th*, 1847.

INTRODUCTION

[TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION. 1834.]

THE Compilers of the following pages are anxious, in every possible way, to bring the truths contained in them before the minds of their Christian Brethren. They do not profess to report all that was stated at the Meeting, but only that which they believe to be profitable truth.—In doing this they have availed themselves, indiscriminately, of the remarks of their brethren, without mentioning the names of any. Their earnest desire is, that by these and similar meetings, many may be led to search the Scriptures, and understand what they testify respecting the SECOND COMING of our God and Saviour.

“To them that look FOR Him shall He appear the SECOND TIME without sin unto salvation.”

MONDAY.

Question—CAN the Church account for her present state, i. e. that instead of unbelievers being mixed up with the children of God, these last are found as individuals among bodies of professing Christians, and joined in communion not as the people of God, but upon other and different grounds?

THE first point in this question is to determine what is meant by "The Church."—It is the whole visible body that hold the name of Christ; and who are therefore under the responsibility of bearing that name.—The whole professing body. A Christian, in the widest sense of the term, is one who professes to have put on Christ,—to stand clothed with Christ in the midst of this evil world. In this view the responsibilities of Christendom are widely different from those of the nations around; and its judgment will be different also, for it will be judged as "The Church,"—The word of God which has been spoken, the same shall judge every man who has heard it in the last day, (John xii. 48.) The 11th of Romans shews the position and responsibility in which the Church was placed. There is one stock—the Jewish, into which the Gentile body was grafted; and its standing was this—if they continue in God's goodness—well: if not, they shall be cut off. There is no breaking off indeed of the elect body, but every branch not bearing fruit is to be broken off; and this is the sentence of the professing body; for the

consciences of all must bear witness that the Gentile Church has not so continued. This is seen at once by looking at the countries which were once filled with Churches and Christians, all of which have passed away; and to the state of Europe, which is overrun with infidelity and superstition. The professing Church is the vine of the earth;* and as such professes to bear fruit.—Christ will come to seek fruit, and when He comes He will find none, just as He found none in the Jews: and the fearful end is stated in Rev. xiv. 18, that it is cut down, *according to the threatening* in Rom. xi. and “cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.”†

* “Vine of the earth,” Rev. xiv. 18. It is very important to attend to this awful passage. The vine is always used as the symbol of that which professes to bear fruit unto God in the earth. It is first applied to the Jewish body.—“The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.”—Then to the “true vine,” even the Lord Jesus Christ.—And lastly, to those who profess to be His representatives during His absence; i. e. the professing Gentile body, which is here called the vine of the earth, whose clusters are cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God: for which reason it cannot mean the elect Church, for the elect Church never perishes. [See the following note on the application of the term “vine of the earth.” Ed.]

† [In speaking of the Church there are always two things to be distinguished; those who are really the elect of God, and those who may profess to belong to Him, but who really do not. In speaking of the professing Church, it would imply the great body of those who call themselves Christians, in the midst of whom there are found real believers in the Lord Jesus, who are sheltered from all destruction by His blood. In the sense only of a great professing body can we apply the name of Church to that which is spoken of in Romans xi. as being cut off. This is not the place to go farther into an examination of that chapter, it will suffice to call attention to its general bearing as has been done above. But the use made of the expression “vine of the earth” requires a farther remark;—this has to be re-

To discover the present state of the Church we must bring its present condition into direct and actual comparison with its state as shewn in Scripture ; which alone will shew how far she has kept her proper ground. It will be useless to compare it with any intervening period, for the appeal can only be made to what it once was ; and thus the difference is seen. What then was the Church of God in its proper standing before Him ? It was founded upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, which was the birth-moment of the Church ; not when He was in the days of His flesh, but afterwards—at His resurrection ; when He was able to call His disciples brethren, and to say “ *my* Father and *your* Father, *my* God and *your* God.” (John xx. 17.) God has ever progressively manifested Himself to His people.—To Abram He was made known as the Almighty God ; to Israel as Jehovah (Exodus vi. 3 :) and only in this dispensation is He revealed as Father.—This is the dispensation of sons. To be of the Church is to say, I am a son ; so that although John was the greatest of

garded as something yet farther advanced in evil than the wild olive branches which do not continue in God’s goodness :—a result of the corruption of the Church, and not the corrupt Church itself. See the question of Thursday evening. Just so there was such a thing as corruption in Israel at various periods, for instance in the days of Hezekiah ; but such corruptions and those involved in them would materially differ from worshippers of Baal ; those who had renounced Jehovah of Hosts both in heart and in name. I should prefer stating it :—Out of the professing Church in a certain portion of the world will the vine of the earth spring, when evil shall in that part of it have reached such a height that the name of Christ is rejected, and it claims no longer to be of the Church in any sense. Its judgment will be according to the height of the iniquity which it will have reached, and this is the end to which in a large portion of the earth, corruption of Christianity is flowing onward. ED.]

prophets, yet "the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The Spirit of adoption is the peculiar characteristic of Christians; and therefore we find (Gal. iv.) that "*because they are sons, God has sent into their hearts the Spirit of His Son.*"—And this is the baptism of the Spirit, which is the main distinction between this and the former dispensation. The Church then, as having died in Christ and risen again in Him, "are set down with Him in heavenly places."—This was its calling; it was put in a position of power, and a position also in which, following Jesus, would lead to suffering.

I.—The Church with this standing and character, was placed in the world; they were united as those who had risen with Christ, and had forgiveness through His blood. Let us next inquire into the detail of their arrangements as ordered by the Lord.—And first what gave a title to fellowship with them? Now the simple title to have fellowship with them was, the confession of the Lamb slain for sin; they had no other test—"if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:" an individual, if he did not belie his confession, was received directly. The blood of the Lamb which brought them nigh to God, was that which brought them nigh to one another. Here was the broad ground of their fellowship as brethren.

II.—The next thing to be noticed is, that they did not reject the weak; the Church was intended to be the nursing place for such, it was for the weak and not for the strong,—"*him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*" (Rom. xiv.)

III.—The preservation of the Church in its purity, was through the exercise of discipline; they kept away all who walked disorderly. It would be sufficient to quote one single passage from the Epistle to the Thessalonians,—"*now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw*

yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.* Again, John, in his 2nd Epistle, speaks of those who were not even to be *received into their house*, much less at the table of the Lord. Paul commands the Corinthians, if any man that is called a brother be covetous, "with such an one no not to eat;" and they were enjoined to purge out the old leaven. When they had so put away the wicked person, he commends them as having approved themselves to be clear in this matter. The thing to be met by discipline was manifested evil; for the Church is the place of righteousness, but it judges not the heart. The Church is the place of righteous judgment,—not so the world; for man's law tolerates covetousness, but God says "with such an one no not to eat:" therefore, on this ground alone, it is impossible for the world to legislate for the Church.

Another point is, they were ordered to be gathered,— "to assemble *themselves* together," that they might edify one another in love; the 4th of Ephes. shews the proper gathering of the Church together,—one body, one Spirit, one hope in which they are called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. For the purpose of mutual edification, different gifts had been given,—Pastors, Teachers, &c. for the Church; Evangelists not for the Church, but for the world. All these *different* offices were ordered by Christ, that His Church might be brought into unity, the one thing for which He prayed—"that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that the *world* may believe that thou hast sent me." Secret union was not enough; it was to be manifested union that the world should know, and the world could re-

* [It may be fairly questioned whether this passage applies to excommunicatory discipline; it rather relates to internal conduct within the body. But there are enough Scriptures (such as 1 Cor. v. 11—13,) which prove beyond all question how the Church is called on to act in excommunicatory discipline in cases of proved sin where there is no repentance. Ed.]

cognize nothing else; union that they might meet, and that they might edify one another in love. Thus the Apostle in many places desires that they may have unity of knowledge.

And what the unity of the Church actually was, we learn from Acts iv. "they were of one heart and one soul; none said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, and great grace was upon them all." Again, they were to edify ONE ANOTHER; the place of Pastor or Teacher *was not confined to one individual only*, but each exercised his own gift for the profit of all; a single person could not fill all the offices. The Scripture is most clear on this, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal; for to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another faith, by the same Spirit." &c. "Let the Prophets* speak two or three, and let the others judge; for ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and that all may be comforted." And again, "are all Apostles? are all Prophets? are all Teachers?" &c. (1 Cor. xii.) These and other passages shew that the Spirit was Sovereign in the Church; free course was given to it, nor was it restrained by any arbitrary rules, or mere order in the flesh, only by this one—"the spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets." There were no preconcerted arrangements to preclude the Spirit's having free course; and it is important here to note, that this character of order and edification was not necessarily connected with what are termed the extraordinary gifts; for the Holy Spirit was given as *a person* to the Church, to abide with them always to the end, as He even now abideth in each member of the body of Christ;

* A Prophet was one who spoke to edification, or exhortation, or comfort (See 1 Cor. xiv. 3.) There are many such even now.

and does give to one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another the gift of prayer; every gift needful for edification, even though for certain reasons He has withdrawn those which once made the Church a wonder to the world, yet He has not forsaken the poor of the flock. In fact, if the Spirit was withdrawn, there would be no Church at all, visible or invisible, a thing most important to be remembered and realized in the present day. The abiding presence of the Spirit in the believer, ought to be a matter of far greater faith than it is.

The end for which the Church met in this peculiar way, was, that they might be strengthened, not for this world, but for resurrection glory: to wait for the Lord from heaven. In the former dispensation believers had been taught to expect earthly privileges; but now Christ was rejected, and the Spirit led *from* the world to Him. They had but one hope, and that in heaven; the course of this world is stated in Scripture to be under "the prince of the power of the air;" they were taken out of that course, "and their life was hid with Christ in God." It was their distinctive privilege and blessing to have no earthly power or glory; nor is there one place in Scripture where they are enjoined to wait for any thing but the Son from heaven; till that time, their place was to suffer, to be the few amongst many who took the broad road; nor were they left here to make the world the Church, but to gather out of the world into the ark which God had appointed. To the world they were to be God's witness, and therefore distinct from the world, or there would have been no witness. One other thing to be considered is, the way in which they were to be governed, they had one Head, one Bishop, one High Priest, even Christ; they themselves were priests to God: to some amongst them gifts were given to rule, and in them the government of the Church was vested, as may be seen from Acts xv. where it is stated, that the *Apostles* and *Elders* came together "to consider the question" at issue, ver. 6, whilst in

ver. 23, the decision is given as the judgment of the Apostles, and Elders, and Brethren. They were ruled by Elders, the general name including all in authority; these ruled and laboured in the word, and the flock as under them were to be fed and governed. The reason of this is evident, every one knows what is the result if people rule themselves; but it is the people who are to be governed, and not the people who are to govern; for then the many would determine what they would or would not learn, and every question would be decided by the opinion of the majority, who would necessarily in every case be the least spiritual; but the Elders as shepherds led them on, and the others followed.

The Church did not long continue in this state: it needs only to compare its present condition with its character and order as above stated, to shew that *now* it does not agree with it in one single particular.—“While men slept the enemy sowed the tares.” Many, it may be, will argue *a priori* against the standing fact of the apostasy,* which actually took place, as though

* [There are some terms which require definition as to the sense in which they are used. Apostasy may be used as implying a departure from a condition in which a thing was set, and from the principles necessary to that condition, or it may be used of the entire renunciation in word as well as in heart and practice, of all that related to such a condition. This latter is Apostasy in its full sense, and in 2 Thes. ii. it is called “*the* Apostasy” (in our translation inaccurately “a falling away;”) just so in 1 John ii. we find “*the* Antichrist” mentioned, and that too in contrast to “many Antichrists.” Some ambiguity would have been avoided if it had been restricted in use to this sense. In many countries the Apostasy will take place when God and Christ will be alike disowned, (see the question of Thursday evening.) In the sense of the admission of corruption and the departure from the standard laid down by God in principle and practice, an Apostasy has indeed come in; this is the sense in which it has been used above, this is what we see around us:—the Tares have been sowed amongst the

the promise of Christ "Lo I am with you always," must in this case have failed; but the declension is not only prophesied of in the Epistles, but all the seeds of the future evil are clearly disclosed in them. And these, like so many tributary streams, found their way into one mighty current, and gradually bore the Church away from the position in which it was originally placed.—The history of the three first centuries is an illustration of this.—We see there how the mischiefs which had begun in the very days of the Apostles—Divisions, Heresies, Judaizing, Philosophy, and vain deceit; self-exaltation, false teaching, holding the truth in licentiousness, and the absurd wanderings of the human intellect,—all rapidly grew up.—But worldly glory was the last of all.—The Church had been corrupted within; the foundation had been undermined: her union in the resurrection of Christ was forgotten; and when the barriers with which God had surrounded her were subverted, the world found an easy entrance. What was the apostasy of the Jews? It was this—"they were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works." The Church did the same thing; and this is the essence of its apostasy—the true secret of its fall; for apostasy is departure from the standard laid down by God in principle and practice. We may remark that as soon as the Spirit ceased to be amongst them, giving real moral power, that men began to claim OFFICIAL authority from the ordination of men.

The period of Constantine, perhaps, may be fixed on as the consummation of the Church's fall; for then first it became possessed of legalized power, and *professedly* ceased to be distinctively separate from the world.

wheat; both will grow together till the harvest: the evils connected with this are the practical evils now surrounding the real children of God:—they have to testify and to act with regard to these as present things, while they are also responsible for giving warning as to the more fearful things yet before us. Ed.]

The apostasy was finally brought into a systematic form in Popery. It is not intended to enter into the character of the Roman system. There are however three features which should be noticed, pre-eminently distinguishable in Popery; but which, wherever found, are sure signs of apostasy.—

I.—The world is identified with the Church.

II.—The constitution, rites, &c. of the Christian Church, which is *electal* and *spiritual*, is founded on the model of the antient Jewish system, which was *national* and *outward*.

III.—Official appointment or ordination is considered to bestow authority, although every spiritual and moral qualification be wanting.

These three evil features are found as decidedly in modern national systems, as in the Church of Rome. With respect to ordination, it may be observed that ordination from an Apostle himself could not be recognized, if the moral and spiritual qualifications, as detailed in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, were wanting. And it is deeply important to remember, that he who recognizes ordination as giving authority to any whom the Spirit has not qualified, does so far sanction and link himself to apostasy.

With respect to the second point, sufficient has been said; only it may be observed that all national systems have been based upon the *supposed* resemblance between the Christian and Jewish systems, which however are so totally dissimilar, that the *principle* of the last dispensation becomes *apostasy* in this. The Jewish system was *intended to be of this world*.

At the Reformation the principles of individual salvation were recovered; but the Reformation did not take the systems out of the world, but left them where they were before. And this point is of infinite importance.—The true view of our present state depends upon it. There was then no gathering of God's children together out of the world. The world was still allowed to clothe itself with the garments of the Church.

But to come more immediately to our present state.—National establishments are not, like the early Churches, united on the ground of belonging to Christ rejected, and risen out of the world because He was disowned by it: but their very principle is to receive the world, and call it by the name of Christ.

II.—National establishments do not, like the early Churches, “receive the weak;” for unscriptural enactments have cut off many followers of Jesus, who have stumbled at the enforcement of things not enjoined by God.

III.—They do not like the early Churches, “assemble themselves together,” but they assemble with the world.

IV.—The early Churches were commanded not to receive, even at a common table, any who, being called a brother, was covetous, (1 Cor. v. 11,) or in any way unworthy, or who abode not in the true faith, (2 John i. 10 :) but national Churches receive such, even at the table of the Lord, to partake of the ONE bread.

V.—They altogether hinder the free course of the Spirit. In the early Churches all, whom the Spirit had qualified, were allowed to speak, “one by one, that all might learn, and all might be comforted.” (1 Cor. xiv. 31.) In national Churches none are allowed to speak except one, who professes to have the full authority of the Holy Spirit, though he may have been appointed only by man, and have no spiritual or even moral qualification whatsoever.

What would an Apostle say to these things? Every thing which he had forbidden, would be found to be done; and every thing which he had commanded, would be found undone. What is apostasy, except departure in principle and practice from the directions of God?

There are other systems free from many evils which are professedly of the world; but they do not meet the requirements of Christ; they would not stand if tried by the test of Scripture.

In the first place many are not based on the broad principle of Christian brotherhood, but are gathered on some peculiar and sectarian principle of their own.—

I.—They are not ready to receive the weak.

II.—There are some which professedly receive the world.

III.—Almost all hinder the free course of the Spirit, so that *their* arrangements also would be destroyed by His presence in power;—and this by arbitrary appointments, by confining the edification of the body to one individual, as though the Spirit dwelt only in him. Moreover, this appointment comes not from those who are delegated by God, but from themselves, by the election of those who ought to be governed: and, lastly, instead of there being “Elders who rule,” (1 Tim. v. 17, Heb. xiii. 17) we find Churches governing themselves.

IV.—They recognize what the Scripture doth not recognize—a separate body; adherence to which, implies separation from every other. And thus the growth of all is necessarily hindered from want of mutual edification, and from being practically cut off from the instruction of others. The Scripture recognizes no separate body; it knows of no membership except of “the body of Christ.”

No wonder then that there is little consistent union of Christians—little acting together in contradistinction to the world. And this is the real question—the question at issue between God and the Church—the thing by which believers are tried now,—whether the power of the Spirit to unite, or the bonds which men have formed, be the stronger. God's Spirit is a uniting Spirit; and if it had free course, would bring Christians together into one; but they allow *circumstances* to overcome its blessed power, and are content to be divided from one another amongst predominating masses of those who own nothing of Christianity but the name.

The Church has forgotten that its only hope is in the resurrection; and as a natural consequence, is looking for rest upon the earth: but if there is to be a time

when the Church is to have such rest on the earth, God has not said so in His word; for that speaks only of the numbers being few, the way being narrow, iniquity abounding, and a latter day of unexampled apostasy.

The Church has lost her power and her unity. It is true there is no remedy for the dispensation at large, but there is still blessing in union for those who desire to reject all that is of the world, and to meet as risen with Christ: and these, however few, will be still in the place of every possible blessing. The Lord Jesus still feeds "the poor of the flock." Whatsoever therefore hinders the union of Christians by throwing obstacles in their way, by enforcing authority which is not of God, sins against Christ; and every system of man does this. If Christians stand together, it must be by the Spirit alone. There is indeed no Apostle to give the outward appointment.—This was broken off in the apostasy; but whenever the Spirit is given, they who are spiritual will recognize it, whether as Evangelists, Pastors, or Teachers.—But better would it be for them to break in pieces than to be kept together by man.

The Holy Spirit has not left the Church: He has been grieved, but He has not departed; otherwise there would be no Church at all. The promise still remains,—"Whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them:" and the blessing of His presence will be known just in proportion as it is looked for and depended on. It is still possible to meet together and follow His commandments to the very letter: and although those gifts may be withdrawn which formerly made the Church a wonder to the world, yet facts sufficiently shew that the gifts of teaching and of speaking to exhortation and comfort, with many others, are still continued in their measure; and it is these which the "poor of the flock" esteem most precious, as contributing to their growth and instruction in righteousness.*

* It should be remembered that the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary gifts is utterly unfounded. It

In conclusion, the statements may be summed up thus,—If when the Gospel was first preached, a heathen had sought to know what Christianity practically was, he would have found a faithful exhibition of its character in the Churches at Antioch or Jerusalem. But the position which was formerly occupied by them is now occupied by the nations of Christendom. From them the heathen have to learn what Christianity practically is.

Under the figure of the olive-branch (Rom. xi.) and the vine, whose clusters are to be cast into the wine-press of wrath, God has recognized the nations as standing in this responsible position. He has also foretold what the end will be; and facts sufficiently shew how fearfully the present state of the professing Gentile body agrees with the predicted end.

It could not be supposed that the Gentile body at large would recognize its own apostasy; but it might have been expected of the "remnant according to the election of grace."—Yet even they sanction the apostasy, or separate on self-chosen principles; which are, more or less, inconsistent with the written requirements of God.

Apostasy can alone account for the present position of the Gentile remnant—united with aliens and separated from one another.

Obedience to the word and unanimity in following out its requirements, might yet bring us into a position where we should cease to offend, and find that although Beau-

is quite as miraculous, quite as contrary to the course of nature, for a sinner to be enabled to speak "the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge," as for him to heal the sick or restore the blind. [But still it must not be forgotten that there is an important visible difference between the one class of gifts and the other. If the terms extraordinary and miraculous are used as expressing the gifts which once made the Church a wonder to the world, their use need not be objected to. Ed.]

ty and strength may have departed, yet that it is still possible, even in weakness, to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" assuming no authority, but looking only to the Holy Spirit to provide what is needed, according as the time requires.

TUESDAY.

Question—Of what future events have we predictions in the Book of Psalms ?

OUR minds are perhaps accustomed to shrink back from inquiry into the future. Yet this betrays a sad want of confidence in God, who surely has revealed nothing that does not tend to our "instruction in righteousness;" who tells us that it is now "night," but that prophecy is "a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn."

There is much discouragement in bringing such subjects before the Church at present, on account of its selfishness. We are so accustomed to regard as important those things which affect ourselves individually; and are so little able to be interested in the truths of God *for their own sake*.—Yet He who knoweth our frame, says, "add to your faith knowledge." Our want of knowledge may cause us to be a grievous stumbling block in the way of others, even though we may be unconscious of its being an hindrance to ourselves.

The book of Psalms was once a book of prophecy, altogether unfulfilled. To us part has been fulfilled; though by far the greater part remains unaccomplished. As a whole they prophetically refer to the position in which God and man respectively stand to each other till the conclusion of the earth's history; especially un-

folding what a mere narrative of facts could not unfold—the secret feelings of those who are acting or suffering in the circumstances referred to. In the other parts of Scripture the circumstances are recorded as facts: in the Psalms the moral comment on them is given.

For example; one of the most interesting relations in which man has ever stood towards God, was that of the Lord Jesus living as The perfect Man in the midst of surrounding evil.—The facts of His life are given in the gospels. In the Psalms we find the secret experience of His soul, together with God's estimate of His service, and His sentence of blessing.—“Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly.” (Ps. i.) “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver Him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name,” &c. (Ps. xci.)

The Psalms which describe the moral perfectness of Christ as the second Adam, or more characteristically His righteousness, as the seed of Abraham, born under the law, were of course all future and unfulfilled until His incarnation.—Primarily, and in strictness of interpretation, they belong to Him alone, who only could say, as in the presence of God—“In innocency have I washed my hands, and so will I compass thine altar.” (Ps. xxvi. 6.) But in a secondary and subordinate sense, they admit of being applied through Him, who is essentially the Son, to those who are sons by adoption and led by His Spirit. This is mentioned in order to illustrate the principle on which the Scriptures are uniformly written. The Holy Spirit describes the greatest event in each particular class; and in describing the greater comprehends the less. What may be *interpreted* of Christ, may be *applied* in principle to any who follow in His steps.

The Psalms then which have already received their *great** fulfilment are—

* i. e. Other subordinate fulfilments may yet remain.

Those which refer to the humiliation of the Lord Jesus—His sufferings and perfect righteousness, both as the second Adam and the seed of Abraham. This may be called the first division of the Psalms.

The second division comprehends those Psalms which refer to any of the present relations of man to God, which are these;—

I.—Christ, as the rejected Man, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

II.—The state of those who, as described in the 7th of the Romans, are feeling after “peace and righteousness;” but find themselves to be, after every effort, nothing better than “lost sheep,” for want of the knowledge of the cross of Jesus.*

* The 119th Psalm is of this character. It appears *primarily* to describe the state of one who is ready to surrender every thing if he could reach God: but finds himself, after every effort, “a lost sheep.” It was not so with Christ: neither could it be said of Him “Before I was afflicted *I went astray*, but now have I kept thy word.” (ver. 67.) Christ never went astray.—He could say, in reference to the to the iniquities of others which he was bearing as His own, “*Mine* iniquities have taken fast hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head.” He felt the full burden of these iniquities, but they never caused Him to go astray. [This Remark on the application Ps. cxix. rests entirely upon the supposed meaning of verses 67 and 176. Every other part of the Psalm may be felt by the Christian as applying rightly and fully to Him who could say “By the words of thy lips I have kept from the paths of the destroyer;” whose delight was in the law of the Lord, and who meditated in His law day and night. But these two verses present no real difficulty: in ver. 176, “I have gone astray” is part of the same verb, which is used in Gen. xx. 13, “when God caused me to wander;” a going astray or wandering in a sinful sense is by no means conveyed by the word; Abraham was led of God to be a stranger and pilgrim, and so was Jesus in this world;—the term “a lost sheep” is rather “a

III.—The state of those who have found redemption and the righteousness of faith.—“Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sin is covered.”

These are the three relations of interest that are at present exhibited between God and man.

The third division of the Psalms comprehends those which are yet future. We must judge of the mode of their fulfilment by examining the manner in which the past have been fulfilled.

Now the past have been fulfilled with the most minute and literal exactness. Let us look at the 22nd and 69th Psalms.—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” “The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet; they part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.” “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee have fallen upon me.” “They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” All these things have been literally fulfilled with the most minute accuracy. We therefore expect the same *kind* of fulfilment for the unfulfilled predictions in these same Psalms, viz.—that “God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell there and have it in possession.” “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.” (Ps. xxii. 27.)

perishing sheep.” It is said of us, “All we like sheep have gone astray, *we have turned every one to his own way;*” this turning to our own ways marks there the character of the wandering; but Jesus never turned to His own ways, or to any ways which were not wholly pleasing to the Father, to whom His will was subjected. The expression “I went astray,” in ver. 67, is rather “I was ignorant” or uninstructed; Jesus had to “learn obedience by the things that He suffered;” not that He ever had disobedience of spirit, but He had to learn what obedience was, and this too up to the very end of the course of His earthly service;—He was instructed in the path of service in which He was led. Ed.]

We expect literal fulfilment for this and every remaining prediction. We have next to inquire what the remaining predictions are. The Psalms which contain them make up the third and most numerous class, and refer to the remaining relations of interest in which man will be found in reference to God. They are historically described in other parts of Scripture; but before we state what they are, we would mention one very important fact, viz.—that since the call of Abraham, there has been no crisis in the history of the earth, nor any personal manifestation of God unconnected with Jerusalem.

The fulfilled events noticed in the Psalms occurred at Jerusalem. And so will the future likewise; so true is the principle of the Apostle which he advances in quoting from the Psalms, "whatsoever the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law," i. e. the Jews. In them every prediction will find a definite fulfilment.

The remaining predictions refer to the Gentiles in connexion with Jerusalem:—and to the Jews. The Gentiles have possessed the power and glory of the earth since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem began to be trodden down. But not only so, they have since assumed the position of being the witness of God. They have become the vine of the earth. (See note page 6,) [and also the note there added.] *Their* position is therefore one of awful interest.

On the other hand the Jews, although they have stumbled through unbelief, are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes." The relative position of these two bodies towards God and towards each other, at the close of this present age,* is the great subject of prophetic vision.

* The "present age," (Gal. i.) cannot end until Satan is personally bound and cast into the bottomless pit. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until then."

The Prophets frequently speak of the "Time of the end;" and of the "last end of the indignation against Jerusalem." They tell us what the features of that time will be; and they are these:—

I.—The Jews still remaining in unbelief, will be nationally re-established in Jerusalem; where they will again be surrounded by their Gentile enemies, and brought into such a state of suffering as they have not hitherto experienced. This is shewn by the 12th and 14th of Zechariah and the 3rd of Joel.

II.—It will be the period at which Gentile and Jewish apostasy are both consummated under THE ANTI-CHRIST; who, it is said, shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces on the glorious Holy mountain, i. e. Mount Zion. The moral character of His power is frequently referred to in the Psalms,—for example in Ps. x. we have one described as the wicked, by way of pre-eminence: for the word is in the singular throughout, answering to that in 2 Thes. ii. "Then shall the Wicked (or Lawless One) be revealed;" "he boasteth of his heart's desire, blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth: God is not in all his thoughts; as for his enemies he puffeth at them: he hath said in his heart I shall never be moved," &c. His seducing arts (for he comes with all deceivableness of unrighteousness) are detailed in ver. 8—10. The moral character of the Gentile confederacy under him is described in Ps. xii. marking the apostasy noted in 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19, "Men speaking great swelling words of vanity;" and Jude 15, 16. It is fully admitted that these descriptions of man's depravity are, in principle, applicable at all times; but there is yet to be a time of their full developement, specifically denominated in the Scripture of the New Testament as the "last time" and "last days."*

III.—Whilst the greater part of the Jews are carried away by the delusion of him whose "coming will be

* See the question of Thursday evening.

after the working of Satan, with all signs and power and lying wonders," there will be a remnant faithful to the God of their fathers. They are expressly referred to in the last chapter of Isaiah; the commencement of which describes the character of Jewish iniquity at the time immediately preceding their *final* and *therefore future deliverance*. The faithful remnant are recognised in this verse,—“Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your eye and they shall be ashamed.”*

It is this remnant who will use the penitential Psalms.—They will stand in circumstances in measure similar to those of the Lord Jesus, who was the great sufferer from Gentile and Jewish violence; and therefore the same Psalms which pertain to Him, describe the suffering of the Jewish remnant in the time of the final triumph of man's ungodliness. We have in Ps. cii. a remarkable instance of the way in which the humiliation of Jesus is extended till the restoration of Zion. As to earthly glory He is yet an Expectant;

* [In speaking of the latter day, there are *two* remnants; the one a Christian Remnant, and the other, simply a Jewish Remnant. Both of these will be found as brought before us in the Scripture; to the former would belong such Psalms as we can now apply to ourselves; to the latter such as lxxiv. lxxix. lxxx. The former are simply a part of the Church, a portion of whom, Jews by nation, but one with us by faith in Christ, will be found in Jerusalem towards the closing scenes of this dispensation:—these would come under the definition used by the Apostle Paul in Rom. xi. “the remnant according to the election of grace,” for this includes all of Israel who believe while the nation at large is in blindness. The Jewish remnant are those who are preserved from worshipping Antichrist, and who are converted when they see the Lord come in glory;—they are blessed on the earth; in Isa. x. they are mentioned as “the remnant that shall return.” Ed.]

His name is exalted above all heavens, but still despised and outcast on the earth. In their great trial, the godly remnant in Jerusalem will in measure be able to use His words—"Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come; for *thy servants* take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof." (ver. 13, 14.) So again we find many Psalms of a character similar to Ps. xi. in that time when the question shall be asked, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" and in Ps. xii. the cry of the remnant causes the Lord to arise, to awake as one out of sleep:—"Help Lord! for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men." "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." (ver. 5.)

IV.—It is revealed in many parts of Scripture, that Jerusalem is to be finally delivered at the time when the nations are gathered together against it. Let us turn to Zech. xii. 2, "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, WHEN THEY SHALL BE IN THE SIEGE both against Judah and against Jerusalem;* and in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all they that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it." And again, "Behold I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; THEN shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations." (see also Joel ii.) This gathering of the nations is distinctly referred to in many of the Psalms, and also the purpose which

* [This would be more correctly rendered,—“And also against Judah shall it be in the seige against Jerusalem.” One peculiar feature of the period will be that a portion of Judah will have united itself to the besiegers:—in ver. 5, we find that their hearts are turned, and in the following verse they aid in the destruction of the oppressing hosts. Ed.]

they meditate. "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps."

"We have become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us."* (Ps. lxxix.)

"Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength and come and save us." (Ps. lxxx.)

"For lo thine enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee have lifted up the head: they have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones: they have said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel be no more had in remembrance; for they have consulted together, with one consent they are confederate against thee." (Psalm lxxxiii. see also Ps. xlv. lxxiv.)

V.—When extreme affliction shall extort from Jerusalem the penitential cry, "THEN the Lord will be jealous for His land and pity His people."—This is written in Joel ii. 17, 18, and in other prophets. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives.—The Lord my God shall come and all His saints with thee." (Zech. xiv.) "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord, that rendereth recompence to His enemies." This manifestation of the Lord is referred to in very many Psalms.—"Thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right; thou hast rebuked

* This Psalm must refer to a yet future siege of Jerusalem, because of their repentance expressed in ver. 5, 8, 9, "How long Lord wilt thou be angry, for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? O remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name's sake." A repentance which has never been exhibited in any former calamity of the kind.

the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever." (Ps. ix. 4, 5, &c. and 16—18, Ps. xviii. lxxviii. 65, 66.) The great end is to exalt the Lord by judgment.—"That men may know that Thou whose name alone is Jehovah art the Most High over all the *earth*."

It is written in many of the prophets that, after this act of judgment, the will of the Lord shall begin to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. We find it so in Zephaniah.—"Wherefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, (addressing Jerusalem) until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy; THEN will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent." Again, we find it written in Zechariah, "In that day (i. e. when the Lord shall have gone forth against the nations) shall living waters go forth from Jerusalem, and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: *in that day* shall there be one Lord, and His name one." (Zech. xiv.) "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvellous things: His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory. The Lord *hath made known* His salvation; His righteousness hath He *openly showed* in the sight of the heathen: He hath remembered His mercy and His truth towards the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have *seen* the salvation of our God." (Ps. xcvi.) "Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; He shall rule the people righteously." (Ps. xcvi.) "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth: HE maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; HE breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; HE burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know

that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.—The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.” The glory of His power as the Son of David, reigning from the river unto the ends of the earth, and His glory as the second Adam, having all things put under Him—all sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field,—His glory in both these characters is largely described in the Psalms, and with as much minuteness as His past sufferings. The 8th Psalm is worthy of especial attention; because, by the testimony of the Apostle, it describes the character of what he calls “the world to come:” (Heb. ii.) and he expressly says that we do not yet see this Psalm fulfilled; in other words, that Jesus is not yet clothed with that specific glory which He is to receive as Son of Man. It is earthly glory secured in the Lordship of Man—the second Adam. (1 Cor. xv. 27.) “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the EARTH! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.” Jesus has already set His glory above the heavens; but the great point here set forth is, that His name shall be excellent *in all the earth*; and this in the re-assertion of man’s lost dominion, which God had given him in creation.—“We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour,” but “we see not yet all things put under Him.” The 67th Psalm shows this same earthly blessing in connection with Israel,—“Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God shall bless us; God shall bless us, and all the ends of the world shall fear Him.” “What shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?” (Rom. xi. 15.) “It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine, and they shall hear Jezreel.”

The triumphant songs of Jerusalem, when restored, is the last division which we intend to mention. “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream: then was our mouth filled

with laughter and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." (Ps. cxxvi.) And the great concluding strain, in the end of the Book, is the accomplishment of that announced in the beginning—the destroying of the way of the ungodly, and the establishment of God's King upon His holy hill of Zion. (Ps. cxlvi. 10, cxlvii. 12, cxlix. 2.) These are the songs which will one day be sung by Jerusalem in her glory. They may be sung in faith by a believer now. He is already brought into the same covenant of grace which will bring blessing on Jerusalem then. He is brought into this covenant now, whilst Christ is rejected:—the Jews will not be, until Christ is manifested in His glory, (see Zech. xii.) and therefore neither will have the privilege of suffering nor of reigning with Him.—“If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.” “Know ye not that the saints will judge the world? know ye not that the saints will judge angels?”

It must not be thought, therefore, that what has been said deprives the Church of Christ of any of her consolations. If Israel, according to the flesh, is to have earthly glory, the Church is to have the heavenly—even “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” The Lord is gone before to prepare for His Church mansions of resurrection glory; not in the earthly, but in the heavenly Jerusalem, to which every believer is already, in spirit, come.

But the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem are now, many of them, sojourners in an evil world. It is expedient for them that they should be forewarned respecting its history, that they might not be unwise, but understand the signs of the times. That they might find in Jerusalem's sorrow and in Jerusalem's glory, a pattern or illustration or shadow of their own; that they might know from the history of Jerusalem, that “the gifts and calling of God are unrepented of.”

The following is the classification which has been given.—

I.

The first class, or those which have already received their principal accomplishment, describe the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, and His righteousness, as the second Adam, and as the seed of Abraham.

II.

The second class, or those which are still receiving their accomplishment, include—

I.—Those which describe Jesus, waiting at the right hand of the Father, until His enemies be made His footstool.

II.—Those which relate to us as seeking, or having found, the Bishop of our souls.

III.—The third class are, as to their primary fulfilment, altogether future, though capable of being *applied* in principle now.—They refer—

1.—To the future gathering of the nations around Jerusalem. (Ps. lxxxiii. lxxix. xlviii.)

2.—To the manifestation of the Head of the last apostasy in Jerusalem. (Ps. x. ix.)

3.—To the distress of the godly remnant in Jerusalem, and their penitential cry. (Ps. lix. liii.)

4.—Their deliverance by the manifestation of the Lord. (Ps. l. Ps. xcvi. verses 8 & 2.)

5.—The glory of the Lord Jesus as the second Adam, (Ps. viii.) and as the Son of David. (Ps. lxxii.)

6.—The joy of Jerusalem when the Lord reigneth. (Ps. xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. xcix.)

The *earthly* Jerusalem and Zion have been frequently mentioned in the preceding observations. It is important to remember that the *heavenly* Jerusalem and Zion are also mentioned in the Scriptures; but with characteristics entirely distinct from those of the earthly.

They both denote places.—The earthly Jerusalem and Zion denotes that place which has been appropriated by

God to Israel according to the flesh.—The heavenly Jerusalem or Zion is the place reserved for the Church, or those who believe in Jesus; where they will dwell in resurrection blessedness. The following are some of the most important points of contrast.—

I.—The first has had earthly glory; the second never.

II.—The first has had wrath poured on it; the second never.

“The Lord hath accomplished His fury, He hath poured out His fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundation thereof.” (Lam. iv. 11.)

Neither the foundations of the Church, nor those of the heavenly Jerusalem, can be ever devoured, neither do they ever know WRATH.

III.—The earthly Jerusalem will have RESTORED glory; the heavenly Jerusalem never.

“The Lord shall inherit Judah, His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem *again*.” (Zech. iii.)

“It shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down,...so will I watch over them to build and to plant.” (Jer. xxxi. 28.)

The children of Israel shall abide many days in desolation; afterward they shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days. (Hosea iii. 5.)

Ezekiel, in the 1st chapter, describes the departure of the glory from Jerusalem; in the 43rd, he sees the glory return and fill the house. “And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever; and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile.”

These and many other passages might be quoted to show the RESTORED glory of the earthly city: the heavenly cannot have glory *restored*, because it is never taken away.

IV.—The earthly Jerusalem, when restored, will have a temple; the other never.

The Temple of the earthly Jerusalem, after the glory is *restored*, is minutely described in the concluding chapters of Ezekiel.

But of the heavenly Jerusalem it is written, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Rev. xxi. 22.)

V.—The earthly Jerusalem, when *restored*, will be enlightened by the Sun and Moon.

"The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun; and the light of the Sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." (Is. xxx. 26.)

"He (the Messiah) shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

"In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the Moon endureth." (Ps. lxxii.)

But the heavenly Jerusalem it is written, "that it had no need of the Sun neither of the Moon to shine in it; and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle neither the light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." (Rev. xxi. & xxii.)

VI.—In the *earthly* Jerusalem, even when made the glorious city of the Great King, there will be death and the possibility of sin.

"In those days, they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge; but every shall *die* for his own *iniquity*; every one that *eateth* the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." (Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.)

"The child shall *die* an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old (i.e. though he be not older than a child) shall be *accursed*. For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people."

But of the *heavenly* Jerusalem it is written, "There shall be no more curse." (Rev. xxii.) "Neither shall there be any more death." (Rev. xxi.)

VIII.—The inhabitants of the glorious earthly Jerusalem will have natural bodies of flesh and blood. There

will be distinctions between young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile.

“Thus saith the Lord : Again there shall be heard in this place...even in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness : *the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride* ; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts, for His mercy endureth for ever : and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.”

“In those days and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David ; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely.” (Jer. xxiii. 10, &c.)

“The *Gentiles* shall come to thy light.” (Is. lx.)

“The *nation* that will not serve thee shall perish.” (Is. lx.)

“Their seed shall be known among the *Gentiles*.” (Is. lxi.)

See also Jeremiah xxi. “AGAIN, I will build thee and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel. They shall not sorrow any more. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together,” &c. &c.

These passages describe the earthly Jerusalem when *restored* to her final blessedness.—They recognize marriage, difference of age, difference of nation.

But in the heavenly Jerusalem, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.” “They shall not marry nor be given in marriage, for they shall be like the angels in heaven, being the children of the *resurrection*.”

The resurrection glory of the heavenly Jerusalem is that which belongeth to those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. To them the glory of the earthly city (great and marvellous as it will be) is among “the former things which have passed away.” But these distinctions will assist us in rightly dividing the word of truth ; and we shall find that the hour of returning mercy to Jerusalem below, will be the hour of the manifested glory of the saints above.

WEDNESDAY.

Question—WHEN was this world given up to Satan the god of this world? Where since in it has been God's dwelling-place? Was the dispensation of the Priesthood of Christ, in its graces, gifts, and hope of future glory, as proposed to the early Christian Church, at its foundation among the Jews, identical with that possessed by the Gentile Christian Church after the rejection of Israel?

THE present question is one of solemn interest; the more so because we are so little able to estimate its importance—so little able to understand the devices and power of Satan. There is much need of love and forbearance in considering it; and we should be very watchful concerning this, remembering that a saint of little knowledge and much love, is far more acceptable unto God, than a saint of great knowledge but deficient in love; and that in the latter day, "knowledge will increase" (Dan. xii.) but love diminish. (Matt. xxiv.) Yet knowledge is very valuable if used in love. Our object in entering on the consideration of the present question is, that knowledge may be communicated; and though we are very weak and liable to failure, yet God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.

The world fell *virtually* under Satan's sovereignty as soon as Adam transgressed. The whole creation began to groan and travail in pain together. Yet his power was not absolute; for God hindered him in measure.

Adam when he ate the fruit, was to die ; God said, " in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But here is the important distinction between a thing's being *virtually* and *actually* fulfilled. Although he died morally, yet as to his natural life, he did not *actually* die for many years. The sentence of death was upon him ; he became possessed of a mortal—i. e. of a dying life ; but it could still be said of him and his posterity, that " in God they lived, and moved, and had their being." God was able to sustain him because of Jesus, otherwise all would have utterly perished at that time.

But instead of this, man was immediately placed under dispensations of amendment, in order that the character of the evil which had been introduced, might be experimentally developed. When this was tried, man grew worse and worse :—testimony was sent and rejected, and the flood came—It came in judgment on the ungodly, that future generations might be warned. It failed however, for men were not amended thereby.

A new dispensation was then introduced. God selected Abraham ; and from that time the history of the world, i. e. God's history of the world, became, in other words, the history of Jerusalem.

In the family of Abraham it was fully tried how far a man like Solomon, not only having unequalled power, and glory, and wisdom, but having it by the special bestowal of God Himself, was capable of so amending the systems of this world as to fit them abidingly to bear the glory.

But utter failure was soon visible. They went from sin to sin, until at last they avowedly rejected God, and *professedly* leant upon the kings of Assyria for support. He then withdrew the presence of His glory, and Ezekiel saw it depart. (Ezek. i.) The Gentiles were allowed to arise into undisputed sovereignty ; and what is called by our Lord the " Times of the Gentiles," commenced with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

Up to this time God had not given up the world to Satan's power. On the contrary, there was one people

of whom it could be said, "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." (Num. xxiii. 21.) Their religious and their civil systems were alike sanctioned by Him. In them and in their kings He *owned* earthly power. Their kings were the Lord's anointed, and for a short season there was one national system upon earth, accredited by God.

But as soon as the "Times of the Gentiles" commenced, earthly power, (although not disowned) was not *owned* by God any longer. It was transferred from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, but the name of God was not transferred together with it.—On the contrary, the time of the transfer was the time at which He withdrew the the presence of His glory from the earth; for Ezekiel beheld it depart, and it has ever since been hidden in the heavens. This most important difference between the Jewish and Gentile glory is strikingly marked in the repentant words of Israel as prophetically recorded in Isaiah lxiii. 17,—“O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.—The people of thine holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary—WE are thine, thou NEVER barest rule over them, they were not called by thy name.”

But although owned no longer, yet the systems of earth were not yet professedly rejected as wholly incapable of amendment.*

* Jerusalem (and therefore the earth) was *virtually* rejected as incapable of amendment, as soon as God had said "lo-ammi" (not my people) and broken "Beauty," the first of His shepherd staves. Yet although the visible glory had departed, yet for the sake of the remnant, He so remained as to be still able to say to Haggai, "My Spirit remaineth among you." Though "Beauty" was broken, "Bands" was long continued, as intimating to the "poor of the flock" that His shepherd care over them had not ceased. It is important to see the mode of God's acting; viz. continuance

Although the glory had departed, yet Jerusalem was still watched over with pity. It was necessary, because it had been prophesied, that four Gentile empires should successively arise into dominion over it, but the three first were made rapidly to pass away; and as soon as the fourth was introduced, as if anxious to restore His blessing, God sent His Son, saying, "It may be they will reverence my Son."

Here was the last trial of the systems of earth as to their capacity for amendment. "The Son of God came eating and drinking,"—He met them in familiar love, proving whether they were capable of amendment. But Jerusalem which had THE law and the Gentiles which had THE power, united in destroying Him whom God had sent. And therefore it was that, on the night of His betrayal, He formally assumed the sign of Nazarite separation, (see Num. vi. 3,) by refusing any more to drink of the fruit of the vine, i. e. to receive any joy from communion with earth, until the kingdom of God should come, and the "present evil age" (Gal. 1,) be ended.—THEN HE will be able to rejoice in them, and they shall say "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The lifting up of Jesus upon the cross was the final proof that the systems of earth were utterly alienated from God; and at this time they were finally given up as incapable of amendment. It was fully shown that "new wine must be put into new bottles." Accordingly it was at this period that Scripture first applies to Satan the title "Prince of this world," and similar expressions. *He is never so called except in connection with the rejection of Christ.*

From this time forth the systems of this world have their character plainly marked in the Apostolic Epistles.

of mercy to the remnant in the midst of apostasy. It is wisdom to see when the glory is gone, and to rest in His faithfulness to the remnant.

Evil spirits are expressly said to be the "Rulers of the darkness of this age." (Eph. vi. 12.) The course of this age is spoken of as being under Satan's control; (Eph. ii.) and the interference of God for His people is said to be exercised in extricating, or taking them out (*εξαιρεισθαι*) of this present evil age. (Gal. i. 4.)

Surely no texts can be of more solemn interest than these. They imply that the whole course of the present age is moved on by Satan: and the position which God is pleased to occupy, is that of one who interferes to check, for a season, the full operation of his power.

Not that Satan is the author of any of the works of God. It is God who hath given the fruit-bearing earth, and giveth the fruits in their seasons. It is God who sustains man in the power of doing whatever he does, whether it be good or bad. It is God who provides every instrument of man's action, for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.

But the road is broad that leadeth to destruction. The days are evil, (Ephes. v. 16.) The children of disobedience are many, and it is Satan who worketh in them: (Ephes. ii. 2,) and through them he so orders the arrangements of mankind, and the distribution of God's gifts among them, that the name of God is not hallowed, nor his will done upon earth as it done in heaven. This is what the Scripture means, when it speaks of the course of the "present *evil* age" as being under Satan. God gives for good, and man arranges for evil.

If it be asked how long the days will continue to be evil, the answer is—until Satan be bound. Nothing more strikingly shows the dangerous state of the professing Church than the practical infidelity which it exhibits respecting the personality and agency of Satan. The Scripture universally testifies that there will be no time of universal peace and blessedness, until Satan is *personally* bound and shut up in the bottomless pit. Surely the preaching of the Gospel (though it shall gather the children of the kingdom into their everlast-

ing rest) will not bind the person of Satan,—but the Lord, “*coming out of His place,*” will. (Isaiah xxvi. and first verse of succeeding chapter.) Why then has this been doubted? If we really believed the personal might and power of Satan, we should never think that any thing less than the direct agency of the Lord could bind and shut him in the bottomless pit. And it must be remembered, that we are not speaking of his *last* but of his *first* imprisonment, after which he must again be loosed *on the earth* for a little season. (Rev. xx.)

Nevertheless his power is not yet allowed to operate unhindered. What Satan said to the Lord Jesus, when he offered all the kingdoms of the world, was like most of his temptations, partly true and partly false. *Virtually*, and in title, the glory of the earth, during the present age, did belong to him; but *actually*, it was not under his full control. And, even though he has been pronounced to be the “Prince of this world” and the Ruler of the darkness of this age, in consequence of the rejection of Christ, yet even still, he is hindered from giving the glory of the earth to whomsoever he will; for it is distinctly written, “that He who hindereth will hinder, until he be taken out of the way; and THEN shall that wicked one be revealed, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.” Then Satan’s desire of clothing man with glory, and setting him in opposition to God, will at length be gratified.

At the time then when “Jerusalem began to be trodden down,” God ceased to be a “Governor among the nations,” though the systems of earth were not given up as incapable of amendment. At the crucifixion they were given up in this respect, but yet not allowed to fall under the unhindered power of Satan; for God is *acting on them* that He might *gather out of them*. Up to the time of the rejection of Jesus, there had been no such gathering out. Earthly blessings were the promises to which there was a gathering *in*. Solomon enjoyed earthly glory whilst it was *owned* by God; and Daniel

was allowed to hold it before it was *disowned*. Temporal glory and prosperity was, more or less, a blessing then. But now the greatest of blessings is, not to be like Solomon, but, like the Apostle, "the off-scouring of all things." And why? because the testimony of Christ crucified was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." And therefore the gospel of Him, who, when He was on earth, "had not where to lay His head," is acting on the systems of the world, and "*taking out of them* a people to His name." (Acts xv. 14.) And this brings us to the second part of the question. The Church of Christ is "*taken out*" and "*brought nigh to God through the blood of Jesus,*" that God might dwell in them. He once dwelt visibly in the tabernacle and temple at Jerusalem. He dwelt also in the Lord Jesus Christ. But since Christ departed, the Church *only* has been His habitation, through the Spirit.

Whilst Jesus was on earth He was not a Priest; (Heb. viii. 4,) but as soon as He gave Himself to be separated from the earth, by being lifted up on the cross, He became a Priest: and the house of God—i. e. the Church, is placed under Him in this character; being themselves made priests unto God. And the very fact of their being so is a perpetual memorial of what the world is, and of their relation thereunto: for how did Jesus become a Priest, except by His being rejected of men? and they are priests through Him. They are priests only in virtue of their connexion with Him, who is still, as to earth, the rejected Man; and has, on that account, sat down on His Father's throne, and not on His own throne, (compare Rev. iii. 21, and Dan. vii. 14.) Separation therefore from the systems of the "*present age,*" and rejection of men, must be the necessary result of *realized* union with Him, even though it is union with Him as seated at the right hand of the Father, and having, in *title*, all power both in heaven and in earth.

It is then only in the Man Christ Jesus, that God at present *owns* earthly power, in its exercise as well as its possession. And all power now exercised upon the earth in the name of Jesus, and according to His mind, is *owned* by God, but no other. But where is this power at present exercised? In the Church only! Christ *is* a judge and a divider over the Church now; but He *is not* a judge and divider over the world now, more than He was in the days of His flesh. Otherwise the world would be subjected to such judgments now, as fell on Ananias and Sapphira; and so the wicked would no longer flourish as a green bay tree. But Christ is still meeting the world in love without judgment, through the ministry of reconciliation; and God in the meanwhile is maintaining it in the enjoyment of many blessings.

Among these are to be numbered the civil institutions of society. Like the connexions of relationship, they are to be regarded as *natural* appointments from God. They come as gifts from Him, like rain or fruitful seasons,—He giving to some the capacity to rule, and to others the disposition to obey, because He is kind even to the unthankful and to the evil. A right-minded Christian will thankfully acknowledge the blessing of civil government as a gift from Him, and submit to its authority, whether vested in the heathen Emperor of China, or in the nominally Christian Governors of Europe. And if that power is exercised exactly on the same principles on which it should be exercised in the Church,—if it is wholly based on the laws of Christ, then a Christian may hold any office of civil power, and remain a faithful disciple still. But if Christ could not personally exercise the judicial or legislative functions of any present system upon earth, because their power, though it be, like life {and health, a gift from God, is not exercised according to His mind; so neither could a faithful disciple, for he has no perfect pattern excepting Christ.

Now the broad unqualified commands of our Law-giver are these—"I say unto you, resist not evil! Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; therefore if thy enemy hunger, feed him."—These principles are the principles of Christ; but they run entirely counter to those upon which the entire mass of human arrangements is at present conducted. Indeed when these principles are pressed as the duty of Christians, we know how often their force is avoided by the answer, that the systems of the world must stop, if these maxims were universally obeyed.—And this is true. Wherefore it is said of the Church, that their "citizenship is in heaven:" (Phil. iii. 20,) and it is said of the systems of this world, that their course is according to Satan. It is possible even for the tie of relationship to connect us with the course of this world, and then it is to be disowned: How much more are stations of worldly greatness to be relinquished when they bind us (and do they ever fail?) to systems which *our* Law-giver has never sanctioned.*

* It is most important to notice, that the only Power for real blessing is the Spirit. Man has tried to carry on God's work by other agency, and has lamentably failed. The present dispensation is called spiritual, because the Holy Spirit is the only Agent in it, witnessing unto the work and glory of the Son, even as He in the days of His sojourn on the earth, glorified the Father. The world, whose course is rolled on by Satan, has ever been seeking to be accredited in God's work, and God's own people have helped on this delusion by courting their co-operation. All the progress in civilization and expansion of man's intellectual powers, being under such an agency, will not tend to help the world's blessing. "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The personal presence of the Spirit in the Church, and personal presence of Satan in the world, as well as their real agencies, appear to be truths

“Citizenship in heaven” is the distinctive characteristic of the Church in contradistinction to the world: and the life of faith is lived just in proportion as this fact is practically realized, so as to stamp their right value on present things. In the Church at Jerusalem alone, this power of faith was practically developed: for “none said that ought that he possessed was his own;” and this Church also appears to have afforded the only instance of unity and power, combined in such a way as to answer the prayer of the Lord Jesus—“the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one.” (John xvii. 22.) The Corinthians, for example, came behind in no gift; but in unity they failed. The Philippians were united; but we find no mention of the gifts of power.

In their relation to the heavenly glory which is to be revealed, there is said to be no difference, in those who are called, between the Jew and the Gentile. Both alike are made children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; both are, *in title*, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, to which they will actually be gathered when Christ comes to “give unto every one according as his work shall be.”

But as to instrumental service upon earth, especial privileges appear to pertain to those who believe in Jerusalem.

In the first place, the Olive Tree (Rom. xi.) is theirs:—they are the stock into which every Gentile Church is grafted; and therefore the *foundations* of the heavenly Jerusalem are marked with the names of the

which have been held or disowned together; and in the present day, the common language of the “*influence of the Spirit*” shows how far Christians have forgotten their portion of an indwelling God. Nothing can be more direct than the testimony of Scripture on this subject, as well as the marked agency of Satan. (Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Luke xiii. 16. 1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 20. 1 Thess. ii. 18. 2 Cor. xi. 14, &c.)

twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Jerusalem is distinctively the source of blessing--"Salvation is of the Jews." (John iv. 22.)

Secondly, the Church at Jerusalem only has been able to stand in the full plenitude of Church authority, so as to say, "it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and to us." It was a true witness of the mind of Christ.

Thirdly, it would never be said to the Gentiles, "repent and be converted, that the times of refreshing may come* from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Christ." In other words the universal blessing of the world is made to depend entirely on the conversion of Israel; nor would any possible extent of Gentile conversion effect the blessed change. The elective character of this dispensation towards the Gentiles is clearly marked in the words of James-- "God hath visited the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for His name.*"

* (Acts iii. 19.) "Repent and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restoring of all things."—This is the correct and literal translation of this passage. *ὅπως* is never used in the New Testament to signify "*when*," and not often in other writings; when it is so used, it is an adverb, always followed by an Indicative Mood. When, as in the present passage, it is followed by an optative or subjunctive, it is a conjunction, and uniformly signifies "*that*." It is used more than fifty times in the New Testament, and in every place except the present is rightly translated. The difficulty of attaching any intelligible meaning to the words "Repent in order that" appears to have distressed the Translators and to have led them to violate the grammar. But the sense becomes quite plain, when we see the connection between the deliverance of the Jews and the deliverance of Creation.

But the words of Peter towards the Jews appear as clearly to imply that the full responsibility of hindering the universality of blessing, rested wholly upon them. —“God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away *every one of you* from his iniquities;”—in which case their conversion would have been life and blessing to the world. But Jerusalem, by the martyrdom of Stephen, sealed the rejection of the testimony of the Spirit in the Church, and then this dispensation was *fully manifested* to be a dispensation of election, holding forth no expectation of universality before the intervention of judgment. These who are gathered out now, are only “a kind of first fruits of His creatures.”

But a time of universality is coming. Jerusalem was the first to receive the former rain; though she profited but little, she shall likewise receive the latter rain; and then will become a blessing in the earth. It is Jerusalem that will evangelize all nations; and this is one of her distinctive endowments from her God.

The Apostle John saw a woman clothed with the Sun, and with the Moon under her feet. This we believe was a prospective vision of what Jerusalem will be, when she shall not only stand with the Moon under her feet—that is in the fulness of Church authority, (for thus in a measure she has already stood) but shall be also clothed with the Sun,—i. e. shall have the glorious presence of the risen Lord. Then she shall gather all nations. “And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah ii. 3.) Nor if the application of the passage from the Revelation be objected to, is the fact capable of being impugned; for it rests upon the clear testimony of Scripture. The effective evangelization of the nations is always spoken of, as subsequent to the restored blessing of Jerusalem,—“How beautiful

upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall eye to eye, when the Lord shall *bring again* Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (Isaiah lii. 7—10.) At what period are these "glad tidings of good" published among the nations? The answer is contained in the preceding chapter—when Jerusalem shall have received her final cup of trembling—when it shall be taken out of her hands, and put into the hands of her Gentile oppressors—when the Lord shall *bring again* Zion.

The following then is the answer which has been given. When Adam transgressed, the systems of this world fell *virtually* under the power of Satan: but his power was restrained, in order that the character of man might be *manifested* under successive dispensations of mercy from God.

From Moses to Nebuchadnezzar, the systems of the world were owned in the chosen nation: and from Nebuchadnezzar to the mission of the Lord Jesus, they were not *disowned* as utterly incapable of amendment. But at the rejection of Christ, Satan was fully *manifested* to be the "god of this world:" and therefore this and similar titles are applied to him in Scripture, in connexion with the rejection of the Son.

From the crucifixion to the present hour, God has continued to hinder His full power; not that He might amend, but that He might gather out of the systems of "this present evil age."—How long He will continue to hinder is known to Himself alone. But the time is

coming, of which the Apostle warns, (2 Thess. ii.) when "strong delusion" will be sent from Him, and when the world and its systems will entirely and actually (though but for a short period) be given up to Satan's unhindered power. (See Question of Thursday Evening.)

From the time at which Satan is first called in Scripture "the prince of this world," the only dwelling-place of God, on earth, has been in the Church. The Gentile and Jewish Christian Churches had the same hopes of heavenly glory; but pre-eminence, in instrumental service on earth, belongs to Jerusalem.

In conclusion, however startling the points of the question before us may appear to the minds of many, the resolving of them will alone enable us to judge righteous judgment, and to walk uprightly before God. Indistinctness in the apprehension of the real extent of Satan's power in the world, and of the actual presence of the Spirit in the Church, has led Christians to confound things that differ, and induced the lamentable condition of disorder and disunion in which we are; and from which many a longing heart is seeking emancipation. It is the recognition of these broad principles, which will give to a Believer the apprehension of his real standing; as not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. He will be enabled to take his vantage ground, and to survey all things around him in the light of God's truth; so as to say, while deeply conscious of *his* weakness, "we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Hence every effort will be directed in the earnestness of love, not to the improvement of the systems of the world, but to the deliverance of individuals from them into the principles of the Church: and a holy jealousy will be felt of carrying on the work of God by any other than spiritual weapons. In a word, all consistency of walk, as a Christian, will much turn on the view taken of these first two points. How many have tried to put the new piece to the old garment, and the rent has become worse!

With respect to the last point in the question, the answer to it will bring us into our proper place:—Seeing the glory in which the Church once was, and comparing it with its present state, instead of thinking ourselves “rich and increased with goods,” we shall feel that we are “poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked.” It will tend to keep us from high-mindedness, and bring us to that humble state which is the place of safety. The “little strength” which we shall then have, is real strength, because of the Spirit. And however separate we may personally be from the evil around us by the power of that Spirit, such separation will not lead to a Spirit of judgment, but to confession of our common sin before God, for having grieved His Spirit, intercession for the Church, and waiting upon the Lord, as those who mourn over its departed glory. And the right answer to this point, also, will much tend to give a right direction to our minds as to the Church’s future prospects, and prevent our being borne away by excitement, or tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine:—“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

THURSDAY.

Question.—WHAT is the result, to which a comparison of the 2nd, 7th, and 8th chapters of Daniel with the 13th and 17th of Revelations leads, as to the scheme of Satan’s working, and his future plans?

THE question respecting examination into prophecy is only a question of degree; for every one who looks at all beyond the present, must do it upon the faith of God’s predictions. If he looks for a judgment to come, it is because it has been prophesied; his whole know-

ledge of it rests upon prophecy alone. It is the same with many other events which are spoken of in the Scriptures, as being yet future: they all stand upon the same ground to us, nor is there any difference of certainty as to their actually coming to pass; though some may be of greater importance unto us than others; and some may be spoken of more or less explicitly. But one single intimation of a future event, is a sufficient ground for a Christian's mind to rest upon; how much more then, when the testimony concerning it is repeated in many places and in various ways.

Much responsibility indeed rests upon us for every conclusion which we draw from God's word; and in none more than in those connected with unfulfilled prophecy. Satan is assuredly able to make great use of any mis-statements of truth; and is actually doing so in the present day, to the turning away of the minds of many from the truth itself. Much reverence and humility are therefore needed in approaching a question like the present; but at the same time, we are equally responsible for undoubting trust in the Lord's assurance,—“I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.” It is of unquestionable importance to know the working and future plans of Satan, that we may not be ignorant of his devices. These are things in which all are intimately concerned: and therefore God has graciously marked out the lines of his operation, and the end to which they are approaching: that “by the word of His lips” His saints may be “kept from the paths of the destroyer.” More than is revealed we cannot know; but whilst “the secret things”—i. e. *those which are not written*, belong unto the Lord our God,—the things which are *revealed*, even all the Scriptures of truth, belong unto us and to our children for ever.—Nor will any thing be hereafter done either to Israel, the nations, or the Church, of which intimation has not been given; for the Lord God will do *nothing*, but He *reveals His secret* unto His servants the prophets. (Amos. iii. 7.)

There are two principles which it is important to remember in reading the Prophecies.

I.—That the prophecies are germinant in their accomplishment—i. e. they grow on from one fulfilment to another, until they arrive at the last great crisis, which alone exhausts, to the full, all the terms of the prophecy. The events of the latter day are the great subjects of prophetic vision: and therefore they will answer to every particular of the description which is given. Nevertheless the Providence of the Most High has arranged, that events similar in character, though less in importance, should previously occur as warnings, exemplifications, and perhaps as types of the consummation which is to follow; so that the description of the great event becomes in part applicable to the forerunner. It is thus that prophecy, throwing its strongest light upon the concluding events of the dispensation, and increasing in importance as time advances, is nevertheless rendered useful throughout the whole period, by admitting of being *applied*, though not *exclusively interpreted*, with relation to antecedent events, *kindred in principle* to that which is *mainly* the subject of prediction.

II.—Although much difficulty may exist *in detail*, yet the great outline of futurity is so clearly given, that the leading features are as distinguishable as any event which may have already past. And it is from these that practical instruction is derived; for the detail is morally of comparative unimportance. The present question involves much of outline and much of detail: many things which may be laid down with the same certainty, with which we speak of those parts of Scripture which have already received their fulfilment, and others not known with the same degree of clearness; but which it may be expected that increasing light on these subjects, will gradually elucidate.

The question leads us to several chapters in Daniel and the Revelations. Daniel was raised up as a prophet at the time when Jerusalem began to be trodden down

by the Gentiles. His prophecy is throughout a detail of Gentile history, as connected with Jerusalem: the one principle, which if kept in view, makes it so clear and plain that a child may understand. In consequence of this connexion of his history with Jerusalem, the account is continued, in every instance, only so long as the Jews are in possession of their city; and therefore at the period when Jerusalem was utterly overthrown by the Romans, there is a break in every vision, until the Jews shall be nationally re-established again. Thus the great parenthesis of the Gentile dispensation is passed over almost in silence; and for this reason, that during its continuance the Jews have no national existence; but as soon as they are brought again as a people into their own land, Daniel's history again resumes its order, and hastens to its close. The same observation will probably be found to extend to all the other Old Testament prophets.

The anxieties of Daniel respected Jerusalem. The visions which were successively vouchsafed to him refer to the same general events—namely, the relation of the Gentiles universally to Jerusalem; but each vision *amplifies* that which precedes, and brings out the different points with increasing minuteness of detail. In the 2nd chapter we find only a rapid and general sketch, though extending over the whole course of time, *from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of the end*. The number of the Gentile empires is given, and the divided state of the fourth at its close: but the character of their relation to Jerusalem and to God, is not even referred to, except so far as we may infer it, from the fact of the image being smitten or destroyed. But in the 7th chapter, the *final* re-embodiment of the power of the Gentiles, in the little horn, is declared,—its blasphemous opposition to God and His saints, and its destruction by the direct judgments of God; but there is no mention of Jerusalem. The 8th describes the relation of the Little Horn to Jerusalem,—declares it to be the symbol of “a king, understanding dark sentences, who shall

prosper *till* the indignation be accomplished ;” and gives many particulars of his character. In the 11th chapter his origin, and the whole line of his predecessors is traced, with astonishing accuracy of detail, up to the period when the Jews are scattered ; (ver. 31,) after which the detail is suddenly exchanged for such general description as this ;—“ They (the Jews) shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.” This continues up to the period of their re-establishment : when at once, as though there had been no interruption in the order, “ The King,” the accomplisher of the indignation, is introduced in verse 36.

According to these principles, the prophecy of Daniel will be divided into two parts, viz.—the *fulfilled*, extending from Nebuchadnezzar, to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans ; and the *unfulfilled*, commencing at the still future period, when Jerusalem shall be restored in unbelief, and extending to the time of her full restoration to the favour of God.

In the 2nd and 7th chapters, the manifestation of the ten toes of the image, and the ten horns of the beast or Roman empire, are that which we would mark as future. They denote ten kings or kingdoms, which divide the whole Roman earth ; wherefore they must be sought in the *Eastern as well as the Western branches of the Roman empire* ; and secondly in accordance with the principle already stated, some part of their existence must be contemporaneous with Jerusalem.

These two rules have been entirely neglected by the various writers, who have endeavoured to shew that the ten kingdoms have been already manifested. They have sought them in the Western branch only of the Roman empire ; whereas “ the division ” of the whole Roman earth is clearly said to be denoted by the toes of the image. (ver. 41, chap. ii.) And they have never considered that Daniel’s prophecies have Jerusalem for their centre.

Indeed the entire discordancy among themselves of the various systems which have been proposed, is suffi-

cient to shew that these kingdoms have not yet been manifested; for this difficulty is never found in fulfilled prophecy; since in every point which has been accomplished, we can always, with unerring certainty, shew the entire and indisputable correspondence of the event with the prediction.*

The fact, then, that the whole Roman world, from the Euphrates to Britain, has never yet been thus divided, is a sufficient proof that the ten kingdoms have not yet been manifested. But the certainty of this is confirmed, when we pass on to consider the history of the Little Horn; he is definitely connected with the ten kings, for he overthrows three, and therefore their existence must be contemporaneous with his. Now *his* manifestation is necessarily future; for he is expressly said to exist in the fulness of his persecuting power, "until judgment shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom." (vii. 22.) And since the saints are neither possessed of the kingdom yet, nor exposed at present to the fury of such persecuting power, we are certainly sure that his manifestation is future: and therefore the manifestation of the ten kings, in connexion with him, is future likewise. His actings will be the closing event of this dispensation. "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, UNDER the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

* A clear proof that the fifth empire has not yet commenced, is this—that at the period generally assumed, when the Roman world received the name of Christian, there were no such ten kings at all. And the kings, whom the expounders of prophecy have found so many ways of explaining, were followed not by Christ's reign, but by Popery. But *in the days of these kings* shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

This is the period of which it is written,—“I saw in the night visions; and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Antient of days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given Him glory,” &c. and this is the passage to which our Lord referred, when, standing before the High-priest, He said, “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Such is the testimony of the 7th chapter. But even supposing this chapter to be annihilated, we find nevertheless, in the 8th, the same testimony as to the fearful termination of Gentile power. Many attempts have been made to explain away these awful prophecies, by referring them to the past history of Popery or Mahomedanism. But the 8th chapter of Daniel affords three criterions, to which neither Popery nor Mahomedanism answer. I. It is there written, that a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up, not from the West nor from Arabia, but from *one of the four divisions of the broken empire of Alexander the great.*

II.—He will find the sanctuary at Jerusalem standing: but He will cast down and take away the daily sacrifice. (ver. 11, 12.)

III.—The time *expressly specified*, is, “*the last end of the indignation*” against Jerusalem. (ver. 19.) “He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.” (xi. 36.)

The two explanations, which some attempt to give, are at utter variance with this description; for Popery arose in the West: Mahomedanism did not arise out of any of these kingdoms, but from Arabia; which, according to the prophecy respecting Ishmael, has marvelously been preserved from every conqueror. And secondly, neither of them found the sanctuary standing, nor took away the daily sacrifice: and lastly, both arose at the commencement, rather than at the close, of the indignation against Jerusalem; and therefore the prophecy has never yet been fulfilled.

We would press the plain testimony of these chapters on the consciences of our brethren. It is not presumptuous to search into the prophecies of those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but to become prophets ourselves is presumption;—a presumption so fearful, that we may tremble in contemplating the result to those who persevere in refusing to inquire, what the Scripture says concerning the latter day, and yet fearlessly affirm that the world is gradually advancing into its Millennial rest,—“when nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” These chapters describe the closing period of the “Times of the Gentiles,”—the period of “the Horn that has eyes,”—the period when “mind” shall govern, and strength be directed by intelligence. But what is the result? “He shall speak great words against the Most High.” (vii. 25.) “He shall cast down the truth to the ground.” (viii. 12.) “He shall stand up against the Prince of princes.” (viii. 25.) This is the end of the glory of the Gentiles.

And we would also observe, that the great point which we are anxious to press, does not at all depend on the accuracy of our interpretation. Supposing we were to relinquish all that we have said, and admit that the Little Horn did not signify “a king,” but a system: and that system was Popery or Mahomedanism; still the awful fact respecting the close of Gentile dominion remains unchanged, that *because* of blasphemy, *therefore* the judgment sits. (chap. vii.) The concluding word respecting this dispensation, is still the same,—“there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time.” (Dan. xii. 1.)*

* *The following connexions may be found useful.*—

I. Between chap. VIII. and chap. IX.

viii. 25. “By peace he shall destroy many.”

ix. 27. “He (the Prince that shall come) shall confirm the covenant with many.”

But valuable and precious as the book of Daniel is, in enabling us to view the history of the nations, in connexion with the counsels of God; he was only enabled to prophecy as the prophet of the earthly Jerusalem. The *external* history of the nations in connexion with Jerusalem, is the great subject of *his* prophecy; but the moral history of this period, as to the character and extent of its evil, is given through the prophet of the Church, in the Revelation.

viii. 11. "He shall take away the daily sacrifice."

ix. 27. "He shall cause the sacrifice to cease."

viii. 19. He shall prosper (verse 12) in the latter end of the indignation.

ix. 27. " - - - till that determined is poured on the desolate."

II. Between chap. VIII. and chap. XI.

viii. 9. "He waxes great towards the pleasant land."

xi. 41. "He enters into the glorious land."

viii. 17. "At the time of the end shall be the vision."

xi. 40, 41. "At the time of the end shall he enter."

viii. "He prospers in the last end of the indignation."

xi. 36. "He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished."

III. Between chap. VII. and chap. XI.

vii. 25. "He shall speak great words against the Most High."

xi. 36. "He shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods."

vii. 25. "He shall change times and laws."

xi. 37. "He shall not regard the God of his fathers," but honour another.

vii. 22. He shall continue until the saints possess the kingdom.

xi. 36. "He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished."

The first part of the Revelation describes the position of the Church, as set in the place of testimony, in the midst of surrounding evil;—the only portion of the world that recognized the Lordship of Christ, and therefore the only portion judged by Him as Son of Man, and by Him enabled to be a candlestick—a light shining in darkness.—These were, *to the Apostle* the things that *are*.

The second part of the Revelation was to the Apostle, the things that shall be; and it may be divided into two portions.—The first describes the world as controlled by the *Father*, and visited by His awful chastisements, whilst the Son sitteth on His right hand, waiting until His enemies be made His footstool.

The second division describes the world as placed under the government of the Son, when the Father shall say, “Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” It is the time which Daniel foresaw, when he beheld one like the Son of Man, who came to the Antient of days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given unto Him dominion; and then also the kingdom and dominion, *under* the whole heaven, is given to people of the saints of the Most High.

Since then both Daniel and John describe the state of the nations, at the time which immediately precedes the period, when the Son takes unto Himself His great power and reigns, (Rev. xi. 17.) we might expect to find much correspondence of prediction: and accordingly, we find it in their descriptions of him, who prospers until “the time when the saints possess the kingdom.”

The 13th chapter of the Revelation answers to the description of the Little Horn in the 7th chapter of Daniel. The following are the points of connexion.—

Dan. vii. 25. “He shall speak great words against the Most High.”

Rev. xiii. 5. “Speaking great things and blasphemies.”

Dan. vii. 21. He made war with the saints, and prevailed.

Rev. xiii. 7. He made war with the saints, and overcame.

Dan. vii. 25. "They shall be given into his hands for a time, times, and a half"—i. e. 1260 days.

Rev. xiii. 5. "He continues forty and two months"—i. e. 1260 days.

These are not only instances of exact *verbal* agreement, but they show that the two chapters mark the same relations, both to God and to the saints, and also the same duration of persecuting power.*

* There are also other points of resemblance. The beast which John beheld arose from the sea. The fourth beast in Daniel arises from the sea, i. e. from the ordinary, (in man's view) political combination of nations.

The terrible appearance of the fourth beast, which Daniel does not describe, is described by John; who views it in its *secondary* state as having its power embodied in the Little Horn. In this state he has seven heads and ten horns, crowned. Now the seven heads are probably the union of the heads of the three first beasts in Daniel with the fourth: viz.—Lion or first beast—one: Bear—one: Leopard—four: fourth beast—one. In all—seven heads.

The ten horns are crowned; which proves that it is the fourth empire, in its last state, after the setting up of the ten kings, which is here represented.

The beast was in appearance like a Leopard, which points to the part whence he is to arise; viz. from one of the successors of Alexander or the third empire; and also identifies him with the individuals in Dan. viii. and xi., who are stated to arise from one of the divisions of Alexander's empire.

The connexion between Rev. xiii. and Dan. vii. is also important, in satisfactorily proving that Dan. vii. describes the same person as Dan. viii. and xi.;—for if the Little Horn of chap. vii. belongs to the Beast "that devours the whole earth," and if "power is given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations," (Rev. xiii. 7,) it follows that the

And in whatever part of Scripture we find a time of blasphemy predicted, immediately preceding either the time of earthly blessedness or the deliverance of Jerusalem, or the completed blessing of the saints, we may safely refer the descriptions to him who shall prosper "till *the indignation* be accomplished, and the thing that is determined be done." We will now briefly endeavour state some of his characteristics, in the words of the chapters which refer to this consummation of apostasy.

I.—His moral characteristics are these ;—

Isaiah xiv. 14. He shall say in his heart, "I will be like the Most High."

Dan. viii. 25. "He shall stand up against the Prince of Princes."

Dan. xi. 36. "He shall exalt himself above every god."

2 Thess. ii. 4. He shall exalt himself "above all that is called God."

2 Thess. ii. 4. He shall show himself that he is God.

1 John ii. 22. He shall deny both the Father and the Son.

Rev. xiii. 6. He shall "open his mouth in blasphemy against God."

Rev. xvii. 3. He shall be "full of names of blasphemy."

II.—The extent of his power.

Is. xiv. 16. He shall make the earth to tremble, and shall shake kingdoms.

Is. xiv. 17. He shall make the world as a wilderness.

universal dominion of chap. viii. and xi. must be identical with that of chap. vii. if it exists at the same time; and it does exist at the same time, viz: in the last end of the indignation.

Dan. vii. 23. "The fourth beast (whose power he embodies) shall devour the whole earth."

Dan. vii. 25. "Times and laws shall be given into his hand."

Dan. viii. 9. "He shall wax exceeding great."

Dan. viii. 24. "His power shall be mighty,...he shall destroy wonderfully."

Dan. xi. 36. "He shall do according to his will."

Dan. xi. 40. "He shall enter into the countries and overflow."

Dan. xi. 42. "He shall stretch forth his hand upon the countries."

2 Thess. ii. 9. "His coming shall be with all power."

Rev. xiii. 7. "Power shall be given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

Rev. xvii. 13. The ten kings shall give their strength and power unto him.

III.—His power will be supported by miracles.

2 Thess. ii. 9. "His coming shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."

Rev. xiii. 12. He that ministereth before him, shall do "great wonders, so that he shall make fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and shall deceive them that dwell upon the earth by means of those miracles which he shall have power to do."

Rev. xiii. 15. "He shall have power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should speak."*

* In Dan ix. 27, we find this remarkable marginal reading, "and upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator." This is probably the abomination of desolation, which will be placed in the temple of God. We know from Acts xvi. that the Pythian Oracle was inspired

IV.—His reception on the earth.

Rev. xiii. 8. "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life."

Rev. xiii. 15. Whosoever will not worship shall be killed.

Rev. xvii. 8. "All, whose names are not written in the book of life, shall wonder."

"If another will come in his own name, him ye will receive."

V.—The place of his manifestation in blasphemy.

Is. xiv. 13. He will "sit on the mount of the congregation, on the sides of the north."

Dan. viii. 11. "He will take away the daily sacrifice."

Dan. xi. 45. "He will plant the tabernacles of his palace on the glorious holy mountain."

2 Thess. ii. 4. "He will sit in the temple of God."

VI.—He is named—

Is. xiv. 12, 13. "Lucifer," as blasphemously assuming Christ's character of the morning star.

Isaiah xiv. The King of Babylon, as having sustained the last fabric of Gentile power. (see Rev. xvii.)

Dan. vii. The Horn that has eyes,—as denoting intelligence and strength.

THE King, for whom Tophet is prepared. (Is. xxx. 33.)

These are his principal names in the Old Testament, where he is always referred to in connexion with the Jews. In the New Testament, in contrast to the

by an evil spirit, for the words, "spirit of divination" in verse 16, should be translated literally "spirit of Pytho." The extensive influence of this oracle over the minds of men, may give us some notion of that which will be extended through the image which shall both live and speak.

holiness which is the Church's character, he is called the Man of Sin, or the Lawless One; as denoting the unhindered nature of his actings. In John he is called "The Antichrist," in his special character of opposition to Christ. In the Revelations he is called the Beast, as denoting his moral estimation in the sight of heaven.

VII.—He will be destroyed by no human agency.

Dan. viii. 25. "He shall be broken without hand."

Isaiah xi. 4. The Lord, "with the breath of His lips shall slay the wicked one."

2 Thess. ii. 8. The Lord shall consume him with the breath of His lips, and with the brightness of His coming.

Rev. xix. 15. He will come forth, who shall tread the winepress of wrath, and by Him the Beast will be taken.

These are the facts connected with the awful history of this wonderful person; a history marvellous indeed, but very credible to those who remember the mighty power of Satan, and that God has Himself declared, that a time is coming, when He will withdraw in judgment the restraint that He now places on Satan's agency and the evil hearts of men, and send upon them "strong delusion that they should believe a lie." (2 Thess. ii.) These things were seen in the early Church. How is it that the spirit of slumber is fallen so deeply on us? We much fear that none of us feel, as we ought, the awfulness of this slumber.

* *The words of Justin Martyr are as follows:* speaking of the second coming of the Lord, he says, "Foolish are they and ignorant, who do not understand what has been revealed throughout the prophetic Scriptures, viz.—that two comings of Christ are declared; one, that in which He has been preached in humiliation; the other, that in which He should come in glory from heaven, *at the time when* the man of apostasy who speaks impious things against the Most High, shall be upon the earth, and shall have dared

The 17th of Revelation still remains to be considered. It is very important, as revealing what the 13th does not reveal—the connexion of Antichrist with Babylon. The relation between the 13th and 17th of Revelation, appears very similar to that which subsists between the 7th and 8th of Daniel. The 7th of Daniel describes his history in very general terms, as the head of the Gentile monarchy;—the 8th gives his specific relation to Jerusalem; and so in the Revelations: the 13th chapter gives the general aspect of his character, whilst the 17th supplies his specific relation to Babylon. In the 14th of Isaiah he is called the king of Babylon, “the golden city;” for he becomes for a season the support and sustainer of its power.

He is still symbolised by a beast, with seven heads and ten horns; but the horns are no longer crowned; for God had put it into their hearts to give their royalty unto the beast, till the words of God should be fulfilled.

The characteristic feature of Babylon throughout the Scriptures, is, “greatness in the earth,” as contradistinguished from greatness in the sight of heaven. We can hardly help being struck with the truth of this, if we examine the chapters which delineate its character. The detail of the 14th of Isaiah;—the character of Nebuchadnezzar, the great prototype of Babylonish greatness;—the vision of the Tree which symbolised his power; and above all, the 18th of the Revelation sufficiently show, however much its moral influence may

lawless deeds against us Christians.” (p. 203.) The words employed, clearly refer to Dan. vii. Thess. ii. Chrysostom also refers to this subject, his words are as follows: “He will not lead to idolatry, but will be some one standing in the place of God, and he will put down all gods, and will give commandment, that they should worship him instead of God; and he will sit in the temple of God, not that *in Jerusalem only*, but also in the Churches every where, in which he will violently assume the presidency, endeavouring to shew himself as God.”

be assisted by ecclesiastical system, yet that secular greatness is the characteristic of Babylon. The kings of the earth who live deliciously;—the merchants who deal in gold, and silver, and precious stones; the ship-masters, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea;—these are they who weep and wail and cast dust upon their heads, when Babylon is made desolate:—and “souls of men” are but once mentioned, as a subordinate part of its gainful traffic.

Wheresoever, then, the power of the image, which Daniel saw, has been, or shall be concentrated, there is Babylon. It may be concentrated in Nebuchadnezzar’s city, or in Persia, or in Rome (whether by physical or moral influence, it matters not); but wherever it is found concentrated, there, in the language of Scripture, would be Babylon. And whereas violence and sanguinary outrage have hitherto been the chief characteristics of every past concentration of Gentile power, it would seem that the quiet pursuits of peace are the foundation of this its last aggregate. With one or two exceptions, the characteristics of Babylon, as noted in the chapter which gives its final history, are those things which men generally consider to be of a neutral character, which they pride themselves on pursuing with zeal and enterprise; objects, for which they educate their children, and by which what is called society is held together in the bond of common desires and common gratifications.—It is in fact “THE WORLD:” and whilst all man’s systems are of it, and while that which calls itself the Church, may and has identified itself with it, yet Babylon has a distinctive character of its own,—it is the “harlot” and not the “adulteress,”—it is that which tempts, and not that which is tempted.

We do not now inquire where the great power of the earth will be again concentrated. The seat of the Beast’s empire is expressly mentioned, (Rev. xvi. 10,) and must have a definite existence somewhere. We only desire to press this simple fact, that the result of

all the efforts of human power, in which the world is now exulting, will end in Babylon. The liberty of mind, the boasted freedom from religious restraints, the advocacy of the "rights of man," all these are but accelerating springs to the universal movement into Babylon. We say "universal movement;"—for Babylon is said to be the great city which reigneth over "the kings of the earth." And *all* nations are said to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

It is not, then, in the openness of blasphemy that Antichrist makes his first approaches upon the minds of men. He comes supporting the systems in which men have been delighting, and clothed in their, probably, *peaceful* glory. Wherever the mystery of Babylon is working, there is the place where the spirit of Antichrist, as to its present developement, is to be sought; and every individual, every system, that is seeking influence or station by means unsanctioned by the Spirit of God, connects itself with Babylon, is exposed to her judgments, and also to the fearful dominion of Antichrist's subsequent power. Surely warning of this is needed; not only by those who wilfully close their eyes to all that God has so graciously revealed respecting the future, but by those also who, looking to *crisis* alone, forget that every principle of the coming evil, is working on every side around them.*

And if any believer avows his connection with Babylon, he avows his sin and his shame. He avows a connection for which he alone is responsible, which God has never formed, which God has commanded him to break. It matters not whether they be the formed or the unformed principles of Babylon, the command varies not:—"Come out of her my people, that ye be

* It is to be feared that many are tampering with it, in violation of their conscience, for the sake of "Influence." Men will often be ready to sacrifice prospects, health, and riches, but influence they will not surrender. They will buy it by the sacrifice of all.

not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." He who knowingly and designedly tolerates partial evil now, has surely no right to conclude, that he will be delivered from the desire to tolerate it in its entirety, when "the enemy shall come in like a flood."

Babylon will be destroyed by the Beast.* The systems which men shall have formed with the helps of their "unfettered energies," will be swept away; their rights and their liberty (which after all is but the liberty of selfishness seeking its own advancement) will be heard of no more; and instead of the realization of their flattering visions, every energy will be fettered into dreadful subjection to him, whom all shall worship whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.

The destruction of Babylon, through the instrumentality of the Beast, is the last act of the Father's chastisements. All His administration towards the earth, as described in the central part of the Revelation, has the character of chastisement, and not of utterly destroying judgment; though the only effect is, that men only blaspheme God the more on account of their plagues. (Rev. xvi. 9.) Nevertheless even after the destruction of Babylon, the voice of warning is once

* [This certainly requires correction, for in this and the following paragraph two things are confounded. There is a system of Babylon by which earthly greatness will have been again concentrated, which will be destroyed by the Beast; just as the Roman Emperors destroyed the Republican-institutions, which were the means by which their greatness had been reached. The destruction of Babylon *locally* is however wholly a different thing;—this takes place before the destruction of the beast, but not by his instrumentality. See Isa. xiii. This is not the place to go into the details which relate to this subject, but the correction of what had been stated above is of some importance, for the clear understanding of the prophetic outlines which have been drawn. Ed.]

more uttered, for the last time :—“ If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of His indignation.” (Rev. xiv. 9.)

It is under the Beast, that the kings of the earth and of the whole world, are gathered to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And now the Son taketh unto Himself His great power; His foes are made His footstool. The rod of His strength is sent out of Zion. He ruleth in the midst of His enemies. He comes to administer, not chastisement, but utterly destroying judgment; for He treadeth the winepress of wrath. And by Him the beast is taken; and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him.—These both are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

Such is the termination of the times in which we live; or, as they are called in Scripture, the “Day of Man.” The day of the Lord will then begin:—“For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols He shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His

* The identity of the person described in the 13th and 17th of Revelation, is shewn by a comparison of the following passages, Rev. xiii. 12—14, xvi. 13, 14, and xix. 19, 20.

majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they had made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah ii.)

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." (Ps. cvii. 43.)

FRIDAY.

Question—WHAT does Scripture say will be the first movement of Christ towards the earth? What the Apostasy and consequent rejection of the Professing Church? How far are Ministers of the Word responsible for not proclaiming His speedy Coming, or not warning of the Judgments to precede it?

THE state of the earth, since the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, is represented, in Scripture, as Darkness. Whilst He was in the world, He was the Light of the world: but after He had left it, the whole period of His absence is described as Night. We find St. Paul thus speaking of it, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand:" and St. Peter, when pressing upon Christians to give heed unto the sure word of prophecy, calls it the light which was to guide them in this period of darkness: "a light that shineth in a dark place, until the

day dawn." During this darkness, it is *Man's Day*; and this in contrast with that which Scripture characteristically calls the *Day of the Lord*, and which always denotes the period which terminates the present mingled scene of sin and misery, rebellion and judgment, by ushering in the time when the Heavens do rule. It is the appellation which Scripture gives it,—“With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you, or of *Man's Day*, (margin) &c. therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.” (1 Cor. iv. 3, 5.)

The characteristics of this period are—

I.—Creation is represented as groaning and travailing in pain together. (Rom. viii. 22.) “The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away.” (Is. xxiv. 4.) But it looks for the removal of the curse which is on it, at a time which is to come. “For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God; because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

II.—During this period the Gentiles are in authority. “Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” “Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

III.—The Jews are still “A proverb and a bye-word among all the nations, whither the Lord hath led them.” (Deut. xxviii.) “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.” (Hosea iii. 4.)

Now, as surely as this is the present state of the earth, the creation, the Gentile and the Jew, so surely is it noted in the Scripture of truth, that these several states shall be altered. We read of the coming of a “morning without clouds;” (2 Sam. xxiii.) a time when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; when the darkness which has covered the earth,

shall be dispersed, the vail shall be taken away from Israel; and that vail which is spread over all nations. (Isaiah xxv.) Creation will then, and not till then, be set free from the bondage in which it is now held; a bondage which is so little sympathized in now, that few know what it is, even in a slight measure, to enter into the mind of the Apostle, when he describes the spirit of the believer, as looking forward in unison with the groaning creation around him, to the day which will bring the fulness of liberty to both, even deliverance from the body of this death, and from the thralldom in which he, who has the power of death, has held every thing that Adam forfeited when he believed Satan, and broke the link which held all created things in the perfect blessedness of unity with God. And this power of Satan, without entering into discussion respecting it, since it has been spoken of before, we would again desire to be pressed upon the minds of Christians, because there is so much disbelief of it, such unaccountable forgetfulness of the actual effects of the Fall of Man, and consequently such an infinity of false reasonings on the present state of things, because this single consideration is omitted in the account.

And wherefore is it that apparent disorder and confusion still take the place of order and righteousness? Wherefore do we see sin and Satan still reigning, darkness covering the earth, and God's purpose of blessing as yet unfulfilled? Even because Christ has not yet sat down on *His own* throne. He now occupies the Father's throne; (see Rev. iii. 21,) and therefore in that which is, as to the world, only the exercise of providential control,* there is scope for evil to work its will. But as soon as the Lord Jesus leaves the position in which He now is, and which He occupies UNTIL his foes are made his footstool; then the exercise of righteous-

* See question of Wednesday Evening.

ness begins, and the words of God will be fulfilled.— Then will be deliverance, and not till then.

The Lord Jesus will continue to sit on the throne of the Father, until the Father shall have discontinued the exercise of that power which has specifically for its object, "to make Christ's foes His footstool." We have noticed in the preceding evening, that the central part of the Revelation describes this exercise of the Father's power in judicial chastisements and warnings, until the last warning against the Beast is rejected, and the nations are gathered at Armageddon: and this, therefore, is the concluding event of what may be specifically called "The dispensation of the Father." It is at Armageddon that Christ's foes are made His footstool; and He is to remain on the Father's throne until then: and Jerusalem is the place from which the rod of His power is to be sent forth.

This is very important, as connecting the conclusion of Christ's sitting on the Father's throne, with the gathering of the nations under Antichrist and the state of Jerusalem:—These events are similarly connected in the 7th of Daniel.

The gathering at Armageddon, which is the time when the rod of Christ's power is sent forth, is said to be "The great day of God Almighty." It is important to observe this expression, because it identifies this period with so many passages throughout the Old and New Testament; some referring to Jerusalem, and others to the earth at large.

"The day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?" (Joel ii. 11.) "Behold the day cometh which shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble;" and in connexion therewith—"The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, behold He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts, but who shall abide the day of His coming? or who shall stand when He *appeareth*?" The gathering at Armageddon is the concluding event

in the "Day of Man;"—the manifestation of the Lord to destroy those who are gathered, is the commencing event of the "Day of the Lord;" an expression which extends to the whole period, during which He, whose name in the Branch, shall execute righteousness and judgment in the earth.

The coming (*παρουσια*, literally, presence,) or Revelation, (*αποκαλυψις*) of the Lord Jesus in the manner described in the 63rd of Isaiah, and the 19th of Revelation, is therefore the act which *commences* the day of the Lord. And every event of blessing to the saints, and judgment to the world, (for every thing which precedes, has been chastisement) is made to depend thereupon. If it be asked—

When is Satan bound? When the Lord COMETH out of His place. (Isaiah xxvi. 21, and xxvii. 1.)

When is the Antichrist destroyed? By the brightness of His COMING. (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

When are the departed saints raised? At Christ's COMING. (1 Cor. xv. 23.)

When does creation rejoice? Before the Lord when He COMETH. (Ps. xvi. xcvii.)

When will saints be like Him? When He shall *appear*. (1 John iii. 2.)

When will creation groan no longer? When the saints shall be manifested as the Sons of God. (Rom. viii. 19—23.)

This gathering, we have already said, is connected with Jerusalem. The glorious holy land is the appointed place in which Christ's enemies will be made His footstool. The testimony of Zechariah xii. xiv. and of Joel iii. to this point, has already been quoted,—“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of judgment; for the day of the Lord is near, in the valley of judgment. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.” “It shall be one day known unto the Lord; not day nor night, but at evening time it shall be light.”

This collection of the nations under the last great instrument of Satan, whose power has been largely dwelt upon in the preceding questions, will bring Jerusalem into its last season of distress.—And it is not the cry of the saints in heaven, for they are admonished to rest; nor the cry of the saints on earth, for they are allowed to be overcome; but it is the cry of Jerusalem which causes the Lord Jesus to come.

Jerusalem is brought to the very extremity of distress. "It is the day of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it;" for it is then the cry to the God of Israel is heard in their distresses. The main body of the nation will be in utter ungodliness, and none of them will have looked upon Him whom they have pierced;—but there will be a faithful remnant who still retain their allegiance to Jehovah, and in the midst of the universal destruction they will be preserved. They will cry "Help Lord for the godly man ceaseth:" (Ps. xii.) they will remind the Lord of His own honour and of His own Holy name;—"Wherefore should they say among the heathen where is their God?" (see Ps. lxxix. and Joel ii.) Then, as it is written, "The Lord will be jealous for His land, and pity His people." He Himself has spoken of the time. "For the Lord shall judge His people and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left." (Deut. xxxii. 36.) "Now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him." "Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and *I will remember the land.*" (Lev. xxvi. 42.)

He will come out of His place, into which He has retired *till* they shall acknowledge their offence. (Hosea v. 15.) That place is heaven; (*ουρανός*) "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." "The Lord shall descend *from heaven.*" "I saw heaven opened." *The Jews* are exhorted to repent,

in order that the heaven may cease to retain Him, and that the times of restitution may come. (Acts iii.)

He shall descend from heaven, not secretly, but with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and shall come into the air, and *there* the saints shall MEET Him, and be brought with Him to the earth; at the time when His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, and when it is said to Jerusalem, "the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee." (Zech. xiv.)

His coming, then, is definitely to Jerusalem, and His coming there is the time of refreshing, and the time of restitution,* and *not* the destruction of all things; a restitution immediately connected with the repentance of the Jews, even as it is elsewhere written, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from dead?" (Rom. xi. 15.) Now this restitution of all things is declared to have been the burthen of prophetic testimony from the beginning, and that testimony is to earthly blessing. In this respect we must confess our ignorance, for our minds have been used to connect the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with the destruction of all things, and the passing away of creation. But so far from that, it is said that when He COMETH to judge (rule), the earth shall rejoice, and the world shall be established. (Ps. xevi. 12, 13, &c.) Let any allowance whatsoever be made for figurative language, one cardinal point remains;—when He cometh to the earth, the earth shall rejoice; and he who denies that, denies

* The substantive is only used in Acts iii. 21, but the verb from which it is derived, Matt. xii. 13, xvii. 11, Mark iii. 5, xiii. 25, ix. 12, Luke xi. 10, Acts i. 6, Heb. xiii. 19 is, invariably rendered restore, and implies a former state of relative perfectness to which the thing was to be brought back from its present state. It is the same word as is used in reference to the man who had his withered hand restored whole like the other.

the plainest testimony of God's word. Jesus is to remain in heaven not till the destruction, but till the restitution of all things.

And now with respect to the last part of this question, it is painful indeed that the declaration of the Lord's Coming should be considered only in the light of judgment. Nothing shows more clearly the degraded state of Christianity, than that any Christian should wish to put any thing between him and this his only proper and blessed hope. There are two things to be considered:—The Lord's Coming, and the judicial chastisements to precede it; and then the question as to the responsibility of Ministers in declaring these things. The distinction between the Lord's Coming and the chastisements to precede it, is important. The destruction of Babylon is antecedent to the Lord's Coming and the resurrection of the saints. In such visitations the saints may be, and be kept in them: but when the Lord Jesus Christ comes personally to judgment, when He judges those who destroy the earth, then His saints will be with Him. Now if God has given us the details of these judgments, surely we are responsible for declaring them. As to the fact of "a judgment to come" at all, it is purely prophetic, resting on the testimony of God's word; and if it is enlarged upon in that word, and especially in that which is peculiarly our portion—the New Testament, then the question is, are we to declare the whole counsel of God or not? And if there be one fact established by past history it is this,—*that the testimony of judgment has never been acceptable to God's professing people.*—It has been received by those who were not (as in the case of Nineveh); but never by those who were. From Noah down to the great Prophet the Lord Jesus, the preachers of righteousness were preachers of judgment. And what says Stephen? "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" It is deeply entwined in the nature of man to believe the state of things, in which he is, to be the final one; and

he cannot bear to be told of its subversion, and the introduction of another. Hence all God's prophets were prophets of judgment, and all the prophets of the people were prophets of peace. Now these things are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. True, we do delight to preach the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, as filling the hearts of His suffering people with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We would rather set it forth as a hope, than a terror; but there is an Apostasy, and caution is needful. Is not warning needful to England, the glory of Christendom, as to religious effort? Is there not here a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge? But the great evil of overlooking judgment, has been to divert our attention from the actual state of Christendom.* Here Satan has got an advantage over us; we look to the idolatry of the Heathen, and our compassion is appealed to, and rightly in their behalf; but surely those very Heathen shall arise in judgment with Christendom, and condemn it. What is the state of France?† almost avowedly without God; the Lord's day entirely turned to a day of recreation and amusement. Germany leavened with Neology; and in Switzerland, authoritative prohibition to preach on the leading doctrines of the Gospel. Portugal, Spain, Italy, either under Popish bigotry or infidelity.

* So little is the state of Christendom considered, that when perhaps two or three hundred thousand pounds are annually expended in Missions to the East or West, only eighteen hundred pounds were contributed last year, [1833] to the Continental Society, for the support of the Missionaries in Europe.

† Since the Meeting for these questions, a statement has appeared in the Newspapers, exhibiting the moral degradation of France in a most fearful manner. A Dramatic Piece, most popularly received has been exhibited, in which obscenity is only surpassed by the most daring blasphemy. Each one of the great realities of Christianity being introduced and burlesqued in a manner not fit to be mentioned.

Is not the voice of warning to be pressed on them? Is this the only portion of the globe to which, because it has the name of Christian, we shall not send the Gospel? Yea, what shall we preach unto them, but the Everlasting Gospel; saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the HOUR of His JUDGMENT is coming. (Rev. xiv. 6—8.) Now whilst it is our glory to declare the finished work of Christ upon the cross to perishing sinners, and to set forth the preciousness and suitableness of His priesthood to those who come to God through Him; we feel it a responsibility, that we cannot shift from ourselves, to state that which is so definitely declared in God's word,—that Jesus will not always remain at the right hand of God; and that when He rises up and shuts to the door, there is no entrance in. Surely it is our business not only in general terms, to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, but, as far as we are enabled by the Scripture, to give definiteness to every particular, that it may rest upon the mind, in the manner in which God's wisdom has been pleased to reveal it.

But there is another remark connected with this question. It is not only the duty of a minister of the word to preach the Gospel, but according to his ability to feed the sheep, and strengthen the lambs. Do we not find that it is for the Lord's glory, that His people should be walking together in the light, and bringing forth fruit unto God? Should we not be anxious that a man should not only be saved, but have praise of God, that he should not only be saved as by fire, but have an abundant entrance ministered unto him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? We must add to our faith knowledge. Now if we desire to have the people of God edified, we are not left to the choice of subjects to effect this; God knows their souls, and has put forth objects of faith and objects of hope, by which moral effects will be produced. What did the Apostle tell the Thessalonians? To wait for the Lord

from heaven; to look not only to, but for Him. If they wanted to warn, what did they say? "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" (1 Pet. iii.) If they wanted to give consolation in the season of death, "Those which sleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him; we that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv.) Since these things have ceased to be pressed upon the Church the moral effects have been lost. On this ground we feel the responsibility which lies upon those who would edify the Lord's people, to give those subjects the pre-eminence which they hold in God's Word. When we find the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, saying, "How long?" is it for us to say that it is a little thing, whether our hearts harmonize with the saints in heaven?

Now, with respect to the Church, the announcement of judgment is most important. The Church has forgotten the coming of the Lord, and forgotten what is to be judged. The minds of many Christians are very confused as to what Babylon is; and whether the earth deserve to be judged or not, and much more as to the characteristics of that time. With respect to the signs of those things which are coming to pass, as teaching us how to interpret Scripture, the disbelief of judgment has produced a most fearful error in the Church; men have taken passages relative to judgment, and applied them to mercy. Now we ask solemnly, has not this been done? Is it not a most fearful thing that the 63rd chap. of Isaiah quoted in Rev. xix. 15, should be not only used in the Church of England services, but be found in other writings, high in the estimation of the Church at large, and applied to acts of mercy, instead of to the dreadful day of the wrath of the Lamb? Is it a slight thing to be able to divide the word aright; to distinguish between promise and warning, blessing and judgment?

And now, as to the world. It is no faithful testimony to it, if the book of Revelation be God's word, and Babylon a system to be established, to say that the knowledge of the Lord is going to cover the earth through the causes now in operation.—It is a false encouragement; the world will bear it and go along with it, for it is crying "Peace;" and the world delighteth in the thoughts of its own agency bringing about this glory. Man will rejoice in the works of his own hands, but is jealous of God's interference. We are bound to speak of Babylon, and of God's strange act; we are bound to testify that there is *no single place* where a time of earthly blessing is spoken of, without its being preceded by judgment, "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger, for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For *then* will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." (Zeph. iii. 8, 9.) Now Ministers of the Gospel are saying what will be, but not saying what will precede it.

With respect to preaching the Gospel, the view of these Truths will make a man instant in season and out of season. A Minister of the Gospel never ought to be any where, where he could not preach the Gospel. So far from interfering with preaching the Gospel, if rightly held, these considerations would make men preach it with double power, and live as those who believe that the end of all things is at hand. The testimony of the Spirit is to the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; and if we have the Spirit of Christ, our testimony will be correspondent to this.

In conclusion, Brethren, we seek for ourselves and for others, that we may know how to walk and please God. Our place, as Christians, is to be weeping as

though we wept not; buying as though we possessed not; because the time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away. But if there be such a thing as Babylon, its principles are widely different from these. And we have to see to it, whether in any way we are serving it or helping it, by seeking for ourselves, or our relatives, or children, those things which shall make them great in this world; but which the day of the Lord will cast down. "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Are we in a state to meet the Lord? Is there any thing of this world which would make us desire, in our hearts, that the Lord should delay His Coming? Then let us see to it, whether our hearts be not in Babylon. It is time for us to measure every step we take; and those who are now faithful and true will find, even in the smooth state of things around them, that they will have much to forsake in following the Lord. May He grant us wisdom in our walk, and to love His appearing. That which we seek for ourselves and others, let us seek in wisdom; and then we shall walk in wisdom towards God and before men, in malice being Children, but in understanding—Men.

APPENDIX.

WE earnestly desire to remind our Christian Brethren, that there is nothing in these (to many) new views which at all militate against the common faith of God's elect. They, who adhere to them, as precious parts of God's revealed truth, believe, as firmly as any can, in the eternal love wherewith the Church has been loved,—its sure salvation, through its union with its risen Head,—its sanctification by His blood,—the abiding

presence of the Comforter,—and its eternal portion in *Heavenly* places. But they believe that something further has been revealed, as profitable for instruction in righteousness, and tending to stablish, and not to unsettle, in the simple faith of the Gospel.

They, who have proved the doctrines, can alone be competent judges of their effects: but it is plain that many, whilst refusing to search the Scriptures, have become prophets themselves, and predicted, *without referring to Scripture for their proof*,—that the Apostasy is past,—that the Lord will never visit the earth again, except when He comes to destroy it; and have ventured to describe the character and instrumental causes of the Millennial rest.

In reality, then, they have *not* past by the inquiry as to what is coming to pass upon the earth, but have determined it for themselves, apart from Scripture. The testimony of the Scriptures has been already given, and we leave it with the consciences of our brethren. We see them (as being men) necessarily connected with the earth; and we are sure of the practical importance of their learning to think and speak about the things of earth in their connexion with God. The history and interests of nations have been too often considered as *neutral* ground, on which believers and the world may meet and hold common converse;—and the darkness of this delusion can only be dissipated by that light “shining in a dark place;” which shows that in these things also the end has been traced from the beginning; and when once this light is seen and walked in, it will soon be found that the Church can have no common judgment with the world, even on things in which they have a common interest.

With respect to the final Apostasy, the 8th of Daniel has been especially rested on, as affording three decided criterions of its character; which are answered neither by Popery nor Mahomedanism, nor any thing that is past. Nevertheless the utter abomination of the Papal system is in no way extenuated. Popery is the master-

piece of Satan in a particular way.—He has taken the evil principles of human nature and woven them together in a system of astonishing unity, calculated to ensnare every human passion and interest. The number of adherents whom Popery has led to perdition has indeed been many; but many also, who have acknowledged its authority, have doubtless built their faith on the common foundation :* whereas of Antichrist, it is written, that all his followers will be involved in his own ruin ;—all who worship him shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.—And all *shall* worship him whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.

* The doctrines of Popery are in themselves soul-destroying ; so that a consistent Papist could not be saved, inasmuch as he "frustrates the grace of God." Yet many a poor Romanist may, under the mass of superstition with which he is encumbered, be really looking to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God that has borne away his sin.—So true is it that in this, as well as other systems, there are individuals who, by grace, are raised above their doctrines, though they have not light enough to disentangle themselves entirely.



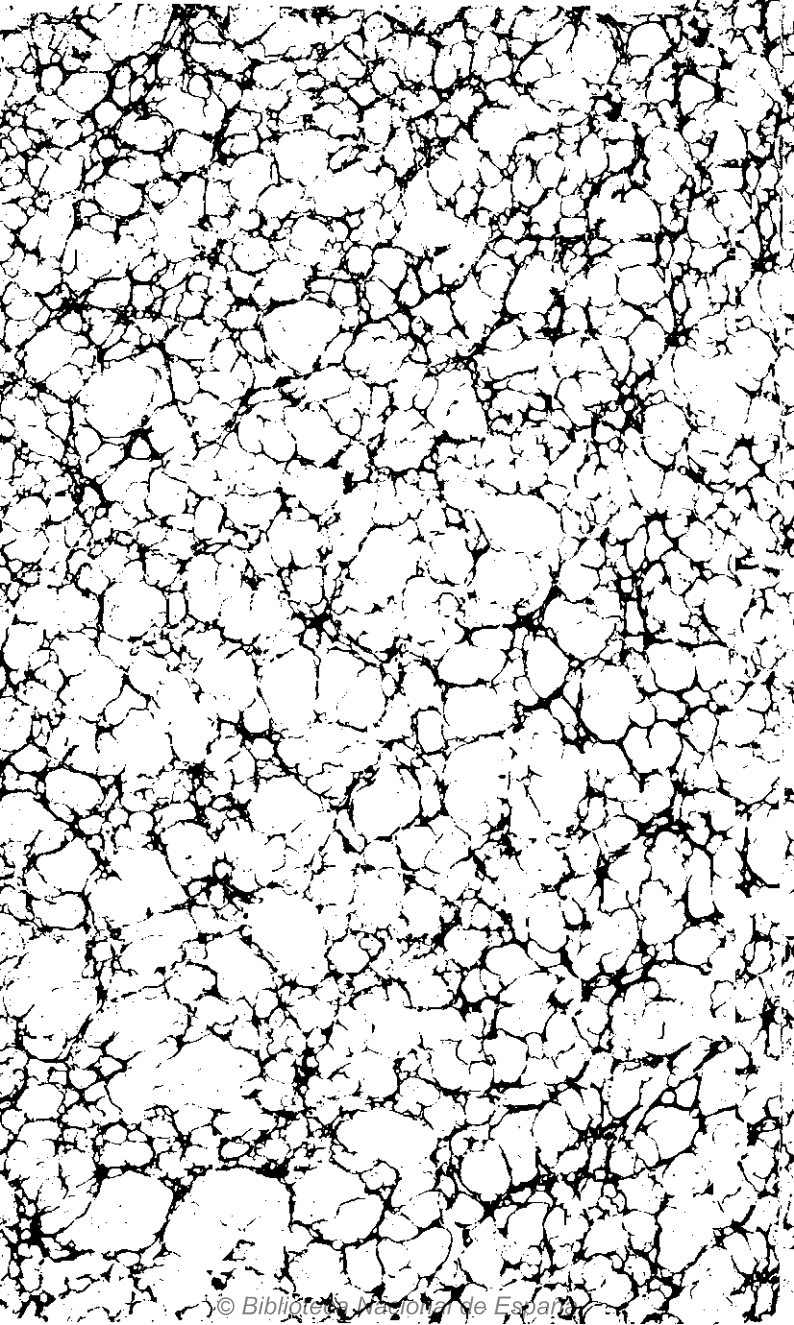
POSTSCRIPT.

[The Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is now far more generally acknowledged by Christians, as the hope set before the Church of God, than was the case when the preceding pages first appeared twelve years ago.

The importance of these truths and of testimony to them is as great now as it was then; but if they have a practical power upon the soul, they must be held as God has set them forth, and held in the Spirit. If we really wait for the coming of our Lord, it behoves us to wait Scripturally:—else, what power can there be in our testimony? what ability to use this truth as a warning or as an encouragement? Many may hold this hope as an indefinite thing, without having learned from Scripture the manner and circumstances in which it is there presented; they therefore do not apprehend rightly either the circumstances of the Church or the world at that time:—they do not see the evils which are at work, and those which yet will be at work, and which will rise to a head and only be abolished by the coming of Him, who will take His blood-bought and believing people unto Himself. In giving a testimony to this day of glory we are responsible for stating also what will precede it. We are responsible, for God has stated it in His word,—see Thess. ii., 2 Pet. ii. iii.—and as the stream of evil will widen, therefore Christians should be warned of these things before-hand, so that knowing them they may not be led astray by the error of the wicked. We have no *hope* but the coming of Christ, even as we have no ground of confidence but His precious blood shed for us; and if we have this hope really in our souls as the early Church had, we can bear to be told of days of deepening evil, and the other similar signs of the coming on of that day, even as they could bear it;—and this knowledge instead of causing our hope to be dimmed before our view, will lead us to hold it as God has set it forth, and to know it as having a present separating power. We are to take the warnings of God's word as well as the encouragements, and to receive them in humble thankfulness to Him who has seen fit thus to reveal them. Ed.]

END.







1000363461